



Info for newcomers to barn dance fitness

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Welcome to BDF!

Find out a bit more about what to expect at our classes



Hi, I'm Dan Longley, and I welcome you to the class. I want to reassure you that we're a friendly lot and that the dancing is easy!

Who attends BDF classes?

Anyone 7yrs or over! Our midday classes tend to attract men & women 50+, who have more leisure time. The early eve class at Stirchley is popular with families, and the later Hall Green class with working females 35+. Sometimes, we have 3 generations at the same class - it is truly inclusive.

What's it about?

We don't take ourselves seriously, and yes, we make fools of ourselves. It's about having fun together getting fit as a social activity in normal sensible clothing and footwear. It's about 'us' which is why it's so different to other fitness classes - there are no mirrors! I think what we do is a great leveller, there's no status, and we need each other to make it work.

Of course, we want to stay fit and live longer, and there's plenty of published evidence that regular moderate dancing supports that aim. Furthermore, it's an all body and mind workout: you probably won't even be conscious of how much stretching, balancing, stepping, and mental concentration, just happens.

When you arrive...

We'll ask you to fill in a standard questionnaire about your readiness to take dance exercise. The instructor will have a short chat with you and then introduce you to a few of your fellow dancers. We aim to start on time, so please arrive at least 10 minutes before your first class.

Will I need a partner?

No, but do bring a partner if it makes you feel more comfortable.

Will I be embarrassed?

I understand that it can be very embarrassing to get something wrong, but it doesn't matter to us. No one will judge you, and sometimes we adapt your original moves and put them into the dance, so we're all learning together. The dancing has its own vocabulary of steps and styles so it will take a few sessions to feel comfortable. In each class, there will be a new dance, so even regular attendees will find it as challenging as yourself.



What if I can't do it?

The class is for beginners who join at any time in the year. If you can work out your left from your right - that's the toughest challenge - then you'll be brilliant. Please accept that there is a lot to take in and it's natural to feel awkward for the first few sessions. Accept that it may take 6 months to strengthen the core (and see the results) if you're not already an active dancer.

Why will I enjoy it?

There's no pressure to be beautiful and perfect. Our aim is to have fun - we just happen to get fit in the process. Remember, you can do it at your own pace.

What do I need to take to my first class?

Dress in loose clothing; allow for layers that you can peel off as you warm up. Shoes should be comfortable and suitable for dancing on wooden floors. Bring a bottle of water and possibly a small towel.

Who is my instructor?

C'est moi, Dan Longley. I'm a qualified ETM fitness instructor and first aider. I work as a professional caller for the [Burdock Ceilidh Band](#). I will walk you through the dance and ensure that you understand the moves before commencing. You don't need to remember all the figures as I'll call them out during the dance.

What are the dances?

The dances come from all over the world. For example, we draw from the European bal tradition, American, French, Klezmer, Mediaeval, Celtic, and what you might remember as English country or social dancing.

Social dance is that category of dances that have a social function and context.^[1] Social dances are generally intended for participation rather than performance and can be led and followed with relative ease.^[2] They are often danced merely to socialise and for entertainment... *Wikipedia 15/09/17*

How is the class structured?

There are 6 to 7 dances per 1 hour session. The first dance is a warmup often done in a line facing the instructor, similar to other dance classes. This is followed by different formations of group dances, some more energetic than others, ending with a gentle dance to cool down.

What about health worries?

Many of our dancers have health challenges, but the one thing that they seem to have in common is that their doctor has told them to 'get more exercise!'. You will find that you can do the dances at your own pace; each step sequence or move will have a low impact, or low swing, alternative.

Are there any concessions?

The price is the same for all, however children accompanied by a parent/guardian partake free. We will be offering a loyalty discount direct debit option later this year.