

# get down and boogie

BY KATE CRAWFORD

From a hot shoe shuffle to hip hop, dancing is a delightful way to get fit. According to dance teacher Nicole Bradford of Manly Vale, dance is a fun and creative way to get your body moving.

She says women of all ages are stepping out on the dance floor. "Women are taking up dance because they are sick of the gym and want something more interesting, more a combination," Nicole said. "If you're just running or walking you are conscious of losing weight or keeping fit but with dancing, you forget you're even exercising. Dance lessons can also be very social - a chance to have a giggle and just enjoy yourself. "Nicole says dance classes, whether they are tap, jazz, hip hop or ballet, aren't confined to the girls. She also teaches the blokes, ranging from teenage boys to grandfathers.

According to Nicole, some women are returning to ballet simply because they enjoy it. "I have one woman who does ballet to help her back pain," Nicole said. "Another one of my students goes to university and says she would go mad without her ballet."

As a professional dancer, Nicole has worked on many projects over the years including Foxtel productions and the closing ceremony of the 2004 Rugby World Cup. This year, she choreographed the finale for the television show Big Brother.

Nicole opened the Bradford Dance Academy in Bankstown in 1991 but after moving to Manly Vale with husband Richard, she also decided to run dance classes closer to home.

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Nicole has now cut her trips to Bankstown to twice a week. In the afternoons and evenings of Monday and Thursday, she runs another dance school out of the Manly Vale Community Centre. She also has two young daughters, Jasper Jayne, 7, and Charlotte Ruby, 20 months, and Nicole describes her life as "a fulltime juggling act". She says she can't get by without her mum who lives nearby.

At Manly Vale, Nicole personally teaches ballet, jazz, tap and contemporary dance and utilises other professionals to teach cheerleading, singing, drama and Pilates.

Nicole emphasises that you don't have to be slim and trim to take up dancing (she was still teaching when she was nine months pregnant) and emphasises beginners are welcome. "This is not about competition so it's nice to have a class that's a mix of beginners and those who are more advanced," she said.

And what is the best dance style to choose? "It depends on the person. I might recommend a really outgoing person would prefer hip hop while someone who is quietly spoken might like ballet," Nicole said. "Dance can also be a great way to build confidence and help relieve the stress in your life."

For further details, visit [www.bradforddanceacademy.com.au](http://www.bradforddanceacademy.com.au) or telephone 0418 700 069.