

DANCE AWAY

If you're not sure which form of dancing will suit you, and which you'll enjoy most, here are a variety of dance forms that you can try out:

ZUMBA

WHAT IS IT? Coining the concept of a 'fitness party' and making fitness fun, Zumba has positioned itself as the single most influential movement in the industry of fitness. It started when celebrity fitness trainer, Beto Perez, came up with the concept of Latin-inspired fitness in his native country of Columbia. The routine features interval training sessions where fast and slow rhythms and resistance training are combined to tone and sculpt your body while burning fat. Add some Latin flavour into the mix, and you've got Zumba.

WHO CAN DO IT?

Catherine explains that Zumba is safe to do during pregnancy, but that you should be cautious with some of the movements.

She also recommends not doing a strenuous Zumba class in the last trimester of your pregnancy, as the extra weight may cause premature fatigue and breathlessness.

Like any aerobic exercise, dancing can help to maintain muscle tone, strength and endurance.

TELL ME

MORE:

Virgin Active health clubs offer Zumba classes. They're free if you're a member. Go to www.virgininactive.co.za and check with your doctor before you start.

ADULT BALLET

WHAT IS IT? Ballet originated in Italy. It is an artistic dance form performed to music, using set steps that are fluid and graceful, explains Iain MacDonald, artistic director at Joburg Ballet.

WHO CAN DO IT?

"The wonderful thing about ballet is that anyone can do it," says Iain. He offers Beginners' and Advanced classes, which allow those who have never danced before, an opportunity to learn the fundamental technique of ballet. The Advanced classes allow those who have danced before, the full benefits of a ballet class.

HOW CAN IT BENEFIT A PREGGY MOMMY?

Ballet focuses on the entire body, both mentally and physically. Physically, it's demanding to maintain the required posture for ballet, which transcends into one's everyday lifestyle, as well as the endurance and strength to execute the steps. Flexibility and muscle tone are also improved. Mentally, the brain is engaged on four different levels: The left side is for the mathematical element or the logic of the sequence of steps; the right side is for the artistic interpretation; the upper rear portion helps interpret spatial relationships; and the lower part helps with memorising the steps.

TELL ME MORE:

The classes take place at the Joburg Theatre in Joburg and are R70 a lesson. For more info, email Iain on iain@joburgballet.com

BELLY DANCING

WHAT IS IT? Belly dancing originated in the Middle East, and for many generations, women would dance together at times of celebration. When a pregnant woman was ready to give birth, her female family members would belly dance around her, their movements mimicking the birthing movements, and celebrating their bodies through beautiful movements.

WHO CAN DO IT?

If you haven't done it before, it's best to do it post-pregnancy. "If you've done belly dancing leading up to your pregnancy, then you can continue, as long as your doctor has approved it, and your teacher is well qualified in anatomy and physiology – which our SADTA belly dance teachers are," says Senta Duffield, chairperson of the South African Dance Teachers Association, Bellydance Division. There will, however, be certain moves that you shouldn't do, especially in the first and final trimesters.

HOW CAN IT BENEFIT A PREGGY MOMMY?

If you're healthy and having a normal pregnancy, then belly dancing will help keep your pelvic floor muscles strong, which will in turn help with natural labour.

TELL ME MORE:

To find a SADTA-qualified teacher, visit www.bellydancingsa.co.za. Once you've found one in your area, she'll advise you of the cost and frequency of the classes.

NIA

WHAT IS IT? Nia is a sensory-based movement practice. Its teaching style uses visual and sensory language, with choreography that can be adapted to fit individual needs. Each class includes mindful movement guidance: 52 basic movements and techniques are used, which draw on a combination of jazz and modern dancing, Tai Chi and Aikido, and the body-mind healing arts of the Feldenkrais Method, the Alexander Technique, and Yoga.

WHO CAN DO IT?

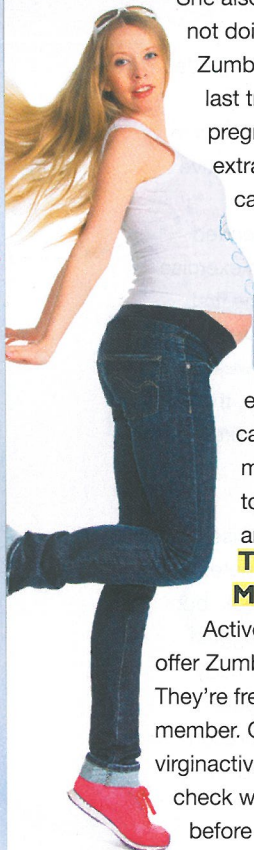
"It's for anyone at any age and any fitness level, since Nia honours the body's natural way, as in how it was designed to function and move," says Nia instructor, Nicci Gates. Nia is based on the fundamental premise of movement that is pleasure-based, and is not about forced effort. It also provides great support, nurturing, and healthy conditioning for the mind and the emotions of women during pregnancy, as well as before and after birth.

HOW CAN IT BENEFIT A PREGGY MOMMY?

It cultivates awareness of how the body is feeling, and invites you to choose movement that feels good. Nia does not advocate effort, but rather dynamic ease, explains Nikki.

TELL ME MORE:

For information about classes, visit www.niasouthafrica.co.za and go to the page that lists teachers across South Africa. Classes are usually an hour long and range between R50 and R90 a class. **I&I**



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