SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Write A Dance Resume

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Introduction: Why Every Dancer Needs a Powerful Resume

In the world of dance, your body tells a story, but your resume tells your professional history. Whether you are auditioning for a prestigious company, applying to a college dance program, or seeking a teaching position, knowing **how to write a dance resume**is an essential skill that can open doors to your dream opportunities. A dance resume is much more than a list of performances; it is a curated document that highlights your training, versatility, experience, and dedication. While a brilliant audition can land you a role, a well-crafted dance resume often gets you in the room first. This guide will walk you through every step of creating a compelling dance resume that captures the attention of directors, choreographers, and admissions boards alike.

Many dancers focus almost entirely on perfecting their technique in the studio, but they neglect the business side of their career. A professional dance resume is your calling card. It communicates your unique strengths, your stylistic range, and your level of professionalism before you ever step onto the floor. By learning exactly **how to write a dance resume**that is clear, concise, and targeted, you set yourself apart from the competition. This article will provide you with actionable advice, from structuring your contact information to listing your performance credits in a way that showcases your growth and potential.

Why a Dance Resume Matters for Your Career

A dance resume serves a specific purpose: to quickly and effectively communicate your qualifications to someone who makes hiring or admissions decisions. Artistic directors often sift through hundreds of applications. A cluttered, poorly organized, or incomplete resume will be discarded in seconds. Conversely, a polished resume that highlights relevant experience demonstrates that you are serious about your craft and understand the professional expectations of the industry. The ability to present yourself on paper is just as important as your ability to execute a triple pirouette. Understanding **how to write a dance resume**means understanding that this document is a marketing tool for your personal brand as an artist.

Furthermore, a dance resume is not a static document. It evolves with your career. As you gain new training, perform new works, or develop choreographic skills, your resume must be updated accordingly. The process of creating and maintaining a resume also forces you to reflect on your journey, identify your strengths, and set goals for the future. Whether you are a classically trained ballet dancer, a contemporary artist, or a hip-hop performer, the core principles of a strong resume remain the same: clarity, relevance, and professionalism.

Essential Sections of a Dance Resume

To write a dance resume that is both comprehensive and easy to read, you must include several key sections. Each section serves a distinct purpose and should be formatted consistently. Below, we break down the most important building blocks of your dance resume.

Contact Information and Header

Your contact information should be the first thing a reader sees. Place it at the top of the page, centered or aligned to the left. Include your full name (professional name if applicable), phone number, email address, and your location

(city and state are usually sufficient; avoid listing your full street address for privacy). If you have a professional website, online portfolio, or a link to a video reel, include those as well. In today's digital age, many directors will want to see your work before calling you in. Make sure your email address sounds professional – avoid nicknames or numbers that look juvenile. A clean, simple header sets a professional tone right from the start.

Dance Style and Specialty

Right below your contact information, or as a brief subheading, clearly state your primary dance styles and any specialties. This could be as simple as "Ballet, Contemporary, Jazz" or more specific, such as "Vaganova Ballet Technique, Horton Contemporary, and Tap." This section helps the reader immediately understand your niche. If you are applying for a musical theater role, you might list "Ballet, Jazz, Tap, and Musical Theater Performance." Being clear about your stylistic focus helps directors quickly determine if you fit their needs. This is a small but powerful part of learning **how to write a dance resume** effectively.

Training and Education

This is arguably one of the most important sections on a dance resume. Dancers are defined by their training. List your formal dance education, including schools, conservatories, university programs, and notable private instructors. Include the years you attended or studied with each teacher. If you studied under a renowned pedagogue or at a prestigious institution, make that prominent. For example:

- School of American Ballet, New York, NY (2018-2022)
- Intensive Study with David Howard, Scholarship Program (2019-2021)
- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA (2015-2019)

Be honest about your training. Do not exaggerate your time with a teacher or claim training you did not complete. The dance world is small, and dishonesty can damage your reputation. Additionally, list any summer intensives or workshops you attended at prestigious institutions, as these demonstrate dedication and exposure to different styles.

Performance Experience

This section is the heart of your resume. List the performances you have been a part of in reverse chronological order (most recent first). For each entry, include the name of the production or piece, the role you performed (if applicable), the name of the choreographer, the company or organization, and the year. If you performed a solo or principal role, highlight that. For example:

- Swan Lake (Odette), Choreography by Tchaikovsky, City Ballet Theater, 2023
- Emergence (Ensemble), Choreography by Crystal Pite, Dance Works Company, 2022

If you have a long list of performances, prioritize the most prestigious or relevant ones. You can also group similar experiences under a single subheading, such as "Repertory Highlights." Quantify your experience when possible, such as "Performed over 20 shows with the company." This gives weight to your background.

