

The Veena Method

teacher training course and curriculum



About the Author

Veena is the co-creator and owner of the world's largest online pole dance community. She discovered pole dancing in 2007. Her passion for pole dancing lies within the artistic side of pole dance. Through her online lessons, Veena has reached thousands of pole dancers using her unique Veena Method to guide students in their own pole journey from their own homes.

She is a life-long health and fitness fanatic and has been an ACE certified personal trainer since 2002. She also holds multiple certifications in various other fitness related fields. In her free time Veena also enjoys cooking, baking, hiking, camping, and gardening.

Veena is happily married to her best friend and business partner, the two have four amazing young boys. She hopes to be an inspiration for other mothers, demonstrating that you can enjoy your passion while still maintaining a strong and fulfilling relationship with your children and spouse.

Acknowledgements

I am forever grateful and blessed to have the support of my loving husband and four children. From the beginning they have been understanding of my love for movement, allowing me the time I need to grow and create. My husband, Christopher, not only designed and created the technology for Studioveena, but he has also been my business partner and best friend. Without him, teaching around the world would not have been possible.

I'd like to extend a big thank you to Yolanda Torres for helping me edit and piece my written thoughts into a cohesive course, I couldn't have done it without her help!

This course is dedicated to all of my Studioveena students over the years. You have all taught me so much through your questions and video shares. You have supported and believed in my abilities as an instructor and for that I thank you.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a free, structured program, in hopes of creating a connected and cohesive pole community. Providing instructors with quality teaching tools and students with consistent training.

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The Veena Teaching Method

Teacher Training Course

Welcome to the Studioveena.com Teacher Training Course. Here is a quick preview of what will be addressed throughout this guide:

- What the Veena Method is
- Who can benefit from the Veena Method
- How to apply the Veena Method at home, in class or online
- How to gain or maintain strength for pole
- How to maintain strength without a pole, off pole training options
- Responsibilities of a pole dance instructor
- How to reduce risk of injury
- This method is not a certification course
- This method is not a business course

Learning Objectives

- Understand the purpose of a warm up and why it is important
- Learn injury prevention exercises
- Learn exercises to strengthen the scapula
- Learn exercises to strengthen the core
- Learn options for off pole training
- Identify fundamental pole work
- Identify the POC (Points of Contact)
- Identify when a student is ready to move on to static spins
- Identify when a student is ready to begin working on inverts
- Identify safety concerns with teaching static spins too soon
- Understand basic pole strength moves
- Understand the difference between elite level and amateur
- Understand the difference between flexibility training and stretching
- Identify stretches and offer alternatives for less flexible students
- Identify major muscle groups used in pole moves
- Identify major muscle groups stretched
- Identify static spin grip terminology

GETTING STARTED – HOW TO USE THIS COURSE

Welcome to the Veena Method and Teacher Training Course. After many requests for a certification, I decided to create a course along with this study guide to help others understand the Veena Method and how to utilize the StudioVeena lessons to teach students or yourself. This method can be used to enhance an existing curriculum, on its own, in class and at home. I have designed it to be easy to follow, allowing those without a fitness background to understand the concepts I have created. Anyone can learn and teach this method. To get started, simply follow the order of material presented in this manual. While reading through the 12 sections, please take time to follow the links (or copy and paste in browser) when listed.

- A. Veena Method
- B. Pole Dance Basics
- C. Signature Moves and Elite Pole Work
- D. Warm Ups
- E. Strength and Conditioning
- F. Fundamentals of Pole Work
- G. Beginner Level
- H. Evaluating Students for Spin Pole Work & Spinning Pole
- I. Intermediate level
- J. Advanced Level
- K. Off the Pole
- L. Pregnancy and Pole

Read-

Much of the information for my method is online in video form. In addition to watching each video in full, please be sure to READ each description that has been placed under the main player of the lesson. In the descriptions you will find useful information. Again, watch links to the lessons as you read.

Watch-

By the end of this course you should have watched all of the lessons placed under the following categories and read the descriptions.

- Beginner https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/beginner-pole-lessons
- Intermediate https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/intermediate-pole-lessons
- Advanced https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/advanced-pole-lessons
- Conditioning https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/conditioning-exercises
- Stretching https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/stretching-exercises
- Routines/Combos https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/routines-pole-lessons
- Veena's Tips https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/veenas-tips
- 30 Day Take Off Program https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/30-day-take-off
- 30 Days to Flexy https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/30-day-flexy

Practice-

Even if you feel you are familiar with a move or exercise, please take time to watch and practice everything that is within your body's ability, this includes Conditioning, Foam Roller and Stretching sections. I often update and add new lessons, so I may have updated a lesson. Also, my method of teaching may be different from what other instructors have taught, which makes watching each lesson important. Become familiar with the tips I provide in the Veena's Tips section so you are able to share them with students.

A. VEENA METHOD

HOW THE VEENA METHOD WAS BORN

After having my youngest in 2008, I experienced pole dancing at my weakest and decided it was time to change the mainstream approach of teaching static spins first to new pole students. When I started my pole dancing journey, I had come from a background in exercise and had been weight training for years. This allowed me to excel quickly, however, after having my 4th baby, I had the opportunity to experience pole dance as an untrained individual. Lacking overall strength and flexibility after having my youngest, I decided to develop a guideline for my personal use that focused on strength building first. I then realized this method of strength first reduced the risk of injury and improved student retention for not only my online lessons but studios that used my teaching method as well.

The Veena Method is heavily focused on beginners; this is due to the fact that almost all moves build upon each other or they are based on variations of basic and fundamental moves. Building a strong foundation from the very start will allow for faster progression and reduces the risk of unnecessary injury. Beginner pole work is also important because many students will not have the time or desire to progress higher than basic pole work. As instructors we need to remember that every level of pole dance can be fun, improve physical fitness and provide emotional freedom and expression. Progress is not the only outcome students should be encouraged to strive for. Encourage students to enjoy where they are in their journey and remind them that pole dancing at any level can be physically and emotionally fulfilling.

This course provides a written breakdown of my method that can be printed and kept in a folder/binder for quick reference. Or keep the links ready to use on your computer for quick access to both the written course and video links. In this course, you will also see how this method is practiced by watching the videos and reading descriptions in the online studioveena.com lessons.

B. POLE DANCE BASICS

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility training should be done when muscles are very warm. For example, train flexibility after pole dance, strength training, or any activity that raises the body's temperature. It is unnecessary to perform deep static stretching before warming up; there has been no proven benefit to deep stretching before physical activity. In fact, it can be detrimental in some cases. Student's time is better spent elsewhere.

Deep stretching can fatigue muscles as well, so avoid flexibility training before pole dancing, unless the focus of the pole practice is flexibility based pole trick work. Deep stretching before pole practice may make for a less productive session and increases the risk of careless injury due to fatigue. Therefore, strength based moves should be avoided after heavy flexibility training. This video has more information on flexibility training <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/4dd66731-eab0-4b4a-aa13-41ad0ac37250>

POINTS OF CONTACT (POC)

This is a term I introduced when I began working on how to teach without physically being there. A point of contact is the point or points on the body where the pole makes contact. In order to maintain contact with the pole a student will usually push the point of contact into the pole in order to actively hold the body up or to maintain the desired position on the pole. Students often try to hold themselves on the pole by using only skin contact, be sure to cue them to use the muscles to squeeze or press into the pole as well.

It is important to note, not everyone will have the EXACT same points of contact. POC is to be used as a basic guideline allowing the student and instructors to communicate. If they are not capable of reaching the exact POC during pole moves, it is often acceptable, as long as they are close to the general POC. Keep in mind that flexibility, pole diameter and body structure will determine exactly where the POC are.

Avoid using these areas as POC:

- lower ribs
- clavicle
- spine
- tailbone
- knee cap

If any of these areas are being used as a POC, the student is either not ready for the move physically, they do not understand the POC, or the move is not right for their body type.

ADVANCING

The online lessons are placed in the order in which to work on them, however, it is important to note that a student can advance to the next move even if they cannot perform every move before it in my lessons section. The order of progression is a basic guideline to follow, allowing each move to build on the next. A dancer does not have to learn every intermediate spin before working on intermediate pole work. In fact, if a student has natural flexibility, they may be able to achieve some of the intermediate and advanced pole work simply because of the flexibility requirements.

