

# A ballet-based dance intervention for people with Parkinson's

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This research was conducted by **Ashley McGill, Sara Houston and Raymond Y.W. Lee** at the **University of Roehampton** and the **University of Portsmouth**.

## Summary

Parkinson's disease is characterised by loss of balance and stability, which can have a two-way detrimental impact on an individual's quality of life by affecting their health as well as their self-esteem and social interactions. Dance has proven to be a beneficial component to treatment for people with Parkinson's. However, there is little research on the mechanisms by which specific dance movements influence stability.

## **This study evaluated the effect of weekly ballet lessons on a group of Parkinson's patients**

It looked specifically at how ballet can affect gait variability and balance confidence. 19 participants were recruited from an ongoing dance-for-Parkinson's class, and a control group of 13 patients did not take the ballet lessons. The researchers tested participants over a period of 12 months.

## **The ballet-based dance programme made no significant improvement to the balance of patients with Parkinson's**

The researchers did not find significant effects on gait variability or balance confidence after the period of evaluation. However, the ballet classes might provide other social, emotional and psychological benefits that impact upon daily activities. Future research should continue to assess potential changes in

dynamic stability (such as gait and balance), for instance assessing these change with increased frequencies of classes and testing dance programmes over a longer period of time.

This summary is by **Ailin Buzzi, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate.**

## Keywords

**ballet** **dance** **experiment** **parkinsons** **UK**

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