

# Functional Footprints®

## A TURNOUT TOOL FOR DANCERS

Developed by dance medicine experts: Jean-Claude West, Motor Learning Specialist and Katy Keller, Physical Therapist, to help dancers achieve optimum technique.

**TURNOUT**, the outward rotation of the legs, is basic to ballet and other dance forms. Turnout should originate from the hips without forcing from feet or knees.

## UNIQUE DESIGN

- The axis is positioned to promote rotation from the hips
- The resistance-free swivel prevents forcing turnout from the feet and knees
- The degree indicator provides an objective measure of rotation and symmetry
- The tip mechanism challenges balance and alignment

## FUNCTIONAL FOOTPRINTS® EXERCISES

help dancers perfect turnout and technique by improving alignment, dynamic strength, symmetry and balance. Specifically, these exercises train dancers to use their turnout properly, preventing injury.

## WHAT PROFESSIONALS SAY

"Great for strengthening turnout... every dance school should have them."

—PRINCIPAL DANCER, NEW YORK CITY BALLET

"Fabulous tool for clinicians and instructors working with dancers."

—DIRECTOR, LONG BEACH DANCE CONDITIONING

"I can feel my turnout muscles working better than ever."

—DANCE STUDENT, THE JULLIARD SCHOOL

"Revolutionizes training techniques"

—PHYSICIAN

## SAFETY GUIDELINES

To gain maximum benefit from your Functional Footprints® and avoid injury, read and follow all exercise instructions carefully.

Consult your health care professional before beginning this or any exercise program, especially if you have been injured or have a medical condition.

When first learning the exercises it is recommended that you have your dance teacher, physical therapist or other movement specialist supervise your performance.

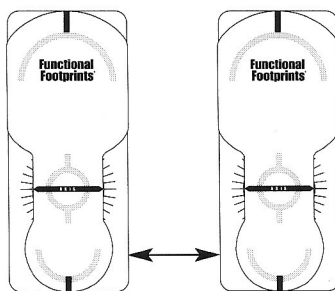
Use the exercises to prepare for class and for additional training in the dance studio or home.

- Hold onto a stable support such as a doorway or ballet barre to maintain balance
- Use on a carpeted or non-skid floor
- Perform exercises barefoot or wearing slip-resistant shoes
- Never force inward or outward leg rotation; forcing rotation may result in injury
- Perform outward rotation (turnout) with straight knees; rotation with bent knees may result in knee strain
- Perform exercises slowly with control
- Do not spend more than fifteen minutes daily on these exercises; build up gradually
- Only progress to advanced exercises when you have mastered the preceding exercises
- Discontinue exercises if you feel discomfort; consult your health care professional
- Footprints can support up to 200 pounds
- Do not spin on this product or use other than as directed

## HOW TO SET UP FUNCTIONAL FOOTPRINTS®

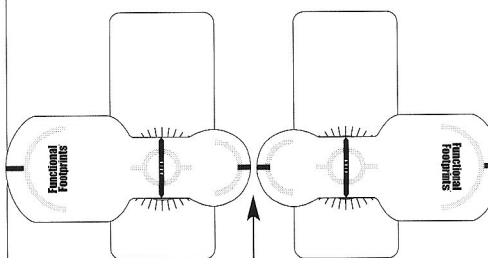
### SET-UP:

Set Footprints on a carpeted or non-skid floor, parallel to each other, about 4 inches apart.



### SET FOOTPRINTS PARALLEL ABOUT 4 INCHES APART

To check if you have the correct distance between Footprints, turn the top platforms 90 degrees. The heels should almost touch. Return the Footprints to parallel (zero degrees rotation) before stepping onto them.