It will be important to have a mix of spins and pole work during a pole session to help avoid overuse and boredom. Placing all spins at the beginning of class may not only increase injury due to overuse, it can cause many new students to become dizzy and queasy. For new dancers most spins are not appropriate yet anyway. Begin class with strength based work, floor work, and transition to ease the body into each session. Remind the students often that pole is not only about progressing to the next level, pole can be enjoyable and beneficial at any level. Inverts are fun but not necessary for every pole dancer. You will find ideas for class structure in the Combos and Routines section https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/d391c86e-ff58-11e1-b996-12313d086a56

SPOTTING

Pole dance instructors are often working with the general population and not trained athletes, therefore, spotting should not be approached as a method of helping a dancer get into a move or position they are not capable of doing on their own. Instead, spotting should be used as a safety measure, to help slow down or prevent falls. Physically helping a student get into a position they are unable to achieve on their own, whether it is due to lack of strength, flexibility or understanding of the POC, can create a greater possibility for falls and injury. Students should always be encouraged to stay within their own ability level.

When working on new moves, a crash mat and a spotter should always be used, also encouraging students to practice moves from the floor or as low to the floor as possible is best. When learning new moves, students should not wear heels in order to prevent ankle strains, sprains and possible injury to the spotter.

The majority of spotting will be done at the hips, never grab hold of the head, hands, arms, feet, or legs to slow a fall. Stay close to the person you are spotting, keep your eyes on them and pay attention to the student's body language and face. Signs of fear are wide eyes, open mouth, and the body may become very stiff. If you see these signs, know that person is possibly feeling fear. Be prepared to help if needed.

Teach head tucks (chin to chest) and pole hugs from the beginning. Some dancers will have a natural safe hold they go to, as long as it is biomechanically safe. For example, no twisting of limbs, feel free to encourage them to continue using their natural "safe" hold.

Keep an eye on the hips, hands and legs. In a panic, students may let go with the hands or release the legs. By watching the hips you will be able to tell which direction they are falling and react accordingly, always giving priority to protecting the head and neck.

For the spotter, when holding the hands out under a dancer, keep the fingers close together, in a cupped position. Spreading the fingers out could result in injury to the spotter's fingers or hands. Always be aware of what direction the student's legs and arms should be going to avoid being struck in the face.

In addition to verbal cues, tapping or briefly touching an area of the body that needs an adjustment is a helpful reminder to students. Do not use force to help a student into position.

The following lists the four basic spotting hand placements:

<u>Hands on hips</u>	<u>Hands under torso</u>	<u>Hands crossed for moving mounts</u>	<u>Hands under shoulders</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Reverse Handstands ◇ Elbow Stands ◇ Caterpillars ◇ Butterflies ◇ Inverted Crucifix ◇ Inverted Thigh Hold ◇ Star/Adv Star ◇ Scorpio Handstand ◇ Straight Edges ◇ Inverted Back Hook ◇ Reverse Inverted V ◇ Knee Hold ◇ Eros ◇ Split Grip Invert ◇ Iron X 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Planks ◇ CKR/CAR ◇ Gemini ◇ Scorpio ◇ Hip Holds ◇ Superman ◇ Marley ◇ Shoulder Mount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Cartwheel Mount ◇ Handspring Mount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Pencil Mount ◇ Bow and Arrow

HISTORY OF POLE

Let's take a quick look at the history of pole dance before moving on to pole dance levels. The use of a pole for exercise has been traced back at least 800 years to the traditional Indian sport of mallakhamb, which utilizes principles of endurance and strength using a wooden pole, wider in diameter than a modern standard pole. There is also Chinese pole, which originated in India and often uses two poles on which men would perform "gravity defying tricks" as they leap from pole to pole at approximately 20 feet in the air.

In the 1920s, traveling circuses and sideshows would utilize pole dancing with a pole in the middle of a tent. Eventually pole dancing moved from tents to bars and combined with burlesque dance. Since the 1980s, the dance pole has increasingly been incorporated into striptease routines, and Go-Go or lap dancing, first in Canada and then in the United States. In the 1990s, pole dancing commenced to be taught as an art and used in fitness exercises.

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pole_dance

CLASSIFICATION OF ELITE, PROFESSIONAL, AMATEUR

Pole dance is for everyone. Most can learn the fundamentals of pole, as well as enjoy the benefits that pole dance has to offer. As pole instructors, we should understand that even the most basic pole move can increase strength, boost self-esteem, and look beautifully impressive. As professionals, it is our duty to guide students through their pole journey using safe and effective methods, and by doing so, we will increase student retention and prevent unnecessary injury.

Due to the mainstreaming of pole, along with the sudden surge of in-home poles being available, there came a bit of confusion as to what moves are actually reasonable for the general population and what pole work is professional or elite level. Let's take a closer look at what possibly caused this confusion.

Those who started pole dancing around 2007 watched acquaintances, friends and fellow pole dancers enter newly developed competitions, create new pole moves, and become Pole Stars by winning competitions, gaining instant fame within the small pole community. This was great and we will always need someone to represent what pole is and where it is going; however, it is possible the confusion as to what is amateur appropriate has set in because pole dance as an industry has grown very fast. Today we see circus style moves being developed by those entering pole dance from Contortion, Chinese pole and Gymnastics backgrounds. Pole dance jumped from girl next door to contortionist almost overnight. Along the way we struggled to define what is class appropriate work and what is elite level work.

For the purpose of this course, I will use the following descriptions as a guide for levels in the development of my lessons.

Elite - A pole dancer who is considered to be the best in their talent field by having achieved a very high level of proficiency, demonstrating high levels of strength, flexibility and overall skill. Spending several hours a day practicing and participating in activities that help maintain this high level of achievement. This level is not reasonable for everyone, ongoing injury is often a harsh reality for those training to this extreme.

Professional - A pole dancer whose main paid occupation is pole dance related. It is part of their job and it is a large majority of their life. Those who fall under this category are instructors, paid pole dancers, exotic dancers. Professionals may or may not be dancing at an Elite level.

Amateur - A person who engages in pole dance for sport and fun on an unpaid basis. They spend minimal time pole dancing, most students will fit in this category. Included in this category are also those who practice regularly, 3-6 days a week, but not to the extreme of an Elite.

Below you will find suggestions for classifying pole work. We will look at Signature and Elite moves.

C. SIGNATURE MOVES AND ELITE POLE WORK

SIGNATURE POLE WORK

Signature tricks are widely popular in workshops and are often shared on social media, this can be very inspiring and exciting. However, we need to remember that many signature moves are signature partially because that particular dancer's body, usually an Elite level dancer, has the ability to produce that move. Not every pole move is right for every body. **I'll repeat, not every pole move is right for every body!** This goes for basic pole work as well. If a student experiences pain or cannot find a safe pole placement on the body that allows them to keep ribs and joints safe, or if they lack the strength and flexibility for a move, they should not be forced or encouraged to continue working on that trick. Always encourage students to listen to their bodies.

ELITE POLE WORK

As instructors, we need to provide our amateur students with a clearer definition of appropriate, non-elite, studio and home pole work. Anyone who competes or performs at an Elite level in a sport knows there will be injury, you will push and push your limits some more. However, this is NOT what the amateur, studio or home pole dancer should strive for. Pole dance should be fun, balanced and attainable, improving physical and mental health. It should enhance the student's life, not riddle them with injury and it should be a positive and self-accepting experience, without the feelings of inferiority that can be brought on by striving for Elite level moves. Students need to be reminded, even in a pole class setting, that pole dance is an individual journey; they should strive only to outdo themselves, not others around them.

Below is a very short list of the more popular advanced moves that have been labeled Elite level. This is not to say that ONLY Elite should or could acquire these skills, but rather give the instructors and students an understanding of what moves may require years of consistent training and therefore should not be rushed. These moves have been placed under the Elite label due to the level of training, risk, flexibility and strength necessary.

Examples are:

Batwing	Iron X
Chopsticks	Orion
Closed/Contortion Scorpio and Gemini	Phoenix
Contortion Ballerina/Eagle	Rainbow Marchenko
Flag Invert	Shoulder Mount Flip
Fonji	Spatchcock
Inverted Drops	Twisted Grip lifts
Inverted Pole splits	Yogini

Please note that every student will have different strengths, this is simply a guideline. With that in mind, when a new pole move is brought up in class and a student asks “can you teach us this?” use the questions below to help you decide if that particular pole move is acceptable for your class level or a student.

If you answer yes to any of the following questions then the pole move is NOT Amateur appropriate but rather Elite level pole work.

Does the move require a release and catch of the pole?
Does the move require contortion level flexibility?
Does the move require limbs threading/passing through other limbs possibly tangling and making a safe exit tricky?
Does the move place the body's joints in a compromising, beyond neutral position?
Does the positioning against the pole potentially place ribs, clavicle, spine or knees at risk?
Does the move require superior strength?

As instructors we must constantly remind students of the hours spent training and sacrifice needed to perform at an Elite level.

