

*Original Research Article*

## **Study of Body Posture in Latin Dance and Its Important Significance**

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**Abstract:** In this fast-developing era of the 21st century, the spread of culture is far beyond people's imagination. Since it was introduced into China, Latin dance has developed rapidly and now entered colleges and universities as a novel major. The focus of the education of Latin dance has gradually turned from popularization to cultivating specialized Latin dancer. Professional physical colleges and dance schools have also established art departments or dance departments one after another to ensure more students to obtain corresponding qualifications through theoretical and practical learning professionally and systematically, and pursue the artistic temperament and enthusiasm brought by dance. However, in the development process of modern Latin dance in China, there are some defects in universities' Latin dance courses. It is especially important to understand the importance of body posture in Latin dance. This paper introduces the requirements of five kinds of Latin dances on body posture. By using the methods of literature, induction and analysis, interview and investigation, combined with the characteristics of Latin dance, this paper explores and analyzes body posture in Latin dance and its important significance. Then the practice methods of body posture in Latin dance and its influence on Latin dance practice in the future are obtained.

**Keywords:** Body Posture; Latin Dance; Important Significance; Practice Method

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### **1. Introduction**

With the rapid development of the world economy in recent years, people have had a higher pursuit of beauty in daily life, in the context of which, Latin dance has become a good choice for fitness and entertainment. At the same time, more and more students like and begin to learn Latin dance. Latin dance can not only cultivate students' graceful posture, but also cultivate their unique dancing temperament. Nowadays, many colleges and universities have set up Latin dance courses one after another. However, in the development process of contemporary Latin dance, many Latin dancers in China now have wrong body posture, misunderstanding Latin dance as a dance with great swings and twists. In order to correct their wrong ideas on Latin dance and improve the dancers' understanding of the significance of body posture, the research of this paper is carried out to enable Latin dancers to dance with correct posture.

### **2. Body posture exercise: the key of shaping Latin dancers' good body shape**

Good body posture is the basic requirement to display perfect dance style and elegant dance steps. A perfect Latin dance performance is a combination of movement and emotion. Body posture has become an important factor to judge dancers in Latin dance competitions. Long-term Latin dance training can promote learners to develop body muscle

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strength and form straight figure. Correspondingly, good body posture will help the dancers' movements more elegant, with stronger expression and appeal on the stage or in the competition. Therefore, body posture exercise is quite important in Latin dance training<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **3. Body posture exercise: the premise of cultivating dancers' unique dance temperament**

Good body posture has an important influence on dancers' temperament. The difference between professional Latin dancers and amateur Latin dancers is obvious, among which, the biggest advantage of the professional group is that the overall posture of the dancer is much straighter. As good body posture can show the dancer's perfect dance style, the audience can be moved by the atmosphere created by of professional dancers. The elegance of the dance is reflected in the gestures. It is also known that students who learn dance from an early age possessing a unique temperament compared with ordinary students. Therefore, body posture exercise can cultivate dancers' unique dance temperament<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **4. Good body posture: the basis of high-quality dance movements**

One of the main criteria for evaluation in many large-scale sports dance competitions is the player's body posture. Especially in the final round, body posture evaluation is the most important. Because most players will be relaxed when they run out of strength after several matches in a row, they may lose control on their body. However, the professional dancers are still at their best in the final round, who recover from the competition and effectively control their body posture from top to toe. Therefore, the dance quality of professional dancers can be well expressed through their perfect body posture<sup>[3]</sup>. That is to say, the body posture is also the core of the dance quality.

### **5. Body posture exercise: an important factor to reflect artistic beauty**

Outstanding dancers will describe the scenes of the dance from three aspects, namely their faces, posture and emotions. The combination of graceful dancing and beautiful music perfectly presents the cultural connotation of music, which is based on good body posture. The beauty of art is demonstrated in every movement of body posture. For example, there are strict requirements on the posture of the head, trunk and limbs of Latin dancers, which requires Latin dancers to be strict with themselves in their movements, then fully express their emotions through the combination of dance and music, thus perfectly presenting the beauty of art<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **6. Key points of body posture in Latin dance**

Perfect dance is bound up to diligent practice. However, in many cases there are some students who practice particularly hard, turning out to have inelegant dance posture and little progress. Therefore, the correct practice method is important to dance. As a very important and indispensable part of Latin dance practice, body posture exercise is directly related to the future performance of dance<sup>[5]</sup>.

#### **6.1 Raise the head and tuck the jaw gently**

In daily practice of Latin dance, looking down at the floor should be forbidden, nor raising the jaw which seems arrogant and destroys the beauty. In all dance movements, it is better to tuck the jaw gently unless it is necessary to raise the jaw in some movements, so as to lengthen the head and neck lines.

#### **6.2 Lengthen the neck and sink the shoulder**

Lengthening the neck means lengthening the cervical spine at the back of the neck. At the same time, combining with sinking the shoulder instead of shrugging can perfectly express the noble temperament of the dancers.