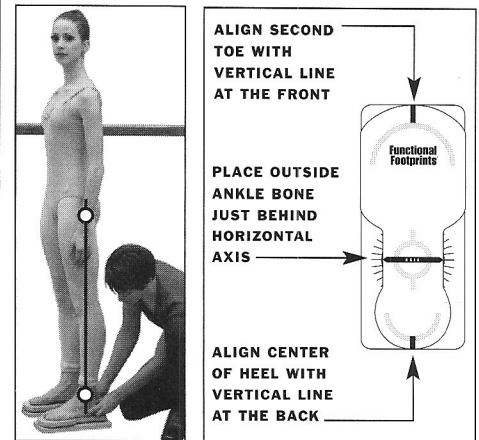


TO CHECK SET-UP TURN TOP PLATFORMS 90° HEEL-TO-HEEL. RETURN THEM TO PARALLEL BEFORE STEPPING ON

## HOW TO STAND ON FUNCTIONAL FOOTPRINTS®

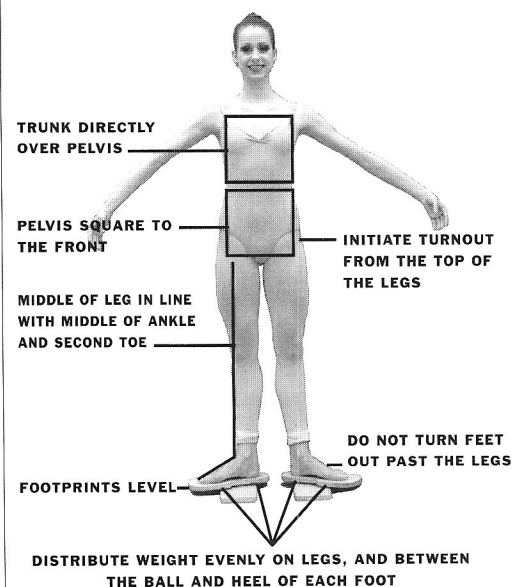
### FOOT PLACEMENT:

Holding onto a stable support, step onto parallel Footprints, one foot at a time. Follow diagram for ankle, 2nd toe and heel placement.



ANKLE PLACEMENT  
ALIGNS LEG WITH AXIS  
OF HIP ROTATION

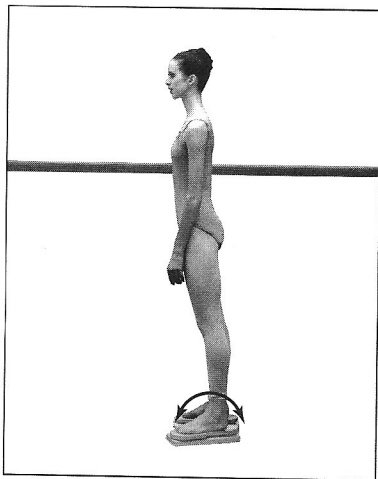
## ALIGNMENT GUIDELINES:



## WARNING:

Failure to read and follow instructions may result in injury. The designers, manufacturers and distributors are not liable for accident or injury resulting from use of Functional Footprints®.

## EXERCISE 1: ROCK AND LEVEL



FEET STAY FLAT ON THE FOOTPRINTS WHILE GENTLY ROCKING FORWARD THEN BACK

**CAUTION:** Functional Footprints® have a built-in tipping motion to challenge your balance and weight distribution. Hold onto a stable support when learning the exercises.

Stand on Footprints in parallel (0° rotation), holding onto a stable support.

### ROCK

With feet flat on the Footprints and knees straight, **slowly shift your weight forward and back in a gentle rocking motion.** Try to keep the Footprints parallel as you rock. Feel how they tip slightly forward and backward.

► Gently rock forward and back four times.

### LEVEL

Find the balance point where the Footprints are level (not tipped forward or backward). Feel your weight evenly distributed between the heel and ball of each foot.

► Hold the Footprints level for ten seconds.

Try to keep the Footprints level throughout all the following exercises.

