

Backstage Coach Productions

Dance Education

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HIGH KICK TECHNIQUE

by
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ALIGNMENT

- * the head is aligned with the shoulders, hips, knees, and feet
- * the weight is shifted forward versus back on the heels
- * the abdominals are engaged to support the spine for solid core strength
- * the spine is elongated from the sacrum all the way up to the neck and through the head

HEAD

- * the focus remains level
- * guiding when performing rotations like pinwheels allows for accurate execution of formations
- * the dancer accents the head movements for emphasis
- * the chin is slightly lifted when performing field routines
- * the head may turn to a profile (chin over shoulder) or tilt (ear to shoulder)

ARMS AND HANDS

- * the dancer remains in line with the team versus pulling forward or backward in the line
- * the entire arm remains stretched, with the elbow and wrist remaining aligned with the shoulder
- * fingers remain closed without gripping or pressing on the partners' shoulder in the hook-up
- * thumbs often remain tucked under the hand in the hook-up for beginners

HIPS

- * hips remain level without lifting up or pulling forward
- * flexibility and rotation in the hip sockets are needed for fan kicks
- * the dancer performs a complete circle in fan kicks

LEGS

- * the kick is directed towards the nose versus the shoulder
- * the leg is either turned-out or parallel depending on the team's style
- * the leg is lifted/lowered with enough strength and endurance to perform with control
- * cardio training along with muscular strength and flexibility in the hips and legs are needed in order to perform high kicks with consistent stamina
- * a dancer's propensity for flexibility is a strong factor in determining the height of the kick
- * the dancer may need to lower kicks when performing to a faster tempo
- * remaining on beat with the music is more important than the height of the kick
- * the dancer may perform waist, shoulder, eye, or hat level kicks

FEET

- * the dancer prepares for kicks with both feet in parallel first
- * as the kick returns to the preparation position, the feet must close together
- * the preparation for each kick should be performed in the same place without moving off your spot
- * the toe is connected at the knee in hooks and at the ankle in cuts
- * the entire foot beginning with the ankle and moving through the arch and the toes remains stretched
- * the dancer leads with the toes during any transitions between kicks
- * the heel of the supporting leg remains on the floor
- * the supporting foot remains aligned with the ankle versus sickled (inversion of the foot)

For more kick terminology visit the Backstage Dance Library: Sawyer, Gina. *The Performance Dictionary*. Dallas: Backstage Coach Productions, 2005.