9 Health Benefits of Dance

Studies show that dance can help you lose weight, stay flexible, reduce stress, make friends, and more. Here, read more about the feel-good boosts from getting your groove on. 5-6-7-8!

These days, people love to watch other people dance. Competitive dance shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing With the Stars* are dominating the world of reality television. What you may not realize, however, is that if you get off the couch and dance yourself, it's a great way to keep your body and mind healthy. Studies show that dancing can help you lose weight, stay flexible, reduce stress, make friends, and more.

What are you waiting for? Start reaping the many health benefits of dance today.

1. **Boost Memory**
   Dance not only instills grace, but it also helps you age gracefully. According to a study in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, dancing may boost your memory and prevent you from developing dementia as you get older. Science reveals that aerobic exercise can reverse volume loss in the hippocampus, the part of the brain that controls memory. The hippocampus naturally shrinks during late adulthood, which often leads to impaired memory and sometimes dementia.

2. **Improve Flexibility**
   Those plies and arabesques that ballet dancers practice aren't just for aesthetics — they also increase flexibility and reduce stiffness. You can skip the ballet slippers and still reap the benefits of ballet by practicing some simple stretches at home. Increasing your flexibility will help ease joint pain and post-exercise soreness.

3. **Reduce Stress**
   If you're feeling tense or stressed out, you might want to grab a partner, turn up the music, and tango! In a controlled study in the *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, researchers found that partner dance and musical accompaniment can help bring about stress relief.

4. **Diminish Depression**
   Dancing really does lift your spirits, according to a study in that tested the effects of dancing on people with depression. Patients who participated in an upbeat group dance showed the fewest depression symptoms and the most vitality. Got the blues? Grab a friend and go out dancing tonight.

5. **Help Your Heart**
   Dance is a great activity for those at risk for cardiovascular disease. People with heart failure who took up waltzing improved their heart health, breathing, and quality of life significantly compared to those who biked or walked on a treadmill for exercise, noted an Italian study.

6. **Lose Weight**
   Bored with your bicycle? A study in the *Journal of Physiological Anthropology* found that an exercise program of aerobic dance training is just as helpful for losing weight and increasing aerobic power as cycling and jogging.

7. **Balance Better**
   If you are nervous about falling as you get older, some dance lessons might help ease your worries, according to a study in the *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity* that showed tango dancing can improve balance in aging adults. Dancing requires a lot of fast movement and good posture, so frequent dancing will help you stabilize and gain better control of your body.

8. **Increase Energy**
   Can't seem to find your get-up-and-go? Taking a dance class might help. Research published in *The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition* found that a weekly dance program could improve physical performance and increase energy levels among adults.

9. **Make Friends**
   A dance class is the perfect setting to make new friends and branch out socially. Maintaining positive relationships may just rank up there with healthy eating and exercise. Being socially engaged leads to increased happiness, reduced stress, and a stronger immune system.

Source: http://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness-pictures/health-benefits-of-dance.aspx#/slide-11