

Psychologists identify the killer moves that make women better dancers

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Who needs Beyonce or Shakira to be a disco diva when you have avatars showing you all the hip moves?

The new study, led by psychologists from the University of Northumbria and published in the journal *Scientific Reports* this February, pinpointed which female avatar movements best rated among peers.

Using 3D technology to record the movements of 39 young women as they danced to a drum beat, male and female judges ranked the dancers in terms of their dance quality and not their height, looks or other physical features.

And the results revealed that both male and female raters judged hip-swinging, asymmetric thigh and [arm movements](#) to the beats as high quality dance moves for future dance-offs. 'Whatever the music is, it doesn't matter, if someone is keeping to a rhythm then that signifies a decent dancer,' explained Nick Neave, the lead psychologist who led the research.

Dancing is a universal human behaviour that is observed particularly in courtship contexts and has always been an interesting topic for researchers in terms of the evolutionary significance of our actions and potential partner quality. 'The way that you move is very crucially linked to your health, your hormonal status and your personality and also possibly things like intelligence and creativity,' Nick Neave went on to say.

The same team led a 2010 research project published in 'The Royal Society' which showed that male dance quality can be predicted by variability in twisting their necks and torsos together with the speed of movement of the right knee. 'We then went on to find that the stronger the male was, the better the dancer he was thought to be,' said Neave.

Future research from the team might include examining whether dance attractiveness differs according to variables that distinguish individuals in terms of their value or potential as a partner or competitor.

Although this study certainly offers a glimpse into dancing traits that are attractive from a Western cultural context, it cannot claim to encapsulate all cultures and courtship dances. Indeed, what might be regarded as an attractive dance at the legendary Ministry of Sound nightclub in London certainly differs from what would be considered hot stuff at New York's famous Copacabana or Blue Note clubs. Although for your writer with two left feet, it does not really matter where the oscillatory movement is performed as the dance rating would always show a consistent lack of evolution in attractiveness.

Nevertheless, Bronwyn Tarr, a dancer and researcher on dance and human evolution from the University of Oxford stated that 'studies like this help us build a more complete picture of how we, like many birds and other animals, can use [dance](#) to attract attention from the other sex.'

So ladies, if you want to start rocking the club, put your hands up and start swinging those hips and shaking an arm or leg to really get your groove going!

More information: Kristofor McCarty et al. Optimal asymmetry and other motion parameters that characterise high-quality female dance, *Scientific Reports* (2017). [DOI: 10.1038/srep42435](https://doi.org/10.1038/srep42435)

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