

# Backstage Coach Productions

## Dance Education

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### PRACTICING TURNS

by  
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- Always push yourself to complete multiple turns in technique class, but only do what you know and can perform with consistency for a performance.
- Understand the following parts of the turn: the preparation, the spot, and the turn.
- Turns, like any other skill, take practice; repetition is your “friend”.
- Repetition in turning helps the mind and body to experience balance, control and the focus needed to turn. Create an “at home” studio space and practice on your own for quicker progress.
- Close to a performance, rehearse the turn with the exact arm and foot placement that will be used. The muscle memory will become more powerful and the body will gain strength in practicing with the exact placement.
- Remember that a change of direction when turning effects balance so clarify this by knowing specifically where and when to spot. Determine where to spot at the end of the turn before beginning the turn.
- Practice turning facing the mirror and facing away from it so that you can quickly adapt the focus to any given space.
- Do practice different preparations and endings to a turn, variations of the turn, and link different skills to the turn. This will improve your coordination in picking-up the patterns in movement which will help you learn combinations faster at auditions.
- Do practice turning in place and traveling in across-the-floor exercises to experience different weight distributions which will result in greater connectivity when dancing.
- Link easier turns before and after a more advanced turn to achieve an effective series of turning. Add a leap with the turn for greater variation.
- Dancers who spot together turn together.
- With a group of dancers the timing of the pirouette must be practiced so that all turns are performed on the same beat. All dancers may verbally say “spot” to reinforce that all bodies are synchronized and rotating at the same time.

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- If choreographing the dance, choose movements beginning and following the turns that have a natural transition so that you can execute it with greater fluidity and control.

For more information about turns you may be interested in the following resources.

Grant, Gail. *Technical Manual and Dictionary of Classical Ballet*. Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1982.

Sawyer, Gina. *The Performance Dictionary*. Dallas: Backstage Coach Productions, 2005.

Turns and Turn Combos Instructional Dance Video. Dir. Michelle Assaf. DVD. Tezoro Productions, 2003.