Teaching and Choreography Experience

If you have experience teaching dance or choreographing works, include a dedicated section. This is especially important if you are applying for teaching positions, but it also adds depth to a performance resume. List the institutions where you taught, the age groups, and the styles you taught. For choreography, list the pieces you created, where they were performed, and the year. This section demonstrates leadership, creativity, and the ability to communicate dance concepts to others. Many directors appreciate dancers who can also contribute to the company in a teaching or choreographic capacity.

Awards, Honors, and Competitions

Highlight any scholarships, awards, or competition results. This includes winning or placing in competitions like Youth America Grand Prix, American Dance Awards, or regional ballet competitions. Also list any academic honors, such as Dean's List or dance department awards. This section provides external validation of your talent and work ethic. Be specific: instead of saying "won many competitions," list the competition name, the year, and the placement. This adds credibility and shows a track record of excellence.

Special Skills

This section is often overlooked but can be highly valuable. List skills that are relevant to dance but may not fit elsewhere. Examples include:

- Partnering experience (lifts, pas de deux)
- Pointe work
- Flexibility or acrobatic skills
- Singing or acting ability (for musical theater)
- Choreography notation (Labanotation)
- Knowledge of dance history or kinesiology
- Fluency in multiple languages
- Certification in Pilates, Yoga, or Barre
- First Aid or CPR certification

Think about what makes you unique. A special skill can sometimes be the deciding factor in a competitive audition. For instance, a ballet dancer who also excels in contemporary flamenco or has aerial silks training offers something extra that a company might value.

Physical Attributes (Optional)

Some dance resumes include a brief line with physical attributes such as height, weight, and eye color. This is more common in commercial dance, modeling-adjacent roles, or certain ballet companies that have specific physical requirements. Use this section sparingly and only if it is relevant to the opportunity. In many contemporary or modern dance settings, this information is not necessary and can feel reductive. If you choose to include it, place it near the bottom or within the "Special Skills" section.

References

Most directors and hiring managers will request references separately, but it is professional to have them listed at the bottom of your resume or indicated as "Available upon request." If you do list references, include the reference's full name, their relationship to you (e.g., former teacher, artistic director), email, and phone number. Always ask for permission before listing someone as a reference. Choose people who can speak specifically to your skills as a dancer, your work ethic, and your character.

Formatting Tips for a Professional Dance Resume

Now that you know **how to write a dance resume** in terms of content, let's focus on presentation. A beautiful resume that is hard to read will not serve you. Follow these formatting guidelines to ensure your resume is visually appealing and easy to scan.

Keep It to One Page

Unless you have an extensive career spanning decades, your dance resume should fit on one page. Artistic directors do not have time to flip through multiple pages. Be ruthless about editing. Cut older, less relevant

experiences. Use concise bullet points rather than long paragraphs. If you absolutely must include more information, consider a separate sheet for "Repertory List" or "Detailed Training History," but keep the main resume to one page.

Use a Clean, Readable Font

Stick to classic, professional fonts like Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, or Georgia. Avoid script fonts, decorative typefaces, or anything that distracts from the content. Use a font size between 10 and 12 points for the body text, and 14 to 16 points for your name. Bold your section headings and key terms (like company names or roles) to help them stand out.

Consistent Formatting Throughout

Choose a style for dates (e.g., 2022-2023 or 2022-23) and stick with it. Align your text consistently. Use the same bullet style for all lists. Ensure that your margins are even (0.5 to 1 inch is standard). White space is your friend; it makes the resume easier to read. Do not cram too much information into a small space.

Save as a PDF

Always save and submit your resume as a PDF file unless otherwise requested. PDFs preserve your formatting across different computers and operating systems. A Word document can shift and look messy when opened on another device. Name your file professionally, such as "Jane_Doe_Dance_Resume_2025.pdf." Avoid generic names like "resume.pdf" which can get lost in a pile of submissions.

Tailoring Your Dance Resume for Different Opportunities

One of the most important aspects of **how to write a dance resume**is understanding that you may need multiple versions of your resume. A resume for a ballet company audition will look different from a resume for a cruise ship contract or a college application. Here is how to tailor your resume for specific goals:

For a Ballet Company Audition

Emphasize your classical training, Vaganova or Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) background, pointe work, and performances of classical repertoire. List your summer intensives with major ballet schools. Include any competition wins from Youth America Grand Prix or similar events. A clean, traditional layout with a focus

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