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**Study Protocol and Statistical Analysis Plan**

**Study Title:** Effectiveness of a Mind-Body Conditioning Course for the Management of Physical and Emotional Stressors in University Dance Students

**Document Date: 10-23-2024**  
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Attached is the IRB approved study protocol and statistical analysis plan.

Sincerely,

Beth Steinberg, PhD, RN  
Primary Investigator

## Research Protocol

**Title:** Effectiveness of a Mind-Body Conditioning Course for the Management of Physical and Emotional Stressors in University Dance Students

### Objectives

Physical injuries and mental health issues are common in collegiate dance students. Distinct from other college students and student athletes, collegiate dancers must manage required academic courses with regular rehearsals, technique classes, and evaluative performances (DiPasquale et al., 2021; Mathisen et al., 2022). The need for adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and physical and mental recovery, often disregarded by dance students, can lead to increased physical injuries, as well as increased stress, burnout, and performance anxiety (Balk et al., 2018; Cahalan et al., 2018; DiPasquale et al., 2021). While dance tradition is slowly shifting, a focus on perfection relative to body appearance and type, personality, and performance continues to be encouraged and emulated. This focus only serves to exacerbate mental health concerns such as eating disorders, body dissatisfaction, anxiety and depression, that are common in dancers (Dwarika & Haraldsen, 2023; Kozai & Ambegaonkar, 2020; Mathisen et al., 2022).

Mindfulness-based approaches, including breath practices, progressive relaxation, yoga, and meditation, have shown promise in managing the stress and anxiety of college students including student athletes and those who major in performing arts (Butzer et al., 2016; Galante et al., 2018; Kanaujia et al., 2023; Lal & Vinod Kumar, 2023; Lemay et al., 2019). These interventions can be implemented as a group class, integrated into course content, or as individual, brief practices available or reinforced through a smartphone app. The Department of Dance currently offers Dance 5175/2175, *Yoga Theory and Practice*, through which students become familiar with the benefits of yoga through a rigorous asana (postures) and pranayama (breathwork) training. This new course, *Body-Mind Conditioning for Dancers*, will include studio work in mind-body practices, as well as education in the research surrounding the efficacy of mindfulness based interventions for conditioning dancers to their peak performance.

Through a collaboration between The Ohio State University Center for Integrative Health and The Ohio State University Department of Dance, the **purpose** of this study is to: 1) evaluate the effects of integrating an evidence based, eight week mindfulness-based intervention into the OSU Dance 2802 curriculum on student perceived stress, burnout, resilience, physical pain and injury; 2) assess the feasibility of integrating the mindfulness-based intervention into the Dance 2802, Introductory Dance Seminar for second year OSU Dance majors.

### I. Background and Rationale

A successful dance performance requires physical skill, cognitive ability, and personal expression, integrated during hours of practice and perfected with critiques from instructors and fellow dancers. Collegiate dancers have a passion for dance and performance, however this passion can often supersede essential self-care practices. Dancers often report poor nutrition, insufficient sleep, and inadequate physical rest and recovery which is directly associated with increased incidence of physical injury and disability (Arbinga, 2018; Cahalan et al., 2018; Deja et al., 2020; Fauntroy et al., 2023). Dancers have high injury rates and often perform when injured (Cahalan et al., 2018). Mainly characterized as overuse injuries, active injuries of the foot, ankle, lower leg, and knee are reported by over half of collegiate dancers (Deja et al., 2020;

Michaels et al., 2023). These physical injuries negatively affect dancers' health related quality of life and impact their academic progress.

Collegiate dancers also report significant mental strain. Burnout is common within the dance community with student dancers reporting high levels of stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue (DiPasquale et al., 2021). Depression, mood disturbances, and poor concentration are reported frequently by collegiate dancers with symptoms ranging from mild to debilitating (Balk et al., 2018; Dwarika & Haraldsen, 2023). While the intensity of mental health symptoms is due to a combination of genetics, personality, past experiences, situational triggers, and underlying emotions, interventions and contemplative practices that can support self-management of the behavioral, cognitive, and physical symptoms experienced by dancers.

Practical strategies to effectively manage the physical and mental stressors that collegiate dancers experience are critical to dance education. Kozai and Ambegaonkar (2020) found that many academic dance departments offer students information on recognition of dance injuries and illnesses, strength and conditioning, nutrition, and basic personal health, however, the information was offered mainly through textbooks, journal articles, and web sites. Application of the concepts was not incorporated mainly due to limited expertise and resources. Mathisen et al. (2022) did integrate education and practical applications relative to physical and mental rest and recovery, mindful eating, and sleep hygiene for 125 professional dance students in their study. Improvements in mental health and nutrition knowledge were reported, likely due to the integration of content into the required curriculum and the interactive nature of the presentation.

