



DANCE FITNESS

Cardio dance fitness is the workout that feels more like a party. It uses a combination of upbeat music, group fitness, and dynamic fitness moves to get your body moving and grooving. There's no excuse to shy away from these classes if you think you can't dance because any instructor will point out that dance fitness is about having fun with cleverly disguised fitness moves such as squats and jumps.

Mary Rowell teaches ReFit® in Gilbert at her church Beulah United Methodist Church. Her goal is to bring a positive and inspirational dance cardio class where women of all ages and all sizes feel comfortable. Stacey Ashley teaches her original dance fitness class, SKA Fitness, in Lexington at South Carolina Dance Company, bringing high-energy and explosive cardio dance moves with a variety of clean, hip-hop music in a club like atmosphere. Trace Lingle Stewart teaches the ever-popular Zumba® in Irmo at Crunch Fitness with more than a half-decade's worth of Zumba experience under her belt.

REFIT®: A REVOLUTIONARY FITNESS EXPERIENCE

Mary Rowell knew she wanted to step back into the dance world but also wanted something with a family-friendly vibe. After a search on the Internet, she discovered Texas-based ReFit® and decided to go for it.

"I went to Charlotte for training. I got certified a few months before that and was just preparing myself and learning choreography," says Rowell. "They consider themselves to be more positive-based than faith-based. They encour-





SKA Fitness

IS FOR EVERYBODY

by Natalie Szejner



Christian and non-Christian pop including TobyMac, Mandisa, Whitney Houston, Meghan Trainor, and even Jimmy Buffet. Sometimes her playlists are mainly secular and sometimes their primarily Christian.

The dances are a 50/50 mix of ReFit® and either her own or other ReFit® instructors. As a certified teacher, she gets exclusive access to new dances and other business necessities. Rowell keeps her classes dimly lit, so participants feel more comfortable with lights strobing around the church's activity center. Her classes average about 13 songs with a cool-down focusing on stretching and core strength. The class ends in a circle, as participants share concerns or joys and pray for each

if you have to come in your wheelchair and move your arms, then just come. I've had young moms come, too. Right now, the majority are between 40 and 60 (years old)."

SKA FITNESS: ORIGINALITY MEETS HAPPINESS

Stacey Ashley fell in love with dance fitness years ago as a step aerobics instructor and discovered how much she enjoyed creating her own choreography to current hip-hop hits.

She developed her own original program, branding it SKA fitness after her initials. Under SKA fitness is SKA Vibe, which is taught at the South Carolina Dance Company in Lexington. She also has a bootcamp-style class called SKA Vivor, which was on hiatus during the latter part of 2017.

"What makes us different is the energy. Not just mine or Jen's (another SKA instructor); it's the energy in the entire room. That's why I called it SKA Vibe because of the vibe you feel. People talk about it. That energy sets it apart. Energy comes because people know my passion. People feed off the energy," says Ashley. "It's a fitness family people feel they're a part of."

During class, the lights are turned low

"This is a ministry I really love. I'm 58, and it's nice to have a class where women my age feel comfortable."

Mary Rowell

other if they want. Rowell points out that it's not mandatory.

"This is a ministry I really love. I'm 58, and it's nice to have a class where women my age feel comfortable," says Rowell. "The oldest I have is 75. I tell people



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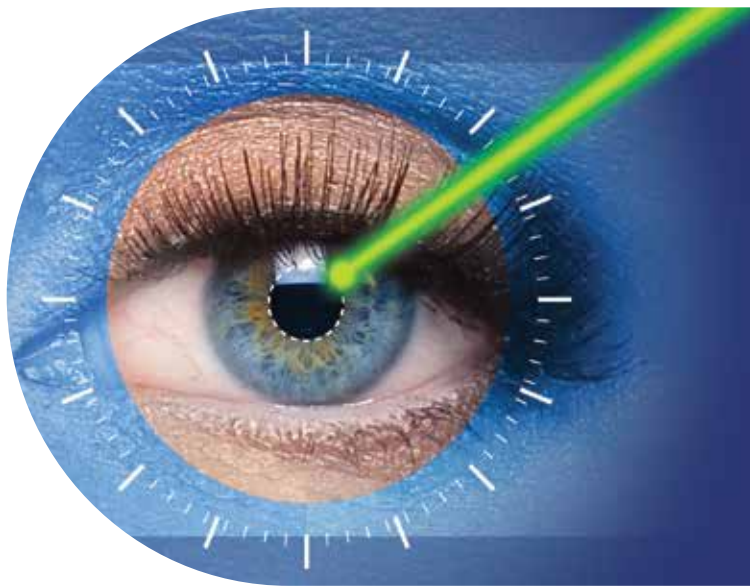
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“It’s for anyone who’s a little intimidated by being in the gym and needs something to latch onto.”

