



Movement to Music: Care Homes

Seated, dance-based sessions for those living in care, residential and nursing homes

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1. Introduction

Imagination Dance CIC was founded in 2018 to provide dance opportunities for those who are rarely offered them.

We regularly work in the community, providing sessions for older people; those with long-term conditions such as Dementia and Parkinson's; children and adults with learning and/or physical disabilities; and many more! As well as hosting our own timetable of classes, we provide bespoke sessions within care homes; adult day services; schools; Dementia support groups; and other organisations

Our **Movement to Music** sessions are chair-based sessions aimed at residents in **care, residential and nursing homes** to implement an element of fun within their week, and a way to keep active in a gentle way. We focus on dance-based routines which incorporates co-ordination exercises, sensory aspects and sing-a-longs. All of our sessions also aim to improve **strength, mobility and balance** whilst keeping it fun and social! Each week we explore different styles of dance and movements to keep the class varied. In our classes, improving mental well-being is just as important as improving physical health!



2. Example Lesson Plan

Warm Up	Head to toe warm up - breathing in and out, stretches, head tilts, wrist and ankle rolls Seated cardio warm up – heel digs, toe taps, marches and side taps	Example songs – I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie Honey) – Four Tops Sir Duke – Stevie Wonder
Theme/co-ordination exercises	Introduction of theme/co-ordination exercises with arms/legs/feet/hands	
Hand dexterity exercises	Hand turns, finger to thumb, reaching to the sky	
Follow along routines	Follow along routines – new prop introduced week to week e.g. scarves, shaker eggs, pom poms or drumsticks	Example songs – Dancing Queen – Abba Crocodile Rock – Elton John Shake Rattle & Roll -Bill Haley & The Comets
Cool down	Stretches, head tilts, shoulder rolls	What a Wonderful World – Louis Armstrong

Our warm up consists of **static and dynamic stretches**, as well as a **cardiovascular** section. It is important we do a thorough warm up for our participants to avoid any injuries, increase our heart rate and to ensure our **mind and bodies are focused** for the rest of the class. It also gives a chance for our teachers to **visually assess** how everyone is moving in the class that day.

We then will introduce a **theme for the session** - e.g. 'Strictly Come Dancing', and work on a few **co-ordination exercises**.

Co-ordination focuses on **all parts of the body** and we may develop these exercises over a number of weeks, adding to them or making them more challenging over the weeks. Co-ordination exercises are beneficial for older people by **helping with mental agility, improving concentration** and even **enhancing memory**.

As well as full-body exercises, we implement **hand dexterity exercises** in many of our sessions. These exercises have a much smaller range of movement, and **aid residents with Arthritis or problems with their wrist/hands/fingers**. Our hand dexterity exercises are beneficial in **improving grip strength** which benefits participants when using props.

We switch up our follow along routines each week. All of our routines are **seated** and the **style of dance can vary** - we have covered everything from Salsa, Tango and Ballet. Routines may often **incorporate props** which supports those with more **sensory needs**, as well as **creating an element of fun** in the class! This fun and inclusive atmosphere helps to improve mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation.

Our cool down section is equally as important as the rest of the class as we need to **lower our heart rate, stretch our muscles** and return our **breathing rate to normal**. It also gives our participants a chance to **reflect on the class** and **relax their minds** to some calming and slower music

3. Research

Research has shown care and residential homes were some of the hardest hit environments during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, with residents and staff feeling extremely **socially isolated**, and older people and those with long-term health conditions being in the **high risk category**. We are now seeing many care and residential homes seeking out activities for their residents that will improve not only their **physical health**, but their **social well-being** after such a long period of difficulty.

“Our bodies were made to move!
It's a myth that getting older means an end to being active.”

Age UK website

“We're always told being active is the secret ingredient to health and happiness, and it can help us reduce the risk of everything from cancer to heart disease”

Age UK website

150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate intensity aerobic activity **per week** is recommended for **older people**

There are 95 care homes in **Bedfordshire**, with 29 offering nursing care

There are 190 care homes in **Hertfordshire**, with 70 offering nursing care

Bupa believes that supporting organisations that provide dance activities for older people in the community, in care homes and hospitals, can make a major contribution to **better physical and mental wellbeing** of the growing numbers of older people in the population.

