



Why every woman should LEARN TO BELLYDANCE!

by Lurainya Koerber



Lurainya teaches a Veil Workshop in Doylestown, Pa.

Invite a woman to take part in a Bellydance class, and she'll probably giggle and say, "Oh, I could never do that"! Usually that means she would never bare her belly, thinks she could never be able to move like that, or doesn't think good girls should move like that.

To any woman who's ever been curious about taking a Bellydance class - it's not about baring your belly; if you find the right teacher you CAN learn to move like that; and again, the right teacher will show you there is nothing dirty about this dance. It's about taking pride in being a woman and learning to love your body for what it is.

Unfortunately stereotypes associated with this dance can deter women from wanting to learn more about it, robbing them of the opportunity to experience all the amazing benefits belly dancing has to offer. Every woman can find a home in this dance! For most, that's in a classroom or living room enjoying the exercise, camaraderie and costuming! For some, that graduates into being a dedicated, disciplined professional. But no matter where you fit into this dance, it's important to respect the training and the history.

The authentic term for "Bellydance" is Raks Sharki, Arabic for Dance of the East. The term "Bellydance" was first coined by the Europeans, because to them it looked like "the belly was dancing". Bellydancing is a form of the oldest known documented dance. Most people don't know that this was a dance created by women, for women, and was used as a form of childbirth preparation. Many of the movements and the intense muscle control, specifically in the abdominal region, are helpful to pregnant women

TOP 10 BENEFITS!

1. Improves posture - with constant strengthening of the postural muscles women measure taller at their doctors office, and chiropractors say it keeps the spine straighter!
2. Improves body image and self-esteem; so important for today's young women and girls!
3. Teaches the muscular control needed throughout the course of childbirth – Bellydance was around long before Lamaze!
4. Improves confidence – Making you feel like a different person at school, at work, at home, and just walking down the street!
5. Improves concentration- students with ADD and ADHD have noticed a difference in their ability to focus due to the intense muscle control requiring tremendous concentration.
6. Improves coordination – learning to isolate different body parts enhances the mind-body connection!
7. Improves balance and grace – even those thinking there's no hope can learn to become balanced and graceful!
8. Gives a gentle cardio workout - increasing the heart rate to burn fat!
9. Tones muscles- works every muscle in the body, even the ones you never felt before; with strong focus on the 'core-muscle groups' that everyone is so concerned about these days!
10. Increases flexibility – you'll notice an improved range of motion throughout the whole body!

up to, and throughout, the course of labor. In the simplest of terms this dance, it is a celebration of the feminine

While still maintaining the benefits of childbirth preparation, bellydancing became a form of entertainment and celebration. As a dance of such antiquity, it's difficult to trace all of the developments throughout time; but it's thought to have begun its worldly migration around the 11th century when the Rom (more commonly known as Gypsies) left India and traveled throughout the continent. In doing so, they left traces of their music and dance that would meld with the already present styles of each region. It's believed by many that it was first seen



Lurainya reminds student Jessica Hanson to maintain proper posture while controlling a hip isolation.

in America in 1893 at the Chicago World's Fair, when dancing girls from Egypt were one of the main attractions. One dancer by the name of "Little Egypt" is noted to have been the most popular.

There are many different forms of this dance throughout the world. Depending on the region, stylization of costuming, music and movement can vary greatly. Some dancers prefer traditional styles like Egyptian or Turkish, while some prefer to fuse characteristics from many styles of world dance, contributing to the continuing evolution of this art form in America.

Although different, each style worldwide shares the basic movements and conveys a celebration of the Feminine. Wherever the artistic preference may take the performer, one commonality among true professionals is that this dance be presented with respect. In the hearts of most who live it and love it, bellydance by any name, remains a dance by women, for women.

One of the many misconceptions about this dance is that you have to bare your belly. Wrong! Whether you're in class or performing, it is not about baring your belly. It's about movement – of the mind, body and soul. In fact, traditional costuming leaves very little exposed. It's the more modern costuming typically associated with the dance that leads people to believe one must bare their belly in order to bellydance.

The benefits are endless and apply to every woman no matter her age, size or shape. It's great exercise, toning muscles you never knew you had; but at the same time it's a gentle workout that makes it safe for every body type. Find a teacher that stresses proper posture and technique, and you will find a full body workout. When done correctly, Bellydance works every muscle in the body. Most notably for the beginner will be the toning and strengthening of all the abdominal muscles and all the postural muscles, along with the arms, shoulders, glutes and quads. Additionally, calories will burn! The amount depends on the endurance of each individual, but like any aerobic exercise, as the endurance increases, so will the amount of burned calories.

Bellydance is the perfect full body workout for every woman; no matter her age, size or shape. Yes, it will take time to learn, because to do it correctly and safely is hard. Isolating and controlling individual muscles takes a great deal of concentration, and so exercises the mind as much as the body. Find a teacher you're comfortable with, be patient with yourself, and stick with it. Everyone's timeline for learning is different, but the great workout, rich rewards, and fun start right from the very first class. It's the most fun you'll ever have in a workout!

Lurainya's Locations: Current classes with Lurainya are held in Doylestown at the Dragonfly Yoga Studio, in Furlong at the Pilates for Sport Studio, and in Hatboro at the Sandi Spicer Dance Studio. Registration information and details can be found at MoonGypsy.net.



Lurainya Koerber is a professional Bellydance instructor, performer, and choreographer and is the producer/director of "Lurainya's Realm" dance productions. Her goal is to respectfully and responsibly heighten the awareness and prestige of this dance as an ancient art, innovative form of exercise and source of spiritual healing. She has just released her first Instructional Bellydance package consisting of an instructional DVD, a T-shirt and CD. For more information on Lurainya and Bellydance, please contact Lurainya@phillyfitmagazine.com.