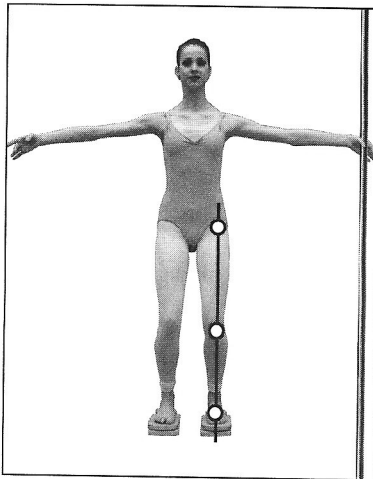
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# Functional Footprints®

TO ORDER FUNCTIONAL FOOTPRINTS® CALL 1-800-343-5540

## EXERCISE 2: PARALLEL DEMI-PLIÉ



CENTER OF HIP, THIGH, KNEE AND ANKLE ALIGN WITH SECOND TOE THROUGHOUT THE MOVEMENT

**CAUTION:** Check with your health care professional before beginning this exercise series, especially if you have had an injury.

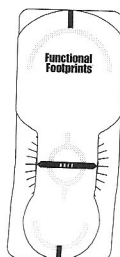
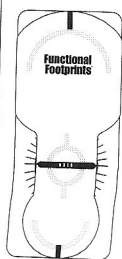
Stand on Footprints in parallel, holding onto a stable support.

Perform five, slow demi-pliés in parallel.

As you bend and straighten your knees, keep them aligned with your second toes. Heels do not lift off Footprints. Pelvis is upright without tucking under. Keep Footprints parallel (do not let them swivel in or out) and level (do not let them tip forward or back) as you demi-plié.

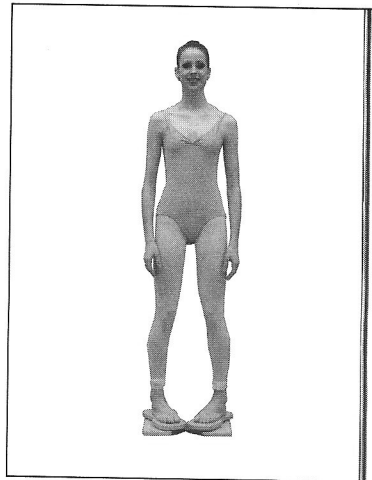
► Demi-plié five times.

★ **TECHNIQUE TIP:** If the Footprints tip forward during demi-plié you are probably tucking under and incorrectly pushing forward into your knees.



PARALLEL

## EXERCISE 3: TURN-IN



ROTATE LEGS INWARD, KEEPING FEET FLAT ON THE FOOTPRINTS AND PELVIS 'SQUARE' TO THE FRONT

**CAUTION:** Do not exceed 30 degrees of inward rotation; stay within your comfortable range of motion.

Stand on Footprints in parallel, holding onto a stable support if needed for balance.

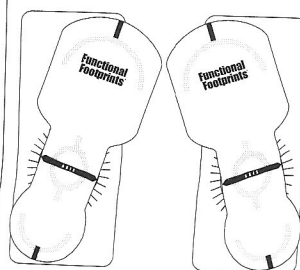
Slowly rotate both legs inward without forcing. Feet and toes stay flat on the Footprints. Knees are straight.

Return to the parallel starting position, keeping the Footprints level.

► Repeat the *parallel — turn-in — parallel* sequence five times.

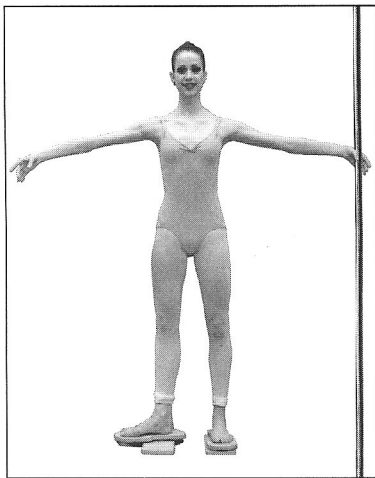
Notice if one leg turns in more easily than the other. Try to achieve symmetry.

★ **TECHNIQUE TIP:** Turn-in exercises help stretch the turnout muscles and maintain muscle balance and joint health. Do turn-in exercises both before and after turnout exercises.



