Dancing can be a way to stay fit for people of all ages, shapes and sizes. Dancing can improve your muscle tone, strength, endurance and fitness. Dancing is a great way to meet new friends. See your doctor for a check-up if you have a medical condition, are overweight, are over 40 years of age or are unfit.

There are many forms of dance, from ballroom to barn dancing and disco to Morris dancing. Dance has always been a part of human culture, rituals and celebrations. Today, most dancing is about recreation and self-expression, although it can also be done as a competitive activity. Dancing is an enjoyable way to be more physically active and stay fit.

Health benefits of dancing

Dancing can be a way to stay fit for people of all ages, shapes and sizes. It has a wide range of physical and mental benefits including:

- improved condition of your heart and lungs
- increased muscular strength, endurance and motor fitness
- increased aerobic fitness
- improved muscle tone and strength
- weight management
- stronger bones and reduced risk of osteoporosis
- better coordination, agility and flexibility
- improved balance and spatial awareness
- increased physical confidence
- improved mental functioning
- improved general and psychological wellbeing
- greater self-confidence and self-esteem
- better social skills.

Getting started with dancing

You can dance in a group, with a partner, or on your own. There are lots of different places where you can enjoy dancing, for example, at dance schools, social venues, community halls and in your own home. Dancing has become such a popular way to be active and keep fit, that most fitness clubs now offer dance classes in their group exercise programs.

Dancing can be done both competitively and socially. It can be a great recreational and sporting choice, because anyone of any age can take part. It doesn’t matter whether it is cold or raining, as dancing is usually done indoors.

The gear you need for dancing will depend on the style of dancing you choose. For example, tap dancing will involve buying tap shoes, whereas ballet will need ballet slippers and ballet clothing. To get started, simply choose a style you enjoy, or would like to try, look in the Yellow Pages or online for dance schools in your local area and join a class.

Types of dance

There are many styles of dance to choose from, each with its own attractions. Popular styles of dancing include:

- Ballet – mostly performed to classical music, this dance style focuses on strength, technique and flexibility.
- Ballroom dancing – this involves a number of partner-dancing styles such as the waltz, swing, foxtrot, rumba and tango.
- Belly dancing – originating in the Middle East, this dance style is a fun way to exercise.
- Hip-hop – performed mostly to hip-hop music, this urban dance style can involve breaking, popping, locking and freestyling.
- Jazz – a high-energy dance style involving kicks, leaps and turns to the beat of the music.
- Pole dancing – has become increasingly popular as a form of exercise. It involves sensual dancing with a vertical pole, and requires muscle endurance, coordination, and upper- and lower-body strength.
- Salsa – involving a mixture of Caribbean, Latin American and African influences, salsa is usually a partner dance and emphasises rhythms and sensuality.
- Square-dancing – a type of folk dancing where four couples dance in a square pattern, moving around each other and changing partners.
- Tap dancing – focuses on timing and beats. The name originates from the tapping sounds made when the small metal plates on the dancer’s shoes touch the ground.

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Choosing a dance style

When choosing a dance style, ask yourself questions such as:

- Do I want to dance to improve my fitness?
- Am I trying to improve my flexibility and coordination?
- Do I prefer fast dancing or slow dancing?
- Do I want to dance with a partner, or on my own?
- Do I want to join a group, or have private lessons?
- Will I enjoy competitions, or do I want to dance just for fun?

General tips for dancing

If you are thinking of taking up dancing, suggestions include:

- See your doctor for a check-up if you have a medical condition, are overweight, are over 40 years of age or are unfit.
- Wear layers of clothing that you can take off as your body warms up.
- Do warm-up stretches or activities before you begin a dance session.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after dancing.
- Make sure you rest between dance sessions.
- Don’t push yourself too far or too fast, especially if you are a beginner.
- Wear professionally fitted shoes appropriate to your style of dance.
- Check with your dance instructor that you are holding the correct form.
- Sit and watch new dance moves first. Learning new moves increases your risk of injury, especially if you are already tired.
- Perform regular leg-strengthening exercises.
- Move as fluidly and gracefully as you can.
- Cool down after a dance session, including stretching.

Where to get help

- Your local council
- Victorian Square Dancing Association Tel. 1800 643 277
- Dancesport Victoria (ballroom and competitive dancing) Tel. (03) 9467 6565
- Smartplay Tel. (03) 9674 8777

Things to remember

- Dancing can be a way to stay fit for people of all ages, shapes and sizes.
- Dancing can improve your muscle tone, strength, endurance and fitness.
- Dancing is a great way to meet new friends.
- See your doctor for a check-up if you have a medical condition, are overweight, are over 40 years of age or are unfit.

