

# HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR DANCE STAMINA



Long-time competitive and professional Irish dancer and instructor, **Ellen G. Waller**, has dedicated her life to Irish dance. Ellen holds an undergraduate degree in Dance Education and a Masters of Science in Exercise Science. Her in-depth experience as an Irish dancer/instructor along with her expansive knowledge of kinesiology led Ellen to create the innovative **TARGET TRAINING** program; a series of courses and advanced training methods that condition specific muscles Irish dancers of all ages need to excel.

**Y**ou come out to dance at a competition and your first step is full of energy and power. When you hit the left foot of your middle step, you start to slow down. It's hard to keep your body in control, you're missing beats in hard shoe, and you can't push off the ground. By the time you reach your last step, you are gasping for air and your legs feel like jelly.

Does this sound like you? You are not alone! Many dancers have trouble training their stamina. But with Target Training's 3 simple steps to improve stamina (and a lot of hard work on your part!) you'll be able to master a full round with confidence, strength, and stamina!

## STEP 1 IMPROVE YOUR TECHNIQUE

With proper technique and good biomechanics, you will improve the efficiency of your movement. The more efficient your movements are, the less energy you will expend. Example: There are two dancers, one with a strong core and one with a weak core. When they begin to dance, the dancer with the weak core will exert more energy to maintain proper Irish dance form (as they fight to keep their arms in, back straight, shoulders back) and the dancer with the strong core has more efficient posture and wastes little energy to maintain their perfect form.

**How to improve your technique:** Pay close attention to the corrections your dance teachers are giving you in class then work on them both in the studio and at home.

## STEP 2 INCREASE YOUR STRENGTH POWER AND SPEED

- To stand out in Irish dance, you must develop explosive power and speed.
- When you watch elite Irish dancers, they are flying around the floor executing sharp movements and explosive jumps.
- Increasing your strength will help you develop these critical Irish dance components.

**How to improve your strength:** You can improve your strength, power and speed in Irish dancing by incorporating strength training and high intensity interval training (10-20 seconds of intense work) into your weekly routine.

## STEP 3 MAXIMIZE YOUR STRENGTH POWER AND SPEED ENDURANCE

- The ability to maintain maximal speed and power in Irish dance is essential to getting through your entire round. By increasing your anaerobic (high-intensity, non-oxygen conditions) capacity, you'll develop a greater lactate threshold. Your lactate threshold is significant because once you go over this threshold, fatigue will set in and you'll have to slow down.

# ★ COMPETITION BOOTCAMP

**How to maximize your strength, power & speed endurance:** To maximize your endurance, perform moderate/high intensity training rounds between 30 seconds to 2 minutes. Depending on which dances you are performing, I like to establish a dancer's limits by the length of a full round: Reel = 0:48, Slip Jig = 1:00, Treble Jig = 1:12, Hornpipe = 1:20.

## ENDURANCE CIRCUIT

Perform each exercise for as long as one of your full dance rounds with a 3-5 minute rest between. Repeat two times to complete 1 set.

### EXERCISES

- Burpees
- Stair Runs
- Banded Runs

### EXAMPLE

**Burpees** = 1:00 minute (Slip Jig)

**Rest** = 3-5 minutes

**Stair Runs** = 1:12 (Treble Jig)

**Rest** = 3-5 minutes

**Banded Runs** = 1:10 (Set)

**Rest** = 3-5 minutes

**Repeat**



Burpee



Banded Runs



Frogger



Step Ups



Stair Runs



## STRENGTH POWER SPEED CIRCUIT

Perform each exercise for 20 seconds with a 10 second rest inbetween. Repeat two times to complete 1 set.

### EXERCISES

- Frogger
- High Knees
- Step Ups - right
- Step Ups - left