



## **Salsa**

### **Objectives**

A fun way in which to encourage your workforce to get fit and reduce stress. The benefits of Salsa include:

- building stamina, flexibility and co-ordination
- improve the circulation and increase the performance ability of the heart and lungs
- dancing causes endorphin release, and lead to a pleasant "high" and sense of well being
- postural improvements

### **Planning Guide**

#### **Venue**

Should be large enough for participants to easily move around whilst dancing. The room should also be well ventilated. The floor should be non-slippery, clean and clear of any trip hazards.

#### **Materials**

Participants should wear appropriate clothing as the dancing is likely to make you very warm. It is actually preferable in salsa for women to wear high heels, however they aren't necessary and you can wear flat comfortable shoes.

#### **Health and Safety Issues**

Remember that most participants are probably first-timers. There will be a lot of stepping on toes and uncoordinated thrashing about! Warn people to be careful, and not be afraid to speak up if their partners are making them uncomfortable.

If the majority of participants are new to the dance, the instructor won't push them too hard, but Salsa is one of the more energetic dance forms, pulse rates are going to soar, and people will find themselves out of breath. Those with health problems may want to take it slowly or sit out. Make sure you provide lots of water and paper towels.

#### **Extra Activities**

Why not extend the Salsa theme throughout the day? This would involve those that were a little wary of dancing. Activities could include providing a Salsa-inspired buffet lunch, wearing costumes, playing salsa music, or talks on the history of Salsa and its health benefits. There may be an employee in your midst who is into Salsa and would like to share his or her experiences.

If people have really enjoyed the event, think about running salsa classes or outings more regularly throughout the year. Salsa has more benefits for your workforce than you would think; The increased well-being and reduced sense of stress that comes with Salsa sharpens mental acuity and concentration all round, so that learning non-physical things, for example work-related training, becomes easier too.

Salsa classes are a great place to meet new friends, and will improve the confidence of employees who take up classes. It's not just your employees who will benefit either; research evidence shows that many diseases and conditions are less common in people who have satisfying social lives. As around one and a half million working days were lost last year through sickness, anything that improves the health of your workforce can only be a bonus!

### **Case study**

Last year, Dudley College showed that Learning at Work Day is not just about improving your work skills, but about learning in lots of different ways, by holding a Salsa extravaganza! Janet Pearson, from the events, marketing and publicity department, said; "We were looking to do something that wasn't too serious, to show that whatever you do, when you try a new activity, you are learning all the time."

The salsa class was held in the big college hall, during the lunch hour. "I first asked around the adult education department to see if anyone knew a salsa teacher, but ended up looking through Yellow Pages. There were also lots of salsa teachers advertised on the Internet. Its really big at the moment!"

Janet said; "we promoted the event through flyers, which we put up not just in the college, but also in the local council office, trying to get them involved too. We found loads of salsa material on the Internet, which we used on the flyers to draw attention and make the event look really exciting."

The event proved very popular, "We had about fifty people take part, and many more popped their heads round the door, but were a little bit apprehensive. But after the event, lots of people asked me if we were going to be repeating the classes. I think if we did it again, we would encourage groups, as individuals seemed a bit shy. The advertising would concentrate on persuading employees to bring along colleagues."

### **Useful Links**

[www.uksalsa.com](http://www.uksalsa.com)

[www.salsaweb.com](http://www.salsaweb.com)