References


Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

1/4 How would you rate this website?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Fair
- Poor

Next Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details
Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

- talk to your doctor or pharmacist
- dial triple zero (000) in an emergency
- ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

2/4 Your Comments

Tell us who you are

Select an option

Enter your comments below (optional)

Next Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

3/4 Questions

What are you here to do? Looking for information on

Did you find what you were looking for?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Send us your feedback

- Rate this website
- Your comments
- Questions
- Your details

4/4 Your details

Postcode

Email Address

Submit Now Cancel

Send us your feedback

Thank you. Your feedback has been successfully sent.

More information

Keeping active

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Keeping active basics
- Getting started
- Staying fit and motivated
- Exercise safety and injury prevention
- Healthy eating and exercise
- Keeping active throughout life
- Health conditions and exercise

Keeping active basics

- Balancing energy in and energy out
  
  A kilojoule is a unit of measure of energy, in the same way that kilometres measure distance...

- Body mass index (BMI)
Body mass index or BMI is an approximate measure of your total body fat.

- **Energy in food (kilojoules and calories)**
  A kilojoule is a unit of measure of energy, in the same way that kilometres measure distance.

- **Exercise intensity**
  If you can talk but not sing, you’re exercising at the right intensity.

- **Exercise in your local surroundings (video)**
  Want to exercise, but find gyms boring or expensive? Sue Stanley and Shane Bilsborough team up to show you how to exercise indoors and outdoors using your local surroundings - whether it's running up...

- **Exercise - the low-down on hydration**
  You need to drink enough and regularly to keep hydrated during exercise.

- **Exercise with a friend**
  Exercise is important for your physical and mental health. Working out with a friend means you’re more likely to have fun and stick to your exercise plan.

- **Fitness centres – how to choose one**
  Do some research before signing up at a fitness centre.

- **How to make exercise fun (slideshow)**
  Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don’t know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off...

- **Kids and energy needs**
  It’s important for kids to eat a wide variety of foods for a healthy, well-balanced diet and to be physically active. Creating healthy habits during childhood helps to ensure lifelong healthy...

- **Personal trainers – how to choose one**
  Make sure your personal trainer is properly qualified before entering into any agreement.

- **Physical activity for men**
  Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare.

- **Physical activity for seniors**
  Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease.

- **Physical activity for women**
  If you can’t make the time to exercise for yourself, do it for your family.

- **Physical activity - how to get active when you are busy**
  Even if you’re busy, you still need to find a way to be physically active.

- **Physical activity - it’s important**
  Just 30 minutes of moderate activity each day can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing certain conditions or diseases.

- **Physical activity – setting yourself goals**
  When you’re trying to become more physically active, set realistic health and fitness goals.

- **Physical activity - what’s your excuse?**
  There are many excuses we can come up with to avoid being active, but the truth is there is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day.

- **Resistance training – health benefits**
  If you do resistance training repeatedly and consistently, your muscles become stronger.

- **Secrets to healthy ageing (slideshow)**
  Experts say the key to living well into our 80s and 90s is making a commitment to live healthily. Check out these simple ideas and embrace your senior years!

**Getting started**

- **Exercise programs**
  If you are unfamiliar with what is involved, starting an exercise program can be challenging.
Exercise - the low-down on hydration

You need to drink enough and regularly to keep hydrated during exercise...

Exercise with a friend

Exercise is important for your physical and mental health. Working out with a friend means you’re more likely to have fun and stick to your exercise plan...

Gardening for children

Children can learn new skills, have fun and develop self-confidence when they grow their own plants...

Gardening for health - starting out

Gardening is a healthy activity that can be enjoyed by everyone...

Gardening for older people

Garden spaces and equipment can be modified or adapted to help older people enjoy gardening...

Gardening safety

Gardening is an enjoyable form of exercise, but you need to take care...

Getting active - tucker talk tips

The main thing is to choose physical activities that you enjoy and that you can stick to in the long term...

How to make exercise fun (slideshow)

Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don’t know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off...

Physical activity - choosing a provider

Choosing the right fitness centre or service provider requires some research...

Physical activity – choosing the one for you

You are more likely to keep up a healthy lifestyle change if your chosen activity suits you...

Physical activity for men

Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare...

Physical activity for seniors

Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease...