College students in general have high levels of stress and anxiety. Studies with yoga, meditation, and mindfulness-based interventions, offered for college students, have all reported decreases stress, anxiety, and depression while self-compassion, mindfulness, and resilience increased (Galante et al., 2018; González-Martín et al., 2023; Lal & Kumar, 2023; Lemay et al., 2019). While these studies provide ample support for these interventions, integration into required coursework for collegiate dance students will enhance accessibility, convenience, and promote community within the dance student community.

Dance 2802 is an undergraduate course designed to provide students an introductory experience to The Ohio State University Department of Dance and the field and discipline of dance at large. A required course for second year Dance majors, the syllabus describes the goals of the course to "include exposure to university and departmental resources and a comprehension of physical practice, creative activity and theoretical inquiry in the field of dance." The departmentally approved revision of the course curriculum to integrate mindfulness education and practices, tailored to the physical and mental health needs of dance majors, into the required course content may enhance their overall well-being.

We **hypothesize** that, for second year dance majors enrolled in Dance 2802, the integration of an evidence based, eight-week mindfulness intervention into the course content will decrease perceived stress, burnout, and occurrences of physical pain and injury while increasing resilience. We also **hypothesize** that the integration of the mindfulness content into the course content will be deemed feasible by the OSU second year Dance students.

## **II. Procedures**

### **A. Research Design**

The study will use an intervention, historical control design to evaluate the effects of integrating an eight-week mindfulness-based intervention into the curriculum of the Introductory Seminar, Dance 2802, a required course for second year Dance majors. Third year dance majors will serve as the historical control group having completed Dance 2802 during their second year of study. Outcomes of interest for both groups include perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical (musculoskeletal) pain and injury. Respiratory rate will be assessed before and after each weekly mindfulness-based intervention for the second year Dance majors. Feasibility of integrating the mindfulness-based intervention into the course curriculum will be evaluated by the second year Dance majors at the conclusion of the 8-week intervention period.

### **B. Sample**

Second year Dance majors enrolled in Dance 2802 at The Ohio State University Department of Dance will participate in the Mind-Body Conditioning Course as part of the required Second Year Seminar. Approximately 20 students are anticipated to be enrolled in the Fall 2025 semester and if inclusion criteria are met, would be eligible to participate in the study. Third year Dance majors, who completed Dance 2802 during their second year of study, will serve as the historical control group. Approximately 20 third year Dance majors will be recruited to serve as the historical controls.

#### **Recruitment:**

An informational flyer explaining the study will be provided to the second year Dance majors during their class. Dance majors, assisting with this study as members of the study team, will be available for questions related to participation in the study. A QR-code on the flyer provides a link to a Qualtrics survey for interested students to provide their name, preferred email contact, and year of study as a Dance major, i.e. second year or third year. Once submitted, the study team will reach out to the Dance major to evaluate inclusion/exclusion criteria. If inclusion criteria are met, the second year Dance major will receive instructions via their preferred email to download the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app with a unique log-in and password. The unique log-in will allow them access and provide instructions to change their password. Once logged in, the Dance student will have access to the study consent; a paper copy of the consent will also be available on request. If the Dance student chooses to participate in the research, the REDCap link to the demographic and survey questions will be available to complete on the Mindfulness in Motion app.

An informational flyer explaining the study will be posted in designated areas of the OSU Department of Dance for recruitment of the third year Dance majors. Dance majors, assisting with this study as members of the study team, will also distribute flyers to third year Dance majors and be available for questions related to participation in the study. A QR-code on the flyer provides a link to a Qualtrics survey for interested students to provide their name, preferred email contact, and year of study as a Dance major, i.e. second year or third year. Once submitted, the study team will reach out to the Dance major to evaluate inclusion/exclusion criteria. If inclusion criteria are met, the third year Dance major will receive instructions via their preferred email to download the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app and a unique log-in and password. The unique log-in will allow them access and provide instructions to change their password. Once logged in, the Dance student will have access to the study consent; a paper copy of the consent

will also be available on request. If the Dance student chooses to participate in the research, the REDCap link to the demographic and survey questions will be available to complete on the Mindfulness in Motion app.

