

You shall dance



Ballroom dancing a romantic way to stay in step with your New Year's resolution

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It's romantic, it's fun and guess what? Ballroom dancing is good for you, so much so that experts say dance can be as beneficial an exercise as swimming or bicycling.

Lee Terry, who has been teaching ballroom dancing for years and is herself a model for how it keeps people physically fit, said it's a good way for people to keep those New Year's resolutions to drop some pounds and exercise more.

A New Bedford native, Terry has been teaching ballroom dancing at the Healthtrax Fitness & Wellness Center in Dartmouth for 10 years, and has recently started a new session of eight-week classes Wednesday evening. She also teaches the one-hour classes on Thursday and Friday evenings.

Depending on enrollment, she said, beginners, advanced beginners and intermediate dancers may still be able to enroll, or they can wait until the next eight-week session.

"You use every muscle. It's helped me, so I know," said Terry. Although she just turned 60, she looks much younger and she said her doctor tells her that her blood pressure, cholesterol and bones are just fine.

Each time Terry starts a new round of classes, about half of her students are new and the others are repeat customers who want to improve and appreciate the opportunity to get a workout without the tedium of a treadmill or barbells.

"This is so much more fun. Some students tell me I have so much fun teaching they should pay me," Terry said. "Most of the couples tell me it helps their relationship, and their physical fitness. People tell me they feel better. I have people with bad knees and they tell me dancing helps. I have a bad knee and it helps me."

Students, who must have a partner, sign up for fun, she said. Terry said they see other couples dancing and enjoying themselves and they want to be able to do that, too.

When she first started teaching ballroom dancing in the 1970s, people asked her when they would look like the couples they saw on television dancing in competitions.

Terry said she used to tell them that with years of practice they could look like



HERALD NEWS PHOTO: JACK FOLEY

Lee Terry says ballroom dancing — and teaching ballroom dancing around the year — is the reason why her doctors have declared her so fit and in excellent health. Her latest ballroom dancing class got under way Wednesday night at Healthtrax Fitness & Wellness Center in Dartmouth.