



DANCE FOR HEALTH, DANCE FOR HAPPINESS

Did you know that dance is not only a creative outlet but also a form of movement? In a similar fashion to bodybuilding routines, dance is an artistic outlet. Beyond that, dance promotes a healthy lifestyle by improving muscle tone, bone density, balance, flexibility, strength and cardiovascular health. Additionally, it's beneficial to both emotional and mental health by releasing tension, stress, and helping to put you in a better mood. Let's not forget about the social fun you can have when you're on the dance floor! Taking it a step further, dance lowers your risk of dementia, improves memory. As a matter of fact, National Dance Day was created to promote artistic expressions and exercise and is celebrated on the third Saturday in September.

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There's basically formal dance, free-form dance, and cardio dance. While there are many styles of dance under each of these categories, which one you choose may be determined by what is offered in your area, your own preferences in dance or music or the desire to try something new. From ballroom to flamenco, square dancing to ballet, belly dancing to modern dance, free-form to hip hop, and line dancing – there is something for everybody when it comes to dance.

Ballroom dance is a low impact activity, can be done both in a class or socially, and is great for all ages. Dance workouts like zumba, typically done in classes at a gym, are a fun mix of moves for people of all ages, abilities, and fitness levels. If at-home workouts are your jam, there are dance video games and DVD's available or you can create your own playlist and just start moving!

Does dance really burn calories? Depending on the type of dance you do, here's the breakdown. Ballroom is considered a moderate to vigorous exercise burning approximately 200-400 calories in an hour and similar to walking briskly or water aerobics. You can almost double the amount of calories burned by doing a more intense type of dance like salsa or an aerobics class making this type of dance similar to jogging or swimming laps.



There are numerous other physical benefits to dance including decreased blood pressure and cholesterol, strengthen weight-bearing bones, help prevent or slow bone loss related to osteoporosis, lower the risks of obesity and Type 2 Diabetes, and promote increased lung capacity. Balance and stability especially in older people can be significantly improved through dance which can help prevent falls and stumbles. Finally, dance can improve mental health including memory, alertness, awareness, focus, and concentration and reduce the risk of cognitive impairments.

Most importantly, people who dance just seem to be happier. It brings like-minded people together, helps to improve confidence, communication skills, and a sense of accomplishment, all traits that can carry over to other areas of your life. Having a means to express yourself emotionally or creatively through movement is a hot new trend and is also known as Moving Meditation. TikTok influence has made the Pinegrove shuffle or emotive dance go viral because moods can be expressed through movement of the body and they feel genuine.



Dance is uplifting and fun; like the feeling you might get when dancing at a concert and you're moving and in sync with the crowd. It's a feeling, as adults, we can have a hard time finding. Dance is joyful and if getting healthier, exercising more, and lifting your mood is your goal then dance just might be the thing to try. How much creative self-expression is needed to boost your mood? Just two or more hours a week, in most cases. You can google "Dance for Happiness" to get started but before you do, here's a few things to consider:

- Start with a program tailored to a fitness level that suits you.
- If you have physical injuries, check with a doctor before starting any dance program.
- There are lots of options; public dance classes, an online dance program, or going to a dance-friendly venue or concert.
- Make it social, invite your friends and family to join you or meet new people.
- Some dance studios offer performance dance classes but above all remember, it is not so much about how good your dancing is, dance is more about joy, fun and social connectedness.

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