

DanceRetailerNews
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COVERAGE INSIDE!

What Dancers Want

Teacher Talk

Dance instructors weigh in on new looks for back-to-school dress codes.

BY DEENA CAMPBELL

As dance styles evolve, so do studios. To stay competitive, your store's product selection must keep up with the changes. Here's what three studio owners and instructors have to say about fall trends.

What changes have you made to the dress code this fall?

Diana Schofield: This year we are officially allowing booty shorts and gym shorts in all non-ballet classes. We did this because some of our teens are very self-conscious in just a leotard and tights. However, we still require tights and a leotard be worn under shorts. We do not allow bare legs or bare midriffs at our studio.

What new dance accessories do you recommend to students?

DS: Knee pads for the more advanced contemporary and modern classes. We hope this will help protect against bruising and over-training injuries.

What do your students typically not have for the start of classes?

DS: Dance shoes. Parents always wait until they're sure their child will continue with the class before they purchase them.

What dancewear items will be popular at your studio this fall?

DS: The young dancers love leotards with attached skirts. Camisole leotards, jazz pants, shorts and fun T-shirts are popular with the 6-13 age group.

What changes have you made to the dress code this fall?

Jimmy Locust: This year I'm sticking with traditional looks. I'm very old school when it comes to dance apparel. My ballet students are required to

wear classic pink tights and black skirts.

What items do your students never have in time for the start of classes?

JL: I usually don't have ill-prepared students. I started requiring a dress code three years ago and I'm really strict about it. The first year, I even had students leave class if they didn't have the proper attire.

Do your students ever have trouble finding what you require at local dance stores?

JL: My students have a hard time finding lyrical-style shoes. I always suggest they shop at local stores first so they won't have to wait for the merchandise to be shipped. If a local store doesn't have what they need, then I tell my students to shop online.

What advice can you offer to retailers ordering for the upcoming school year?

JL: Retailers should have lots of availability in shoes. Students often complain that local stores don't have their size.

Even though you have a strict dress code, have you seen any new trends?

JL: I see a trend toward more urban attire for hip hop. There are lots of baggy clothes and printed T-shirts. But I don't allow students to wear that look in my classes. As I said, I'm very traditional. I like jazz pants with off-the-shoulder tops for my students. ■



Diana Schofield,
costume manager and
dance shoppe manager
Kathy Blake Dance Studios
Amherst, NH



Jimmy Locust,
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Locust Performing Arts Center
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"Camisole leotards, jazz pants, shorts and fun T-shirts are popular with the 6-13 age group."

—Diana Schofield

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