

## RETURN TO DANCE PROGRESSION: IRISH STEP

1. The dancer must pass all functional tests and/or be cleared by sports medicine medical provider before beginning Return to Dance Protocol.
2. Recommend pursuing Transitional Therapy for return to dance activities during this phase. Transitional Therapy is a strength and conditioning program that is led by medical professionals with a sports medicine background with the goal of transitioning from therapy back to dance.
3. The dancer may progress through the phases as tolerated. Cross-training can be performed on off days. (Cross training can be done by performing non dance specific activities i.e. swimming, biking, yoga, pilates, and/or PT home exercises).
4. The dancer should first begin with soft shoe class and progress into hard shoe during phase 3 as tolerated. Begin by limiting forceful stomps and trebles with hard shoe initially and modify as needed.
5. Each phase should be performed 2-3 times with one day rest between each session, the athlete should progress to the next phase once he/she is able to complete the current phase without pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or difficulty.
6. If the dancer experiences pain, swelling, decreased range of motion or difficulty during a phase, he/she should take a day off and go back to the prior phase where they were not experiencing pain and/or difficulty completing activities. Do not keep moving through phases if you are having pain or difficulty. Seek medical attention if necessary.
7. Emphasis should be placed on developing and maintaining proper form without developing symptoms or excessive fatigue.
8. The athlete should ice the affected area for 15-20 minutes following the activity.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
Physical therapy, partial class time 50%; begin changes/switches, skips	•	•	•	•	•
Progress class participation to 75%, step down the line or practice 1 step not full routine		•	•	•	•
Full dance class 100% including jumps, landings, transitions and step to left and right.			•	•	•
Begin Rehearsals once full participation in soft shoe and hard shoe class is accomplished				•	•
Feis Competition and Performances					•
Competition details:	Must be cleared by medical provider to return to Feis competition and performances full time after injury and/or surgical procedures.				

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- **Phase 1: Soft Shoe Class Phase-**
  - **Begin partial class time 50%: ½ speed, ½ volume**
    - Participate in soft shoe class only
    - Begin point walking, changes/switches, skips
    - Begin step routine at slower pace not to rapid music
    - Avoid repeated jumps and landings; begin with involved lower extremity as front foot to land on uninvolved leg
  - Continue with Physical Therapy (if applicable) and PT home exercises
  - Mental Practice of steps, transitions, and full routine
- **Phase 2: Progress Soft Shoe to Hard Shoe Phase-**
  - **Progress class participation to 75%: ¾ speed, ¾ volume of dance**
    - Soft shoe progressing back into hard shoe
    - Progress to faster movements to the beat of the music
    - Progress Point walking, changes/switches, skips, point hop backs
    - Begin step down the line to music (light treble, toe, treble sequence in hard shoe)
    - Initiate jumping and landing on two feet. Begin with involved lower extremity as front foot to land on uninvolved, progress to landing on involved lower extremity
      - Limit number of jumps and force of stomps in hard shoe
    - Practice 1 step and progress to transitions from 1 step into the next, not full routine
- **Phase 3: Full Classes Phase-**
  - **Progress class participation to 100%: full speed, full volume**
    - Soft shoe and hard shoe class unrestricted as tolerated
    - Unrestricted dance movement as tolerated
      - practicing steps to left and right, transitions, full routine to music
      - unrestricted stomps, trebles, and turns in hard shoe as tolerated
    - Bilateral → Unilateral jumping, landing, leaping with kicks (increase repetitions)
    - Slow → Fast steps to the music (increasing speed and load)
    - Continued implementation of injury management and prevention techniques learned in rehabilitation
- **Phase 4: Rehearsal Phase-**
  - Graded return to choreography rehearsals at 100% effort when able to participate full time in all classes (soft shoe and hard shoe)
  - Progress time in rehearsals 15 minutes at a time after warm ups as tolerated
- **Phase 5: Competition Phase:** Return to full prior level of Feis competition and performances
  - Rehearse for 2-3 weeks at full performance with no limitations before performance or competition