D. WARM UPS

A properly structured warm up will increase the joints range of motion and dilate blood vessels, helping lower resistance of blood flow which places less stress on the heart. It will also increase muscle temperature in the body, allowing for a more forceful contraction and a quicker relaxed state. This can help increase the strength behind the muscles. For example, have you ever started lifting weights or pole training feeling like every lift or move was so hard, but as you went on in the workout you felt strong and powerful? This is a good example of how increasing blood flow improves performance. An increased body temperature also reduces the risk of strains and pulled muscles.

A warm up can set the tone for the class or pole session. If rushed, we may feel stiff, cold and unmotivated. If we take extra care to spend time warming up the body, the pole and mind, students will be ready to train. Listed below are helpful guidelines for creating appropriate warm ups.

A 10-20 minute warm up should be performed before pole dancing. During cold seasons incorporating the pole in the warm up will ensure that the pole is warm and the student's body temperature is raised. A cold pole is a waste of a student's time, causing slipping and frustration. Keep in mind that elements like air conditioning can also cause poles to be difficult to grip, making a longer warm up necessary even in summer months. In warmer climates, students may need a fan nearby to help evaporate moisture from their pole and body, allowing for improved grip. A quality warm up achieves a light stretch during the routine through various poses and rhythmic exercises used. This concept is demonstrated in my Basic Warm Up lesson

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/52e9ddc7-6c54-4f49-b60b-48950a9aa0eb> You will also find several other routines that can be used as warm up options in the routine section of the lessons https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/d391c86e-ff58-11e1-b996-12313d086a56

When choosing a warm up, keep class level in mind. If dealing with beginners, warm ups should be simple enough that new dancers can keep up. Save more difficult warm ups for intermediate and advanced classes. Heavy flexibility training should only be performed after a workout or a very vigorous warm up, to ensure that the muscles are fully warm. It is not advisable to follow a flexibility training session with a pole dance session. Training after a heavy flexibility session can increase risk of falls due to muscle fatigue, also muscles stretched to the point of fatigue can leave joints less stable. This means strength based pole work should be avoided after flexibility training. Working on flexibility based pole work such as Ballerinas and Pole Splits are okay as long as caution is used. Polers who have tendencies to hyperextend their limbs are at greater risk for joint injury when poling even without having done a heavy stretching session first. So when choosing a warm up for class, remember light stretching to maintain is fine, but not needed before working on strength based pole work. And the key to a good warm up is to use rhythmic, repetitive motions that include a few muscle lengthening sets. Keep repetitions on the higher end, meaning more than 10. This will also allow new students to gain an understanding of the movement before moving on to the next exercise.

Mental Preparation - The warm up is a good time to mentally prepare for an event by clearing the mind, increasing focus, reviewing skills and strategy. Positive imagery can also relax the dancer, build confidence and improve concentration.

Examples of great exercises to include in a warm up are:

- Squats <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e964ee7-7674-4c83-8bef-7922ac110005>
- Pole Kicks <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fe0a9-5c14-4392-b39f-0cfeac110005>
- Leg Lifts <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e854f1d-e4e0-4d43-9bf4-4aabc110005>
- Pole Walks <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a5dd1-9b7c-4946-8de7-5b2fac110005>
- Hip Circles <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8bda30-4734-4c74-bdb6-2f36ac110005>
- Body Waves <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8611d8-b4b0-44c5-a309-5493ac110005>
- Pole Holds <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a716c-3f3c-4f4a-a590-5bdcac110005>
- Side Pole Hold <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a61b4-f650-4605-addb-5b68ac110005>
- Shoulder Slide <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fcdd7-8280-4af9-be9e-0b5aac110005>

Try using moves listed at the start of the Beginner section in your warm up routine

https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/f600e700-07ec-102d-9b8c-003048b8feb1

Floor work can be used as well. https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/Floor_work

The strength and conditioning section has many options.

https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/conditioning-exercises

The ROUTINES Strength and Stretch section has a great selection of routines to use as warm ups:

https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/ROUTINES_Strength_and_Stretch

Using hula hoops as a method of warming up is a lot of fun and it is great for improving coordination. Here is a link for basic hula hooping. You will also find instructions on how to make your own hoop
https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/hula-hoop-lessons

E. STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

Strength and conditioning work is important for new and seasoned pole dancers. The conditioning video lessons will focus on the smaller muscle groups that are often forgotten and under used. Light weights or little resistance is often used and the goal isn't how heavy one can go, but rather proper form and function during an exercise. These smaller muscle groups help with posture and are often weak even in people who appear strong. You can think of conditioning as preparing and maintaining the body for the task you are about to do and plays a large role in injury prevention. You will find all of the conditioning lessons here
https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/conditioning-exercises

The strength work video lessons will focus on the larger muscle groups that are more commonly known and used. It is necessary to focus on strength when striving for progress and making large improvements in pole work. All strength and conditioning routines can also be used as warm ups. You will find a list of muscles strengthened in some lesson descriptions.

Students do not need to know the name of each muscle group; however it is a good idea as instructors to learn the major muscle groups of the body. Here is a link to a fun online game to help you learn the major muscle groups. Poke-A-Muscle <http://www.anatomyarcade.com/games/PAM/PAM.html> Another great way to learn more about the muscles is an app called Muscle System Pro III by 3D4Medical.com, LLC
<https://appsto.re/us/OX0Uv.i>

This is an app I have used and it is a great reference. It allows you to see all angles and uncover very deep hidden muscles, giving a better understanding of the body.

WHEN TO STRENGTHEN and WHEN TO CONDITION

When looking to progress, strength training is the key and often an ongoing process. It is a necessity for those who are serious pole athletes to strength train (usually weight free), in addition to pole training. However, if a dancer is pole dancing for fun or exercise, heavy strength training isn't as important. Conditioning on the other hand should be done by EVERYONE. These exercises will not only protect the body during pole, it will make for a more functional body in daily life. Everyone wants to enjoy life pain free, with the ability to reach, stretch and bend. Conditioning is the key to staying pain free.

Part of every conditioning session should include a review of proper shoulder posture. Working on scapula movement also makes for great homework and off pole training. In my S.O.S lesson I'll cover tips for proper alignment of the shoulder, elbow and wrist when arms are overhead
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7034cf-2b58-4d29-a149-1be9ac110005>

SETS and REPETITIONS

Strength - If a dancer wants to gain strength, lower reps and more resistance are needed. For example, when doing a Pole Triceps Push, a student looking to increase resistance should stand as far away from the pole as possible while still maintaining proper form and control. Standing farther away creates more resistance. They should be able to perform no more than 10-12 reps if they are striving for heavy muscle growth. Once a student can easily reach 10-12 reps, it is time to increase the workload, by either moving farther away from the pole or adding some kind of external resistance. Higher reps of 12-20 works well if general fitness is the goal.

Conditioning - For conditioning purposes, higher repetitions and lower resistance is best. Remember the conditioning lessons focus on the smaller muscle groups so there is no reason to go as heavy as possible for conditioning. Proper form is extremely important when working on conditioning exercises. Without a focus on proper form and

technique many of the exercises will not be as effective as they could be. We also want to avoid training the body into poor posture or unhealthy movement patterns.

CARDIO

Do pole dancers need to do cardio? This will depend on the dancer's goals. If a student is looking to compete, then adding a day or two of cardio work, in addition to pole practice can be helpful, but only for the first few weeks of training to build up stamina for the performance. Continuing cardio up until the performance can lead to fatigue, so reduce cardio at least a week before the competition or show. Pole dance is such a complete workout that the average student participating for health and fun doesn't need to worry about adding cardio. Provided they DANCE, and not only work on tricks or strength. If a student participates three or more times a week in routines that are nonstop movement like the routines shown in the lessons https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/routines-pole-lessons then no cardio is needed. If students gravitate towards only working on tricks or strength, then encourage them to add one or two sessions of dance or routine based pole sessions. They could also work on their cardio outside of class by walking, swimming, biking to name a few.

All of the dance routines listed in the lessons will be a good source of cardio. If you would like to learn more about the cardiovascular system and muscles, I suggest taking a group exercise instructor course or a personal trainer course.

F. FUNDAMENTALS OF POLE WORK

Fundamental moves are commonly used as an entry into more advanced pole work. Fundamental pole moves are also often used as a starting point for variations and signature moves. However, fundamental moves are NOT always beginner level. For example, a Shoulder Mount is a fundamental move for the Shoulder Mount Flip. A Gemini/Outside leg hang is a fundamental move for many transitions and advanced pole moves like Superman, Falling Star, Cherry Ribbon and Gemini to Scorpio switches.

