

Get Up and Dance!

For many people, November is the start of the fall and winter party and holiday season. What better way to celebrate with family and friends than to get up and dance? And an added bonus: Dancing is excellent exercise!

Dance doesn't have to be formal or involve complicated steps. You don't have to be great at it either. Just have fun!

**So what are you waiting for?
Let's Get Up and Go!**



Inside This Month

- 2 Feet Forward
- 3 Party Moves
- 4 Surprise! It's Exercise
- 5 Activity Log

Feet Forward

The first step to dancing is, well, the steps!
But how do you know what to do?

One way to learn new moves is to follow along with an instructional video. No matter what type of music you like, there's a dance step video for you. From the "Hoedown Throw-down" from the Hannah Montana movie to the Soulja Boy "Crank That" dance, as well as rumba, samba, foxtrot, ballet, and jazz, you can learn them all online. Look for how-to videos by searching for "dance steps" on a search engine or video site such as YouTube. Of course, you can also make up your own dances—and your own how-to dance videos!

Here are some tips and ideas for making up your own dances:

- ★ Choose a song you enjoy that makes you want to get up and move.
- ★ Figure out whether it is a fast song or a slow song. Listen for a beat that you can easily pick out. Often it will be drums (or an artificial sound that keeps the song's beat similar to the way drums do) or the sound of a cymbal.
- ★ Tap your toe, clap your hands, or snap your fingers along with the beat. Does it seem fast enough for you to get a good workout while dancing to it?
- ★ If you aren't standing already, get up! Move your hips, arms, and feet. What kind of movement does the music make you feel like doing?
- ★ See if you can come up with a routine, or a series of steps you can repeat, for an entire song. Teach a friend or two and perform your dance together!



Count It Out

You can find a song that will give you a good dance workout by figuring out the song's number of beats per minute. With the help of a clock or stopwatch, count the number of beats in the song for 15 seconds. Then multiply that number by four to find the number of beats in one minute. A good range is between 120 to 150 beats per minute, but you may find your own best beat is faster or slower.

$$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times 4 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

number of beats in 15 seconds number of beats in one minute (60 seconds)

Of course, music isn't just for dancing. Music can help you get pumped for other types of exercise as well. Search online for "workout playlists" to find lists of songs that will get you moving.

Party Moves

Chances are, you have been—or will be—at a dance, wedding, or family reunion where a DJ plays a party dance song that many people already know the steps to. You can try to follow along before the song is over, or you can get ready ahead of time. Here are a few dances you may hear.

ELECTRIC SLIDE

This dance gets you moving in all four directions: **right, left, back, and forward.**

One step that can be used in the left-to-right motions of the dance is the **grapevine**. To do it, step your outside foot to either the left or the right. Then bring the other foot across (or behind) it and put it down next to the first foot that moved so that your legs are crossed. Step your first foot further out, then bring your other foot next to it and tap. Repeat in the other direction.

In the electric slide, you can try different ways to cover the same ground. Some people spin to the right and the left instead of doing the grapevine. Others just move their feet apart, then shuffle them together, then move them apart again as they go right or left. Just make sure you are headed in the same direction as the other dancers so you don't cause a dance floor disaster!

COUNTRY LINE DANCE

You don't need a country song to do a line dance, but many country songs are just right. Dancers get in lines or a circle and move around the dance floor. You'll brush-kick, toe-tap, and strut your way to some fun exercise. The **grapevine** (above) is also a useful move to know for line dancing.

THE CHA-CHA SLIDE

This one is easy, if only because the words of the song tell you the steps! You start off clapping, then move to hopping on your feet. The song will tell you which legs to use, when to move to the left or the right, and when to clap again. There are other songs with similar names, such as the "Mississippi Cha Cha Slide," that are just as fun.

THE CHICKEN DANCE and MACARENA

These dances are performed mainly with your arms and hands. Because of that, they aren't great workouts, but are still fun to do. In the chicken dance, you move your hands and flap your arms like a chicken and end with a clap before grabbing a partner, linking arms, and swinging around together. The Macarena is similar to the Electric Slide in that it is also a "four-wall" dance; that is, after completing one section of the dance, you make a 90 degree turn. After doing four sections of the dance, you'll find you are facing the same direction as when you started.



Surprise! It's Exercise

These forms of dance might surprise you—or it might surprise you to think of them as exercise!



The ***haka*** is a type of dance that comes from Pacific islands such as New Zealand. You may have seen it before the start of a rugby or football game—maybe even in your own hometown.

One form of the haka has been adopted as a way for teams to get pumped and ready for a big game. That's because the dance looks a lot like what you might do if you were preparing for battle.

The dance involves chanting, stamping of feet, and very often people even pop out their eyeballs and stick out their tongues! To see a video of this type of dance in action, search online for “haka videos.”

Another type of dance from another land looks a little bit like double Dutch jump rope, except instead of ropes, dancers jump and hop over two bamboo poles. It's called ***tinikling*** and it is from the Philippines. The dance gets its name from a type of bird—the tikling—because tinikling dancers move similar to the way the bird does.

This style of dance is sometimes taught in physical education classes in schools in the United States. Is it new to you? Watch a video or find a local dance group that performs tinikling. Then find some poles, sticks, or broomsticks, and try it out with your friends!



Michael Jackson recently died, so his music has been getting a lot of play lately. But don't forget about his dance moves! They can give you a good workout. Pick out some steps he made famous and put together your own routine inspired by the “King of Pop.” Or watch an old video, such as “Smooth Criminal” or “Billie Jean,” and memorize the steps. Take a cue from a fan in the UK, who put together a “Thriller Dance Workout,” and get some exercise. Check out www.thrilltheworld.com to learn the exact steps or sign up for a group Thriller dance event. The song is nearly six minutes long, so you only need to do it a few times to rack up a good portion of your minimum 60 minutes of exercise a day!

Folk dances from different lands are a great way to learn about different cultures while also getting your groove on. Look for cultural festivals or dance performances in your area and check one out.

Personal Get Up and Go Activity Log

Fill in the days of the week and the date for the week as shown in the sample. In each day's log, write down each activity you did and the amount of time you exercised for. Then, at the bottom of each day's square, write down the total number of minutes you spent exercising. Experts say kids and teens need at least 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week. (Try to aim for even more!)

date: Nov. 1

- School dance
- 2 hours
-
- Wii Sports
- 1 hour
-
- Practiced free throws
- 1 hour
-
- Walked the dog
- 30 minutes



Track Yourself!

Make a special three-ring binder or folder with prongs to keep track of your progress. Punch holes in each week's planner and file it in your binder. Decorate your binder or folder with photos and sayings to help keep you motivated. The binder will also help you look back at how far you have come, and celebrate all your hard work!

My Exercise Goal:

(write something you hope to get out of your Get Up and Go plan. You don't need to tell anyone else! This is just for you.)

date:	date:	date:	date:	date:	date:
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