**Inclusion Criteria:**

1. 18 years of age or older
2. Ability to understand and read English
3. Second year OSU Dance majors enrolled in Dance 2802 for Fall 2025 semester
4. Third year OSU Dance majors who completed Dance 2802 during the 2024-2025 academic year
5. Access to personal smartphone, either iOS or Android, with sufficient memory to install the MIM app, and WiFi (OSU eduroam while in class or on campus and LTE or personal WiFi off campus)

**Exclusion Criteria:**

1. OSU students with a minor in Dance

**C. Measurement/Instrumentation**

Measurements will be performed during the same time frame for second- and third-year OSU Dance students. Demographics and self-report measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical pain and disability will be completed no later than one week prior to the initiation of the eight-week intervention.

Participants in this study will be provided unique, individual log-ins that allow access only to the MIM app content that relates to the Mind-Body Conditioning course content taught in the Dance 2802 curriculum, i.e. movements and practices specific to dance students. After downloading the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app, the study consent, demographics and self-report surveys will be accessed and completed in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app.

For the second year students, respiratory rates will be self-measured and documented in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app before and after each weekly session of the eight-week intervention; this occurs during the weekly class and is guided by the Mind-Body Conditioning instructor. For this study, the respiratory counts, entered by the participant pre- and post- weekly sessions, is the only participant data that will be collected through the smartphone app. Participants will receive individual MIM smartphone app log-ins for the purpose of respiratory data collection throughout the eight weeks. The log-ins, associated during the course of the study with their identity, will allow correlation to their self-report survey responses in REDCap. The MIM app will not have access to a participant's geolocation or other personal data associated with their smartphone.

For both second and third year Dance majors, self-report measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical pain and disability will be completed no later than two weeks after the eight-week intervention has been completed for the second year Dance majors. Self-report surveys will be accessed and completed in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app.

Feasibility of integrating the mindfulness-based intervention into the Dance 2802 course content will be completed no later than two weeks after the eight-week intervention has been completed by the second year Dance majors. This self-report survey will be accessed and completed in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app.

Individual survey responses will be collected in the Mindfulness in Motion app and managed/stored using REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture), a secure, HIPPA compliant web-based application designed to support data capture for research studies and hosted at The Ohio State University Clinical and Translational Science Institute (Harris et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2019). Each survey response will be assigned a study-specific subject identification number (SID) by the REDCap system.

The following demographic questions will be accessed in the Mindfulness in Motion and managed/stored via REDCap. In addition, the following instruments with demonstrated validity and reliability will be converted to REDCap data capture:

<b>Instrument/Measure</b>	<b>Outcome Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Demographic Questionnaire	Baseline Information	Undergraduate year  Gender – male, female, non-binary, prefer not to answer  Race/Ethnicity  Age	Pre-intervention	Descriptive
Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) (Cohen & Williamson, 1988)	Self-reported perceived stress	10-item self-report assessment of perceived stress	Pre- and post- 8-week intervention	<i>t</i> -tests
Maslach Burnout Inventory-Students (MBI-GS (S)) (Maslach, et al., 1996–2018; Schaufeli et al., 2002)	Burnout	16-item instrument evaluating exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy in adult students in college and university	Pre- and post- 8-week intervention	<i>t</i> -tests
Modified Nordic Questionnaire (mNMQ) (Kuorinka et al., 1987)	Musculoskeletal Health	14-item instrument measuring musculoskeletal discomfort and injury	Pre- and post- 8-week intervention	<i>t</i> -tests
Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10) (Campbell-Sills & Stein, 2007; Connor & Davison, 2003)	Resilience	10-item instrument measuring the ability to adapt, change and cope with stress	Pre- and post- 8-week intervention	<i>t</i> -tests
Respiratory Rate	Respiratory rate per minute	Actual count of 30 second breath count X2	Pre- and post-mindfulness session	<i>t</i> -tests

FIM-Feasibility of Intervention Measure (Weiner et al. 2017)	Feasibility	Evaluation of integrating mindfulness intervention into the curriculum	1-2 week post-8-week study	Descriptive
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## D. Detailed Study Procedures

