

LIVE TEN YEARS LONGER!

Square Dancing will add ten years to your life, a surprising new study shows. Dr. Arron Blackburn states "It's clear that square dancing is the perfect exercise. It combines all positive aspects of intense physical exercise with none of the negative elements."

Dr. Blackburn said square dancing is a low impact activity requiring constant movement and quick directional changes that help keep the body in shape. The study was based on their physical examination which indicated that both female and male square dancers could expect to live well into their 80's.

Square dance movements raise heart rates like many good aerobic exercises should. All the quick changes of direction loosen and tone up the muscles--but not so severely as to cause injury. When you're not moving, you're clapping hands and tapping your feet, which all contributes to long-term fitness.

"You don't see a lot of 55 year old basketball players, but that's just the age when square dancers are hitting their peak", he said.

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A Social Form of Exercise

The physical benefits of square dancing are impressive, to be sure, but don't discount the social payoff, says Jerry Reed of Coca, Fla.

"The primary benefit [of square dancing] is the social interaction between people," says Reed, executive director of CALLERLAB, the international association of square-dance callers, with 2,000 members worldwide.

"Most of the activities that people do these days are individual, such as golfing, tennis, and bowling," he says. "Square dancing is kind of unique in that it involves touching hands -- we turn, we swing, and that seems to bring us closer together."

And the touching in itself can be beneficial to health, according to studies conducted at the Touch Research Institute in Miami, which showed that regular touching can reduce stress and depression and enhance immune system function.

"It takes your mind off of the day-to-day problems," he says. "All those other worries and thoughts disappear when you are dancing."

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Should be able to get an OK from Jerry Reed.