

Meta-analysis study suggests dancing is an effective weight-loss intervention

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A small team of physical education scientists in China has conducted a meta-analysis of multiple studies that shows that dancing is an effective weight loss intervention. In their study, [reported](#) in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE*, the group analyzed results from studies focused on weight loss interventions.

Prior research has shown that the most effective strategy for losing weight or maintaining a healthy BMI is a lifestyle that includes a [healthy diet](#) and [regular exercise](#). But prior research has also shown that living a healthy lifestyle can be difficult for many people. Eating less or reducing consumption of unhealthy foods can be challenging over the long term, and for many, engaging in regular exercise involves taking up jogging, going to the gym or buying and using [exercise equipment](#) at home.

For this new study, the researchers focused only on the exercise part of a healthy lifestyle and found that there is a way to exercise that is far less demanding and that can actually be fun—dancing.

In analyzing data from seven databases of weight loss intervention study information, which included 654 studies and 10 evaluations, the research team found that dancing can be an effective weight loss intervention for both people who are merely overweight and for those who are obese.

The researchers note that dancing may be a more practical form of exercise for many people than traditional fitness routines, mostly because it changes the focus from working out to having fun. They note also that virtually any type of dancing, as long as it is done regularly, can help with [weight loss](#), [muscle tone](#), balance and coordination.

They also point out that the more active the dance, the greater the benefits. And dancing can be done by people of any age; all that differs is the type. Older people, for example, might try ballroom dancing if they do not feel particularly spry.

More specifically, the research team found that people who danced regularly lost on average approximately 4 pounds (3.5 of which was fat) over the course of a given study. They also reduced their waistlines by an inch.

More information: Yaya Zhang et al, Is dancing an effective intervention for fat loss? A systematic review and meta-analysis of dance interventions on body composition, *PLOS ONE* (2024). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0296089](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0296089)

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