

Life After Dance



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SYDANCEY COMPANY Dance Director

What life after dance means for me
Life after dance for me meant finding something that utilised the skill sets I have developed and a way to translate that into a fulfilling second career.

I always believed while dancing that it was important to continue my learning in other areas in case of injury or other obstacles. During my career as a dancer I did a lot of work through Open University working towards a BSc, I did Arts Management courses and I spent years obtaining my pilot's licence for helicopters. Aviation was the area I planned to move into if it felt right to move away from dance!

While I was a dancer I didn't have specific plans to move into rehearsal direction or choreographic assistance but it slowly became clear that it was a natural progression for me.

My aspirations for the future

First and foremost, it would be to keep growing in my role as Dance Director of Sydney Dance Company. I really enjoy sharing the knowledge systems I had the fortune of developing over the course of my career. I am fascinated by watching each of the dancers I coach grow, in particular the different approaches they respond best to with learning. I am still, whilst working continuing to add to my skill set by

doing professional development courses in arts management and also as a Pilates instructor. By furthering my training I aim to reach my full potential in my position.

Advice for dance community when considering this stage in their career.

Don't wait for this point in your career to start supplementing your skills.

Focus on a career that utilises your strengths, such as communication or deep understanding of physicality and art. Build on those strengths and find out how to apply them in a new profession.

Indecision and inactivity about a new profession can be crippling so I always have advocated that dancers should give thought to the things that interest them, both within the dance profession or outside of it. I recommend pursuing those interests in tandem with your career as a dancer if possible as it empowers the future decisions that will inevitably have to be made.

Why did you decide to learn more about Pilates and become an Instructor?

When I was 18 and in my first year as a professional dancer I had a terrible accident

in the rehearsal studio, which resulted in me breaking my back. As I was at the start of my career I had incentive to push through the year of rehabilitation and I spent up to eight hours a day in the Pilates studio building my body back up to what it needed to be to be a professional dancer. I would not have been able to dance again without Pilates (and a lot of physiotherapy, osteopathy and determination!)

I have seen, felt and known first hand, the benefits of Pilates and wanted to complement the knowledge I had of it with further training and to become an instructor myself.

Expand on the benefits you see Pilates providing you and the dancers you mentor/ teach

The dancers I work with and mentor are in peak physical condition but the demands on their bodies are enormous. I will be able to support them in many ways with Pilates. I will be able to supplement their training with some fundamental core stability work before class, to assist them one on one with any particular weaknesses in muscle strength that may leave them susceptible to injury. Or in the event of a chronic or acute injury be able to assist them with their rehabilitation. Pilates also gives me insight into preventing injuries as I train them by utilising my skills of assessing their bodies and technique while they work.