Physical activity for women

If you can't make the time to exercise for yourself, do it for your family...

Physical activity - how to get active when you are busy

Even if you’re busy, you still need to find a way to be physically active...

Physical activity – how to get started

If you've been inactive and want to begin physical activity, see a doctor first...

Physical activity - learn how to swim (video)

Swimming is a great low-impact exercise for all ages and abilities. Australian marathon swimmer, Tammy Van Wisse shows ex-AFL (Australian Football League) player and coach, Tony Shaw some swimming...

Physical activity - overcoming barriers (video)

Former world aerobics champion, Sue Stanley shows us how to overcome common exercise excuses...

Physical activity – overcoming the barriers

If you think physical activity is boring, try exercising with a friend...

Physical activity – setting yourself goals

When you're trying to become more physically active, set realistic health and fitness goals...

Staying fit and motivated

10 tips to plan your exercise
Physical activity won't just happen. Most activities require planning – starting and maintaining a physical activity program does too. Here are some tips for getting ready to exercise:

### 10 tips to stay active year round

- **Pick an activity you enjoy**
- **Exercise and mood**
- **Exercise can have an enormous impact on your mood. Not only can exercise help in treating depression, it can also prevent people from becoming depressed again. So it’s important to keep up an exercise**
- **Exercise - everyday activities**
- **There are lots of everyday activities that provide an opportunity to be active and provide health benefits**
- **Exercise in your local surroundings (video)**
- **Want to exercise, but find gyms boring or expensive? Sue Stanley and Shane Bilsborough team up to show you how to exercise indoors and outdoors using your local surroundings - whether it's running up**
- **Exercise programs**
- **If you are unfamiliar with what is involved, starting an exercise program can be challenging**
- **Exercise with a friend**
- **Exercise is important for your physical and mental health. Working out with a friend means you’re more likely to have fun and stick to your exercise plan**
- **How to make exercise fun (slideshow)**
- **Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don’t know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off**
- **Pets can make you healthy (video)**
- **Australians have one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world**
- **Physical activity – choosing the one for you**
- **You are more likely to keep up a healthy lifestyle change if your chosen activity suits you**
- **Physical activity for men**
- **Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare**
- **Physical activity for seniors**
- **Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease**
- **Physical activity for women**
- **If you can't make the time to exercise for yourself, do it for your family**
- **Physical activity - learn how to swim (video)**
- **Swimming is a great low-impact exercise for all ages and abilities. Australian marathon swimmer, Tammy Van Wisse shows ex-AFL (Australian Football League) player and coach, Tony Shaw some swimming**
- **Physical activity - overcoming barriers (video)**
- **Former world aerobics champion, Sue Stanley shows us how to overcome common exercise excuses**
- **Physical activity – overcoming the barriers**
- **If you think physical activity is boring, try exercising with a friend**
- **Physical activity – staying active during summer (video)**
- **Physical Activity and Fitness Trainer Sherri Bourne gives us some great tips for staying active over the summer months**
- **Physical activity - staying motivated**
- **Pick an exercise or fitness activity that appeals to you and suits your lifestyle**
- **Physical activity - what's your excuse?**
- **There are many excuses we can come up with to avoid being active, but the truth is there is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day**
- **Stretching exercise in winter (video)**
- **When starting out an exercise program, it's really important to do a warm up and cool down before and after exercise**

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Exercise safety and injury prevention

- **10 tips for safe stretching**
  Make stretching part of your life...

- **10 tips to exercise safely**
  Exercising regularly has wide-ranging physical, emotional and social health benefits. You need to exercise safely to remain healthy and injury-free. If it’s safe and painless, you’re more...

- **Aerobics - preventing injury**
  Aerobics injuries are usually caused by trauma and overuse, but can be prevented by using the right techniques and equipment...

- **Australian rules football - preventing injury**
  Australian rules football is a physical contact sport that often results in injuries from tackling, kicking, running and constant competition for the ball...

- **Basketball - health benefits**
  Basketball is a sport enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities...

- **Basketball - preventing injury**
  Basketball is a fast game with frequent and aggressive body contacts - injuries can and do occur...

- **Canoeing and kayaking - health benefits**
  Canoeing and kayaking can be done as a hobby, a competitive sport or as a fun activity on holidays...

- **Canoeing and kayaking - preventing injury**
  Careful preparation and the right equipment can help prevent canoeing and kayaking injuries...

- **Cricket - health benefits**
  To play cricket you need to be fit and strong and have good hand-eye coordination and ball-handling skills...

