

Tango Classes Put Parkinson's Patients a Step Ahead

SUMMARY: Effects of Tango on Functional Mobility in Parkinson's Disease

Researchers at the Washington University in St. Louis medical school compared the effects of Argentine tango lessons and exercise classes on the functional mobility of 19 Parkinson's patients. The patients were randomly assigned to do 20 one-hour tango classes or group strength and exercise sessions designed for Parkinson's patients and the elderly.

All the patients were assessed prior to the start of these activities and after they completed the sessions. The dance classes included stretching, balance exercises, tango-style walking, footwork patterns, experimenting of timing of steps, and dance with and without a partner. By the end of the sessions, both groups showed significant improvements in standard tests designed to measure mobility. People in the tango group showed more improvement in balance than those in the exercise group.

“This type of therapy looks to be superior to what is currently offered,” Researcher Madeline E. Hackney, a pre-doctoral trainee in movement science, said in a prepared statement. “The quality of life improved in these patients because of the social aspect of dancing.”

Effects of tango on functional mobility in Parkinson's disease: A preliminary study. *Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy*, 31(4), 173-179. Hackney, M. E., Kantorovich, S., Levin, R., & Gammon, M. (2007.)