

# HEALTH

GIVE THE GIFT OF FITNESS | HOLIDAY HEALTH HELPERS | MEDITATION MIND FIX



## Barre Out

Ballet might seem like it's all tutus and pink leotards, but don't underestimate this serious dance—ballerinas are actually some of the fittest athletes out there.

Now you can try their workout, too, with the latest ballet-inspired exercises. Step into the studio with professional dancer Jennifer Nichols, founder of The Extension Method, and get ready to plié your way to a better body. **BY KATE DALEY**

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY GENEVIÈVE CARON**

HAIR AND MAKEUP: JUUKKA/TRESEMME HAIR CARE/DIOR/PLUTINO GROUP. CLOTHING: NICHOLS' OWN



**▶ CHECK OUT OUR HOW-TO VIDEO WITH EXTRAS AT [canadianliving.com/barreworkout](http://canadianliving.com/barreworkout).**

### Chassé Lunge Series

Facing a chair with your right foot on a towel, stand in first position (heels together, hips, knees and toes rotated out). Bend your left knee and extend your right leg into a lunge while you slide the towel back, ensuring that your torso is upright. Straighten your left knee and press your right heel into the floor to return to standing. Try eight reps with each leg.



### Attitude Raises in Parallel and Turnout

Facing and holding the back of a chair, stand with your feet in sixth position (parallel and together). Rise onto the balls of your feet and bend your knees, keeping your heels off the floor. With both knees bent, extend one leg backward into attitude position (back leg lifted). Return to sixth position. Try 16 lifts with each leg. Return to attitude position and pulse the lifted leg upward in small movements. Try 32 pulses with each leg. Return to sixth position. Lift the leg again, this time in a turned-out position (hip rotated outward, knee facing the side). Return to sixth position. Try 16 lifts with each leg. Lift the leg in a turned-out position again and pulse the lifted leg upward in small movements, maintaining your alignment. Try 32 pulses with each leg.

ALEXANDRA TANK, \$58. KARMAWEAR.COM. NOTRADAMELEGGINGS, \$88. TITIKA.CA

# 3



## Chassé to Second Plié + Pulses in Relevé

With your left hand on the back of a chair for stability, stand in first position (heels together). Bend both of your knees, sliding your right foot into a deep second plié, feet shoulder-width apart. Straighten your legs and return to standing, sliding your right foot toward your left heel and using your inner thighs to bring your legs back to first position. Try 16 reps on each side. Return to second plié. With knees bent and aligned with the centre of your feet, raise both heels, ensuring that your knees don't extend past your toes. Pulse in this deep plié position 16 times each with your right arm in front of your waist, to the side and overhead. Repeat on the left side.

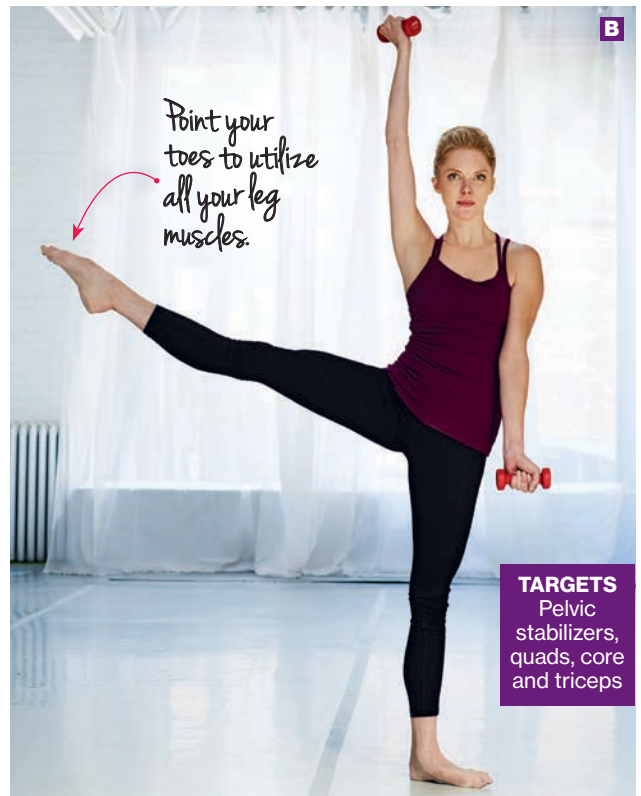


# 4



## Passé Standing Weight Series

In each hand, hold a three-pound weight parallel to the front of your torso and stand in first position. Transfer your weight onto your left leg and draw your right toes up to your left knee to form the passé position. Raise your right arm overhead, then bend at the elbow, lowering the weight behind your head to target your triceps. Straighten into a triceps extension. Repeat



four times. Continue the triceps extension and simultaneously lower your left arm, then draw it up into a biceps curl. Repeat four times. Finally, add in a leg extension. Pointing your toes, extend your right leg out to the side while continuing the arm extensions. Repeat four times. Start the series from the beginning on the opposite side.

# 5



## Arabesque With Arm Raises

Holding a set of three-pound weights perpendicular to your pelvis, bend both of your knees, extend your left leg backward and turn out your front leg. Open your arms wide to either side and lift your back leg into arabesque position. Return to starting position. Repeat this four times. Extend your left arm overhead and your right arm behind you (palms facing down) as you lift your right leg backward. Repeat this four times. Start the series from the beginning on the opposite side.

**TARGETS**  
Inner thighs, quads, hamstrings and calves

# 6



**TARGETS**  
Mid and upper back, glutes, hamstrings and deltoids

## Pelvic Bridges, Flat and Relevé

Lie on your back with your feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart, and your knees parallel. Push your feet into the floor and raise your hips into a pelvic bridge, then lower back to the ground.

Repeat this four times. Raise your hips and pulse eight times in the bridge position. Repeat the entire series with both heels raised. Repeat once more, raising one leg at a time.

SHOT ON LOCATION AT TORONTO'S EXTENSION ROOM, EXTENSIONMETHOD.COM.

## Just Dance

One British study showed that, based on strength, endurance, flexibility, balance and psychological state, the overall fitness level of ballet dancers is greater than that of Olympian swimmers. Research also suggests that, through years of training, ballet dancers' brains can learn to suppress dizziness signals from the inner ear, meaning that endless pirouettes pose no problem. Furthermore, studies show that the social, intellectual, artistic and physical benefits of ballet may improve the quality of life for those with Parkinson's disease. Dancing also improved balance and stability in participants.