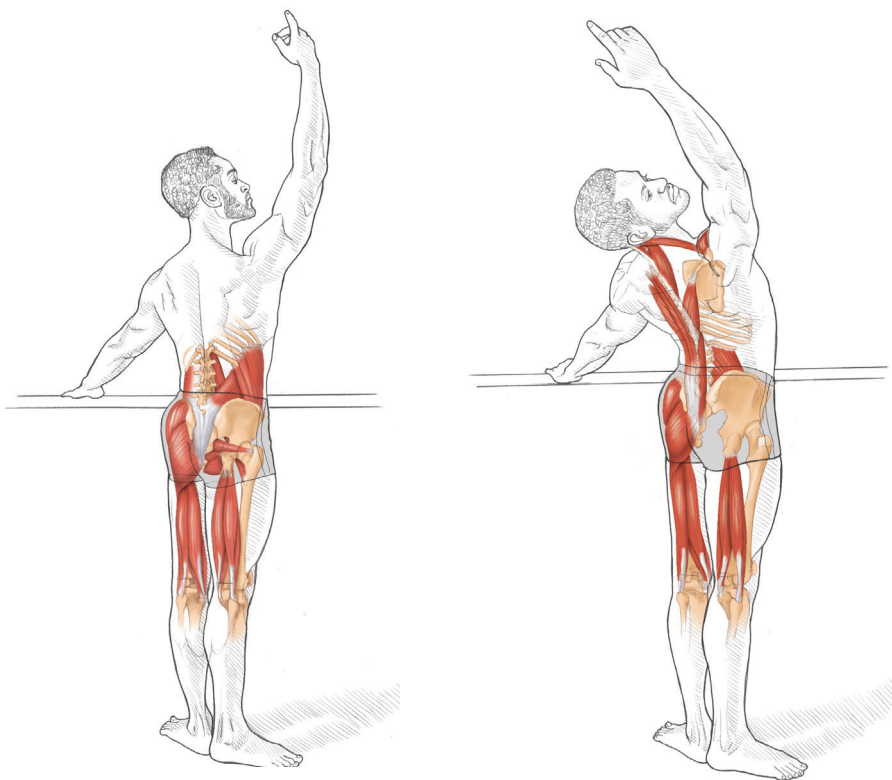


Cambré Derrière

Let's take a look at the safest way to execute a healthy cambré derrière. This chapter focuses on the spine, and the following dance movement execution expands the focus to incorporate various other muscles that are targeted in other chapters. Support for spinal extension involves several factors, one of which has to do with intra-abdominal pressure (which is discussed in more detail in the next chapter). The dance movement execution presented here gives you an overall idea of the functionality of the cambré derrière.



1. Begin in first position, with your left hand on the barre, and bring your right arm to high fifth, using your anterior deltoid and your pectoralis major. Check that you are placed in your neutral spine position. Your legs are turned out from the hips. Activate your quadriceps, hip adductors (inner thighs), pelvic floor muscles, and deep hip external rotators. Maintain muscle tone of the hamstrings, gastrocnemius, soleus, tibialis anterior, peroneals, and intrinsic muscles of your arches.
2. As you inhale, your diaphragm contracts and begins to push down. Lengthen through your spine, or pull up, to help unload your spinal joints. Growing taller, feel the lengthening of your abdominal muscles and the intra-abdominal pressure supporting your lower spine. Try to feel the pelvic floor muscle tone supporting your low back and pelvis.

3. Initiate the cambré from your upper back or thoracic spine; allow your head and neck to follow the line of your upper back. Engage the cervical and spinal extensors while maintaining the abdominal tone. Glide your shoulder blades down away from your ears toward your hips by using your lower trapezius and serratus anterior.
4. As your spine begins to extend, continue providing support from the abdominals, pelvic floor muscles, and hip adductors. Incorporate movement through the thoracic spine; don't allow your hips to rock forward or your neck to collapse and overextend. Your right arm stays in high fifth position.
5. As the spine continues to extend, moving in a long arc, begin to turn your head to the right, maintaining support and control of your neck. Lift your sternum to assist with thoracic mobility.
6. Upon exhalation, reengage your abdominals to reverse the movement and slowly return to the starting position, maintaining length along your entire spine and moving in the longest possible arc.

Muscles Involved

Neutral spine placement: Transversus abdominis, internal oblique, external oblique, pelvic floor, iliopsoas

Hips and legs: Quadriceps (rectus femoris, vastus lateralis, vastus medialis, vastus intermedius), sartorius, hamstrings (semitendinosus, semimembranosus, biceps femoris), gluteus maximus, gluteus medius, deep hip external rotators, adductor brevis, adductor longus, gracilis

Spine extension: Diaphragm, abdominals (eccentric contraction), multifidus, erector spinae (iliocostalis, longissimus, spinalis), quadratus lumborum, spinalis thoracis, longissimus thoracis, iliocostalis lumborum

Cervical extension: Splenius capitis, semispinalis capitis, splenius cervicis, sternocleidomastoid (as the head begins to rotate)

Arm: Anterior deltoid, lower trapezius, pectoralis major, serratus anterior

While executing your cambré derrière, focus on axial elongation, or pulling up, to take the load off of the vertebrae; lengthen and grow tall through your spine. Incorporate movement through your thoracic spine as you use your abdominals to support your spine. Use your entire spine, not just the lower segments, to execute the cambré. Poor technique can create repetitive microtrauma and overuse that contribute to lower back injuries. In order to advance and grow as a dancer without experiencing injury, focus on maintaining stability, using your abdominals, and minimizing stress on the lower spine.