

Biography of Akihiro Kawasaki:



Akihiro Kawasaki is originally from Ibaraki, Japan. He has a very unique career in this medical and fitness field through doing an intern under physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists at Shelby Baptist Medical Center in Alabama, serving as a personal trainer and strength & conditioning (S&C) coach for the Olympians for the national team of Japan and working as a head S&C coach at the Houston Ballet and Academy currently with certifications/completions of *Functional Movement Systems (FMS) – level 2, FMS – Y Balance Test, Rossiter – level 4, Yamuna Body Rolling – Face, Feet, Table Treatment, Animal Flow and Spatial Medicine and more...*

Kawasaki began teaching Strength and Conditioning, Weight Training, Strength Training, Yamuna Body Rolling classes and Private sessions at Houston Ballet Academy in 2011. Also, he has been providing private and group sessions with Houston Ballet company members weekly to strengthen their weak-links and to prevent injuries.

Kawasaki has created exercises specifically using various technique and knowledge of *FMS, Animal Flow and Spatial Medicine* for dancers that will help strengthen the muscles efficiently to prepare them for the strenuous movements on stage. This style of muscle strengthening takes a specific understanding of how dancers' movements are complex, yet graceful, and demanding. His strength and conditioning classes at Houston Ballet are creative and fun for the dancers to participate in while utilizing resources such as: their own body weight, Swiss balls, weighted sand bags and various sizes of dumbbells, among other resources.

Kawasaki not only instructs the dancers on proper form but also reiterates the importance of nutrition, diet and hydration. He also helps keep them motivated to reach their goals and achieve their full potential. One of Kawasaki's philosophies is, "it is essential for student dancers to understand human anatomy, biomechanics and

exercise physiology in order to be able to practice self-care, to rehabilitate, and to choose training exercises in order to maximize and exceed their full potential in their body for their practice and performance in ballet.”

Kawasaki has taught both male and female dancers about the importance of the human body and how to take care of it. Kawasaki has designed different exercises for male dancers to improve personal ballet technique and strengthen partnering skills. Kawasaki works with Houston Ballet’s instructors to help the dancers with any weaknesses and to improve dance technique through strength and conditioning.

After the dancers strenuous yet productive session with Kawasaki, he teaches the importance of conditioning, resting the muscles and how to help prevent injuries after exercising. One way of helping the muscles relax is the practice of Yamuna Body Rolling or YBR. YBR is a component of bone stimulation which posits that if the bones are in correct alignment, then the muscle then will function correctly. Having the muscle properly function assists in relieving pain, preventing injuries and reducing unnecessary stress.

As with any professional sport, these dancers work hard on a daily basis to better themselves in their performances. During the ‘off-season’, the dancers continue to exercise and maintain a healthy diet. They rely on the help of health professionals/trainers such as Kawasaki to reach personal goals, minimize injuries and keep the body healthy. Kawasaki asserts that understanding human physiology will “produce more great, strong and reliable dancers in order to bring the level of Houston Ballet or other ballet companies higher and better.”