### Interventions

#### Mindfulness-based Intervention

Mindfulness in Motion (MIM) is an eight-week evidenced based program designed specifically to help participants learn practical stress reduction, burnout and resiliency building techniques. Content includes didactic instruction, community-building group discussion, mindfulness practices, and gentle yoga. Weekly themes include *Willingness to Daily Practice*, *Mindful Sleep*, *Vision of Self*, *Supported by the Breath*, *Mindful Eating and Yoga*, *Movement Through Balance*, *Awareness of Sensation*, *Clarity and Release*, and *Staying Grounded and Moving Forward*. An OSU endorsed, ADA compliant companion smartphone app reinforces weekly content and offers a variety of individual mind-body and meditations practices. Mindfulness in Motion outcomes over the years have consistently shown significant decreases in stress and burnout, as well as significant improvements in resilience and work engagement (Duchemin et al., 2015; Klatt et al., 2015; Klatt et al., 2022; Steinberg et al., 2017). The evidence-based MIM content has been tailored to meet the physical, mental, and emotional needs of student Dance majors and integrated into the Dance 2802 course content as Mind-Body Conditioning for second year students.

#### Historical Control Group

The third year Dance majors will engage in usual academic activities during Fall 2025 semester.

### Implementation Process

The second year Dance majors who consent to participate in the evaluation of the Mind-Body Conditioning intervention will complete demographic questions and self-report measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical pain and disability no later than one week prior to the initiation of the eight-week intervention, during week 4 of the Fall 2025 semester. The study consent, demographics, self-report surveys, and weekly respiratory counts will be accessed and completed in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app after the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app is downloaded by the participant. Within the MIM app, once the participant chooses “yes” to participate in the study, a reminder screen will notify the participant to complete the surveys in a private setting to maintain their privacy as a participant in this study.

Beginning week 5 of Fall 2025 semester, the Mind Body Conditioning mindfulness intervention will be delivered in a synchronous group format in 1-hour weekly sessions during the Dance 2802 course. The course will be offered each Friday with the 60-minute mindfulness intervention beginning at 12:45pm and ending at 1:45pm. The Mind Body Conditioning mindfulness intervention will be facilitated by Jacqueline Caputo, B.S., over 60 minutes each week, and continue through week 13 of the Fall 2025 semester. Student grades for the Dance 2802 course will not be affected by participation, or lack thereof, in the evaluation of the Mind-Body Conditioning course that has been integrated into the Dance 2802 curriculum.

Week 5, 9/26/25:	Willingness to Daily Practice
Week 6, 10/3/25:	Mindful Sleep
Week 7, 10/10/25:	Vision of Self, Supported by the Breath Autumn Break
Week 9, 10/24/25:	Mindful Eating and Yoga
Week 10,10/31/25:	Movement Through Balance
Week 11, 11/7/25:	Awareness of Sensation
Week 12,11/14/25:	Clarity and Release
Week 13,11/21/25:	Staying Grounded and Moving Forward

Self-report measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, physical pain and disability, and feasibility of integrating the mindfulness-based intervention into the course curriculum will be completed no later than two weeks after the eight-week intervention has been completed, weeks 14 and 15 of Fall 2025 semester. Self-report surveys will be accessed and completed in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app. Prior to completion of the post-intervention surveys, a reminder notification will notify the participant to complete the surveys in a private setting to maintain their privacy as a participant in this study.

For those who consent to participate in the research study, third year Dance majors will complete demographic questions and self-report measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical pain and disability no later than one week prior to the initiation of the eight-week intervention, during week 4 of the Fall 2025 semester. Self-report measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical pain and disability will be completed no later than two weeks after the eight-week intervention has been completed, during weeks 14 and 15 of the Fall 2025 semester. Demographics and self-report surveys will be accessed and completed in the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app. Prior to completion of the pre-intervention surveys and the post-intervention surveys, a reminder notification within the app will notify the participant to complete the surveys in a private setting to maintain their privacy as a participant in this study.

**Incentives:** A \$25 electronic Amazon gift card will be sent to participants within two weeks after the initial survey completion and again within two weeks after post-intervention survey completion for both second and third year Dance majors (up to \$50 total per participant)

**Benefits:** We anticipate that the intervention will bring stress relief and provide coping tools to participants in the study. University Dance students experience increased levels of stress and anxiety due to the rigors of academic study, the preparation, training, and performances that are integral to the curriculum, the isolation that comes with hours of individual study and practice, and extremely high self-expectations. Students with underlying anxiety and/or depression may experience even more stress that can negatively impact their academic success and emotional well-being. Supportive interventions that are acceptable and easily integrated into academic curriculum are more likely to help dance students manage the physical, cognitive, and behavioral symptoms that are experienced due to their course of study.

