



REDs in Dancers

Insufficient energy, either from limiting food (fuel) or from high exercise expenditure, can alter how your body functions and ultimately impair performance.



WHAT IS REDs?

- Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (REDs) is a medical condition which creates physiological/psychological changes due to low energy availability, affecting females and males.
- Causes change in hormone levels, shifting your body into survival mode due to low energy. Body prioritizes necessary systems and shuts down others, limiting performance.
- Long term concerns with bone, heart, blood, immune, metabolic, reproductive and mental health.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Loss of periods, libido and erectile dysfunction
- Low energy/fatigue
- Possible weight loss
- Frequent illness, injury
- Performance decline (strength, power, stamina)
- Preoccupation with food or body, reluctance to rest, calorie restriction, mood changes, irritability, low motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, or depression



WHAT TO DO?

- Express your feelings and what support you need (or do not need) with someone you trust.
- Learn more about REDs and share knowledge with others. Check out www.red-d.com for more info!
- Seek help from healthcare professionals such as athletic trainers, physical therapists, or physicians for proper care and guidance

REDs FAST FACTS:

- **Nutrient timing matters:** Eating every 2–4 hours AND refueling post-activity helps prevent depletion. 6 hours of dance? Fueling during sessions is key!
- **Fasting isn't helpful:** Fueling before training prevents high stress hormone (cortisol) levels.
- **Carbs are essential:** Cutting carbs harms energy, bones, and performance.
- **Restricting calories hurts performance:** Energy in < energy out = decline.
- **High protein isn't "it":** Extra protein doesn't always boost performance but does support recovery.
- **Healthy Fats? Yes please!** Needed for hormones and adequate calorie intake.
- **Periods matter:** Missing cycles is a warning sign that needs medical attention.
- **REDs can affect anyone:** Any age, gender, size, or sport level—not just elite or thin dancers.
- **Don't wait to care until after competing:** REDs can cause lasting, irreversible damage if ignored.

CONTACT PERFORMWELL:

✉ performwellpt@gmail.com
 🌐 www.performwell-pt.com

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