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Male dance moves that catch a woman's eye

Kristofor McCarty, Nick Neave*, Nick Caplan, & Johannes Hönekopp.

*author for correspondence Dr Nick Neave, Department of Psychology, School of Life Sciences,
nick.neave@northumbria.ac.uk

Paper presentation (preferred)

Male movements serve as courtship signals in many animal species, and may honestly reflect the genotypic and/or phenotypic quality of the individual. Here we use advanced 3D motion-capture technology to identify possible biomechanical differences between women's perceptions of 'good' and 'bad' male dancers. Nineteen males were recorded using the 'Vicon' motion capture system whilst dancing to a basic rhythm; controlled stimuli in the form of avatars were then created in the form of 15-second video clips, and rated by 39 females for dance quality. Linear regression revealed that three movement measures were key predictors of dance quality; these were variability and amplitude of movements of the neck and trunk, and speed of movements of the right knee. In summary we have identified specific movements within men's dance that influence women's perceptions of dancing ability. We suggest that such movements may form honest signals of male quality in terms of health, vigour or strength, and our current research programme attempts to address this.