



TARGET TRAINING'S NAIDOC HANDBOOK

Top tips, strategies and techniques to help Irish dancers in the final days before the North American Championships



2026



The 2026 North American Championships are here. Check out this training guide for all the tips you need to help keep your body and mind strong as you head to the championships.

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T MINDSET



Anxiety & Irish Dance Blog

This blog post is here to serve as a starting point for those who experience competition anxiety (& their support team) to better understand what causes anxiety and how to be courageous in the face of anxiety on dance day.

Click [**HERE**](#) to read it!



Coping with Competition Nerves Blog

If you're like many Irish dancers, you experience nerves at competitions that feel totally out of your control and negatively impact competition day. Click [**HERE**](#) to read some of our favorite tips to help you cope through competition day.



How you Speak to Yourself Matters

This article explores how Irish dancers can move beyond the vague advice to “just think positive” by using three proven mindset strategies—Reaffirm, Reframe, and Release—to manage negative self-talk during high-stress moments like competitions. Backed by sport psychology research, it offers practical, actionable tools to help dancers build confidence and mental resilience alongside their physical training. Click [**HERE**](#) to read.



2 TRAINING



Four Step Warm-Up for Irish Dance

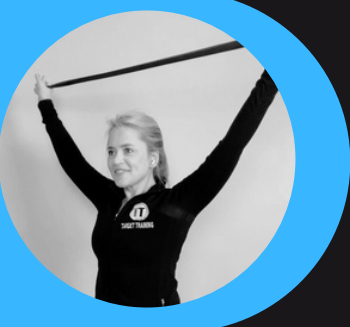
When you think of a warmup, you may picture a light jog followed by some static stretching. However, gradually building up to high-impact activity is key to avoiding injury and maximizing performance.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.



Importance of Rest Days for Irish Dance

As dancers, we often struggle with the idea of taking a "rest day." However, rest days are vital to both physical and psychological recovery, especially in the final days before competition! Click [HERE](#) to read more about the importance of rest days.



Arms In for Irish Dance

Three steps to help keep your arms in for Irish dance. Great reminders for dancers who need a little extra work before they step on the World stage. Click [HERE](#) for all details!



3 TEAMS



5 Tips to being a Strong Team Dancer

Each individual plays a huge role on an Irish dance team. You need to be both physically and mentally strong to endure the long rehearsals and all perform at the same level. Click [HERE](#) to read our top 5 tips for being a strong team dancer!



Navigating Friendship & Feising

Competing against your friends is hard. How do you celebrate their success if you didn't get the placement you were hoping for? Click [HERE](#) to read this blog post for tips on maintaining friendships long after the awards ceremony!



4 NUTRITION



TT's Total Nutrition Guide for Irish Dancers

Proper nutrition is critical for strong dancers, especially so in the days leading up to the North American Championships. Click [HERE](#) for a comprehensive list of all of the previous nutrition blogs written by Target Training's Registered Dietician, Jess!



Irish Dance Timing – When to Eat

Figuring out when to eat on a competition day can be confusing. You don't want to eat too close to competition time but you also want to make sure your body is fueled for the day. Click [HERE](#) to read more about the timing of when to eat on a competition day.



Importance of Hydration for Irish Dance

Adequate hydration is critical to an Irish dancer's overall health and performance. But It is important to understand that as individuals, each dancer has their own hydration requirements. Click [HERE](#) to read more and to find out if you're adequately hydrating for the needs of dance.



5 INJURIES



Ankle Sprains in Irish Dance

If you've experienced an ankle sprain leading up to the North American Championships (or ANY Irish dance injury) click [HERE](#) to read top tips on how to mentally and physically cope with your injury, straight from Dr. Betsy Hines, a physical therapist and TCRG.



Sever's & Plantar Fasciitis in Irish Dance

Learn how to prevent and manage common dance-related injuries like Sever's disease and plantar fasciitis with these valuable insights from Dr. Nina Geromel. Discover the causes, symptoms, and effective strategies to keep your calf muscles and feet in top condition, ensuring you can continue dancing with grace and ease. Don't let pain hold you back – click [HERE](#) to read more to dance your best and stay injury-free!



Shin Splints in Irish Dance

Do you often experience nagging shin pain after intense training sessions? It could be Shin Splints, a common overuse injury among dancers. Learn about the causes, symptoms, and effective prevention strategies to keep your shins in top shape from Dr. Carrie Skony. Click [HERE](#) to dive into this article for valuable insights and stay injury-free on your Irish dance journey!



ADDITIONAL Topics



Imagery for Irish Dance

How are you preparing your mind for competition? Imagery may be the powerful strategy you're missing to increase concentration and reduce anxiety. Click [HERE](#) to read this post for our top tips on creating your imagery practice.



The Importance of Sleep for Irish Dance

Getting enough sleep is critical for every Irish dancer. Studies show that getting enough sleep is key to reaching peak athletic performance, while also helping to prevent injuries. Click [HERE](#) to read this blog about the importance of sleep for Irish dancers!



Music for Irish Dancers

Music can have a huge influence on your mood and performance, setting the tone for whatever you're doing. When training, during dance class, or in competition, this can have a huge impact on your attitude for performance. Click [HERE](#) to read more.



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