

Revealed: The right moves for men on the dance floor

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Psychologists have identified the key male dance movements that most arouse female interest -- and all are to do with central body motions which send out primal signals of health, vigour and strength.

A team led by Nick Neave of Northumbria University in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, northeastern England, filmed 19 men aged 18-35 in a lab as they danced to a standard disco beat.

The men, none of whom was a professional dancer, wore reflective markers that studded their body and were filmed by a battery of 12 3D cameras.

The footage was used to create a dancing avatar, or animated figure, that was faceless and genderless.

Thirty-seven young heterosexual women were then shown 15-second clips of the avatars and were asked to judge which dance movements were the most [attractive](#).

Eight "movement variables" emerged which distinguished the trolls from the Travoltas.

"Good" dancers did wider and bigger movements of the head, neck and torso, and did faster bending and twisting movements of their right knee (greater movements of the right knee rather than the left were to be expected, as 80 percent of the dancers favoured their right leg).

In contrast, "bad" dancers tended to be stiff and plod -- and throwing their arms around was no substitute for fast, variable movement of the central body region.

"Men all over the world will be interested to know what moves they can throw to attract women," said Neave.

"We now know which area of the body females are looking at when they are making a judgement about male dance attractiveness. If a man knows what the key moves are, he can get some training and improve his chances of attracting a female through his dance style."

The study was published on Wednesday in *Biology Letters*, a journal of the Royal Society, which is Britain's de-facto academy of science.

Neave said the experiment broke new ground because of the neutrality of the avatars, which gave no cues to the man's face or clothing that could sway judgement.

The outcome matches previous research that shows a preference among [women](#) for males who are strong and vigorous and skilled in their motor movements.

These are all part of a classic mating quest for the "right" genetic material, which is why the dance floor mimics courtship arenas among animals where the male struts his stuff.

"My guess is that there will be wide cultural variability about the way people [dance](#), but the interest in the core body movements will be the same," said Neave in a phone interview.

"The movement of the trunk, the neck and the shoulders give out signals of strength, suppleness and vitality."

Neave said he was eager to do the experiment in reverse -- to create female dancing avatars and get men to judge the performance.

This experiment would help determine how far movement determines female allure in addition to body shape, facial looks, eye contact and other factors.

More information: Paper: rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsbl.2010.0619.abstract

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