

High Energy Israeli Dances

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SUMMARY: Start your day on the right foot (get it?) with high-energy Israeli dances to get your blood pumping and take your breath away.

GOALS: Participants will feel invigorated and energized by up-tempo music and movement and joyful and connected by having danced in community. They will be able to get their heartrates up and do some high-energy dances either from memory or by following along, and they will know that Israeli dance can be a warm-up, a stretch, an aerobic exercise, and a great way to start a day

AUDIENCE: Groups of any size. Age range will determine choices of dances.

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS: Music: the dance cuts of any songs to be played, plus a method to play them (computer, Bluetooth speaker, sound system) and any other hardware needed to make that happen (playing music from an iPhone on a speaker? Make sure the speaker is Bluetooth enabled and/or that you have the correct wires to connect the devices, etc.)
Water and cups!!

SET-UP: Any large flat space. Best indoors on sprung floors (like a gym) but could be done anywhere there is room to spread out, a surface to dance on, and a sound system to handle the size of the space. Be sure participants have a place to put belongings (jackets, notebooks, bags, phones, whatever) out of the way so they are not in danger of being stepped on/broken or a distraction.

SESSION TIMELINE

1. 00:00-00:05 - Simon Says Warm Up
2. 00:05-00:30 - Dancing

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:05 - Simon Says Warm Up

Leader will invite everyone to spread out in the room and face the leader for a quick game of Simon Says (with no “outs”; everyone keeps playing even after mistakes.) The idea is to get everyone moving a little bit and feeling comfortable moving. After a few minutes, leader will ask if it really felt terrible when someone accidentally did the wrong movement or moved when they weren’t supposed to, and hopefully participants will say No, or it’s just a game, or it doesn’t really matter. Leader will point out that Israeli dancing should feel the same way: there is no “cost” to doing the wrong step or using the wrong foot, it’s ok to make mistakes, and teach people the mantra: “You don’t have to know a dance to do a dance” – the communal idea of all folk dancing, including Israeli dance, is just to participate and learn as you go by following the leader (which is really everyone around you) and having fun, more than focusing on getting it right or wrong. The idea is to play the game.

Depending on the size of the crowd, facilitator may then invite everyone to introduce themselves and say either their favorite dance or make a request of a dance they’d like to do in this session.

00:05-00:30 - Dancing

This is a fun, low-stakes, short Israeli dance session. If possible, both classic and modern dances should be included, as well as a mix of styles (circles and lines, for example). The leader will honor requests when possible and do quick “walk-throughs” when appropriate for participants who don’t know the dances.

If the group wants to learn a non-beginner dance, facilitator will teach “Boker” (“Morning”) by Shmulik Gov-Ari. Video available at <https://bit.ly/BokerSGA>

Other very energetic dance options include: Hora Or, Hanigun, Zeh Hazemer, Mocher Prachim, Hora Habika (all circles) / Sieben Sieben, Huna Huna (lines) / Yesh Lanu Tayish (partner).

The leader will be sure participants can take breaks and drink water as needed!

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

Depending on the camp context, dances can be chosen to serve different purposes. For example: they could be lesser-known or less popular dances, to give people a chance to do

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those; or it could be a chance to review or practice a more challenging dance that's new to camp or the group; or it could be dances around a theme for the day or week that will play out in other ways throughout camp; etc.