

seen dancers eating banana after banana after banana, because they think it's good for you. And that's the thing, dancers may have heard the information before, but they haven't necessarily understood it. We want to go back to the beginning and promote a basic understanding of nutrition, because it's one of the fundamental aspects of being a good dancer."

**K**ris and Cara have been in talks with Graham Oswick, who remains a close friend of Cara's since their competitive days, and who shares the couple's vision, and together they aim to devise a workshop to share this basic yet fundamental information with dancers. "It's about thinking of yourself as a professional athlete," says Kris. "I've been working with England rugby player Andy Gomarsall, and he gets nutritional and exercise plans from specialists who know exactly what his body needs. Why shouldn't dancers have that too?"

"It seems to be acceptable for dancers to have bad eating habits, to smoke etc, and it's a recipe for disaster," says Cara. "There's just nothing worse than getting to that last jive in a competition and having nothing more to give."

Like every dancer, Cara's weekly schedule was made up of a gruelling mix of training and practice, although she realises now that variety is the key to success. "I used to do my practice at Semley [Ballroom] from 9.30-11pm, plus my lessons, but that was it. I was lucky – my dad had me doing jumping jacks, and running up and down the stairs at

home – but a lot of dancers don't do any extra fitness activities to complement their training, because they don't look at it as a sport. But that's exactly what it is, and a sport needs all-round training, like Pilates for example – to properly understand how to make use of the breath is a vital skill for dance."

And it's not just Pilates, but other styles of dance, too. "I used to stretch until it hurt, then stop. Then you get these Eastern European girls whose legs go up to 180 degrees, because they know how to stretch properly, and because they've studied other styles, like ballet for example. Knowledge of other styles is so important, because it encourages you to dance from the inside. It sounds cheesy, I know, but so many dancers are technically perfect on the outside, but it's superficial."

Developing expression is another aspect which will be addressed in the workshop in order to explore the entire spectrum of elements required to produce a well-rounded dancer. As Kris →

**Below:** left, Cara during her competitive days with Graham Oswick, and right, with Matthew Cutler.

