

Los Angeles Times

Dance Fitness Classes Make Exercise Like a Party

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October 31, 2015



Fitness trainers say they are putting more dance moves in their routines, and high-profile trainer Shaun T has a dance workout called Cize for streaming or on DVD and at gyms including Bay Club in Santa Monica. Dancing is naturally social, and experts say that in dance fitness classes, students draw from one another's energy. In other styles, yoga or barre among them, the focus is on the self.

The first requirement, instructors say, is to have fun. The fitness will follow.

"There are a lot of big positives" for dance fitness classes, said **Robert Huizenga**, an associate professor of clinical medicine at UCLA and a weight-loss expert on television shows such as "The Biggest Loser" and "Extreme Makeover."



"When you do a sport to music and with the social aspect, it does propel you to burn more calories," Huizenga said. "It's relatively cheap, works the full body and, if you keep one foot on the floor, relatively injury-free."

Still, like any exercise, participants will get back as much as they put in. While much is made of the often dramatic transformations of celebrities on "Dancing With the Stars" (Gladys Knight lost 60 pounds), that's not realistic for people who cannot spend hours a day dancing.

"You can still expect big results if you do three to four hours of dancing a week," said Emma Slater, one of the professional dancers on "Dancing With the Stars." "Dancing really activates every single muscle in the body. The constant cardio that is involved is a perfect way to create lean, long muscle and trim body fat."

Not that there isn't a degree of trepidation for those who will never move like Channing Tatum or Janet Jackson.

"If you can halfway see and can follow a little direction, then these classes are for you," said Vivian Nixon, the head of DADA Fit, a fitness-dance program based at her mother's studio, the Debbie Allen Dance Academy, where classes include Make Me Sweat, which incorporates dance moves from Bollywood, African tribal, twerking and more.

"If someone is having a hard time, there is always a modification," Nixon said.

"Basically, rhythm isn't required, but a good attitude is."

Here are a few to try:

Buti Yoga

What it is: Bizzie Gold builds this workout around tribal dance: Participants do wide squats and pound on the floor as if drumming, working the thighs and upper arms. Many of the moves, as well as the music, are pulled from African or Caribbean culture. butiyoga.com

Playlist: "Creator" by Santigold, "Sisters" by A Tribe Called Red, "How's That" by FKA twigs.

Where: One Down Dog Yoga Studio, 2150 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock, among other locations. Instructor Karen Resulto brings in a keyboard and sings for the final stretch.

Cost: \$20

Bangin' Body Bootcamp



What it is: Dancer Jennifer Johnson keeps the temperature at about 83 degrees in the studio so her students' muscles become more malleable for this intense and lively 90-minute Sunday morning workout. Her idea was to bring a dance spin to conventional fitness moves, so instead of just doing a burpee, she adds a body roll or a hip shake, and every lunge and squat has a sway or shimmy. "These are moves to take to the club afterwards," she says. jkdancer.com/classes/

Playlist: "Thinking About You" by Calvin Harris, "Elastic Heart" by Sia, "Trap Queen" by Fetty Wap.

Where: 3rd Street Dance, 8558 W. 3rd St., Los Angeles

Cost: \$35

Dancinerate



What it is: Ilyse Baker's hourlong workout draws on her choreography background, incorporating moves from "MC Hammer, Roger Rabbit and old-school funk, hip-hop, jazz and Broadway," she says. Although her moves are designed to work specific parts of the body, she leaves much of it open to interpretation. It pays off: Her students smile as much as they sweat. ilysebaker.com

Playlist: "The Way You Make Me Feel" by Michael Jackson, "No Diggity" by Blackstreet, "Good Kisser" by Usher.

Where: LA Dance Fit, 10936 Santa Monica Blvd., West Los Angeles

Cost: \$16

<http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-dance-workouts-20151031-story.html>