TURN-IN

### EXERCISE 4: SINGLE LEG TURNOUT



KEEP LEFT LEG PARALLEL AND PELVIS 'SQUARE' TO THE FRONT AS RIGHT LEG TURNS OUT

**CAUTION:** Never force turnout at the hip, knee or foot; forcing turnout may result in injury.

Stand on Footprints in parallel, holding onto a stable support.

Slowly turn your right leg out while keeping the left leg parallel. Initiate turnout from the top of the leg, not from the foot. Keep the pelvis *square* to the front; do not let it rotate with the leg.

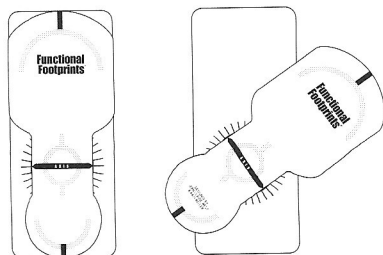
Return the right leg to parallel.

Repeat single leg turnout with the left leg, keeping the right leg parallel.

Repeat the exercise four times, alternating right and left leg rotation.

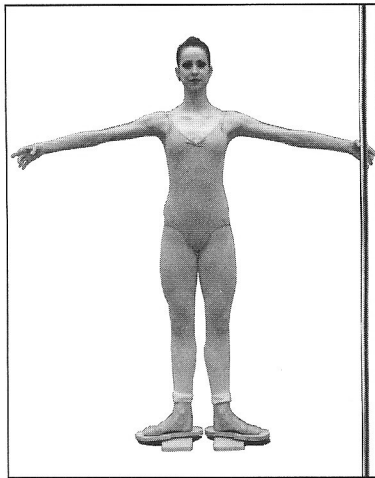
Notice if one leg turns out more easily than the other. Try to achieve symmetry.

★ **TECHNIQUE TIP:** Many dancers have better turnout on one side than the other and tend to favor the better side. This exercise helps you work more symmetrically by training equal rotation of the legs.



SINGLE LEG TURNOUT

### EXERCISE 5: FIRST POSITION TURNOUT



AS YOU REACH FIRST POSITION, USE ABDOMINALS TO KEEP THE PELVIS UPRIGHT

**CAUTION:** Do not exceed 80 degrees of turnout; stay within your comfortable range of motion.

Stand on Footprints in parallel, holding onto a stable support.

Slowly turn both legs out to 1st position, initiating turnout from the top of the legs. The feet follow. Do not turn feet out past the legs. Knees are straight.

Return both legs to parallel, keeping the Footprints level.

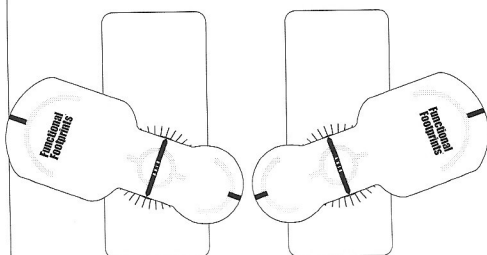
Repeat the *parallel — turnout — parallel* sequence five times

Feel the deep turnout muscles working in the back of your hips.

Use the degree indicator to check symmetry of your turnout.

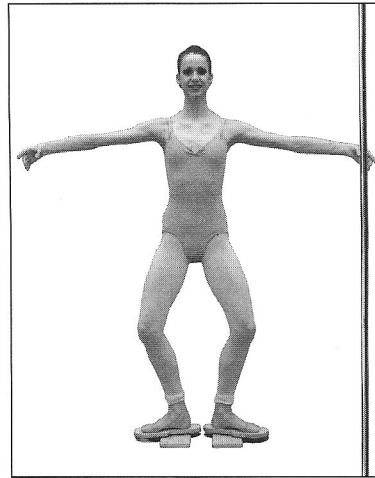
Functional Footprints® won't let you *cheat* your turnout by forcing *from the floor up*. Don't be surprised if at first you have less turnout than you expect.

★ **TECHNIQUE TIP:** Use the deep hip rotators to turnout while keeping the buttock muscles relaxed.



