

# Dancing for the Health of It

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*Dance is a wonderful and social way to exercise because it engages the mind and body while having fun!*

Dancing has been a part of human history for thousands of years. Dance is a wonderful and social way to exercise because it engages the mind and body while having fun! It is not seen as a hard workout, no gym or equipment is needed, and dance moves are easily modified to meet individual needs and abilities. Here are ways dancing can benefit your overall health.

**Physical Benefits:** Strength, balance, flexibility, mobility, stiffness, lowers risk of chronic diseases

**Mental Benefits:** Social interaction, brain health, reduces stress, improves mood

## Getting Started

- Visit your physician and follow their directions.
- Do warm-up stretches.
- Eat well and stay hydrated.
- Listen to your body. Go at your own pace.
- Wear appropriate well-fitting shoes to prevent falls.
- Have FUN!



## Simple Dances Through the Decades

1920s: The Charleston – [youtu.be/Mw858ql\\_tv4](https://youtu.be/Mw858ql_tv4)

1930s: The Jitterbug

1950s: Sock Hop, Boogie Woogie

1960s: Mashed Potato, The Twist, The Hand Jive – [youtu.be/eIozjNOgrm8](https://youtu.be/eIozjNOgrm8)

1970s: Y.M.C.A., The Hustle – [youtu.be/H41dZQ1t-tA](https://youtu.be/H41dZQ1t-tA), [youtu.be/X50dnZi26gg](https://youtu.be/X50dnZi26gg)

1980s: Moonwalk, Breakdance, MC Hammer, The Cabbage Patch – [youtu.be/V6w\\_9vWXXjE](https://youtu.be/V6w_9vWXXjE)

– continued –

1990s: The Macarena, Electric Slide – [youtu.be/-TjtAF1Rdxk](https://youtu.be/-TjtAF1Rdxk)

2000s: The Dougie, Cupid Shuffle, Wobble, Floss

### The Charleston:

1. Start with your left foot in front of you and your right foot slightly behind.
2. Make a semicircle with your right foot, swinging it around to be in front of your left foot. Then, do the same with your left, bringing it in front of your right.
3. Reverse the left, then reverse the right, bringing both feet back to their original positions.
4. Count in your head “one, two, three, four,” where “one” and “two” are bringing your left and right feet forward and “three” and “four” are bringing them back. Let your arms gently swing forward and backward on each move.

### Hand Jive:

1. *Knee pat and hand clap* – On counts “one” and “two,” pat your knees or thighs twice; on counts “three” and “four,” clap your hands twice.
2. *Criss cross hands* – On counts “five” and “six,” cross your right hand over your left hand and pulse two times. On counts “seven” and “eight,” cross your left hand over your right hand and pulse two times.
3. *Hammer fists* – On counts “one” and “two,” cross your right fist over your left fist and hammer two times. On counts “three” and “four,” cross your left fist over right fist and hammer two times.



4. *Thumbs up* – On counts “five” and “six,” point your right thumb over your right shoulder two times. On counts “seven” and “eight,” point your left thumb over your left shoulder two times.

This sequence can be done on the beat or at double time.

To do the Hand Jive line dance, do the full Hand Jive sequence, then grapevine to the right (side, together, side, tap) and to the left (side, together, side, tap), ending with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn to the left to repeat.

### Electric Slide:

1. *Grapevine right* – Step, together, step, tap
2. *Grapevine left* – Step, together, step, tap
3. *Move back* – Step right foot back, step left foot back, step right foot back, touch left foot beside right foot
4. *Forward touch/back touch* – Step left foot forward, touch right foot beside left foot, step right foot back, touch left foot beside right foot
5. *Step and turn* – Step left foot forward, scuff right foot forward, turn  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn left
6. *Repeat*

*In memory of Olive Hager (1929-2023), a fiercely compassionate woman who loved life and never missed an opportunity to dance.*

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