- **Cricket - preventing injury**
  Cricket is a very popular sport. Injuries are often caused by overuse, being struck by a cricket ball and falls...

- **Cycling - health benefits**
  Cycling can help to protect you from serious diseases...

- **Cycling - preventing injury**
  You are much more likely to hurt yourself by falling off your bike or hitting a stationary object than colliding with another vehicle...

- **Dance - health benefits**
  Dancing can be a fun way to stay fit for people of all ages and abilities...

- **Dancing - preventing injury**
  Dancing is fun and a great form of exercise, but make sure you avoid injuries...

- **Dog walking - the health benefits**
  If you are planning to buy a dog, make sure you choose a breed that’s appropriate to your lifestyle...

- **Exercise safety**
  Training too hard or fast is a common cause of sports-related injuries...

- **Fishing - preventing injury**
  Never go fishing alone? Always fish with someone else and, ideally, with two other people...

- **Golf - health benefits**
  Golf provides a stimulating challenge, combined with a healthy walk in pleasant surroundings...

- **Golf - preventing injury**
  The average golfer playing an 18-hole game walks about seven kilometres...

- **Heat stress and exercise**
  Heat stress occurs when sweat can’t evaporate fast enough to keep the body sufficiently cool during physical activity...

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Healthy eating and exercise

- Food for sport - tucker talk tips
  
  Carbohydrate is the most important nutrient for athletes.

- Secrets to healthy ageing (slideshow)
  
  Experts say the key to living well into our 80s and 90s is making a commitment to live healthily. Check out these simple ideas and embrace your senior years!

- Sporting performance and food
  
  Good nutrition and a healthy diet are essential to improving your sports performance.

- The amount of physical activity you need
  
  It's important for your health that you get enough physical activity every day, and that you limit your sedentary behaviour. But getting the amount of physical activity you need doesn't have to be...

Keeping active throughout life

- 10 tips for active seniors
  
  Stay independent for longer with regular exercise - 10 tips for active seniors.

- Children - keeping them active
  
  A young child is naturally active, so build upon their inclinations to use their body.

- Exercise and stretching in the office (video)
  
  Sitting behind a desk all day doesn't mean you can't exercise.

- Gardens for all - a health activity
  
  Gardening has many health and therapeutic benefits, and is an activity that most people can enjoy.

- Getting active - tucker talk tips
  
  The main thing is to choose physical activities that you enjoy and that you can stick to in the long term.

- Healthy active Koori kids - tucker talk tips
  
  Good nutrition and physical exercise help to keep Koori kids healthy and avoid diseases when they get older.

- Healthy ageing - stay involved
  
  Reach out to the world around you for fun, a sense of achievement, social contact and mental stimulation.

- Healthy and active ageing
  
  Being physically active, eating well, socialising and improving your health can help you live a healthy, happy and active life as you get older.

- How to make exercise fun (slideshow)
  
  Many of us find it difficult to stick to some form of exercise, others don't know where to start. Experts say the key to taking up or keeping to any form of physical activity is to have fun. Get off...

- How to volunteer and boost your health (slideshow)
  
  Volunteering is great for our health - it makes us feel good, while helping others in the process.

- Older people in hospital - Get well soon
  
  Learn about improving and maintaining your health during a hospital stay.

- Parent's guide for active girls
  
  Physical activity is an important part of health and wellbeing, and girls should remain active as they grow up.

- Physical activity for men
  
  Many men are only motivated to become more active after they have a health scare.

- Physical activity for seniors
  
  Physical activity can help older people maintain independence, recover from illness and reduce their risk of disease.

- Physical activity for seniors - staying active during summer (video)
  
  Physical Activity and Fitness Trainer - Sherri Bourne shares a few easy and low-impact ways for seniors to stay healthy over the summer months.
Physical activity for women
If you can't make the time to exercise for yourself, do it for your family...

Physical activity - what's your excuse?
There are many excuses we can come up with to avoid being active, but the truth is there is always a way to fit some physical activity into your day...

Postnatal exercise
Always consult with your doctor or midwife before starting any postnatal exercise program...

Pregnancy and exercise
Unless you have complications, you should be able to exercise throughout your pregnancy...

Secrets to healthy ageing (slideshow)
Experts say the key to living well into our 80s and 90s is making a commitment to live healthily. Check out these simple ideas and embrace your senior years!

Sport and children
Make sure that some family outings offer opportunities for physical activity, such as playing sport together...

