

FITNESS

What It's Like to Spend a Day in the Life of a Professional Ballerina

Isabella Boylston takes us through her day AND shares her secrets to success.

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Isabella Boylston has had a long time to figure out what works for her. Now a prima ballerina at the American Ballet Theater, the star ballerina has been dancing since she was 3, winning the Youth America Grand Prix in 2001. Four years later, she joined the American Ballet Theater Studio Company, where she went from apprentice to principal in under a decade. Her secret to success? Hard work, persistence, and staying in the moment while she performs.

"When you're able to be in the moment, it takes away self-consciousness and opens you up to being free and spontaneous, and hopefully giving a performance that will actually make people feel something," she says.

As a dancer, Isabella works hard to combine athleticism with art, spending her days perfecting her latest performance, while building and maintaining the strength that allows her make all those jumps and leaps. Like so many performers and athletes, she's also found that maintaining a steady routine can be crucial to success, especially when you've found yourself with as much to do as Isabella. In an exclusive video for *Teen Vogue*, Isabella reveals that she starts her day the same way many of us do: with as much coffee as possible (and a healthy breakfast to go with it). After that? A full day of practice and rehearsal, which studies show is roughly the equivalent of doing high intensity workouts all day. Still, Isabella finds the routine comforting, telling *Teen Vogue*, "Because it's so repetitive, it's almost like a meditation."

Also on the agenda? Fueling the day with a balanced diet, which includes tons of vegetables, with plenty of room for cravings. "It's so important that you take care of your body, and give it the fuel that it needs," she says, noting the athleticism it takes to make dance look effortless.

With the ballet world finally tackling its notoriously unwelcoming boundaries, making room for more body types, as well as addressing its race and class issues, it's crucial for many dancers to not only keep in mind why they started the combination of art and athleticism in the first place, but keep each other doing with strong friendships and encouragement along the way. As this video shows, Isabella finds relief from her exhausting schedule with friendship and motivation from her fellow dancers, as well as several massages.

"You just get so close to the dancers you're dancing with," she says. "The feeling of love and camaraderie definitely outshines the competitiveness of it."