



Getting fit doesn't have to include weights and typical workout routines. Many Katyites have found the path to better health and fitness with the rhythms of music, whether they are two-stepping to country songs, gliding within the romance of a ballroom, or having a Zumba dance party. If upbeat, fast-paced dancing isn't your style, perhaps the graceful movements of ballet will suit your tastes better. Not to be overlooked, the stretching and toning of muscles during this form of exercise will increase flexibility, ultimately leaving you with an improved shape.

DANCING YOUR WAY TO FITNESS

From ballet to Zumba, Katyites dance for fun and better health

Written by Elizabeth Padgett | Photography by Reinaldo Medina



Connolly Dance Arts offers lessons for dancers as young as age 3 through adults

Call It Classic Ballet

“Ballet is the foundation of dance, and it’s where we get our terminology. Most other types of dance require you to know basic ballet steps to execute the style correctly,” says Kathleen Connolly of Connolly Dance Arts.

As a dance form, it has been practiced since the 15th century. While it may be intimidating, Connolly says that her adult classes cater to all skill levels. “Beginners, intermediate, and advanced adults are invited to take classes. Each week we review the basics, as harder movements are built upon them.”

A big reason dance-based fitness is successful for those who struggle with regular exercise stems from the enjoyment they experience. Connolly shares, “I have personally felt a greater sense of body awareness. I am healthier and happier when I am able to take or teach a class.” Ballet and dance have helped her maintain her overall health.

Get Fit With Zumba

Kenyatta Kelly knew she needed to make a drastic change in her life when she was diagnosed with preeclampsia. Already overweight before her pregnancy, the added body fat and increased levels of blood pressure resulted in a miscarriage of her baby, Jessica, at only six months along.

Shortly thereafter, Kelly was placed on medications to control her high blood pressure and depression. In order to get off the daily medications, she was informed by her doctor that she needed to exercise and monitor her diet. After becoming a licensed Zumba fitness instructor, Kelly went from 210 lbs. down to 155 lbs., and was successfully able to stop taking all medications. Now, she has made it her goal to help others change their lives by showing them exercise can be fun.

“Zumba is the ultimate dance party that burns up to 1,000 calories per class. It’s truly disguised as a workout,”

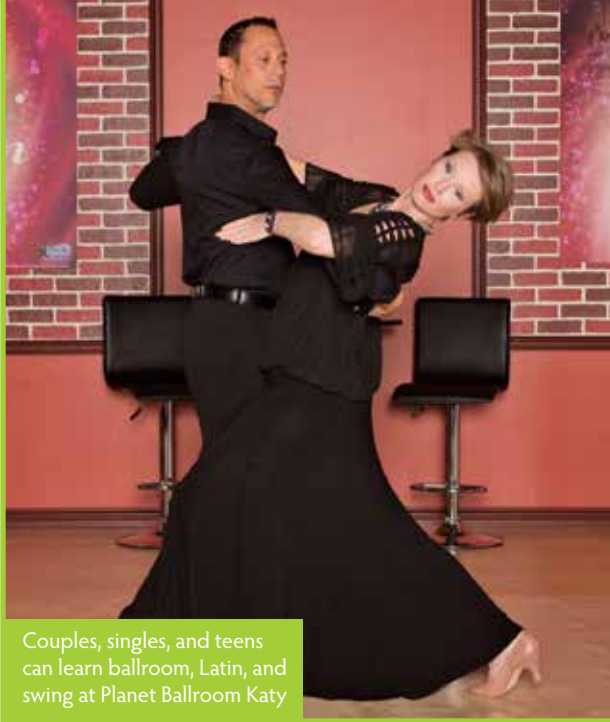
“Zumba is the ultimate dance party that burns up to 1,000 calories per class.”
- Kenyatta Kelly,
Kenyatta & Co. Studio

says Kelly. One of the major benefits of Zumba is that it encompasses both cardio and toning, so in one session you’ll receive a balanced workout. While dancing away to the signature Latin rhythmic music, you’ll be strengthening your body and raising your energy levels at the same time.

At her studio Kenyatta & Co., Kelly says, “All of our Zumba fitness formats are for everyone. No matter your level or age, you will be victorious.” Zumba itself was created by Alberto “Beto” Perez in the 1990s. The choreography developed by the Colombian-born dancer incorporates elements of hip-hop, samba, merengue, mambo, and salsa.



Zumba classes at Kenyatta and Co. feature popular music and an entire body workout



Couples, singles, and teens can learn ballroom, Latin, and swing at Planet Ballroom Katy

Ballroom Performance

Developed by Elizabeth Malvasia, the PB-FIT system is a unique form of exercise that utilizes glamorous ballroom movements with strength training, muscle development, and body lengthening. The method is taught at Planet Ballroom Katy. You will be burning calories away, and Malvasia says you'll feel fabulous while doing it. "Looking, feeling, and being in great shape is a job requirement for me. But after trying so many different things, there was nothing that offered the results that dancing gave me," says Malvasia.

Malvasia is most inspired by teaching at Planet Ballroom Katy when she sees the impact it makes on her students. She shares, "Husbands and wives find romance they thought was gone forever. Moms find the spark and passion they felt in their pre-mommyhood life and become superstars. People who were insecure about themselves or their bodies step into the limelight and realize they are perfect."

While classic ballroom is performed with a partner, Planet Ballroom Katy's classes allow anyone to join, with or without one. Many different types are offered in order to best suit each student's need, including ballroom, Latin, and swing dance; competitive dance sport; social and hobby dancing; as well as getting couples ready for their big day with wedding dances.

Regardless of what form of exercise you choose, what is important is that you find enjoyment in the activity. Malvasia shares, "When a person is dancing, every muscle in their body is working, their heart rate is increased, and they are developing finite skills of coordination and thought process. But they are having such a great time, they don't realize it. They just know that they want to keep dancing." **KM**

ELIZABETH PADGETT is a professional writer and dance hobbyist that enjoys hip-hop and street dance.

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connollydancearts.com
See ad on page 157

Dance with Stars Studio

829 S. Mason Rd., #240 | 281-646-1901
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DanMar Studio

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611 S. Mason Rd. | 832-891-7488
kenyattaandco.com

Planet Ballroom Katy

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planetballroom.com
See ad on page 120

Pointe of Grace

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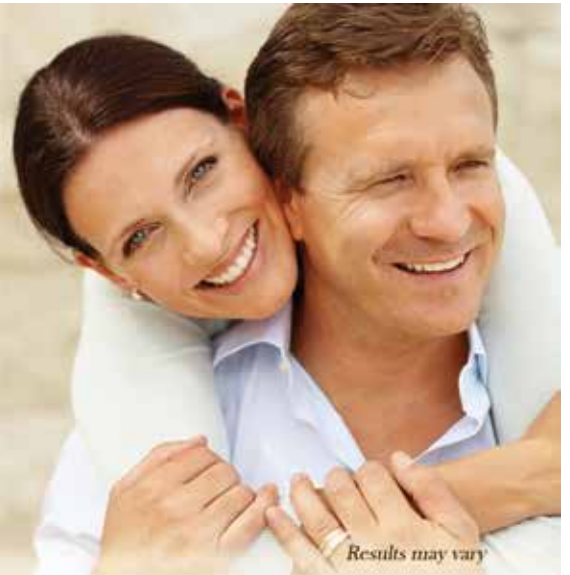
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