

One-Minute Guide

Dance and Health

Physical inactivity

- Physical inactivity contributes to 1 in 10 deaths in the UK, equal to smoking and costs the UK economy £8.7 billion a year
- It is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK (PHE 2014)

Gender inequality

In the UK, women and girls are more inactive than their male counterparts at every age across the life course:

- Only 38% of girls achieved the recommended hour of physical activity each day compared with 63% for boys (Griffiths 2013)
- 19% of men and 25% of women do less than 30 minutes a week (PHE 2014)



Dance

Dance is popular and effective at engaging women and girls in physical activity:

- People Dancing's surveys show that 4.78 million people take part in dance each year in England and most of these are women and girls
- The DCMS' *Taking Part* survey 2013/14 showed that 45.7 % of 5-10 year old girls took part in dance outside of school (compared to 15.7% boys). Only 11.7 % of girls played sport outside of school compared with 31.9% of boys.

Reducing inequalities

- Dance can be effective at engaging disadvantaged communities. Over the last 5 years, the DAZL dance programme, commissioned by Leeds public health, has engaged 8,500 children and young people from the most deprived areas in Leeds in regular dance activity. 75% were girls and over half were otherwise "inactive" beyond school.



Benefits

- **Early years:** Dance improves cognitive and physical development and enhances social skills.
- **Children and young people:** Dance increases cardiovascular fitness, can prevent or reduce obesity and improve self-esteem.
- **Adults:** Dance can reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes and CHD and help maintain a healthy weight. It can also reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Older people:** Dance is a social activity that helps maintain cognitive function, reduces cardiovascular risk and risk of falls.



Regular dance sessions can provide a way for communities to be **active**, have **fun** and engage socially with others.

Community dance performances bring people together to **share** their achievements and can provide a **positive** and celebrational focus for disadvantaged communities.

Dance can **communicate** health education messages in a lively interactive way.

It can **raise** the profile of social marketing campaigns and increase community buy-in.

More information available on PHE National Obesity Observatory:

Commissioning Dance for Health and Wellbeing: Guidance and Resources for commissioners

www.noo.org.uk/Resources/Nice_Sign

To find out more about local dance organisations, contact:

