

Modern Square Dance

For a Healthy-Happy Heart



What could add 10 years to your life, give you low stress physical exercise, inexpensive entertainment and is just plain fun?

www.iowasquaredance.org

The Joy of Square Dancing

If music moves you to get up and dance, join the millions of Americans who have discovered that square dancing is an enjoyable way to get into shape.

Square dancing is a combination of rhythmic movements and dance steps that can improve and maintain cardiovascular and physical fitness. That's why the American Heart Association supports square dancing as a lifelong activity.

Any exercise program should provide pleasure and enjoyment. Square dancing is gaining popularity because it emphasizes fun and fitness rather than competition. At the very least, it should be rewarding, so you'll want to continue. Participation is not limited by age, gender or shape – so try it.

Dancing and Exercise

Ask almost anyone about exercise and they'll say, "It's good for you". Ask most doctors and they'll say, "It's particularly good for your heart." That's because lack of exercise has been labeled one of the "Big 4" modifiable risk factors for heart disease, along with cigarette smoke, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.

Square dancing can condition the heart and lungs by increasing the oxygen available to the body, enabling the heart to use the oxygen more efficiently. This conditioning is called aerobic exercise.

Benefits of Square Dancing

Square dancing brings benefits in many ways:

- A night of square dancing can equal a 3 to 5 mile walk.
- It is an inexpensive family activity (tobacco/alcohol free for the dances) that can be enjoyed by family members of all ages.
- Provides Mental Stimulation by keeping the mind active and alert.
- It can help to reduce your risk of heart disease.
- It's good for psychological well-being, because it releases tension and helps relaxation and sleep.
- It helps you handle stress, so you can do more and not tire as easily.
- Along with a proper diet, it can help control weight.
- It improves blood circulation throughout the body. The lungs, heart and other organs and muscles work together more effectively.
- It improves the body's ability to use oxygen and provide the energy necessary for physical activity.
- It bolsters enthusiasm and optimism.
- It tones and shapes muscles.

A Lifetime of Fun!

Check with your doctor if you plan to start square dancing – particularly if you have been sedentary. Begin easily. After becoming accustomed to one level of dancing, progress to the next level.

Once you start, don't stop! Square dancing should not be considered just a "fad: - something you do for a few days, weeks, or months and then forget. Like good eating habits, exercise should be a lifetime commitment. When you stop exercising, the beneficial effects are lost rapidly. Cardiovascular fitness is an ongoing process and requires constant reinforcement; it is a fun way to get exercise.

As with any regular activity, there may be times when you're not motivated to continue. That's natural. Exercising with friends in a square dance club will help you maintain a regular schedule. Some people say they can't dance – but if you can walk, you can square dance. A night of square dancing beats jogging past the pigeons in the park early in the morning or any time of the day.

Heart Healthy Lifestyles

Remember: Lack of exercise is a risk factor for heart disease. Here's a chance to clap your hands, tap your feet, and exercise with enthusiasm. Whether you sing along, give a great big cowboy yell, or just smile at your neighbors there is exercise for the mind and body, with a big dose of fun and friendliness.

Square Dancing is Entertainment & Exercise set to music

The caller is there to entertain you – to make dancers forget about your day to day worries. And it works! No matter how tired you are from a long day's work, once you start dancing, you become energized again and forget all your troubles. You'll find yourself dancing to many different types of music, including country, rock, popular jazz, gospel and polka.

For a Successful Square Dance Program, Remember to:

- Find a square dance club near you.
- Get the proper attire
- Let the music move you to a healthier, happier life!
- Relax, smile and have fun!

So you are interested in Square Dancing!

How can you get started?

How can you get more information?

There are square dance clubs in most parts of Iowa that are members of the Iowa State Square and Round Dance Federation. Check out the Iowa Square Dance web site – www.iowasquaredance.org – for information about clubs, callers and contacts.

Visit a club and talk to the dancers. You will find them very friendly and eager to “show and tell” why they enjoy square dancing. Visitors are always welcome at all clubs.

Square Dance Contacts can be found as follows:

Dubuque Area – Click on [TriState](#)

Davenport Area – Click on [Quad Cities](#)

Burlington/Ottumwa Area – Click on [South East](#)

Cedar Rapids /Iowa City – Click on [East Central](#)

Waterloo Area – Click on [Northeast](#)

Des Moines /Ames Area – Click on [Central](#)

Fort Dodge Area –North Central

Sioux City Area – Click on [Siouxland](#)

Clarinda Area – Click on [South West](#)