

Winter Warm-Ups

Three dancers share their warm-up staples and new favorites.

BY CRISTINA MORENO

Winter is on its way, which means it's more important than ever for dancers to keep their muscles loose and limber. *Dance Retailer News* spoke with three dancers about their favorite warm-ups and new must-haves for the cold season.

Skylar Brandt

You've been working with ABT for six years. What is your typical warm-up ensemble?

SB: I like to dance in things that are formfitting, so teachers and ballet masters can clearly see what my body is doing. Wearing sweatpants to a company rehearsal, even if it's cold, isn't going to allow them to see my legs working. I'll wear legwarmers instead.

Is there a time when you would wear sweatpants?

SB: I'll wear sweatpants if I'm in class, because it's more about warming up my body and focusing on myself, doing what I need to prepare for the day. I like to layer fleece or cotton tops over my leotard and then wear a comfortable pair of sweatpants or legwarmers. If my feet are cold, I like to wear little booties or ankle socks.

How does this compare to a company rehearsal?

SB: It's really important to keep in mind the other people who are with you and what kind of rehearsal it is. If I'm doing something that involves partnering, I have to make sure that I wear a leotard, as opposed to a sweatshirt, because my partner's hand could catch on the material, which is unsafe. During dress rehearsal I'm usually in the costume that I'll be performing in. If I have to wear a tutu, the most I could get away with adding is a pair of legwarmers.

How do you express yourself through your clothes?

SB: It's really important for a dancer to feel good about how they look because it helps the performance. I express my individuality through colors and style. I like reds and classic blacks, and then I like to wear leotards that are cut in interesting ways. There are newer lines that feature racer-back styles

and turtlenecks, which are great for winter.

Amanda Rebisz

What is the standard warm-up look for a Knicks City Dancer?

AR: We like to wear things that are suited to the dance style we're rehearsing. We pair baggy sweats with a loose tank for a hip-hop routine, to give us that swagger. For Latin or Broadway, we normally wear leggings because they're warm, comfortable and really easy to move in.

What are some new winter trends you've noticed?

AR: A lot of people are buying boatneck shirts and bringing them around their head to wear like a vest. That way they have the long sleeves to keep their arms warm, but they can still show off a colorful tank underneath. This fall I'm into rich plum colors, dark reds and wines, hunter green and deep teals.

What would you like to see more of in dance stores?

AR: I would love to see more basics like leggings with a fold-over waist. For people my age who are professional dancers and working in New York City, there is a real need for basic colors. The leggings can be black, but I want to see a waistband with a pop of color like hot pink. It's simple, but fun and not too overdone.

Ellenore Scott

You dance in a variety of genres, including jazz, hip hop, ballet and modern. How do you adjust your warm-up style for each?

ES: I actually use a lot of the same clothing for each of the styles. I'd say the biggest difference is between hip hop and everything else. For hip-hop class, I'm rocking a tight top and something loose on the bottom, like a pair of cool sweatpants. In modern or jazz, I would

use black leggings and a brightly colored sports bra or tank top under a fitted long-sleeved shirt. I always like to use fun patterns like stripes or polka dots.


How did you dress for rehearsals on "So You Think You Can Dance"?

ES: I could wear whatever I wanted, which was nice. It's important for a dancer to be comfortable. One thing I learned is to be conscious of the type of material I use when I'm dancing with a partner. This past season, I did a tricky duet with Tadd Gadduang. During the routine I had to spin him on a chandelier, but he wore slippery basketball shorts to rehearsal, so I couldn't get a good grip. Make sure you stick with cotton and avoid something with a sleek feel, so it doesn't interfere with your work.

In addition to being a performer, you're also a dance teacher. Do you have specific warm-up requirements for students?

ES: I love having students be themselves, so they don't all have to wear the same color or style, but I want to be able to see how they move. I don't like to see anything too baggy on the top or the bottom; a balance of loose and tight is nice. If you're wearing 15 layers of billowy pants and a huge top, I can't see whether you're accenting the music, and musicality is an important element in my class.

What are your winter warm-up essentials?

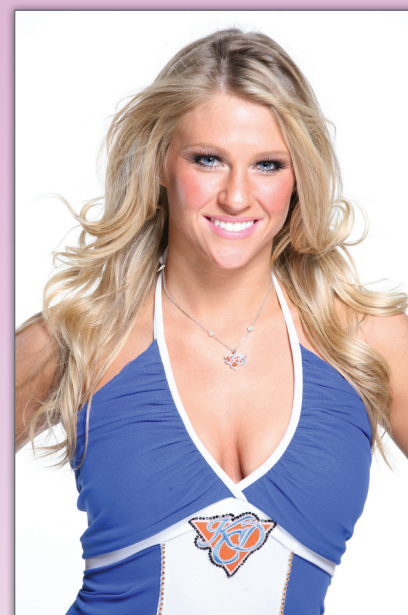
ES: I can't live without my circle scarf. I wear it throughout the day and in class because it's warm and it wraps around, so it doesn't get caught on anything. I also love these knitted slippers called Mukluks. My feet are always cold, so those definitely come out during winter. 

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Skylar Brandt

American Ballet Theatre: Corps de Ballet



Amanda Rebisz

Knicks City Dancers: Co-Captain



Ellenore Scott

"So You Think You Can Dance" contestant; dance instructor