

# 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:

- Dance UK surveys show that 4.5 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](http://www.noo.org.uk/Resources/Nice_Sign)

