



# Educational Programs

We believe that youth health and development is a vital element of a vibrant community. Dancing is a physically and mentally rewarding sport that is sociable and integrates various disciplines such as physical movement, musical appreciation, and public performance. Blues, Swing, Rockabilly, and Rock 'n' Roll dance styles and music are also important aspects of our cultural heritage that Cool Cats wishes to pass on to the next generation.

## Teaching Objectives & Approach

Our goal is that students will have fun, while gaining fundamental dance and performance skills. Students will also develop an understanding of the structure and execution of different dances, footwork, and leads, leading to a sound appreciation of the characterisation of different 'Retro' dance styles.



Cool Cats courses are designed to accommodate both inexperienced students and those with previous training in dance or human movement. Each lesson covers fundamental skills and figure requirements, progressing to consider more advanced concepts, methods, performance, and figure variants. The importance or benefits of different dance aspects are discussed throughout the lesson, with opportunity provided for query and feedback. All students are thus encouraged to examine their own dancing, enabling them to focus on lesson elements according to their strengths and identified areas of practice and/or skills development.



## Introduction to 'Retro' Dance

There are many dance styles that fall under the banner of 1930s to 1960s 'Retro'. This course introduces students to four primary dance styles that are representative of different dance structures, composition, and characterisation:

- Kick Step Rock 'n' Roll
- Swing / Lindy-Hop
- Rockabilly
- 4-Beat Blues

These dances are recognisable internationally in an array of variations or derivatives from the fundamental style.

Participating students will be engaged in an activity that promotes both positive social interaction and a healthy active lifestyle. By introducing a variety of dance styles, students are given the foundation to pursue many avenues of dance development for sport, recreation, and/or performance. The course also provides a unique insight on our cultural history and encourages students to connect with preceding generations.



## Dance Development

Selecting a preferred style, this course focuses upon the key dance aspects of body mechanics, pressure, timing, and harmony. Through specific consideration of the relevance and integration of these components within the dance, the course is designed to examine the physical, musical, creative, and artistic skills that are important for continued dance development.

During the year the course progresses through content that challenges students to acquire and practise new skills and understand different dance concepts, implementation, and characterisation. This is achieved while reinforcing basic dance figures, body movement, frame and alignments. Participating students will be encouraged to monitor, direct, and inspire their dance development through collaboration with their peers and by evaluation with the course instructor(s). At the culmination of the course, students will have the opportunity to develop team, triples, or partnership performances and/or choreography, establishing their own goals for creativity, personal improvement, and skills achievement.



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**Introduction to Retro Dance:** This course offers an 8-10 week program per term in Kick-Step Rock 'n' Roll, Swing, Rockabilly, and 4-Beat Blues dance styles. The program covers the fundamental figures, structure, and characterisation of each dance.

## Term 1: Kick-Step Rock 'n' Roll

This program introduces a basic 6-beat Rock 'n' Roll dance style that is common in several different varieties around the world. Weeks 1-8 examine the basic figures, while weeks 9&10 consider alternative footwork, dance characterisation, styling, and improvisation.

- **Week 1:** Basic Footwork & Rotation
- **Week 2:** Under-Arm Turn; Return; Basic Link
- **Week 3:** Open and Closed American Spins
- **Week 4:** Pass Behind the Back & Variations
- **Week 5:** Cuddle & Roll-Out
- **Week 6:** The Gate; Side to Side
- **Week 7:** The Rope; Forward Return
- **Week 8:** Spins vs. Turns—The Catapult
- **Week 9:** Alternate Footwork & Characterisation
- **Week 10:** Halts, Pauses, & Play

## Term 2: Swing & Lindy Hop

This program introduces the basic 8-beat traditional (East Coast) Swing dance style, from which most other 'Nostalgia' dance styles derive. Weeks 1-8 examine the basic figures, while weeks 9&10 consider dance elements characteristic of the Lindy Hop (fast swing) - Lindy Kicks and 'Air Steps'.

- **Week 1:** Basic Footwork & Rotation
- **Week 2:** Under-Arm Turn; Return; The Shunt
- **Week 3:** Swing-Out
- **Week 4:** Lindy Circle; Closed Swing-Out
- **Week 5:** Open/Closed Double Turn Out
- **Week 6:** The Texas Tommy
- **Week 7:** Right Side Pull-Through & Turn
- **Week 8:** Suzie Q's; Step-Off
- **Week 9:** Lindy Kicks & Variations
- **Week 10:** 'Air Steps' - Basic Jumps, Props & Drops

## Term 3: Rockabilly

This program introduces the 4-beat 'rebel rocker' dance style that developed from the fusion of blues, rock 'n' roll, and country music and barn dancing. 'Hill-Billy Rock' became Rockabilly. Weeks 1-8 examine the basic figures, while weeks 9&10 consider advanced footwork, dance rhythm and characterisation, and the compounding of figures.

