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'I'm an Alvin Ailey Dancer, and These Are the Hip Stretches I Do Every Single Morning'

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Routine is a big part of [Deidre Rogan](#)'s life as a member of the [Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater](#) in New York City. As a dancer, her life revolves around them. One of her favorites happens to be the 10 minutes of hip stretches she does daily, typically two or three times per day, and always as part of her morning routine.

"I really see my stretching time as my me-time, too," says Rogan. "You know, just a moment to check in with myself and feel centered."

Before she stretches, Rogan first makes sure to get her blood pumping. "Our PTs tell us that it's [better for us to stretch when we're warm rather than cold](#), and that you'll get a better stretch that," she says. "So I like to go for a run every morning, and I will stretch after, and then I usually stretch again after we take ballet class as a company at the theater, and after the performance as well."

While many of us think of stretching as a way to [work on our flexibility](#)—and it certainly is—Rogan sees the hip stretches she does as a form of recovery, since stretching increases blood flow to muscles and helps them relax, which can speed up the healing process. "Stretching for me is like the time I give back to my body," says Rogan. "We spend basically all day in the theater or at rehearsal in the studios dancing. And I just feel like we rely so much on our muscles to do our job that stretching is my way to really say thank you to my body because I'm like, I have to do this again tomorrow."

No matter what time of day she's stretching, Rogan says that these are the go-to hip stretches for dancers. She does each for 45 to 60 seconds per move. (For all single-leg movements, remember to repeat on the other side.)

7 hip stretches for dancers

"A lot of the hip stretches that I do incorporate a lot of other things—you're stretching your hip, but you're also stretching your glutes or your quads," says Rogan. This way, all the muscle groups that work together to maintain good hip [mobility](#) are getting released at the same time.

1. Runner's lunge

"I always start with like a runner's lunge," says Rogan. "You're stretching your hips in opposition—front hip is flexed and you're getting a stretch on the underside of it, and then the back hip is extended, so you're getting into that hip flexor." For this one, Rogan comes into a lunge position with her back leg straight and front leg bent at 90 degrees. Then, with her hands on her front knee for support, she gently leans her upper body forward to deepen the stretch.

2. Quad stretch.

From her runner's lunge, Rogan puts her back knee on the ground and bends it, using her hand on the same side to grab for her foot and gently pull it toward her glute. "I can get even further into the hip stretch," she says.

3. Fire log

Be warned, this deep hip opener can be intense, to say the least. Having props nearby like yoga blocks or throw pillows is a good idea. For it, you'll sit, as Rogan says, "crisscross applesauce" on the floor and then bring the foot of your top leg onto the knee of your bottom one. The goal is to get your shins to be parallel and stacked on one another (hence the name). "I like to add a lateral side bend opposite from my top foot. You really, really feel it," says Rogan. "It's one of my other favorites."

From there, Rogan flows into another hip opener, but this time, lying on her back. "I pull the bottom leg towards my chest to deepen the stretch in my other hip," she says.

5. Supine fire log

While she's lying on her back, Rogan returns her legs to the same position as the fire log stretch to give a little more love to the external rotators on the outside of her hips. "If you find that same shape with your legs and pull your knees toward your chest, it's a really, really great hip opener," says Rogan.

6. Pigeon pose

"I like to do pigeon pose again with like my chest all the way forward, another deep hip opener," says Rogan. "And then I'll do my my front splits on both sides and in a [straddle](#)."

7. Sumo squat

"I always finish with a sumo squat," says Rogan. "That's definitely one of my favorite hip stretches, just to reset everything. You can really see if your hip are even, which is huge for us as dancers, making sure that we're level on both sides and everything is aligned." In all, doing these hip stretches takes Rogan about 10 minutes, which she says is well worth the time: "I promise you, it feels great, and your body will really, really thank you."