

Postmenopausal women can dance their way to better health

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Women often struggle with managing their weight and other health risk factors, such as high cholesterol, once they transition through menopause. A new study suggests that dancing may effectively lower

cholesterol levels, improve fitness and body composition and in the process, improve self-esteem. Study results are published online today in *Menopause*.

After menopause, women are more likely to experience weight gain, overall/central body adiposity increases, and metabolic disturbances, such as increases in triglycerides and bad cholesterol. Together, these changes ultimately increase cardiovascular risk. Around this same time, women often are less physically active, which translates into reductions in lean mass and an increased risk of falls and fractures. As a result of all these changes, [postmenopausal women](#) often suffer from decreased self-image and self-esteem, which are directly related to overall mental health.

Physical activity has been shown to minimize some of the many health problems associated with menopause. The effect of dancing, specifically, has already been investigated with regard to how it improves [body composition](#) and functional fitness. Few studies, however, have investigated the effects of dance on [body image](#), self-esteem, and [physical fitness](#) together in postmenopausal women.

This new study was designed to analyze the effects of dance practice on body composition, [metabolic profile](#), functional fitness, and self-image/self-esteem in postmenopausal women. Although the sample size was small, the study suggested some credible benefits of a three-times-weekly dance regimen in improving not only the lipid profile and functional fitness of postmenopausal women but also self-image and self-esteem.

Dance therapy is seen as an attractive option because it is a pleasant activity with low associated costs and low risk of injury for its practitioners. Additional confirmed benefits of regular dancing include improvement in balance, postural control, gait, strength, and overall

physical performance. All of these benefits may contribute to a woman's ability to maintain an independent, high-quality lifestyle throughout her lifespan.

Study results are published in the article "Dance practice modifies functional fitness, lipid profile, and self-image in postmenopausal women."

"This study highlights the feasibility of a simple intervention, such as a dance class three times weekly, for improving not only fitness and metabolic profile but also self-image and [self-esteem](#) in postmenopausal women. In addition to these benefits, [women](#) also probably enjoyed a sense of comradery from the shared experience of learning something new," says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

More information: Giovana Rampazzo Teixeira et al, Dance practice modifies functional fitness, lipid profile, and self-image in postmenopausal women, *Menopause* (2021). [DOI: 10.1097/GME.0000000000001818](#)

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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