

## **The Benefits of Square Dancing**

**Square dancing helps keep you fit** - We all know that exercise is good for you. But isn't there a form of exercise that is also fun and doesn't seem like hard work? Yes there is - it's called square dancing. Square dancing is the perfect exercise. It combines the positive aspects of intense physical exercise without the negatives. Square dancing is a low impact activity that helps keep the body in shape. As with regular exercise, square dancing can lead to a slower heart rate, lower blood pressure, and improved cholesterol profile. Many square dance movements can strengthen your weight-bearing bones and help prevent or slow down loss of bone mass (osteoporosis), burns off calories, and can even add years to your life.

**Square dancing is a mental challenge** - Reacting quickly to the square dance caller keeps you mentally on your toes. And while concentrating on the moves, you escape from your worries and pressures.

**It's a different type of dancing** - Though many men avoid dancing in any form, in actuality, square dancing presents very few negative elements. Though square dancing is dancing in the sense of partners, trappings, and music, it's actually like precision drill-stepping performed with partners. Instead of a drill sergeant, there is a "Caller" who sings directions set to the music of popular songs. Following the Callers directions, the dancers moves are all coordinated. This contrasts with ballroom dancing or swing dancing, where men are under pressure to provide a capable lead.....and many would simply like to avoid that scene. In square dancing, the dancer's responsibility is to simply follow the "calls" and be where they are supposed to be at the moment they are supposed to be there. Novices can walk there; energetic dancers can boogie there - according to your mood at the moment.

**Square dancing is easy to learn** - One of the first things we learn as children is how to walk. In next to no time you don't have to think about how to do it - you just do it. You don't worry about where your feet go - it's automatic. With most dance forms you then have to learn to place your feet in specific arrangements - you have to learn to walk in a different way which is unnatural. Not so with square dancing. Square dancing is based upon walking in defined directions for defined distances - which is exactly what walking is. And since walking is one of the most natural things we do - square dancing becomes so easy to learn.

**Square dancing is entertainment** - The caller is there to entertain you - to make dancers forget about your day to day worries. And it works! No matter how tired you are from a long day's work, once you start dancing, you become energized again and forget your troubles. You'll find yourself dancing to many different types of music, including country & western, rock, jazz, sing-a-longs, and gospel.

**It's teamwork** - Your team of eight dancers depend on one another to keep the dance moving.

**Square dancing is sociable and just plain fun!** - Square dancing involves a social component that solitary fitness endeavors do not. You are given the opportunity to develop strong social ties which contribute to self-esteem and a positive outlook. Many people have made life-long friends at square dances. And you'll find that some married couples first met at a square dance. Cultural background does not make a difference. In fact, square dancing breaks down many barriers between cultures. And talking about fun . . . just ask any square dancer how much fun they have!

**You can dance at any level you desire** -- challenging or easy - Square dancing has a selection of programs available to match your time and commitment desires. If you wish to attend easy dances - there is a program for you. If you wish to delve further into challenging dance routines - there is also a program for you. And several programs exist between those two extremes.

**Square dancing is universal** - No matter where you go in the world, square dancing is the same. The movements have been standardized and are called in the same way. The dance programs used are all standardized, and no matter where in the world you learn - you can still dance the same in other parts of the world. Your Square Dance family truly includes the whole world!

**Square Dancing is as traditionally American as Apple Pie** - It's clean, fun and generally safe, and people of all ages are involved. An evening of this entertainment is inexpensive. You'll find yourself interacting with everyone from teenagers to the elderly... and you'll find you all have something in common!