

## Supporting Wellness For a Lifetime

By Richard Fiore

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There are many known health benefits associated with ballroom dancing. The benefits for seniors are even more remarkable. Social ballroom dancing provides a means for healthy exercise in an appealing social environment. There is a body mind connection that supports health in a profound way.

### Provides Social Connection

One of the keys to keeping healthy throughout life is to have a sense of belonging. This very concept was proposed many years ago by the renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow in his 'Hierarchy of Needs' model. In this model he describes a set of four essential human needs that must be satisfied for an individual to attain self-actualization. Maslow's model affirms that the need to belong to social groups and affiliate with others is one of the most fundamental of human needs. Social dancing provides an excellent venue for people to gather and feel a sense of belonging. It provides a way to get together as a group. Ballroom dancing involves social interaction. This type of activity in a group setting helps to ward off feelings of isolation that have been so prevalent especially during these pandemic times. It provides a way to connect with others while gaining the benefit of exercise through dancing.

### Helps With Balance

There are many other benefits that can be derived from social ballroom dancing. For example, as we age, our ability to balance can become compromised. A study conducted by researchers from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro found that older adults who participate in ballroom dancing regularly have improved balance and are found less likely to fall. Studies have shown that seniors who dance at least once a week gain improved body tone and a better sense of balance. More flexibility and strength are also achieved through regular dancing activity.

### Improves Cognitive Skills

Another clear advantage is the improvement of cognitive skills. As individuals learn to dance, they are forced to think about the step patterns, direction of movement, rhythm, etc. There is a whole brain involvement that encompasses left brain cognitive skills as well as right brain visuospatial skills. Both body and mind get a good workout from ballroom dancing. Over time these skills become even more sharpened through repetition of the various dance movements and figures. This will have the encouraging effect to spur many



to reach higher skill levels. Social dancing is an incredible way to foster clear thinking. Ballroom dancing also helps to enhance other cognitive skills such as memory, visual and auditory processing and sustained focus.

### Improves Joint Function

There is a myriad of physical benefits that result from dancing as well. When individuals dance regularly their joints begin to move more easily assuming that the activity level is not overdone. One's aerobic capacity is likely to become enhanced from social dance. Dancing is an activity that is a means to maintaining an active lifestyle. It can be initially thought of as simply walking with another person to the rhythm of music.

### Creates a Deeper Level of Intimacy

Retired couples who are prone to a sedentary lifestyle can use social dancing as a date night. Getting together for dancing helps a couple to maintain a close friendship bond. Couples feel more connected as they partake in dancing. Their social circles also become greatly expanded. It becomes a self-sustaining activity that many will not want to be without.

Dancing can add an exciting purpose in one's life. It offers a challenge and commitment in something to do that supports a stimulating and healthy lifestyle. It becomes a routine that keeps the cardiovascular system optimized. It also balances blood sugar, burns body fat and increases immunity. Joints and bones remain healthy and strong when they are used regularly. There are many other health benefits associated with social dancing.

Ballroom dancing gives a couple a sense of achievement. This leads to an overall feeling of well-being. People everywhere have realized the value of dancing. It promotes a more positive outlook and is something that can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

## Ballroom Dancing at Adelphi University

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### **New Fall Class Schedule**

**Description:** This class offers an opportunity to gain experience in social / ballroom dancing. It is an excellent choice for those looking to develop fundamental dance skills as well as building on previous experience. The instructor will break down all dance figures and combine them to form amalgamated routines. Best practice syllabus-based techniques in timing, feet positions, alignment, footwork, and lead and follow will be demonstrated. This class is suitable for first time dancers as well as those with previous experience. It is designed to build confidence and enhance social enjoyment on the dance floor. Social dancing gives you a more positive outlook on life!

Enrollment with a partner is recommended; however, singles are welcome. Participants should wear comfortable clothes and leather bottom shoes or dance shoes. Sneakers or rubber bottom shoes are not recommended.

**Candidate Dances:** Foxtrot, Rumba, Waltz, Cha Cha, Swing, Salsa/Mambo, Bachata, Tango & Meringue

**Class Dates (Fall 2021):** Fridays – Fridays – 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3, 12/10 and 12/17

**Instructor:** Richard Fiore – Dual Licentiate, US Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing

**Location:** Adelphi University, One South Ave., Garden City, NY 11530 - Woodruff Hall Dance Studio

**To Register:** \$125/person for general admission. Call Noreen DeNicola at (516) 877-4260 or email ndenicola@adelphi.edu