



Dance Fever!

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“Dancing can be magical and transforming. It can breathe new life into a tired soul; make a spirit soar; unleash locked-away creativity; unite generations and cultures; inspire new romances or rekindle old ones; trigger long-forgotten memories; and turn sadness into joy, if only during the dance.”

~ AARP article

Top 10 Benefits of Dancing

1. Low impact, weight-bearing exercise:
 - Strengthens bones without hurting joints. Reduces the risk of osteoporosis.
 - Reduces the risk of type II diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, many kinds of cancer.
 - Helps with weight management – in 30 mins a 135lb person can burn 100 calories!
2. Improves posture and balance – helping to prevent falls.
3. Promotes muscular endurance and tones the whole body, and increases stamina and flexibility.
4. Stimulates the senses – eyes, ears and touch
5. Good for mind – dancing improves circulation and helps prevent oxygen starvation to the brain, and remembering steps requires using cognitive and muscle memory.
6. Boosts mood – endorphins are released when the body exerts itself at a certain level. When performing, adrenaline and endorphins work together to create a dramatic 'dancer's high'. Dancing can reduce stress, anxiety and help to prevent depression.
7. Promotes reminiscence – feel-good factor of dancing to a song you love, remembering when you danced to it before, with whom etc.

8. Builds confidence and self-esteem – especially when mastering a new step, dance or after a performance
9. Opportunity to express creativity.
10. Opportunity for social connection with other participants.



Choreography Tips

- Easier for standing residents to move laterally than forward and back
- Start every move on the same side (e.g. their right, your left) and allow them to mirror you
- Use the same steps for every verse and chorus (may only have a maximum of 3-4 moves in a whole song)
- Do steps slowly – half the time of the music
- Write down your choreography in a way you can understand
- Simple alterations of steps are easiest – e.g. having hands in fists or open changes the look easily

Music Tips

- Choose songs they know to begin with, songs with an 8 count phrase – can do 8/16/32 of same step before transitioning to the next step.
- Should be upbeat, fun songs with easy rhythms to march / clap in time to.
- Use musical themes – e.g. 1950s, Dancing Through the Decades, Broadway Musicals, Disco etc. (Christmas theme is ok, but most holiday themes don't work – Patriotic, St. Patrick's Day etc.)

Teaching Tips

- Position your residents appropriately, taking into account vision, hearing, level of dementia. Try to give them the same spot each time – much like a dancer who would have her position on the stage.
- Don't expect them to remember any of the steps – use visual and auditory cues
- Name the class / group
- Use props – hats, scarves, pom poms etc.
- Incorporate noise making opportunities – claps, slaps, snaps, woo, yippee etc.

- Practice frequently – and call it a “practice”, not just a dance group or dance activity.
- Set up a performance date to work towards
- Be enthusiastic!

“Boogie Shoes”

Up and down on toes

Kicks

Knee lifts

Kicks with open and closed hand motions

Side taps

Kicks with raise the roof hand motions

“Fever”

Snaps / squats

Toe taps in the front

Blow kisses

“Fever!”

Toe taps to the side and hand roll

Windshield wipers

“The Bugle Boy”

Alternating shoulders

4 heels, double step touch

Single step touch

Salute, bugle, shimmy

March

Side taps

Big toothpaste commercial finish!

“Walking On Sunshine”

3 marches and 1 clap

Swing arms side to side (add hips)

Big circle with right arm

Big circle with left arm

Big circle with both arms

“Woo!”

“Smooth” (Forget About It!)

Front salsa

Side salsa

8-count mambo

Mambo cha-cha-cha

Give me your heart, make it real... or else forget about it!