Stacey Ashley

and the music turned high, making one forget about his or her worries for the day. People have come to Ashley after class to tell her that coming to class was their happy time.

“I’ve never seen another class where people clap after every song,” says Ashley. “People are proud, and they tell us and thank us for class. You can normally tell when they walk out and bring a friend with them the next time.”

Ashley uses a variety of hip-hop, including Christian hip-hop as well as Latin. “Everything has to have a good strong beat with not a lot of talking,” she says, explaining that choreographing a song can take anywhere from a few hours to a few months.

She wants people to know this is a class for anyone and everyone.

“It’s about allowing people to follow along. It’s not about what makes you

look good as a dancer but what people can catch on to. Dance fitness is different than dance choreography. You have to work in the fitness moves, and you have to be tricky and repetitive,” she explains. “You want to give people a sense of mastery over the moves. There’s moves for the verses and moves for the choruses.”

“(It’s) for anyone who’s a little intimidated by being in the gym and needs something to latch onto. Come and try the program. It may not be for you and that’s okay. There are so many wonderful people to connect to and find an accountability partner. Just give us three classes, and if you don’t like it, we’ll help you find something else,” she says, explaining there are many different classes and instructors elsewhere.

“We truly care about fitness and helping people,” she says.

ZUMBA®: THE LATIN DANCE CRAZE

Trace Stewart stepped into her first Zumba class six years ago and immediately fell in love. From that point forward, she knew she wanted to teach others the art of Zumba®. Stewart currently teaches at Crunch Fitness a couple of days a week in addition to other fitness classes.

“It’s just the type of exercise anyone can do,” says Stewart.

Step into one of Stewart’s classes, and you’ll be greeted with a class that isn’t dimly lit, but the music is still high energy filled with a mix of Zumba® jams and modern music. “The unique thing when it’s a true Zumba class is the Latin music,” explains Stewart. “It needs to be 70 percent Latin or world music and 30 percent pop or other. Zumba is supposed to be music from all over the world. If someone goes to another Zumba class after going to mine, they should be able to do it. Once you know the basic steps you can do it.” The basic steps include Merengue, salsa, cumbia, and reggae. Some instructors include Bollywood and Soca music.

Stewart is a part of the Zumba Instructor Network, where she is friends with other Zumba instructors. “It’s a really neat community where we do stuff together all the time,” she says, from Zumbathons to hanging out. One perk of being in the network is frequently receiving

“It’s just the type of exercise anyone can do.”

Trace Stewart



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new music and new dances. Another perk is seeing her participants form friendships with each other.

“I think they learn to love each other. They have fun together and come to see each other and just have fun. A lot of the ladies have been dancing with me for five years,” says Stewart.

Her advice to newbies?

“Just come and don’t give up; don’t get discouraged or overwhelmed. Just come at least three times and talk to the instructor afterward. You’ll get it,” she says, who explains it’s key to find an instructor you can follow.

These diverse instructors maintain their commitment to help you achieve a healthier you. With such talent in the Lexington community, there’s no need to travel far for a cardio experience that will leave your heart traveling wilder than another hum-drum session on the treadmill. ■

ReFit® with Mary

When: Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Where: Beulah United Methodist Church in Gilbert

Cost: \$5 per class or \$40 for a 10-class punch card

For more information, check out: refitrev.com

SKA Fitness with Stacey

When: Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 9:15 a.m.

Where: SC Dance Company in Lexington

Cost: \$5 per class

For more information, check out [facebook.com/skafitness](https://www.facebook.com/skafitness)

Zumba® with Trace

When: Tuesdays at 6 p.m. and Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Where: Crunch Fitness in Harbison

Cost: Comes with gym membership

For more information, check out crunch.com/locations/Columbia or Zumba.com

Lexington Orthopaedics Welcomes Randy Beard, MD

Dr. Beard specializes in hip and knee replacements, offering patients the latest minimally invasive surgical options for hip replacement and performing partial and total knee replacements.

An honors graduate of Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, he earned his medical degree from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Dr. Beard then completed his orthopaedic surgery residency at Wake Forest Baptist Health and completed the prestigious Otto E. Aufranc Fellowship in Adult Reconstructive Surgery at New England Baptist Hospital in Boston.



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