- **Week 1:** Basic Footwork & Hand Holds
- **Week 2:** Top Turn; American Spin
- **Week 3:** Left/Right Hand Figure 8
- **Week 4:** Double Hand Basic; Cuddle & Roll-Out
- **Week 5:** The Gate; Roll Around
- **Week 6:** Spaghetti Pull-out; Multiple Rotations
- **Week 7:** Left/Right Pass Behind The Back
- **Week 8:** Double Hello; The Bird-Cage
- **Week 9:** Secondary Footwork: Push-Pulls & Floating Step
- **Week 10:** Compounding: Advantages without a Back-Step

## Term 4: 4-Beat Blues

The 4-Beat Blues program covers the same basic figures and elements as the Kick-Step Rock 'n' Roll program, introducing the 4-Beat rhythm, Blues footwork, and flexibility of style. 4-Beat Blues may be considered a 'base' dance style fitting most music written in common time. Originally developing from Blues dancing as a faster footwork for Swing and Rock 'n' Roll, more modern forms are evident in dance styles such as Hustle and Ceroc. 4-Beat Blues may thus be danced to traditional Blues, Swing, Rockabilly and Rock 'n' Roll music - or readily adapted for contemporary pop, rock, and dance.



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**Dance Development:** This course provides an examination of the key elements of dancing. For a chosen dance style, the program progresses through body mechanics, pressure, timing and harmony. These aspects are then considered together during the final term.

## ***Term 1: Body Mechanics***

Body mechanics addresses the how and when the body is placed into different positions to dance both safely and with control. The program considers fundamental dance concepts such as: a) dance frame and line of dance; b) positioning with/to partner; and c) transfer and distribution of weight.

- **Week 1:** Basic Footwork, Rotation, & Holds
- **Week 2:** Angles; Movement In/Through Frame
- **Week 3:** Spins & Turns—Actions
- **Week 4:** Movement with Partner—Direction & Positions
- **Week 5:** Side by Side and Shadow Positions
- **Week 6:** Wrist & Arm Rolls; Changing Grips
- **Week 7:** Compound / Sequence Figures
- **Week 8:** Alternate Footwork Actions
- **Week 9:** Advanced Lead/Follow
- **Week 10:** Basic Drops—Supporting (Your Own) Weight

## ***Term 2: Pressure***

This program considers dance elements such as: a) how to use the body to connect with partner; b) how to move across and use the floor; and, c) differentiating between moves, body motions, and dance direction/momentum.

- **Week 1:** Basic Footwork, Rotation, & Holds
- **Week 2:** Frame—Body Position & Pressures
- **Week 3:** Spins & Turns—Leads
- **Week 4:** Movement with Partner—Momentum & Control
- **Week 5:** Wrists & Fingers / Lead & Follow
- **Week 6:** Pressure & Delicate Holds
- **Week 7:** Counter-Balance; Counter-Pressure
- **Week 8:** Halts & Pauses
- **Week 9:** Advanced Lead/Follow
- **Week 10:** Basic Jumps— Grounding, Crunching

## ***Term 3: Timing and Harmony***

This program considers dance elements such as: a) how to dance to the music with spontaneity and fun (often referred to as ‘musicality’); b) timing variation - through the music, the footwork, and the body; and c) framework and body presentation.

- **Week 1:** Basic Footwork, Rotation, & Holds
- **Week 2:** Frame—Working to Partner/Audience
- **Week 3:** Spins & Turns—Emphasis
- **Week 4:** Movement with Partner—Large vs. Small; Tempo
- **Week 5:** Timing Variation—Fast & Slow
- **Week 6:** Dynamics—Simple vs. Complex
- **Week 7:** Body Movement & Characterisation
- **Week 8:** Halts & Pauses—Time to Play!
- **Week 9:** Advanced Lead/Follow
- **Week 10:** Basic Props—Simple Flair

## ***Term 4: Putting it Together***

This program combines the content previously considered through the course and challenges students to incorporate all elements into their own dancing. This is encouraged by the introduction of additional figures and/or sequences that combine or emphasise different aspects of the dance and also by re-examining selected figures that have been previously studied in a different context. Finally, students will be tasked with introducing their own presentation, choreography, and styles, while remaining consistent with the structure and characterisation of the dance.