FIRST POSITION

### EXERCISE 6: FIRST POSITION DEMI-PLIÉ



DEGREES OF TURNOUT REMAIN CONSTANT THROUGHOUT THE DEMI-PLIÉ; DO NOT INCREASE

**CAUTION:** Turn out with straight knees; turning out with bent knees may result in knee strain.

Stand on Footprints in parallel, holding onto a stable support.

With straight knees, slowly turn both legs out to 1st position.

Then bend the knees to *demi-plié*, keeping feet flat on the Footprints. As you bend the knees keep them aligned with the middle of the feet. Do not increase turnout at the feet. Keep Footprints level.

Straighten the knees, maintaining turnout from the top of the legs.

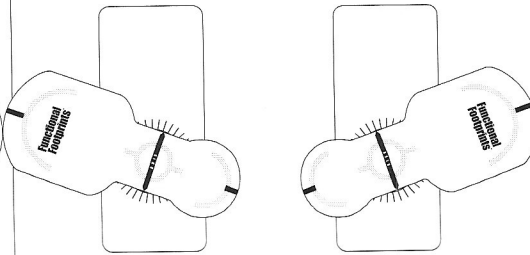
Return to parallel, keeping the Footprints level.

Repeat the *parallel — turnout — demi-plié — straighten — parallel* sequence five times

★★★★

**Congratulations!** You have now performed six exercises in the series. Take the time to stretch your turnout muscles by repeating Exercise 3. Stop if you are tired.

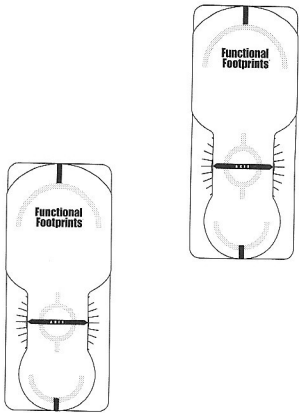
Exercise 5 and 6 can also be performed in 2nd position. The only difference is the set-up. To set up Footprints for 2nd position place them in parallel about 8 inches apart.



SECOND POSITION

**EXERCISE 7: FOURTH POSITION TURNOUT  
SET-UP:**

Set Footprints parallel to each other, about 4 inches apart. Move right Footprint forward to line up the axis with the front of the left Footprint as shown in the diagram.



SET-UP FOR 4TH POSITION

**CAUTION:** Never force turnout; stay within your comfortable range of motion.

**Holding onto a stable support, stand on Footprints in parallel 4th position with the right leg forward and left leg back.**

Keeping knees straight, slowly turn both legs out to 4th position. Keep your body centered between the front and back leg. Keep your pelvis *square* to the front.

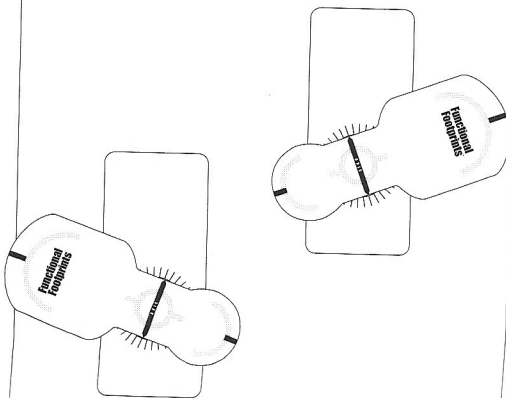
Return to parallel, keeping Footprints level.

Repeat the *parallel — 4th position turnout — parallel* sequence three times.

Reverse the position of the Footprints and repeat three times with the left leg forward.

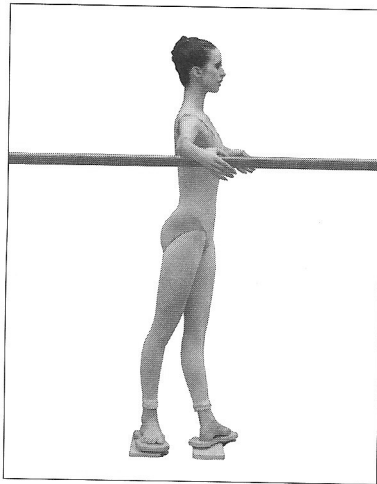
★ **TECHNIQUE TIP:** As in 1st and 2nd position, the abdominals play a key role in keeping the pelvis *square* and upright.