Fundamental moves are the building blocks for a great pole vocabulary. Without understanding the fundamentals, moving into and out of more advanced pole work becomes sloppy and uncontrolled. We should always strive for control during each pole session. Control not only looks better, but it also allows the dancer to maneuver with greater ease and safety. A dancer with control is able to stop themselves if a move should start to go wrong, a dancer with control will also have the kinetic ability to sense if a move should or shouldn't be attempted.

It is important that dancers understand how to dance within their own abilities. Doing so will keep them safe. Pushing to dance beyond abilities increases risk of injury and accidents. Understanding fundamental pole work can be the key to safe pole dancing.

The following will cover Fundamental Grips and Pole Work.

GRIPS/HOLDS for beginners

Pole Hold - Used for climbs and entering into multiple pole moves

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a6f0e-9be0-47a5-ae17-5bdeac110005>

Side Pole Hold - Used for many inverts <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a61b4-f650-4605-addb-5b68ac110005>

Split Grips - Used for holds, entries and spins <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ed5b7ac-d20c-4669-8c9e-4396ac110005>

Arm Pit Grips - Used for Teddy and Yogini <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6847e2-59a8-4f55-b591-49d2ac110005>

True Grip - Cup Grip - Palm Grip - Used for Shoulder Mounts, Handsprings, Cartwheels, Air walks
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e682d47-bb6c-4f9b-8b54-4880ac110005>

Forearm Grip - Used for Climbs <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e68453b-4fe4-4fcc-9944-4993ac110005>

Elbow Grip - Used for Transitions and Ayesha <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e683f0e-db94-4ace-83e1-4946ac110005>

Shoulder Grip - Used for Shoulder mounts <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e702eac-0cbc-4ae7-8246-1b85ac110005>

Knee Pit Grip - Used for Gemini, Side Climbs, Holds and Transitions.
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7be01a-3240-43d8-a75a-308bac110005>

Lower Leg Grip - Used for Climbs and Caterpillars <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a6b55-0434-43e9-a1a6-5bb5ac110005>

Foot Grip - <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7be02b-f498-4b3e-947a-308fac110005>

You'll find more advanced grips and holds placed at the beginning of the Intermediate section
https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/intermediate-pole-lessons

SPIN GRIPS

Forward two hand (Beginner) - Face the pole, one hand high over head, thumb up, opposite hand placed just below, with a thumb up. Example: Fireman Spin
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e93cd7f-18b8-43aa-bc64-4d68ac110005>

Lateral two hand (Intermediate) - Stand beside the pole, inside hand high, thumb up, outside hand across the body, thumb up. Example: Front Hook Spin
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f1351ac-0abc-4c0d-8d31-4642ac110005>

Forward split grip (Intermediate) - Face the pole, one hand high overhead, thumb up, opposite hand extended below the waist, thumb down, or neutral. Example: Carousel Spin
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ee3e31e-3908-4b28-b2c4-016cac110005>

Lateral one hand (Advanced) - Stand beside the pole, inside hand high, thumb up. Example: Reverse Grab <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f2c5188-0344-477d-8983-2f64ac110005>

Here are some common mistakes for grips:

1. Leg Grips for Cross Knee Release and Marley: Avoid teaching students to pull on the hooked/crossed leg for CKR and top leg for Marley. While it may create the feeling of security, if the dancer isn't using their leg to hold them, but instead heavily relying on holding the foot or leg to keep them up, dislocation or tear may occur. When the knee is bent and hooked around the pole, the amount of pressure placed on the knee can be too much for the knee to handle. I have gotten more than a few emails from injured pole dancers who learned to pull on the top leg in Marley. It takes more effort to hold with the legs only, but it is worth waiting and

- building up strength to save your knee. If they must hold, make sure they grab higher on the shin not the foot!
2. Split Grips: Often I'll see students over gripping with the bottom hand, wrapping the fingers fully around the pole, this places too much stress on the wrist. Dancers should focus on PUSHING the bottom hand into the pole with the palm, instead of fully wrapping fingers. A death grip with the fingers can cause tendonitis.
 3. Static Spin Grips: Starting with the wrist flexed and shoulders pulled back and down. This is outdated and may cause shoulder impingement. Get to know the movements of the scapula, learn how to add external rotation of the humerus/arm bone creating more space reducing the risk of impingement and practice moving the clavicle, scapula and humerus as one. The cue to pull the shoulders back and down doesn't always apply when holding our bodies up. Here's a general rule to follow: Start movements from neutral scapula and if your hands are at or BELOW head height, pull the scapula back and down as you lift the body. If the hands are OVER the head, allow the scapula to lift up with the clavicle and arm bone as you hold the body. Forcefully pulling the scapula/shoulders back and down while raising the arms over head can cause shoulder impingement. Meaning the ball (end of the arm bone) runs into the top of the socket and rubs against the rotator cuff tendons. So when reaching overhead, let your scapula rise too
 4. Knee Pit Grips: Not being aware that we use different Points Of Contact on the knee pit for different moves. We use the Outside, Inside and Middle depending on the move.
 5. Forearm Grips: When using the Push Grip students don't always use the correct area of their forearm. If it's placed properly against the pole they should be able to physically push their body away with just the forearm. When using the Pull Grip students don't fully wrap into the elbow pit and miss out on the extra security and leverage you have when pulling with the forearm.

POLE PREP WORK FOR OTHER MOVES (Fundamentals)

Pole Walk - For spin preparation

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a5dd1-9b7c-4946-8de7-5b2fac110005>

Shoulder Slides - Used for grip prep for Shoulder Mounts

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fcdd7-8280-4af9-be9e-0b5aac110005>

Pole Sit - Used for Planks, Cross Knee Release, Cross Ankle Release, Ballerinas

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e73a77a-82b0-46ef-bf20-3d16ac110005>

Pole Climb - Used for Crucifix and to ascend the pole for aerial work

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e73a6aa-fd20-4071-bf41-3d25ac110005>

Cross Knee or Cross Ankle Release - Important for Bow and Arrow, Pencil, Janeiro

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f206a57-34ac-412a-ae5a-12d8ac110005>

Tuck Hip Hold - Used for all hip holds including Jade aslo helps with Inside Leg

Hangs/Scorpio <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f21e9ff-edf0-464a-880e-1b18ac110005>

Thigh Rest - Used for split grip prep and other advanced work

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8611fb-f938-415c-be47-549dac110005>

Side Sit - Used for aerial split, Side Pole Climb

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7bd54e-33e0-4ced-ab53-2f9bac110005>

Inverted Crucifix - Important for Inverted Thigh Hold, Caterpillar climbs, Butterflies, Ayeshas

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5eb62ab5-7db4-4666-8171-6ee7ac110005>

Gemini - Prep for inverted knee pit grips and needed as a transition for many moves

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ebad4a5-19e4-49b5-bcb6-1f4dac110005>

Caterpillar - Used for Caterpillar climbs, Butterflies, Ayeshas, Straight Edge

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5eb5e044-6078-4edc-bedf-6bd5ac110005>

Shoulder Mount - Used for Super Inverts, Transitions and Flips

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f70fdf8-97c8-49e3-bae1-58fac110005>

My hope in creating a list of Fundamentals of Pole Work is to provide everyone with a better understanding of how moves build on each other and why it is important to learn moves in a progressive order.

G. BEGINNER LEVEL

Beginner level is attainable for almost everyone. This is one of the most important levels to understand and nurture. At this level pole dancers are introduced to basic concepts and begin building a solid foundation that will allow them to progress. Pole sessions for new pole dancers should always include conditioning and strength based pole work, the warm up is a great place to include these. This is most important for students who do not have a background in exercise, and for those who live a sedentary lifestyle, meaning they are not participating in any other fitness related activities outside of pole dance. By performing conditioning and strength based work consistently in the beginning, they will develop the strength needed to safely perform pole moves and progress to more advanced work. Conditioning and strength based pole work should be incorporated into every pole session for beginners for at least two weeks, if a student is attending class 1-3 times per week. Remember, students should be encouraged to have a day of rest in between their pole session, including home practice. If a student is not attending physical classes on a set schedule, or the class is a drop in class, then conditioning and strength should always be included. When choosing static spins for a beginner class, use half spins and forward two hand spins, and reverse lateral two hand spins. You will find a review of spin grips on Pages 15 and 18 in this manual.

Conditioning is a crucial part of the learning process, it can help prevent injuries that are common among new pole dancers. Some of these injuries are tendonitis of the forearm, wrist and hand pain, shoulder injuries, along with upper back injury including intercostals injury. Prevention is the key to a long and healthy pole journey. Strive to keep conditioning and strength work fun by offering classes devoted to floor work and transitions or add these elements into your warm ups. A good example of conditioning made effective, fun and sexy, is the Ticktock Leg Routine <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5a7b8bb9-4804-4e0c-be61-181aac110002>

Encourage students to work on conditioning at home two times per week, in addition to their weekly pole class, to allow them to see the best results. It is great "homework".

