Dancing for a Healthy Brain--76% Reduction in Dementia Transcript

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Leisure Activities and Dementia Research

Little did I know when I sent out my blog last week about taking a hip-hop class for fun that there actually is scientific evidence about the value of dance in preventing cognitive decline.

There's an excellent article that was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2003 that studied a large group of older adults over 75 years of age who were engaged in a whole variety of leisure time activities.

everything from things that mainly use your brain, such as reading, writing, doing crossword puzzles and being in discussion groups, as well as more physical activities like tennis, golf, gardening, and dancing.

Reading and Crossword Puzzles Reduce Risk

And when they looked at the literature and they studied these people for 21 years to see what the incidence of Alzheimer's and vascular dementia was, which is dementia caused by blood vessels, they found out the following things.

If you're a regular reader, your incidence of dementia is decreased by 35%. If are a crossword puzzler doer, especially if you do cross word puzzles more than four times a week, you need to do these things frequently, Your risk of developing Alzheimer's and vascular dementia was reduced by 47%. But what really took the prize was dance.

Why Dance Offers the Biggest Benefit

If you do dance on a regular basis, you can reduce your risk of dementia by as much as 76%. Now, it needs to be danced that's spontaneous and innovative if you are using the same memorized pathways, which are memorized steps, and then engage the same old neural pathways in your brain, this is less effective in preventing cognitive decline.

So you want to be in a class where you are innovating, taking rapid cues, and Dance Is ends up being very effective because it integrates a whole lot of different activities.

Physical, cognitive, meaning you've got to use your brains. Emotional and musical. So you can really impact your risk of cognitive decline in the future by the leisure time activities that you are engaged in.

I say, get out your dancing shoes.