The amount of physical activity you need
It's important for your health that you get enough physical activity every day, and that you limit your sedentary behaviour. But getting the amount of physical activity you need doesn’t have to be...

Vision loss and sport
Many sports can be adapted to suit people who are blind or have low vision...

Walking for good health
Walking will improve your fitness and reduce your risk of heart disease...

Walking - the benefits for older people
Walking is great exercise for older people. It has a range of health and social benefits, and most people can do it...

Health conditions and exercise

Arthritis and exercise
Exercise can reduce some of the symptoms of arthritis, and improve joint mobility and strength...

Asthma and exercise
Exercise-induced asthma can be prevented with medication and by preparing for exercise and physical activity...

Breathing problems and exercise
A little physical activity and some breathing exercises can help people with lung disease...

Cancer - exercise to help you cope
People with cancer should be as physically active as their abilities and condition allow...

Dementia - reducing your risk
Adopting a 'brain healthy' lifestyle may reduce your risk of dementia in later life...

Diabetes - issues for children and teenagers
Many parents worry when their child with diabetes starts or returns to school...

Epilepsy and employment
Many people living with epilepsy are successfully employed across a range of professional fields...

Epilepsy and exercise
It is rare for a person with epilepsy to have a seizure during physical activity, but you should always take safety precautions when exercising...

Exercise and mood
Exercise can have an enormous impact on your mood. Not only can exercise help in treating depression, it can also prevent people from becoming depressed again. So it's important to keep up an exercise...

Exercise in your local surroundings (video)

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Want to exercise, but find gyms boring or expensive? Sue Stanley and Shane Bilsborough team up to show you how to exercise indoors and outdoors using your local surroundings - whether it's running up...

- HIV, hepatitis and sport

  People with HIV or hepatitis B or C participate in a wide range of sports without restrictions, and the risk of transmission to another player is extremely small...

- Menstruation - athletic amenorrhoea

  Women who are athletes or who exercise a lot on a regular basis are at risk of developing athletic amenorrhoea, which is the absence of periods...

- Osteoporosis and exercise

  Exercise can reduce the risk of fractures resulting from osteoporosis by both slowing the rate of bone loss, and reducing the person's risk of falling by building muscle strength and improving balance...

- Sports injuries

  A sports injury may be more severe than you think...

- Type 2 diabetes - healthy eating and exercise (video)

  People with type 2 diabetes talk about positive lifestyle changes that improve their quality of life...

Related Information

- Older people in hospital – Get well soon

  Learn about improving and maintaining your health during a hospital stay...

- Squash - health benefits

  Squash can be a fast-moving, sport that provides an excellent cardiovascular workout...

- Squash - preventing injury

  Eye protection is recommended to prevent eye injuries...

- Basketball - preventing injury

  Basketball is a fast game with frequent and aggressive body contacts - injuries can and do occur...

- Aerobics - preventing injury

  Aerobics injuries are usually caused by trauma and overuse, but can be prevented by using the right techniques and equipment...

Home

Related information on other websites

- DanceSport Australia

- DanceWeb.

- Victorian Line Dance Association

Content Partner

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by: Smartplay

![Smartplay Logo]

Last updated: April 2013

Page content currently being reviewed.

Content on this website is provided for information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not in any way endorse or support such therapy, service, product or treatment and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional. The information and materials contained on this website are not intended to constitute a comprehensive guide concerning all aspects of the therapy, product or treatment described on the website. All users are urged to always seek advice from a registered health care professional for diagnosis and answers to their medical questions and to ascertain whether the particular therapy, service, product or treatment described on the website is suitable in their circumstances. The State of Victoria and the Department of Health & Human Services shall not bear any liability for reliance by any user on the materials contained on this website.
NURSE-ON-CALL
Provides immediate, expert health advice from a registered nurse. Call 1300 60 60 24

Service Search
Find services near you

Type a minimum of three characters then press UP or DOWN on the keyboard to navigate the autocompleted search results

Use my location
Find a service

Recent Activity
Polls polled today are 1.
41 people have watched a video today

- Health topics
  - Conditions and treatments
  - Healthy living
  - Services and support

- Explore
  - Recipes
  - Healthy pantry
  - Videos
  - Consumer medicine information
  - Multilingual health information - Health Translations Directory

- About
  - About us
  - Accessibility
  - Content partners
  - Privacy
  - Terms of use
  - Contact us

- Connect with us
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - YouTube

Page last reviewed: 30 Apr 2013


betterhealth.vic.gov.au