

LIVING

DECCAN HERALD FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2004

Dancercise



Dancercise is a combination of exercise and dancing to lose those excess pounds or just for fun. This program emphasizes increased agility and coordination through aerobics dance exercise.

I tell my clients, 'Movement creates energy and energy breathes life into your soul. I give you the tools to dig in and see what really drives you.

I believe, the closer you get to the bedrock of your inherent creative impulses, the greater chance of your success and happiness.'

THE SPIRITUAL saga is in full swing. A health conscious populace is going all out to keep the cholesterol away. Its target 32-24-36 for the fairer sex and brawn times for those pumping iron. Dance has a universal appeal. Dance supports other activities. It is used to initiate people into a deeper experience of mental health. With dance I enable people to come to terms with their physical self. A great mind and a good body go hand in hand. The gaiety of dance as an exercise helps to uplift their emotions. Dancercise or dance plus exercise offer a cathartic experience, to release all pent up emotions. Many meditations use dance to arrive at a peaceful mental state. This program emphasizes increased agility and coordination through aerobics dance exercise. It combines dance and dreams and injects the 'positivity' principle in its patrons.

Now my favorite suggestion: "Think like a dancer. As you go about your daily activities, think of yourself as a dancer on stage. Think of each movement, as a graceful, balanced part of an intricate ballet. Focus on where each part of your body is, how it is moving."

Another favorite suggestion: Get in the habit of including your body in your decision-making processes. As you consider your choices, check in; see how your body is reacting. Notice how your step lightens and your head lifts when you make a decision that feels good. At another time feel your shoulders tensing, your jaw tightening, and your stomach contracting. Perhaps there is a warning here to think about.

And a final suggestion: Exercise regularly: it will help you to become body-aware.

Dancercise has an added advantage over aerobics, because of its fun element; it becomes more popular with children, teenagers and even adults, who find doing plain aerobic moves day after day a little boring. It improves their posture & gait, apart from providing cardiovascular benefits. Since it is a group activity, people get to socialize and exercise together.

As in many activities, dance is something that is practiced over and over again. The ballet bar is a perfect example of using repetition to achieve perfection. No matter where in the world a ballet class is being taught, it is taught in basically the same way. As a beginning ballet student you learn the same steps that the most advanced performer is still doing many years

later. Every day. Standing at the ballet bar you hear the same instructions, over and over. Pull up, straighten your knees, bend from the hip, and stretch out - over and over and over again. From beginner to advanced. There is a purpose to saying the same thing over and over again. It is to assist you in building a strong base that will allow you to "fly" later. It is to help you learn what is important and what is not necessary.

A beginner dancer uses every part of her body to do even a small movement and that is why a beginner often appears awkward. The polished dancer uses only what is necessary. A dancer's grace shines through in what they are not doing as much as in what they are doing. Doing it over and over again you learn to let go of what is not necessary to achieve the movement. It is learning to balance strength and stretch in order to achieve what looks like effortless movement.

One time I had a revelation while taking a ballet class. After 10 years of taking class the teacher said the same thing she always said, and I **HEARD IT DIFFERENTLY**. In fact I heard it so differently that a light bulb went on in my head that totally changed how I approached dance from that day forward. Why? Because we change our perceptions in every moment, depending on a large variety of circumstances. And it is our perceptions that determine what and how we see and hear and act. I had finally advanced enough, or cleared enough other stuff out, to hear it so differently that I shifted to a totally new level of perception. It is not a bad thing that we are told over and over and over. It is a good thing. Each telling shifts us, and each time we act on what we learn shifts us again and then the next telling brings us higher in an ever-expanding circle. This is not a circle that brings us back where we started from, but an expanding spiral that brings us around to hear it again, in a new way.

How many times do we have to be told - anything? We have to be told over and over. All lessons are basically the same. Instead of despairing over this, we should rejoice. Someone loves us enough to keep reminding of us of our innate perfection. We keep shifting our perceptions and growing enough to hear it differently. There is no greater feeling than hearing the same thing we have always heard and hearing it so differently that the world shifts into brighter hues.

No matter what your dream is, it involves the same lessons as a ballet bar. Using what is necessary in each moment and letting go of what is not achieves grace in all areas of life. Going back to how it was - is not going forward. Repetition can sometimes be a beautiful thing. It lifts us up and out to greater heights of awareness. Keep telling and keep listening. Revelation is a shift of perception where you see what has always been here, and how it is here for you.

All the dance forms- folk etc can be improvised to give you right exercise benefits. It could be ballet, jazz, hip hop, bhangra, dandiya, anything. But to get right & optimum workout benefits, we have to take care that we do a proper warm up, stretch the major muscle groups, are extremely careful with plyometric moves. And finish our workout with cool down & stretching. We must be aware of our body. It is important to wear the right shoes and do it on the right floor to avoid injuries. Its best to do it under supervision of an instructor, who carefully choreographs the moves & knows which muscle group is being targeted.