

Dance your way to better health

They say that the best type of exercise to do is the one you will stick with. If you love to dance, good news – more and more research shows that dancing has many health benefits.

Not everyone likes traditional exercise workouts. That’s why researchers have become interested in whether popular recreational activities, like dancing, can provide similar health benefits.

Dancing and brain health

Dance is a workout for both the body and the mind. Dance could have a positive impact on brain health as we get older. The research is still evolving, but there is some good evidence that dance can maintain or improve cognitive tasks like memory, attention, and orientation to time and place.^{1,2}

Dancing that involves learning complex patterns or movements seems to be particularly effective. Researchers also think that the social nature of dance plays a role as well, along with the presence of music. These factors evoke emotional experiences and parts of the brain that are involved with hearing and movement work together to keep to the rhythm. Also, dance movement training has been shown to reduce stress.³

Dancing and physical fitness

While good for brain health, dancing is also good for our physical fitness. Dance can help with mobility and aerobic endurance.⁴ Dance can also help to reduce the risk of falling. Research shows that people who dance regularly have better scores on tests that assess walking ability and balance.⁵

What is the best type of dancing to do?

First of all, pick a style of dancing that you like and can have fun with. Next, make sure that the style of dance suits your functional ability. For greatest physical benefits, the dancing should involve exercise at a moderate intensity. For cognitive

benefits, make sure that the dancing includes learning new steps or routines.

Is dancing enough?

Dancing is a type of aerobic activity that keeps the heart, lungs, and blood vessels healthy. Canada’s 24-hour movement guidelines also recommend activities that build muscle strength and flexibility. Try to exercise in ways that also include strength and flexibility 2 to 3 times a week.

We know being physically active is good for our health. There are a host of dance styles to choose from: line dance, polka, Latin, ballroom, and more. When we move to the music, every step keeps us aging well!

References:

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