



## **Avoiding Burnout**

*By: Ally Paauwe*

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There comes a point in every season when a team may fall into the trap of dance team burnout. Dance team burnout comes from the endless hours of practicing, learning, conditioning and all of the other components that go into making a great team before they ever see the performance floor. In the midst of all these steps leading up to the heart of your season, it may seem as though the practices are becoming monotonous and you and your team are just going through the motions. To avoid this thinking, there are little things you can do to keep everyone's spirits up.

One thing you can try at practice is partner activities. Coaches, rather than cleaning a section of a routine altogether, break your team up into smaller groups and have the officers clean the sections they think need the most improvement. Your team members will benefit from receiving more personal attention and your officers can bring new, creative perspectives to the cleaning process which will improve the routine overall. Since it is impossible to watch every single team member execute a skill simultaneously, consider incorporating partnering into the technique portion of your practice. Choose technical skills for your team to drill and have the partners take turns evaluating each other. Have each member watch their partner execute the technical skill and have them give two positive comments and two things that the dancer can improve upon. Another idea to switch up the cleaning process is to break your team into halves and have each half watch the routine. After each group is done with the routine, have the other half give constructive criticism on what they saw. By doing this, the dancers can see the areas that need the most improvement and the critiques they give each other are most likely things they can improve upon themselves.

Though working hard at practice is vital to a team's success, it is also important to make sure that your team members are interacting and having fun with each other outside of practice. To do this, have your team plan school spirit, community service and fundraising events throughout the season. These activities can allow your team can bond without the pressure of being at practice. Another thing you can do to make sure your dancers aren't getting burned out is to plan team outings at least once a month. You could have a sleepover, plan a picnic or just have everyone get together for a movie night. Team bonding both on and off the dance and practice floor will improve the overall morale of your team.

Working hard is vital to a team's success, but it is also important to have fun. It is important to find a balance during your season. By mixing hard work at practice with team bonding and activities outside of practice, you will ensure that your team will avoid dance team burnout while at the same time strengthening their relationships with each other.