

# therapy

## BENEFITS of DANCING



→ **Weight Loss**  
YOU BURN BETWEEN 300-400 CALORIES PER HOUR



→ **Personal Control**  
INCREASES CONFIDENCE + GREATER CONTROL OVER YOUR LIFE



**IT NEEDS**  
THE UTILISATION OF  
A CREATIVE ART  
FORM LIKE DANCING  
TO UNDERSTAND  
THE BODY BETTER



**IT AIMS AT**  
DECIPHERING AN  
INDIVIDUAL'S  
PROBLEMS  
THROUGH THESE  
MOVEMENTS



**AS DANCE**  
THE ONLY THING  
THAT MATTERS IS TO  
FIND A CONNECTION  
BETWEEN THE SOUL  
AND BODY

# DANCE YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

*Many Andheri residents are trying to find stability in motion  
with dance therapy*

ILLUSTRATIONS: SACHIN VARADKAR



Sonia Lulla

**M**ovement never lies – it's a line that a little girl went on to emphasise all her life after her father worded it to her, having caught her lie through her unsteady body language. That young girl was Martha Graham, renowned American modern dancer and choreographer.

"As dancers, the only thing that matters is to find a connection between your soul and body. And while technique and practice help us look defined while we dance, dance therapy helps us bridge the gap between the two," says Chanda Joshi, a resident of Andheri. :)

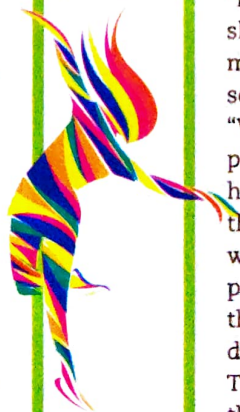
The concept of Dance Therapy emerges from the mere belief that the body and mind are connected and hence movement can be effectively used in a therapeutic manner to heal individuals, usually patients. "It involves the utilisation of a creative art form like dancing, to understand the body better. It can either be complementary and done in association with a team of medical experts, or can be carried out by itself," says Devika Mehta, a Dance Movement Psychotherapist.

Dance therapy encourages people to liberate themselves from conscious movements, allowing the sub conscious mind to express itself. The sessions usually aim at deciphering an individual's problems through these movements.

#### \* THE METHODS

**ACHIEVING A STATE OF UNISON** between the mind and the body is way easier said than done.

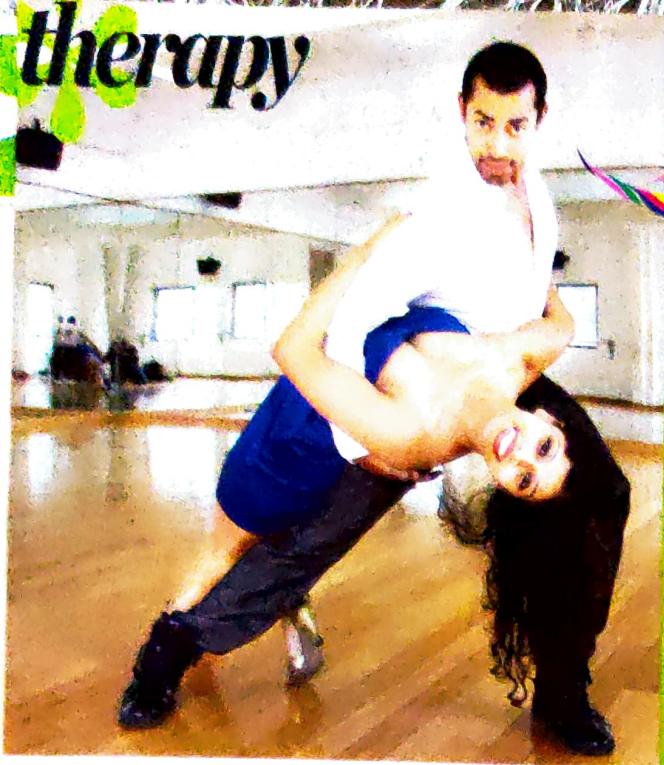
THE  
THERAPY  
CAN ALSO BE  
EFFECTIVE  
FOR THE  
GENERAL  
PUBLIC AND  
DANCERS



↳ BRINGING AWARENESS INTO MOVEMENT

"It does take practice," says Devika, recalling that she too took an entire year to understand how to move as per the language of her body. There are several techniques that enable one to get there. "We start with simple methods like asking a patient to be conscious about small details in his/her life. This can be as easy as focusing on the smell or taste of the food they consume. Then we bring that awareness into movement, asking patients to acquaint themselves with the things they feel when they roll on the floor, or across different surfaces. It's like a moving body scan. The thoughts have to be detailed. You need to ask them things like how their spine or back feels," she says.

Devika also adds that sometimes the idea of even physically exhausting the person with a heavy warm up exercise, makes them more receptive to their feelings afterwards since their



↳ IT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO LIBERATE THEMSELVES

body is worn out.

The health benefits of the treatment may manifest themselves at varied time periods. It is subjective to each individual.

The practice is extremely effective for people suffering from several ailments since it works as a rehabilitation process. "The body reacts to situations before the mind can even decipher them. Thus this therapy utilises this ability of the body to understand concerns that one isn't conscious about," says Devika.

"The therapy can also be effective for the general public and dancers," she adds, highlighting the fact that people today lead a more proactive life and are in search of finding themselves. "But the procedure followed for them is different. People come to us to even tackle with stress." :D

However, it's not with the intention of acquainting yourself with this connection between the mind and body that attracts people to dancing. "When I first took up a Contemporary class in Andheri, I didn't have a clue about the extent to which my soul would be stirred. I remember walking out of class on several occasions with tears because there's something that you experience through dancing that cannot be put to words. Today I cannot even imagine being a part of a dance class that doesn't make me feel the same." says Saranya Valsarajan, a dancer since five years.

Sonakshi Amitabh, company member of Danceworx, agrees to this trend. "People don't usually come in with the expectation of achieving that connection between the mind and the body. It begins with an activity that's fun and enjoyable. However, over time when that connection with

CONALESSY-PARKINSON'S DISEASE AND MOVEMENT DISORDER SOCIETY, INDIA



↳ DANCE THERAPY WORKS AS A REHABILITATION PROCESS

you builds up, that does become the reason to dance thereafter."

## \* DANCE AND DANCE THERAPY

**IT MAY OFTEN BE CONSTRUED** that dance therapy differs from the practice of dance as an art altogether. This may not exactly be the opinion of a dancer. "The concept of improvisation in dancing is nothing but expressing your own style. It's aimed at allowing dancers to break free from the repetitive movements set for them in choreography. And since improvisations are spontaneous in nature, what you get to see is the true reflection of an individual," says another dancer, Preksha Negandhi. :)

However, Devika holds a different opinion. "Dance improvisation is always done with the concept of creating choreography. It does help bring out your own style but is created for visual appeal. Improvisation is definitely a technique we use in dance therapy but that is solely with the purpose of bringing the body and mind in congruence. The two significantly differ."

Sonakshi too seconds this opinion, "It's true that you can draw a similarity between that experience of harmony between your body and soul that dance therapy and dance as a performing art can lend to you. However, the agenda of both differ to a great extent. While the former attempts to help solve issues, the latter is practicing an art."

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF THE TREATMENT MAY MANIFEST THEMSELVES AT VARIED TIME PERIODS