After two weeks of conditioning and strength, 1-3 times per week, begin to introduce lateral two hand spins. Please note, split grip and lateral one hand spins are categorized as Intermediate, these are not appropriate for first time dance classes.

The 30 Day Take Off Program is a great example of how to incorporate beginner appropriate pole work, while

including conditioning, stretching and strength training into a single pole session for beginners. Here is where you will find the 30 Day Take Off Program https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/30-day-take-off and 30 Days to Flexy https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/30-day-flexy

EVALUATING STUDENTS and EXCEPTIONS

Very athletic students may be an exception. The student who has a background in strength training, contortion, gymnastics or other aerial arts and can perform a 3-6 second pole hold or a double pole climb with proper form, may move on to intermediate spins. Be very picky about watching form with students who are strong, as they are often able to muscle through things.

Larger individuals may have trouble holding their body weight when learning to spin on static pole.. Please keep this in mind and provide them with an alternative to work on until they acquire the strength needed to safely perform a static spin. A good alternative would be half spins, pole turns or transitions. If spinning poles are available this would be an option as well. When suggesting alternatives to reduce intensity, direct the suggestion towards the entire class, not just one person. Calling out one person can make the student feel uncomfortable and as if they are failing. Addressing the entire class suggesting they choose what option works best puts less pressure on students who don't progress as quickly. However, it is your job as an instructor to stop someone who clearly isn't ready for something they are attempting.

TEACHING TIPS

When working with students use the Show, Tell, Do method in this order

- ◇ Show (Visual)
- ◇ Tell (Auditory)
- ◇ Do (Kinesthetic)

Show - Demonstrate the move if possible. This will benefit the students who learn best through visual.

Tell - After demonstrating, explain what the move is (whether it is an invert, spin, mount, etc), the Points of Contact, and grips you will use. This will benefit the students who learn best through auditory instruction.

Do - Last, guide the student in performing the move themselves, give the students verbal cues for placement as they make their attempts. This will benefit the students who learn best through kinesthetic instruction.

By using the Show, Tell, Do method you can see how it will appeal to all three common learning styles. It also gives the instructor an opportunity to explain the move before asking students to rush into attempting it without any knowledge of what is expected.

POLE STRENGTH

Here are 10 basic pole strength moves in the Veena Method, more can be found on the website. Please feel free to add your own as well.

- Pole Squat (and variations) strengthens: Glutes Quadriceps, Hamstrings
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e964ee7-7674-4c83-8bef-7922ac110005>
- Pole Plie: strengthens Glutes, Adductors, Hamstrings, Quadriceps
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e964500-2850-4fcb-92be-7818ac110005>
- Pole Leg Lifts: strengthens Hip Flexors, Hamstrings, Quadriceps, Glutes, Abductors
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e854f1d-e4e0-4d43-9bf4-4aabac110005>
- Pole Lunge: strengthens Glutes, Quadriceps, Hamstrings
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e854def-31c8-4b9d-b3fe-4a8aac110005>
- Pole Hold: strengthens Latissimus, Trapezius, Rhomboids, Pectorals, Biceps

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a716c-3f3c-4f4a-a590-5bdcac110005>

- Pole Row: strengthens Latissimus, Posterior Deltoids, Biceps, Abdominals
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e874fd1-09e4-47eb-b8fa-66e5ac110005>
- Pole Triceps Push: strengthens Triceps, Pectorals, Anterior Deltoids, Abdominals
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e9648d4-d3a0-44de-a92b-7898ac110005>
- Pole Shoulder Press: strengthens Trapezius, Deltoids, Triceps
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e91004e-90f8-4d02-9f48-1e99ac110005>
- Leg Hook Side Crunch: strengthens Obliques, Hamstrings, Adductors, Abductors, Erector Spinae
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a72bf-016c-486d-821f-5bdcac110005>
- Side Hold Tuck: strengthens Biceps, Abdominals, Hip Flexors, Latissimus, Trapezius, Rhomboids, Pectorals
<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e96499e-1890-4821-a5f0-7898ac110005>

By utilizing these 10 exercises you will target all of the major muscle groups used in pole dance. Try incorporating them into a warm up, in choreography or as strength based pole class. Two examples of a strength based pole class would be the Pole Strength Routine and the Shoulders and Abs Routine found here

https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/ROUTINES_Strength_and_Stretch

REVIEW OF GRIPS FOR SPINS

As previously mentioned, there are four basic hand grips for static spins:

Forward two hand (Beginner) - Face the pole, one hand high over head, thumb up, opposite hand placed just below, with a thumb up. Example: Fireman Spin

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e93cd7f-18b8-43aa-bc64-4d68ac110005>

Lateral two hand (Intermediate) - Stand beside the pole, inside hand high, thumb up, outside hand across the body, thumb up. Example: Forward Attitude Spin.

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ed59371-5b7c-4d9b-bde1-410eac110005>

Forward split grip (Intermediate) - Face the pole, one hand high overhead, thumb up, opposite hand extended below the waist, thumb down, or neutral. Example: Carousel Spin

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ee3e31e-3908-4b28-b2c4-016cac110005>

Lateral one hand (Advanced) - Stand beside the pole, inside hand high, thumb up. Example: Single Arm Chair Spin or Reverse Grab <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f2c5188-0344-477d-8983-2f64ac110005>

You will find there are many variations of all four basic grips. For example, a lateral partial split grip is used for the Cradle Spin, and a lateral one hand for Ballerina Spin. The Extended Leg Carousel uses a forward split grip but slightly modified, it could also be done with a forward one hand grip. Beginners should start with forward two hand grips and reverse lateral two hand spin grips, think Back Hook Spin. These will place less stress on the joints of the shoulders, arms and upper back.

The lessons placed in the Beginner section can be used to develop lesson plans appropriate for Beginners. Keep in mind that forward two hand spins, with both feet off the ground should be introduced roughly two weeks into a pole session for students who attend class 1-3 times per week. Remember, students who do not attend regularly will not progress as quickly. Backward/reverse lateral two hand static spins, like Back Hooks, can be introduced sooner. Some students may struggle with the pivoting that needs to take place in order to move backwards, they may also struggle with fear of moving backwards. So keep this in mind when planning lessons and have an alternative ready.

When teaching pole walks, focus on neutral posture of the spine, neutral hands, wrist, elbows, and shoulders. Watch for students who have tendencies to hyperextend at the elbow. This should be corrected by having the student maintain a very slight bend in the elbow, using the bicep and triceps to support the arm, not the joint alone. Also keep an eye on a student's hands and wrists making sure they do not allow the wrist to wrap around the pole before entering a spin, this is called over gripping. Beginners should also focus on becoming familiar with leg hooks (from ground), both standing and lying, this will help the students understand the mechanics of leg hooks.

Students should also focus on various pole climbs and pole holds to help develop strength for spins. Remember, give cues for exhaling when exerting and to remind them of proper form which prevents injury. Also remind students that leg positions when performing a static spin are for holding the body in place, not for gripping the pole to hold the body up. The upper body holds them up, the legs are there to guide the spin. It is a common mistake for dancers to grip with the hooked leg in back hook spin, this slows them down, so remind them the leg is just a position and only resting around the pole, it is not holding them up. On a spinning pole the legs can also be used to hold the body in position. For this reason spinning pole can be a good option for those who are having trouble holding their body weight during static spins.

PROPER FORM

When preparing to enter a spin or pole move, proper form should include: A long spine, abdominals contracted, scapula engaged (DO NOT CUE SHOULDERS BACK AND DOWN) the scapula should lift with the arms and work within a safe Range of Motion (ROM) for their body. Do not let students who hyperextend at the joints to lockout in the hyperextended position. They should focus on holding a normal ROM position; this is done by contracting opposing muscle groups.

It is very important to remind students to listen to their body and stay within their own ROM. Mention this in each class.

This video has information on proper scapula engagement.

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7034cf-2b58-4d29-a149-1be9ac110005>

Conditioning exercises like this scapula drill are helpful

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7034cf-2b58-4d29-a149-1be9ac110005>

and up and neutral scapula exercise should be practiced often

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a74ea-715c-4901-afbe-5c4fac110005>

All levels can work on floor work, poses, and transitions. However, ROM should still be considered due to the high level of flexibility for some poses and floor work. Just like all spins are not appropriate for beginners, not all floor work is beginner level. As always the lessons for floor work are placed in order starting from easiest to hardest.

EXAMPLES OF BEGINNER POLE WORK

The following table lists Beginner pole work. (See Appendix A for links) Please watch all lessons to gain an understanding of each move listed in the Table.

