



RH photos/Jade Cody

Debra Endres, center, leads a group of dancers at Phaze Nightclub on October 6.

Dance 'till you feel better

Benefits of dance as exercise go beyond physical health

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Reporter-Herald

Incorporating dance into your exercise regime might do more than improve your physical health, according to Debra Endres, owner of Okay Dance in Loveland.

"Dancing is great exercise in itself, but it makes you feel good for other reasons," Endres said. "It's not about moving from pattern to pattern. It's about engaging in your partner. The bottom line is that makes you feel good."

Several dance classes are offered in the Loveland/Fort Collins area for a wide span of ages. In addition to private lessons and parties, Endres teaches beginner classes at Genesis Health and Fitness Club in Loveland.

Endres said dance can improve your mental health, as well as your physical and

social well-being.

"Dance is a great outlet," she said. "It gets you motivated and focused."

Endres also noted that while the motivation for starting dance may be social, it improves many physical skills, as well.

"It usually starts with wanting to get out, meet people, have fun," she said. "Dancing in itself builds your stamina, and the quick dances, such as swing and salsa, require a lot of hand eye coordination. Body dynamics are really involved, so you have to have a lot of control."

Jennifer Knostman, owner and creative director of Studio West Dance Center in Loveland, said new dancers will see major changes in their muscle structure and whole-body health improvement.

"Instead of building bulk, they'll see an elongation of their muscle structure as well as increased flexibility," she said. "It's a very well-rounded form of exercise. It's not high impact, but you still get cardiovascular."

Knostman hosts both child and adult classes. Her adult classes include break dancing and tap.

"I have a really strong adult program," Knostman said. "It's never too late to start. We will ease into it."

Knostman's studio is more ballet-focused, while Endres teaches more ballroom dances like the waltz,

GENESIS HEALTH AND FITNESS CLUB

- Night Club Two Step, Mondays 7:45 p.m.
- Cha Cha, Thursdays 7:45 p.m.

www.okaydance.com

STUDIO WEST DANCE CENTER

- Break Dance, Wednesdays 8:30 p.m.
- Adult Tap, Tuesdays 8:15 p.m.

www.swdfc.com

swing, tango and foxtrot.

Regardless of the type of dance you choose to do, dance can be a fun alternative to the standard running, walking or jogging for exercise, said Tammy Jenkins, a certified nutritionist, registered nurse, and naturopathic doctor at the Natural Health Center of the Rockies in Fort Collins.

"For people that can't get out there and make themselves jog or run, they can be burning a lot of calories and increasing their fitness and heart rate and doing something very fun and enjoyable," she said.

