

***For Physical & Mental Exercise, Plus Sociability.  
Try Western Square Dancing.  
It's Friendship Set To Music***

Are you interested in an activity that is drug and alcohol free and generally conducted in a smoke free environment. Where you can make many new friends and at the same time have fun, forget your troubles and get some exercise?

Modern Western Square Dancing may be just the activity you have been missing. According to a 1994 Mayo Clinic Health Letter

"dancing can burn as many calories as walking, swimming or riding a bicycle. During a half-hour of dancing you can burn between 200 and 400 calories. One factor that determines how many calories you'll expend is the distance you travel. In, one study, researchers attached pedometers to square dancers and found that each person covered five miles in a single evening. Regular exercise can lead to a slower heart rate, lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol profile. Experts typically recommend 30 - 40 minutes of continuous activity three or four times a week. Dancing may not provide all the conditioning you need, but it can help. The degree of cardiovascular conditioning depends on how vigorously you dance, how long you dance continuously, and how regularly you do it. The side to side movements of many dances strengthens your weight bearing bones (tibia, fibula and femur) and can help prevent or slow loss of bone mass (osteoporosis). If you're recovering from heart or knee surgery, movement may be part of your rehabilitation. Dancing is a positive alternative to aerobic dancing or jogging. And finally, Square Dancing

contains a social component that solitary fitness endeavors don't. It gives you an opportunity to develop strong social ties that contribute to self-esteem and a positive outlook.

**If your doctor has advised you to start an aerobic exercise program, Square Dancing can be a fun part of it. Square Dancing enhances blood flow and gets your heart and lungs working. Just be sure to get your doctor's permission if you have a medical condition.**

This pastime is a perfect way to forget your troubles, because it is virtually impossible to think of anything else while you square dance. This is because of the mental requirements of this activity. I feel sure you agree that keeping your mind sharp is essential in today's world.

So what are these mental requirements? Let's take a quick look. Modern Western Square Dancing consists of layers, or levels of dance. At the bottom, where we all start, is *Basic & Mainstream*. There are 71 different movements at this level. I'll try to define a movement later. Some dancers never advance beyond this level. The next level is called Plus and consists of 29 additional moves. That puts us at 100 movements some having nuances. Most Square Dancers achieve and dance at this level.

Before continuing up the ladder let me try defining what I call a move. It is simply a combination of arm, hand and or foot movement, and is known as a call. Foot movements are basically walking, preferably with a shuffling or sliding step. Each step normally takes one beat of music. A call can take anywhere from one beat to 32 beats or even more. The tough part requires that you execute any call without stopping to think how to do it.

Occasionally, you may have to "stack" several calls in your mind

and remember the order in which to execute them. Of course you are not dancing alone, seven other people are in your square and all must remember what to do.

Some clubs dance "APD" or all position. This makes it a *little* more difficult since the male and female requirements differ.

The next level up is *Advanced*. While there are two levels, A-1(46 calls) & A-2 (37calls), *Advanced* is usually considered to be one level APD.

If you want to go still higher there is *Challenge* level. You will learn more about that level just as soon as you master the 183 calls at any position.

If you can walk you can probably learn to Square Dance. It does take time and practice however. Of course it's all called Square Dancing and whether its a dance, a workshop or class it provides some excellent mental and physical exercise.

**Square Dancing will add ten years to your life**, a surprising new study shows.

Dr. Arron Blackburn states "It's clear that square dancing is the perfect exercise. It combines all positive aspects of intense physical exercise with none of the negative elements." Dr. Blackburn said square dancing is a low impact activity requiring constant movement and quick directional changes that help keep the body in shape. The study was based on their physical examination which indicated that both female and male square dancers could expect to live well into their 80's. Square dance movements raise heart rates like many good aerobic exercises should. All the quick changes of direction loosen and tone up the



muscles--but not so severally as to cause injury. In square dancing, when you're not moving, you're clapping hands and tapping your feet, which all contributes to long term fitness. "You don't see a lot of 55 year old basketball players, but that's just the age when square dancers are hitting their peak", Dr. Blackburn said

[SENIORS](#)  
[Click here for health](#)  
[information directed at](#)  
[you.](#)

If you have read this far and you are not a Square Dancer, I hope I have peaked your interest. If so find a club near you and get started. If you're from West Virginia [click here to find a Western Square Dance Club near you](#) and contact them.

**What others have to say**

 [What is Square Dancing?](#)

*Select your browsers "BACK" button or choose one of the options below.*

---

[Top of page](#) | [Home](#) | [Clubs](#) | [Federation](#) | [Specials](#) | [Callers & Cuers](#) | [Workshops](#) | [Do's & Don'ts](#) | [Links](#)

---

Web page developed by - Don Hill