(See Appendix A for links)

Pole walks	Forward two hand spins (facing pole)	Fan legs
Pole holds	Elbow stands (against a wall first)	Body waves (all variations, with pole, on the floor, reverse)
Shoulder slide (introducing the shoulder mount place- ment)	Handstands. Some students may not feel comfortable with this, so start against the wall first, using a Reverse Handstand. This is a very practical ex- ercise to know, as Reverse Handstand can be used to teach moves from the ground.	Hip circles
Pole climbs	Pole sit and variations	Pole turns/pirouettes
Basic Plank	Wrist sit (skip this if a student is hav- ing trouble holding their own body weight in pole holds)	Crucifix
Half spin	Standing knee hooks	Inverted Crucifix from Reverse Handstand

H. EVALUATING STUDENTS FOR SPIN POLE WORK AND SPINNING POLE

WHEN TO SPIN

For years I have said “most static spins are NOT beginner moves.” Many shoulders, elbows and wrists will be saved by having students focus on building up to static spins. As an instructor, you have the advantage of physically being there to assess a student. If you are unsure when someone is ready, use the following guideline.

SPIN READINESS GUIDELINE

When teaching any spin, begin with the static from standing variation, and then move on to static from walking. This will allow students to understand the push and swing of the legs needed for momentum on a static pole. Keep in mind static from standing will not produce as many revolutions around the pole as static from walking. Make this clear to students to avoid frustration that may arise by students assuming they should spin multiple times from standing. By saving the spin mode variation for last when teaching a spin, you can avoid having the dancer become accustomed to relying on the pole to do the rotation work for them. By spinning only on a spinning pole from the start, students often have a hard time relearning the timing and momentum needed for static spins. This is not to say that spinning pole is easier, it is a wonderful strength builder, but it can be more difficult for a student to learn the push and swing timing needed for static spins if they only work on spinning pole as a beginner.

A student is ready to spin when they:

1. Have a good understanding of scapula movement and can maintain form using proper body mechanics during pole walks, pole holds (both front and side variations), and pole climbs. This rule is especially important when working with heavier and under conditioned students.
2. They are able to perform a Pole Hold with proper form, holding for a minimum of 3 seconds (this is challenging for most new dancers). Heavier students will typically take longer to develop the strength needed to move on to spins. Keep encouraging them to work on strength building pole work and conditioning for the wrists and shoulders. Check out the Beginner combos for Beginner level appropriate ideas.
3. They are able to perform two consecutive Basic Pole Climbs.
4. They can perform a controlled half spin, (one foot stays on floor). This means they are NOT dropping down and hanging from their arm in the spin, but are using proper technique and muscle to hold themselves.

Before moving on to an Intermediate level, students should be able to perform Beginner spins (from a walk) and pole work listed in the lessons. With the exception of the Reverse Handstand, Elbow Stand, and Wrist Sit. Reverse Handstand and Elbow Stand are often scary for those with no gymnastics, yoga or dance background, they may take more time and that's okay. The Wrist Sit is often more difficult for students who are heavier, so keep that in mind when evaluating. They can still move on if Handstands, Elbow Stands and Wrist Sit are not mastered.

- Pole Hold 3-5 seconds
- Side Pole Hold 3-5 seconds
- Double Pole Climb
- Do most beginner spins from a pole walk

SPINNING POLE

When working with a spinning pole, the student can begin working on holds at any time, as long as they understand the concept of starting holds with correct scapula placement (If hand grips over head height, scapula lifts, if hands grip at or below head height, scapula pulls down) and neutral spine. Spins performed on a spinning pole are static holds, this is why new students will often prefer spin mode. Often it can be easier for them to hold a position on a spinning pole, rather than moving through a spin on static with timing and momentum, as it takes more strength and coordination. Remember, if the student only works on a spinning pole, moving on to static spins may be challenging, as mentioned before. Please watch this video for more spinning pole tips

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/60d26ba6-583c-4a3b-8c74-1f4eac110005>

I. INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

This is a level that is attainable for many, but usually only if pole is practiced consistently. Students shouldn't expect or be expected to reach any particular level within a certain time frame. Always encourage students to enjoy the journey, for some that might mean poling off and on for years and years, staying at a Beginner or possibly Inter- mediate level. Others will move on to competitions and performing. As instructors we must remind students that progressing beyond Beginner will require consistency. Occasional or weekend pole dancers can not expect to move forward as quickly as their regularly training counterparts.

INTERMEDIATE STRENGTH and CONDITIONING

There should be a continued focus on conditioning the shoulders, forearms and wrists to prepare dancers for split grip work and more physically demanding spins. In the lessons and routines, you will find variations for more difficult strength work for Intermediate and Advanced students. These will be labeled as Advanced within the lesson. The Advance options are great for Intermediate, as well as Advanced. If a student struggles with inverts, encourage them to add free weights or more strength based work of any kind in addition to their pole session. Strength moves like Pole Shoulder Press <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e91004e-90f8-4d02-9f48-1e99ac110005> , Shoulders and Abs Strength routine <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/528af759-bbfc-4825-9755-47180a9aa0eb> _ and Chest and Back routine <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/52812fc4-8024-4e4c-8363-7db40a9aa0eb> _ can be helpful when done regularly, and if lifting weights is not appealing or an option for students.

Inverts, inverted thigh grips, split grips, will be introduced at this level along with various climbs that offer more versatility than the Basic Pole Climb and Performance Climb. Do not rush students into these moves, and continue to remind them that there is far more to pole dance than inverts.

SPINS

As mentioned in the Beginner section, you will find there are many variations of the four basic spin grips.

Let's review the four Basic Hand Grips for static spins:

Forward two hand (Beginner) - Face the pole, one hand high over head, thumb up, opposite hand placed just below, with a thumb up. Example: Fireman Spin

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e93cd7f-18b8-43aa-bc64-4d68ac110005>

Lateral two hand (Intermediate) - Stand beside the pole. Inside hand high, thumb up, outside hand across the body, thumb up. Example: Forward Attitude Spin

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ed59371-5b7c-4d9b-bde1-410eac110005>

Forward split grip (Intermediate) - Face the pole, one hand high overhead, thumb up, opposite hand extended below the waist, thumb down, or neutral. Example: Carousel Spin

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5ee3e31e-3908-4b28-b2c4-016cac110005>

Lateral one hand (Advanced) - Stand beside the pole, Inside hand high, thumb up. Example: Reverse

Grab <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f2c5188-0344-477d-8983-2f64ac110005>

As the student moves into an Intermediate level it's appropriate to introduce full split grips, and as they approach Advanced level, lateral one hand spins. Spins such as Reverse Grab should wait until Advanced level allowing them to build the strength and flexibility for this move to be done safely. That's right, single arm spins are not appropriate for beginners or intermediate dancers.

FLEXIBILITY

Above average flexibility is not needed for the majority of pole work at Intermediate level. This is another reason that casual pole dancers may be able to maintain this level. As flexibility increases, lines will become more impressive, however even with limited flexibility, lines can be beautiful with proper technique. At Intermediate level, focus on improving lines in addition to learning new tricks and upright or grounded combos. Inverted combos can be introduced at the Advanced level. The Lower Body routine is perfect for strengthening legs and developing beautiful leg lines.

Here are some coaching cues for encouraging elongated or aesthetically pleasing body lines.

Legs/Feet

- Reach through the back of or behind the knee and leg
- Extend from the hip
- Rotate from the hip
- Open
- Lift from the core
- Lower from the core
- Sharp
- Quick
- Lengthen

Torso

- Lengthen from the spine
- Lift the ribs
- Engage the abdominals
- Reach from the top of the head
- Round the spine
- Arch the spine
- Tuck the pelvis
- Reach the pelvis

Arms/Hands

- Extend from the fingertips
- Soft finger and hands
- Flowing
- Reaching
- Lifting
- Sharp
- Quick

INVERTS

Inverts are far more complex than having students do Knee Tucks a million times. The videos listed below will provide wonderful information on how to go about teaching inverts in steps. Invert

<https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5eb9b374-1c80-4085-9b27-156fac110005> This video explains how to work on the Chopper <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f306a48-c52c-46ba-9f3b-4740ac110005> My Veena's tips for Chopper is another great tool <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/60ad73b8-9080-45cf-b4e9-5089ac110005>

BALANCE

Intermediate level is a great time to start focusing more on balance, especially when inverted. If students haven't begun training handstands (against the pole or wall), this is a good time to work on those. Core strength is also a big factor in inverted balance, so adding in some extra abdominal, back and glute training will be helpful.

EVALUATING STUDENTS

Before moving on to an Advanced level, students should be able to comfortably perform these Intermediate moves.