#### **6.3 Hold out the chest, retract the ribs and keep the spine straight**

Holding out the chest instead of retracting it refers to slightly retracting the ribs on both sides on the basis of holding out the chest. The spine should be kept straight instead of bending left and right or back and forth. In this way, the

upright but not rigid posture from the head to the chest and back can improve the overall appearance of the dancers.

## **6.4 Pull the stomach in and lift the hip**

Pulling the stomach in is also called tightening the middle section or the abdominal muscles, while hip muscles should also be tightened inward. Hip lifting isn't holding up the hip or collapsing the waist.

## **6.5 Tighten the legs and brace the foot**

The muscles on the inner side of thighs should be tightened to ensure that the legs are powerful and the body can be turned into a straight line when rotating. Excellent Latin dancers have tight inner thigh muscles. No matter standing or exercising, the instep of Latin dancers should be as straight as possible so as to improve the beauty of feet<sup>[6]</sup>.

# **7. The practice method of body posture in Latin dance**

Correct body posture practice in daily Latin dance training will double the training effect for dancers to learn dance skills. Based on the interviews with school teachers and the author's own teaching experience, the factors that affect body posture of Latin dance can be divided into two categories, one is the exercise of various parts of the body, the other is the exercise of dancers' ideological body posture<sup>[7]</sup>.

## **7.1 Training points of body posture in Latin dance**

(1) The method of circling or turning left and right with positioning eyes can be employed to practice the head's speed and flexibility. In the process of practice, the head should be controlled as far as possible to be perpendicular to the spine, and always be upright and straight.

(2) Shoulder fixation can be achieved by shoulder weight-bearing exercises so that the shoulder is fixed and will not shake with the movement of the body. In order to maximize the shoulder's extension, shoulder pressing and shoulder winding can be applied for practice.

(3) The exercises of the middle part (waist and abdomen) can adopt sit-ups, push-ups and plank to promote the core strength, thus enhancing the control of the body.

(4) As for the lower limb training, squat can be employed to improve strength of the thigh. Meanwhile, in order to prevent the formation of muscle legs due to excessive lactic acid accumulation, the muscles should be fully stretched after the exercise to relax the thigh, which can not only improve strength of the leg but also stretch the leg lines<sup>[8]</sup>.

## **7.2 Training of dancers' ideological body posture**

In Latin dance, the training of dancers' ideology is a long-term process. Good ideological body posture will be displayed from the dancers' gestures. Only when dancers possess the correct ideology can they show the beautiful body posture. Investigations and interviews indicate that Latin dancers' ideological body posture can be cultivated from the following aspects.

### **7.2.1 To understand the historical and cultural background of various dances and improve dancers' self-cultivation**

In order to enable dancers to master the correct body posture of various dances, it is necessary to understand the cultural background and historical sources of various dances, accurately express the cultural information contained in them, and understand the respective style and characteristics of each dance, so as to add vitality and elements of each dance into the body<sup>[9]</sup>.

No matter it is the hot samba, the tender rumba, the witty cha-cha-cha, the cheerful cowboy dance or the passionate bullfighting, each dance requires dancers to understand it attentively, to feel his experience, his growth and his emotion. While understanding each dance, it is also promoting the dancers' self-cultivation. Understanding the connotation of the dance enables dances to make the proper dance posture. In addition, male Latin dancers show a gentlemanly manner and masculinity, with softness and strength at the same time, while female Latin dancers show ladylike manners. Both of them need to improve their self-cultivation and show their perfect posture.

### 7.2.2 To strengthen the dancers' self-consciousness

The body posture should be fully stretched in the vertical direction from head to foot. The consciousness of stretching the body originates from the dancer's mind. It is necessary to deeply understand the space consciousness and the position on the stage, so that audience can feel the unique temperament and see the proper posture of the dancer. Latin dancers should form good habits, let their body posture be released subconsciously, and keep the consciousness of setting up a good posture in each movement<sup>[10]</sup>.

## 8. Recommendation

### 8.1 Pay attention to the special exercises of body posture

Teachers are advised to use posture exercises as warm-up exercises in every Latin dance class, so that students can warm up and take posture exercises at the same time, thus avoiding boring classes when posture is separately exercised in the later class. Moreover, taking body posture exercise as the early stage of each class can help students gradually develop the habit of keeping good posture in daily life.

### 8.2 Pay attention to body exercises

Body exercises and body ideology exercises are two important factors affecting body posture in Latin dance. Therefore, body exercises can improve the aesthetic appearance of dancers' body posture, while good physical quality can improve the control of dancers' body posture. Correct ideology can reflect the level of Latin dancers. To sum up, an excellent dancer must have a good body posture, which is closely related to body exercises and physical exercises.

### 8.3 Attach importance to the ideology in body posture

Dance is a movement art of time and space. Latin dancers should integrate themselves into the practice when practicing body posture. They should add the style and characteristics of this dance into every movement and try to feel the artistic conception of the dance. The cultivation of self-consciousness is a long-term process of accumulation, practice and correction. With dance ideology, elegant dance posture of dancers will be reflected in each gesture<sup>[11]</sup>.

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