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## Jazzercise Measures Up Under ACSM Guidelines

Is it possible for just one fitness activity to meet all of your fitness needs? That, of course, depends in part on your fitness needs. Those looking to enhance their health and improve their functional strength (the kind of strength needed to carry out daily tasks, such as picking up kids, walking up stairs, etc.) need much less than those training for triathlons.

Sometimes it seems as if dancing your way to health just isn't enough these days. With all the interesting twists to exercise in today's world, you have the right to be a little confused. Just how much exercise does a body need to get fit anyway?

First, let's define "overall fitness." Most fitness

professionals agree that cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition (the amount of fat compared to lean or muscle tissue you have) are the essential components to health-related fitness. Your exercise program should impact each of these areas.

What does it take to rid your body of unnecessary fat, improve your flexibility, and enhance the strength of your heart and muscles? The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has set forth the following minimum exercise recommendations for achieving overall fitness. The degree to which you follow the guidelines will depend on three things. First, your current level of fitness; second, your fitness needs; and third, your fitness goals.

Does your exercise activity fulfill the ACSM's recommendations for achieving overall fitness? Let's see how the Jazzercise program measures up to their guidelines.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION	ACSM GUIDELINES	JAZZERCISE
<b>Type of activity</b>	Any activity that uses large muscle groups, can be maintained continuously, and is rhythmical and aerobic in nature.	Jazzercise is an aerobic program.
<b>Frequency of Aerobic Activity</b>	3-5 days per week.	Many areas provide Jazzercise classes on a daily basis.
<b>Intensity of Aerobic Activity</b>	Intensity of aerobic activity: 60-90% of maximum heart rate.	Jazzercise routines are choreographed to get your heart pumping in the "training zone." Recent, in-house research studies indicate that students, regardless of fitness level, have little problem maintaining 60-90% of maximum heart rate throughout the aerobic segment.
<b>Duration of Aerobic Activity</b>	Duration of aerobic activity: 20-60 minutes of continuous or discontinuous activity.	Jazzercise provides a minimum of 25 minutes of aerobic conditioning (up to 45 minutes in some formats).
<b>Resistance Training</b>	Resistance training: A minimum of 8-10 separate exercises that train the major muscle groups, a minimum of two days per week, to a position of mild discomfort.	Jazzercise provides calisthenic-type and weight resisted exercises which work the major muscles of the body, i.e., abdominals, gluteals, quadriceps, hamstrings, chest, arms, back and shoulders.
<b>Flexibility Exercises</b>	Flexibility exercises: At least 3 days per week, to a position of mild discomfort, 10-30 seconds for each stretch, 3-5 repetitions.	Dynamic stretching movements are provided during warm-up and cool-down routines. Static stretching exercises are provided during stretch routines and after muscle strengthening routines.

You be the judge. Does Jazzercise measure up to ACSM's standards? You bet it does! All you need to do is show up at least three times per week and join in the fun! Can you do more? Absolutely! But whatever fitness needs and desires you may have, always take a sensible approach to exercise. Research continues to prove it doesn't take as much as you may think to make positive changes in your health and body. For many, simply feeling better – both inside and out – is enough.

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