- Cross Knee or Cross Ankle Release
- Plank
- Solid Basic Invert
- Double Pole Climb
- Inverted Crucifix
- Gemini
- Scorpio
- Tuck Hip Hold
- Side V
- Caterpillar
- Butterfly
- Handstand
- Pole Hold Spin, static or spin, if using spinning pole, hold for at least 5 seconds
- Shoulder Slide

J. ADVANCED LEVEL

At an Advanced level, it can become a challenge to keep students engaged and interested in class, sometimes interest in pole fades as well. Let's take a look at a few common reasons why interest might decrease at higher levels.

1. Lack of time often causes students to stall, no longer progressing.
2. Feeling pressure to compete or progress to an Elite level can drive students away.

3. The overachiever; this student comes in with a natural ability and strength, flying through classes with ease and occasionally causing jealousy among students. These students start off strong and are prone to losing interest when things become difficult.
4. Another common issue is the student who begins their pole journey with a background in dance, gymnastics or other closely related sports. These students often progress very quickly and because of their previous abilities, instructors in an attempt to keep students interested, allow the dancer to work on tricks before they have learned all of the fundamental moves. Yes, the students are usually physically capable of performing more Advanced pole work, however entries, transitions and other elements often suffer if fundamentals are not taught from the beginning. Bad habits are learned early on and are difficult to break, so start EVERY student off right, by teaching fundamentals.

POLISH and PERFECT

To help students maintain interest in pole once they are no longer new dancers, begin having them focus on polishing and perfecting what they know. This is a great time to begin teaching longer, more advanced combinations. However, remember there should be a focus on polish, not just muscling through combos. Pointed toes, well executed lines and smooth transitions should be a focus for the advanced student. Have students experiment with different styles of inverts, climbs and spin combinations. Check out the Pole Combos lesson section for unique combo ideas on static and spinning pole https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/quick-lessons

FLEXIBILITY

Many advanced level moves required a higher than average amount of flexibility. This is often another problem students run into when hoping to progress. Keep the less flexible students engaged by explaining that many moves are just as beautiful regardless of how big a split is. Have the student focus on the lines and quality of movement. A Half Jade can be just as beautiful as a full Jade split. Also be sure to remind students that flexibility also takes time and commitment. Training flexibility now and then will not give them lasting results or improve flexibility long term. For the less flexible student share these flexibility hacks with them <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/60ba87bd-0094-4511-9a8d-70caac110005>

PROFESSIONAL and ELITE ARE NOT THE SAME

Often Advanced level students begin to explore options of either teaching or training as a pole athlete for competitions. Remember, for the purpose of this course, professional level dancers are not always advanced, but rather are paid for their art making them professionals. Elite dancers train for long hours and often sustain injuries because of the intense nature of this level of training. Encourage students to understand the possibility of injury and overtraining if/when choosing a path of Elite pole level.

Professionals of any level can make money for performing. The most important aspect of performing is to entertain, and this does not always mean performing crazy tricks. Often an audience has no idea that an Invert is technically easier than a Handspring mount. A quality performer engages their audience and is not predictable, they learn to entertain.

Elite competitors often travel for workshops and competitions around the world. This means a lot of time away from home and a life of hotels and visiting other studios. This can be a wonderful opportunity for those with an adventurous spirit. While there's not a lot of money in traveling, it can be a great way to see the world and meet new people. Professionals can also travel and do workshops and training.

Both professionals and competitors should take on these titles because they love what they do, not for hopes of fame or money. Money runs out and fame fades away. Do it for the love of pole dance.

K. OFF THE POLE

There are many reasons for pole dancers to require or desire off pole training.

- ◆ Injury
- ◆ Illness
- ◆ Cross training
- ◆ No access to a pole
- ◆ Burn out
- ◆ Life obligations

INJURY - Injury is the most common reason for a dancer to choose off pole training. While accidents can happen anywhere at any time, the good news is, most pole related injuries are preventable. As previously addressed, there are simple steps to prevent injury, let's review them.

Warm up - A proper and effective warm up uses rhythmic and repetitive motions, this is one of the easiest ways to reduce preventable injury. Taking the extra 10 to 15 minutes to warm up can save weeks or even months off the pole due to preventable injury. The most important aspect of a cool down for pole dancers is to stretch the hands and forearms. When short on time always stretch the forearms, always.

Strength and condition - As we have already learned, pole is highly demanding and if a student has no previous exercise background, then the step of strength and conditioning is extremely important for a successful and long pole journey.

Proper progression - I can't stress how important this is, not only from an injury prevention standpoint, but from a logical standpoint. If an instructor teaches pole work randomly with no plan for progression, students will not have the advantage of pole tricks building on one another, making learning new pole work easier. I have designed my method as building blocks to be learned, then stacked continuously making a solid foundation.

Proper body mechanics - Each and every class should focus on proper technique and body mechanics, whether it is a strength building class, stretching class or pole moves class. Ignoring a student's poor body mechanics will increase risk of injury and potentially shorten their pole journey. Think about this, an injured student is not a paying student, not every pole move is right for everyone.

ILLNESS - The general rule to follow when deciding to exercise during an illness is; if sickness is above the neck, such as a head cold, exercise can continue as planned. However, avoid inverted moves if suffering from sinus issues as this can worsen the problem. If the sickness is below the neck, such as a stomach virus or fever, rest is needed. Encourage students to wash their hands before pole class, this will not only help stop the spread of germs, but it will remove any oils and lotions that are often on hands. When dealing with long term illnesses, students should create an exercise plan with their doctor.

CROSS TRAINING - Any well rounded training program should include cross training. Cross training prevents boredom, reduces overuse injuries, it can also allow dancers to focus on weaknesses. Here are some examples of cross training workouts for pole dance.

Hula Hooping - Strengthens the cardiovascular system and improves coordination. When performed off the body it will strengthen hands, wrists, forearms and shoulders. Remember hula hooping can be a great way to warm up before pole practice.

Hammock - Improves balance, flexibility, strengthens the core, and increases spatial awareness. Aerial hammock will also strengthen the entire upper body including the hands, forearms, shoulders. When used in a yoga based

setting, hammock is a great way to relax and reduce stress.

Yoga - Improves balance, flexibility, mind body connection and some yoga practices also address a meditative aspect. This can be helpful when dealing with mental blocks when learning new pole work.

Dance Class - Ballet and Ballroom are great cross training options. Pole dancers will learn new movement patterns, they will learn how to spot when turning and a quality ballet class will focus on proper form and body mechanics.

Pilates - The conditioning and stretching in my lessons are very similar to Pilates methods. You will focus on deep core conditioning, body mechanics and mind body connection. Its primary focus is the body's core - the abdominal, hip and back muscles. Exercises are often performed in sets of five or 10, usually in a particular sequence. Precise movement is key when practicing. Pilates can help improve posture and help maintain a healthy body.

Weight Lifting - Strength training with free weights can be a great addition to those looking to move up to advanced pole training. Much like pole dance, strength training with free weights or any other external resistance, such as weight machines, resistance bands, or body weight, will help develop strong bones. Strength training increases bone density and reduces the risk of osteoporosis. It allows a dancer to maintain strength while giving the body a break from its usual movement pattern used on the pole. As you can see most forms of exercise are beneficial for pole dance.

NO POLE - Not every student will be able to attend pole classes three times a week or may not have access to a pole at home, but this doesn't have to slow their progression. If a student is serious about progressing in pole, there are many options for maintaining and gaining strength at home with little to no equipment needed. Resistance band and body weight exercises are free or they can use inexpensive methods of strength building at home by using exercise balls, iron gym and free weights.

You will find a selection of videos with options to strengthen the whole body using only body weight, a fit ball, free weights or bands here https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/ROUTINES_Strength_and_Stretch If students have access to the Studioveena lessons (and they should!) at home, be sure to encourage them to use the conditioning and strength lessons. These are valuable for all levels and most of them can be done without a pole. They also make for great homework options. As an instructor you should also have basic knowledge of full body exercises, these may have been learned through group fitness or personal trainer courses you have taken. Use these and provide students with a printed list of strength training options.

BURNOUT - This is a common issue for advanced and elite level pole dancers. Often they lose sight of what brought them to pole, they become set on perfection or progressing to reach someone else's level without enjoying their pole journey. Encourage advanced students to take time to enjoy their journey and reflect on how far they have come. Reassure students that taking a break is OK, and necessary at times, to fall in love with pole again. Suggest hooping, yoga, dance class, or if they need a creative break, training with weights is a great option.