**Risks:** In this study, breach of confidentiality of data is always risk. Given the small number of second and third year Dance major study participants, and online nature of survey completion, participants could be at risk of identification, however, all precautions to maintain data security will be taken. Data will be collected in REDCap which has the capacity to separate the participant's name from their actual survey data so that the data collected is not associated with the name of the participant. After the study, the survey responses from all second year Dance majors will be combined and reported as a group. Similarly, the survey responses from the third year Dance majors will be combined and reported as a group. These two groups of data, as well



as the comparison of survey responses between the groups, will be posted in an online data repository on the internet. Individual survey responses, names, and IP addresses will not be posted online and identifying information about individual survey responses will never be posted online.

Risks to participant privacy is also a concern due to the research study being integrated into an existing class for second year Dance majors. With approximately 20 Dance majors anticipated to be enrolled in the Dance 2802 seminar, all second year Dance majors enrolled in Dance 2802 will have the opportunity to participate in the Mind Body Conditioning course. All second year Dance majors will also have the opportunity to download the Mindfulness in Motion app through a unique, password protected log-in for use during the eight week intervention. However, second year Dance majors can opt out of participating in the research data collection by not providing online consent within the smartphone app. Prior to completion of the pre-intervention surveys and the post-intervention surveys, a reminder notification will notify the participant to complete the surveys in a private setting to maintain their privacy as a participant in this study. Because the smartphone app will be provided to all second year Dance majors, those who choose not to participate, or participate in the research data collection, will not be known to anyone but the study team unless they disclose their participation to others. Only study team members from the Center for Integrative Health will have access to data provided by study participants.

While Professor Cervera, as the course instructor, is part of the study team, he will not be present during the Mind-Body Conditioning course instruction and Center for Integrative Health personnel will be providing the mindfulness content. He will also not be aware of those students who are or who are not participating in the research data collection. Data management and analysis will be performed only by Center for Integrative Health personnel.

Third year Dance majors who choose to participate, will provide consent and data entry on the Mindfulness in Motion smartphone app through a unique, password protected log-in. Prior to completion of the pre-intervention surveys and the post-intervention surveys, a reminder notification will notify the participant to complete the surveys in a private setting to maintain their privacy as a participant in this study. No other indications of study participation will be visible or apparent to other students or instructors.

Demographic data will only include participant age, gender, race/ethnicity, and student year within the Department of Dance, i.e. second or third year. Preferred emails will be used for study communication and to distribute electronic gift cards for those who participate in the research. Once all gift cards are distributed, all email information will be destroyed. Outcome measures of perceived stress, burnout, resilience, and physical pain and disability are recorded quantitatively and will be reported only in aggregate.

## **E. Internal Validity**

As Dance majors in the OSU Department of Dance, students during their second year are enrolled Dance 2802, a weekly class that considers the history, discipline, and the community aspect of dance while recognizing philosophy and practices that embrace diversity and anti-racism. Students in this class participate in weekly seminars, setting personal goals for health and well-being and academic goals that serve to broaden their understanding of scholarly activities that advance the science of dance. These course goals and objectives mirror the philosophy and concepts of mindfulness.

Dance students must exhibit discipline and a desire to learn and understand the importance of preparation, training, as well as practices that can help them manage stress and performance anxiety. During the third year, the students continue to build upon these principles while progressing through required dance classes, as well as other classes to meet university requirements. Recruitment and comparison of second- and third-year students, comparing the effects of the those who receive the mindfulness intervention that is integrated into the curriculum and those who did not, is most feasible and appropriate for this study. Participation in a mindfulness intervention that is seamlessly integrated into the second-year course may offer the students skills and practices that may supplement dance preparation, training, and performance while minimizing attrition during the 8-week period of instruction. Finally, the use of valid and reliable instruments also limits threats to internal validity.

## **F. Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics will be used to describe the second year Dance majors who are enrolled in Dance 2802 and will participate in the intervention and the third year Dance majors who completed the Dance 2802 course in the 2023-2024 academic year; the data will also be presented in summary tables. Feasibility of integrating the mindfulness-based intervention into the course curriculum as evaluated by the participants will be described descriptively with summary of the data provided statistically using mean, median, standard deviation, range and percentages as appropriate.

Inferential statistics will be used to compare pre- and post-intervention data for the intervention and historical control groups. SPSS statistical software will be used for data analysis and limit of significance set at <0.05.

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