Only progress to the Advanced Exercises if you have mastered Exercises 1 through 7.



TURNED-OUT 4TH POSITION

**ADVANCED EXERCISE:  
EXERCISE 8: TRANSITION TO FOURTH POSITION**



WEIGHT IS CENTERED BETWEEN THE LEGS, SHOULDERS ARE 'SQUARE' OVER THE PELVIS

**CAUTION:** This advanced exercise involves a coordinated change of direction.

Set Footprints parallel to each other, about 4 inches apart as described on first page.

Stand on Footprints in parallel, holding onto the ballet barre.

Facing the ballet barre, slowly turn both legs out to 1st position.

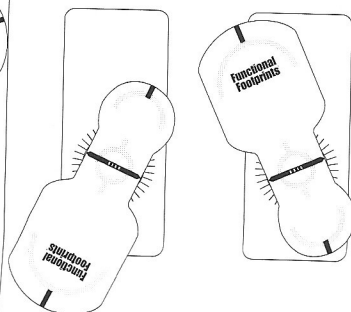
Then slowly rotate a 1/4 turn left to 4th position, leading with the left leg, and keeping the shoulders *square* over the pelvis. Reposition your right hand forward on the barre.

Return to 1st position facing the barre, leading with the right leg. Reposition both hands on the barre.

Repeat to the other side, rotating a 1/4 turn to the right, and then back to 1st position.

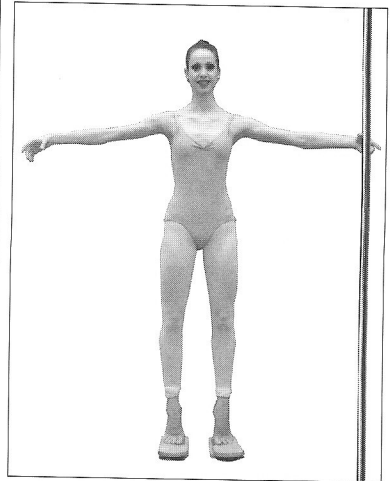
Focus on *squaring* the body in each position; shoulders over pelvis, weight centered between the legs.

Repeat the *1st position — 4th position left leg front — 1st position — 4th position right leg front* sequence three times.



TURNED-OUT 4TH POSITION

**ADVANCED EXERCISE:  
EXERCISE 9: RELEVÉ**

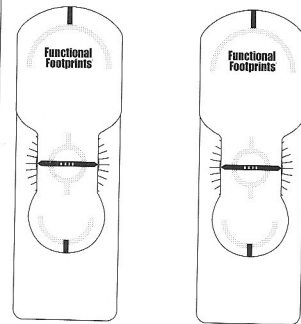


ANKLES ARE IN LINE WITH THE LEGS AND 2ND TOES, WITHOUT SICKLING OR WINGING

**CAUTION:** This advanced exercise requires good ankle control. Performing this exercise without adequate control may result in injury.

**SET-UP:**

Set Footprints parallel to each other, about 4 inches apart. Next turn the bases 180° around. The numbers will be upside down and the Footprints will extend beyond the bases as shown in the diagram.



SET-UP FOR RELEVÉ

Holding onto a stable support, place the ball of one foot on the axis line, with the heel angled down off the back of the footprint onto the base. Repeat this placement with the other foot.

Slowly rise up onto the balls of the feet, lifting the heels a few inches into a low relevé. As you relevé, keep Footprints parallel and ankles in line with the 2nd toes.

Lower the heels back down in parallel, feeling a gentle stretch in your calf muscles.

Relevé again, raising heels higher this time.

Lower the heels back down.

Repeat the *low relevé — heels down — high relevé — heels down* sequence three times.

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