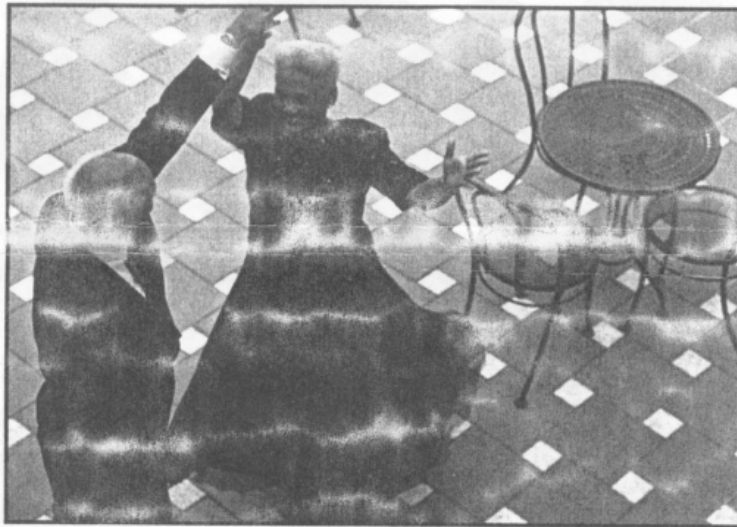


# Strut Your Stuff

By Rosemary E. Riley, PhD, LD



Ah, the classic ballroom duo of Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. They seemed to glide effortlessly across

the dance floor. What you didn't see was how hard they were working. Ballroom dancing (any kind of dancing, for that matter) is a wonderful physical activity with benefits for your heart, balance, posture, flexibility and appetite.

There are 2.5 million people taking dance lessons at more than 10,000 dance studios in the US. Among them is Jim Gieseke, a retired chemical engineer. Thirteen years ago Jim's wife talked him into taking ballroom dancing lessons. Now at age 63 he is more committed to dancing than ever. He actually competes at the amateur level and in pro-am competitions. Jim practices anywhere from 2-5 times a week and attends 3-6 competitions a year. He says ballroom dancing has been very rewarding. It not only keeps him young

physically, but also socially by keeping contact with people of all ages. Dancing also brings him

a sense of achievement. Or, if you're not ready to strut your stuff publicly, turn on the radio and move to your favorite beat right in your own home. The point is to *move*. Slower movements like a waltz, fox trot, or just slow dancing triple your metabolism, compared to when you're resting (i.e., sitting). Faster movements like disco, folk, or square dancing increase your metabolism by five and one-half times.

Have you noticed that when people dance, they wear a smile? You'll be surprised at what dancing can do for the soul, so why not bring out your hidden Fred or Ginger!