

## Let's Dance Dementia



### Studies show dancing may lower dementia risk & improve brain health

Scientific research suggests that dancing and dance-based activities have positive effects on brain health and may be associated with a lower risk of dementia and improved cognitive function:

#### **Reduced risk and brain health:**

A long-running observational study found that among older adults, dancing was uniquely linked with a lower risk of developing dementia compared with many other leisure activities, suggesting that the combined physical, cognitive and social engagement that dancing requires may be protective against dementia risk over time.

#### **Cognitive benefits in older adults:**

Systematic reviews and trials indicate that dance interventions and dance therapy can improve aspects of cognitive functioning — including memory, executive function, attention and global cognition — in older adults and those with mild cognitive impairment.

#### **Social and physical engagement:**

Dancing's mix of physical movement, mental challenge (learning steps, rhythm, coordination) and social interaction is thought to stimulate neuroplasticity, engage multiple brain networks, and support overall brain health.

#### **Evidence in dementia populations:**

There is preliminary evidence that dance and music-based movement interventions may help people living with dementia with mood, social engagement and cognitive symptoms, although researchers note more high-quality studies are needed.

In summary, while no single activity guarantees prevention, a growing body of research supports dancing as an enjoyable, cognitively stimulating and socially engaging activity that may contribute to maintenance of brain health and potentially lower dementia risk.

