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Get Your Boogie On

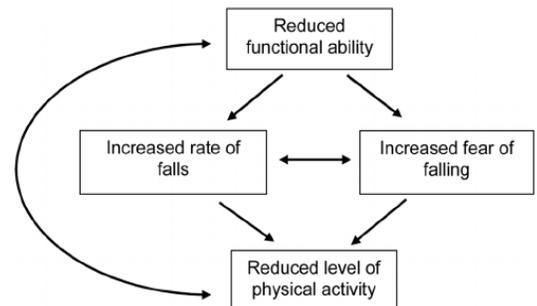


“Nobody puts Baby in a corner!”¹

The aging process causes many changes in body composition and physiological function, but that doesn’t mean we should stop dancing, in fact, it means we should dance more!!

Dance is defined by the Google dictionary as; “moving rhythmically to music, typically following a set sequence of steps; move in a quick lively way. Dance has been and is done for worship, for celebration, for mourning, for entertainment, as well as for exercise.

As adults age, they typically have greater body fat percentage, reduced muscle mass & strength, less endurance, less balance, and decreased aerobic power compared to younger adults. The cause for these changes vary, but the end result is typically a diminished level of functional ability which can readily be seen in older adults taking longer to complete tasks such as timed-up-and-go; sit-to-stand; stair climb; or timed walk. This reduced functional ability can start a vicious cycle of mental and physical decline.



Dancing is a form of exercise that can take many forms, be performed in a variety of settings, does not require much expense or equipment, and can appeal to a wide range of individuals of all ages. From the mental aspect, dance can bring back positive experiences of when one was younger and plays an important role in allowing older adults to maintain a connection to everyday life as it encourages fun and enjoyment while promoting social interaction, sense of community, appreciation of aesthetics and continued health. From the physical aspect, dance has the following health benefits:

- **Improved condition of heart and lungs, increasing aerobic fitness**
- **Increased muscle tone, strength, endurance and fitness**
- **Weight management**
- **Stronger bones; reduced risk of osteoporosis**
- **Better coordination, agility and flexibility**
- **Improved balance and spatial awareness**



Initially, one should start slowly, building confidence, as well as strength and stability. As one becomes stronger, more challenging and different forms of dance can be tried. One should consult a physician to review risks and make modifications to steps as necessary to avoid injury. The music that we dance to can also have a very positive effect on our mental state, so turn up the music and put your dancing shoes on; enjoy a happier, stronger you.

The following website was sourced and referenced for this article:

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ab82>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/dance-health-benefits>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40033548_Physical_Benefits_of_Dancing_for_Healthy_Older_Adults_A_Review

¹Quote from the film *Dirty Dancing* (1987), Starring Patrick Swayze & Jennifer Grey; Directed by Emile Ardolino

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