Physical activity for older people improves their **health, quality and length of life.**



Benefits of seated dance-based exercise within care homes:

- Improve balance
- Improve circulation
- Mobilise joints
- Retain / regain mobility
- Improve muscle tone
- Promote quicker reactions
- Mental stimulation
- Improve posture / co-ordination
- Improve flexibility
- Increase muscular strength
- Laughter and having fun
- Alleviate Depression
- Social interaction
- Reminiscence

In the whole of **Bedfordshire**, there are 5,277 people living with **Dementia** with 1.26% living in **Bedford**, compared to the Bedfordshire average of 1%.

In the whole of **Hertfordshire**, there are 5,838 people living with **Dementia** with 1.44% living in **South West Hertfordshire**, compared to the Hertfordshire average of 1%.

4. Locations

Our Movement to Music: Care Homes programme is delivered in different care homes/nursing homes in the **Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire** and **Cambridgeshire regions**. Our sessions vary from weekly, monthly, fortnightly and one off sessions.

Examples of the care homes we deliver include:

- **Richmond Manor Care Home** (Amptill, Bedfordshire)
- **Caddington Grove Care Home** (Dunstable, Bedfordshire)
- **Taymer Nursing Home** (Silosoe, Bedfordshire)
- **Mantles Court** (Biggleswade, Bedfordshire)
- **Riverside Place Care Home** (Ware, Hertfordshire)

We are always expanding this programme and welcome new enquiries from care, residential and nursing homes across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire.

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5. Feedback

Feedback is based on responses from Activity Co-ordinators and residents from a number of care homes. Monitoring forms were distributed in 2023-24.

85% of responses said our classes were extremely beneficial in improving co-ordination skills, core strength and balance

85% of participants said our classes were extremely beneficial in improving their mental wellbeing

There was a 60% increase in rating 'quality of life' after participating in our classes regularly*

**Based on care homes participating in the Active Communities scheme*



"I try to attend every time Leanne is in for movement to music, as this makes me feel so much better in myself. The music is wonderful and I love being able to do what I can in each session I attend. The music makes me feel so much happier and I always feel so much better at the end of the session."

"My favourite part is the music"

"I love the sessions and wish it could be more often! Leanne is lovely and the sessions are always fun."

"Thank you for making us happy! I could do this everyday"

"We love our monthly sessions with Hannah!"

"I can see a difference in our residents at the end of each session and they always look forward to your session"



6. Case Studies

What do you like most about the Movement to Music sessions?

I like the music, and it makes me happy, I enjoy knowing that we have a regular exercise every week."

Do you feel like you are benefiting from the movement to music sessions in your care home?

My movement is much better now, although I still cannot move my shoulder properly due to my brace, but my legs have got a lot stronger."

How do you feel after the movement to music sessions?

"I do feel tired, and especially the next day."

Do you feel stronger and more mobile from taking part in these sessions?

"My feet and legs feel stronger, I would hate for these sessions to stop, the lady who takes our class is lovely, and includes us all, even though some of the others do not join in, but they tend to observe."

What do you like most about the Movement to Music sessions?

"I enjoy all of it. I used to do a bit when I was younger."

Do you feel like you are benefiting from the movement to music sessions in your care home?

"I'm sure I am, it's good for us."

How do you feel after the movement to music sessions?

"I feel a bit achy but I feel fine. I look forward to it."

Do you feel stronger and more mobile from taking part in these sessions?

"I am mobile in myself, the class just gets you moving and you're fine! We enjoy it very much, well I do anyway!"



7. Conclusion

Our Movement to Music: Care Home sessions continue to be very popular, and the feedback from our participants and activity co-ordinators is always positive. Our classes keep residents moving regularly and are beneficial to all, especially to those who have limited opportunities. Our care home sessions have varied benefits including improving physical and mental wellbeing, improving co-ordination and muscular strength, improving memory and allow residents to interact with others and improve social interaction and reduce social isolation.

All of sessions ensure there is something for everyone! Our sessions are also enjoyed by those who just simply love listening to music, as we include a mixture of genres and eras within our sessions. We also use a variety of props, including scarves, shaker eggs, ribbons, drumsticks and pom-poms and a variety of themes and movement/routine. We ensure our sessions are inclusive, adaptable and most importantly fun so all our residents feel comfortable joining in their own way.

We are pleased to run so many classes in the Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire regions on weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis and going forward we hope to continue to expand and grow our Movement to Music: Care Home programme.



8. References

- <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus/dementia-care-homes-impact>
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- <https://www.caresourcer.com/s/providers/counties/hertfordshire/care-home/#:~:text=190%20care,homes%20in%20Hertfordshire>
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All information correct as of April 2024.

