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So You Think You Can't Dance?

By Ann Zander, Family & Consumer Science Agent, Boulder County

According to Anne Lindsay, M.S, Asst. Professor, Exercise Physiologist, Extension Specialist, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension "Anyone can be a dancer, including former NFL Quarterback Kurt Warner, teen Bristol Palin and TV's favorite Mom from the 1970's hit show The Brady Bunch! ABC's Dancing with the Stars has made our favorite celebrities into ballroom, salsa and tango dance performers."

Lindsay says that television, musicals and movies have added to the popularity of dance. Movies like Saturday Night Fever, Footloose and Dirty Dancing featured dancing as something everyone wanted to do. Michael Jackson shocked the world with his Moon Walk and popularized hip hop, break dancing and other forms of street dance that still exist today.

However, dance isn't just entertainment. It is a way to be physically active. Dancing is a great way to make fitness fun. Lindsay says that dancing can be performed at various fitness levels. For example, dancing slowly might be compared to walking a dog, golfing, or light bicycling. A fast hip-hop dance could be compared to running, playing basketball or swimming. It just depends on how much energy you want to expend and for how long.

Interest in dance continues to skyrocket and is becoming popular with dance fitness programs. For example Zumba combines Latin and international music with dance styles from Salsa, Merengue, Mambo and Reggaeton.

Lindsay shares that "University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's program called All 4 Kids: Healthy, Happy, Active, Fit, has kids dancing as part of a physical activity program. Preschoolers learn movements that are fun but also improve their physical development and build self-confidence."

Whatever type of music you like, whatever style of dance you enjoy, whatever your level of fitness is.....DANCE is a great way to be active. You don't have to be a dancer; you just gotta get up and dance!



Let's Talk

Its winter and we often dread those days when the weather is bad and children can't get outdoors to play. Children need to have active time every day to use up energy, learn new things and be healthy. Here are some ideas for active play indoors:

- Put on some music and have a dance party.
- Plan a "work out" time to do simple exercises with children. Keep them age-appropriate. Borrow simple exercise tapes from the public library.

- Games such as Simon Says Follow the Leader, or Duck, Duck, Goose keep children active.
- Children can pretend to ice skate wearing socks on a smooth floor.
- Children love pretending to be animals by making their sounds and movements.
- An indoor basketball game can be played with crumpled up newspaper balls thrown into a laundry basket or cardboard box.
- Pile up some old blankets and pillows for some soft indoor climbing fun.
- With a little imagination and creativity, you can come up with other fun ideas.

Recipe for Health:

French Toast Popcorn

Note: This recipe can be made gluten free by substituting gluten free oat flour for the all purpose and whole wheat flours. Oats are naturally gluten free but can become contaminated with gluten in processing, so look for oats and oat flours that are labeled gluten free. Gluten is a protein found in a variety of grains such as wheat. Some people are sensitive to gluten and should avoid foods containing gluten if advised to do so by their health care professional.

Ingredients

- Cooking Spray
- 8 cups popcorn (popped without butter, oil or salt)
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 1 tbs butter
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp cinnamon

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 300°.
2. Coat a large baking pan and a large mixing bowl with cooking spray.
3. Place popcorn in the bowl.
4. Combine syrup, butter, salt, and cinnamon over medium heat. Bring to a boil, stirring only until combined.
5. Cook without stirring for 2 minutes.
6. Pour syrup mixture over popcorn in a steady stream, stirring to coat.
7. Spread popcorn mixture in an even layer in the pan.
8. Bake for 15 minutes.
9. Allow to cool completely in the pan Eat!

Makes 16 portions (1/2 cup)