LIFE OBLIGATIONS - This may be the most common reason for taking a break or quitting pole altogether. A student starts a new job, moves, has a baby or just ends up needing to spend more time with family. As instructors we can avoid losing pole dancers who want to quit pole because they feel left behind after an extended period of time off. The students who quit and never return often feel they have been left behind, this is such a sad and misguided thought process. No one needs to feel they have to pole all the time. Yes, it is challenging and regular sessions are needed if one wants to progress, but as I've mentioned before, progression isn't everything. As instructors it is our job to encourage students to stay with it, even when they have to come back and start over. Remind them that the journey back isn't nearly as long as when they started. Muscle memory kicks in and the body remembers. The goal with returning students is to make sure they take time to build their strength back up if they have been sedentary during their time off pole.

If a student has taken time off pole and has been active, and the activity included strength building exercises of some sort, these students will need to focus less time on conditioning and strength. Timelines will vary, but on average, one week of conditioning for injury prone areas like shoulders, forearms, wrists and core is a good idea before beginning any split grip or heavy static spin work. If a student has been sedentary during their time off, then 2-4 weeks is needed before working on forward facing single arm spins and split grips. The structure I use for the 30 Day Take Off Program is not only great for beginners, it is a wonderful way for those who have had time off to get back into pole.

Instructors, please remember to always encourage students to enjoy pole. It can be enjoyable even without inverts and advanced work. Take time to get creative with choreography and strength classes. This will open up more opportunities for students who can't pole regularly to enjoy themselves. Feel free to find inspiration within the ROUTINES Pole dance lesson section on studioveena.

https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view_category/routines-pole-lessons

L. PREGNANCY AND POLE

Before a pregnant woman continues her pole practice she must be cleared by her midwife or doctor for exercise. The following addresses a healthy, normal pregnancy. Unfortunately, most doctors and midwives have no idea how strenuous pole dance can be. Below is a guideline to follow, however, as an instructor it is your duty to educate yourself on exercise and pregnancy. A student of pole will need to speak with their doctor or midwife about their pregnancy and help them understand what pole is. If a woman is high risk, she will more than likely not be exercising anyway, so we will not address high risk pregnancy. Another exception would be a woman who has never pole danced before, she should not begin her pole practice until about six weeks after the baby is born. However, she could work on conditioning exercises for pole dance, allowing her to be a step ahead after the baby is born.

Here are the rules I followed during my pregnancy.

First Trimester

A regular routine may be continued. I focused on familiar pole work that I felt confident with and didn't learn any new moves. My first trimester left me feeling weak and sick, but I did find that exercise helped my morning sickness significantly and peppermint gum was a great way to settle my stomach. The gum was a life saver!! I was careful not to over stretch. Relaxin is a hormone that will be with you throughout the pregnancy, peaking before birth and will continue after the baby is born for a bit. Some women find that relaxin really affects them...but for me it was not a problem. It is thought that women, who prior to becoming pregnant, performed strength exercise, were affected less by relaxin and suffered less from loose joint issues. To put it simply...if you have strong muscles, tendons, and ligaments, this can help reduce the issues with relaxin. If a woman is new to working out and pole dance, spins can be really tough on the shoulders. Also no matter what type of exercise you choose, be sure to avoid overheating, this can be bad for the baby. The mom to be should drink plenty of water and stay cool.

Second Trimester

I didn't work on any new tricks and stopped inverting on the regular around 6 months. You will weigh more and your balance will be changing because of a growing belly. It is probably time to put the heels away if balance is becoming tricky. You know your body and skills so that is what is most important, what works for you!

Third Trimester

I rarely danced at all, maybe four or five times and I made a video two of those times because I knew I wouldn't be dancing much and wanted to remember those moments. Again, I did not do any inverts or climbs and I stopped most spins and had to modify others. Pole dancing while pregnant was so new there was zero information out there. With it being my 4th baby I chose to play it safe.

Will using abdominals hurt the baby? The quick answer is no. Contracting or squeezing the abdominals will not hurt the baby. The little one is well protected in amniotic fluid. However, if you have or have had in previous pregnancies, Diastasis recti (separation of the rectus abdominis) you do risk causing more separation if care isn't taken when training. If you have abdominal separation, avoid heavy lifting and activities that place strain on the rectus abdominis (6 pack). Moves like inverts, abdominal crunches and forward planks may increase risk of separation. These positions place unnecessary pressure on the rectus abdominis, which is not ideal if you want to avoid separation!

For healthy, happy abdominals, focus on the transverse abdominals before, during and after pregnancy. Exercises that focus on these areas, along with obliques, can help aid in preventing separation and prepare the body for labor. Before and after baby, try incorporating exercises like the Switch to help moms and all women learn to engage the transverse abdominals, healing abdominal separation and developing true core strength. This is a great exercise for after baby <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e96384e-6354-43fd-b1e9-76f2ac110005>

After the third month of pregnancy moms should avoid heavy exercise while lying flat on the back for extended periods of time. This position can put pressure on the vena cava blood vessel, a vessel that is prone to becoming compressed while lying on the back. This is the vein that supplies blood to the baby. Short bouts of time on the back are okay for some, but if the mother feels dizzy at all, she should no longer exercise in this position.

I have an unproven theory that inverted positions held for a long period of time late in pregnancy may increase the risk of turning a baby breech. Therefore, I personally avoided inverts and all moves that place the hips over the head for an extended period of time. My babies were head down and ready early on and I didn't want to risk it changing!

In conclusion, I wouldn't recommend learning new things or taking up pole dancing as a new exercise while pregnant. However, if you were a pole dancer before pregnancy, you can still enjoy your pole. Pregnant polers can dance around, do hip rolls, body waves and learn to feel sexy with their new body. This is a great time to practice moving in a controlled manner and to take this as an opportunity to practice good posture while dancing. Ladies can work on dancing through their breath, pointing toes (if they are having leg cramps then avoid pointing toes) and they can work on having pretty and expressive hands while dancing. During my pregnancy, I became more polished as a dancer, my movements became more fluid because that was my focus after my sixth month. Growing a human is hard on our bodies and doing moves just so you can prove it can still be done is understandable, but the pole will be there once you've had your baby. It will come back to you, so don't stress if you decide to take a break from pole while pregnant.

I would like to thank all of you for taking the time to study and familiarize yourself with my method.

I believe this method can help studios and students get the most out of their pole journey.

Happy Poling!

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Appendix A
List of Beginner Moves in Table, Page 20

- Pole Walk <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a5dd1-9b7c-4946-8de7-5b2fac110005>
- Sexy Walk <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fcc2a-b6d8-478c-8157-0b65ac110005>
- Pull In Walk <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fcba5-1214-421c-ab19-0b51ac110005>

- Pole Hold <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a716c-3f3c-4f4a-a590-5bdcac110005>
- Side Pole Hold <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a61b4-f650-4605-addb-5b68ac110005>

- Shoulder Slide (introducing the shoulder mount placement) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fcdd7-8280-4af9-be9e-0b5aac110005>
- Basic Pole Climb (For strength building) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7bd4b9-4dcc-4d65-820d-2f82ac110005>
- 2 Hand Plank <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f04ded5-1548-43e8-bce2-0dc4ac110005>
- Step Around <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7e4217-a544-4440-978a-55f6ac110005>
- Forward two hand spins (facing pole) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e93cd7f-18b8-43aa-bc64-4d68ac110005>
- Elbow stands (against a wall first) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5f3b0167-0dd8-4b36-8b6d-0b98ac110005>
- Handstands. Some students may not feel comfortable with this, so start against the wall first, using a Reverse Handstand. This is a very practical exercise to know, as Reverse Handstand can be used to teach moves from the ground. <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7e4afe-1e80-432d-a28c-56bfac110005>
- Pole sit and variations <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e73a77a-82b0-46ef-bf20-3d16ac110005>

- Wrist/Forearm sit (skip this if a student is having trouble holding their own body weight in pole holds) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e73a790-6084-43b2-a2a9-3d23ac110005>
- Beginner knee pit grips <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7be01a-3240-43d8-a75a-308bac110005>
- Fan legs <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e86129e-9a38-4a51-8d5e-5473ac110005>
- Body waves <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8611d8-b4b0-44c5-a309-5493ac110005>
- Reverse Body Wave <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8fcd01-cc40-488d-ab5d-0b67ac110005>
- Hip circles <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8bda30-4734-4c74-bdb6-2f36ac110005>
- Under Turn (Pirouette) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e6a6d52-7728-480d-921a-5b81ac110005>
- Across Turn (Pirouette) <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e8536b6-3818-4d47-b23d-48e7ac110005>
- Crucifix <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5e7bd552-10ac-414f-9f55-2f7dac110005>
- Inverted Crucifix from Reverse Handstand <https://www.studioveena.com/lessons/view/5eb62ab5-7db4->

[4666-8171-6ee7ac110005](#)