

SCHOOL'D BY FUNKMODE

You want to become a Hip Hop expert? Learn the info below and you're on your way, yo!

I AM HIP HOP (A 5-PART SERIES) - PART 2: DANCE

If you have been around Hip Hop for any length of time, you have probably come to understand that Hip Hop is far more than just dancing, music or art. Hip Hop is a culture. In this second lesson of a five-part series, we are going to help you to understand how one comes to represent Hip Hop through dance.

In the introduction to this series, we explained that representing any type of culture occurs through three essential steps. First, you must learn about the culture. Then, you must start participating in the culture. Finally, you have to be a contributor to the culture. Therefore, if you are going to start representing Hip Hop culture through dance, you need first to learn about its rich history and evolution. Already, there have been many SCHOOL'd lessons written on how Hip Hop dance began and how it has changed over the years and we recommend you start there. Besides that, there is much about Hip Hop dance culture that can be learned elsewhere. As Hip Hop is still a relatively new dance form, there are many people around who can give their own firsthand account of how Hip Hop dance's milestones occurred. The internet is quite helpful in gathering this information as quite a few of the pioneers of Hip Hop dance now have personal websites rich with historical information about all aspects of Hip Hop culture.* In addition to these, there are also general websites created by lovers of Hip Hop dance and culture where you can read interviews, opinion articles, historical timelines as well as watch videos.† There have also been books written on Hip Hop dance and documentaries produced that can provide excellent insight into how the movement began.‡ Finally, any experienced and well-respected Hip Hop dancer should be able to provide you with stories, knowledge and personal perspective on Hip Hop dance culture.

To start participating in Hip Hop dance, you just need to get moving ... literally. There are many ways to get started into Hip Hop dancing. Over the last 15 years, dance studios have become a common place to learn Hip Hop dancing. Where authenticity was a larger concern in the past, many reputable dance studios now have excellent Hip Hop teachers, and even programs, that provide a solid education in all styles of Hip Hop. However, you can even learn to dance without leaving your home, once again, courtesy of the internet. You can find many online tutorials from dance crews from all over the world in every Hip Hop style that exists (e.g. your favorite Hip Hop peeps, FUNKMODE). Participating means ongoing effort. Therefore, once you start learning, only consistent practice is going to lead you to being able to represent yourself well as a Hip Hop dancer. If you have friends that like to dance and/or want to learn Hip Hop, get together in groups and create routines or just freestyle to your favorite Hip Hop music. If you have moves or styles they want to learn, why not start teaching them yourself?

Speaking of freestyling, if you've been following these lessons, you have seen it stated many times that Hip Hop dance is first and foremost a freestyle dance. Every style that now fall under the Hip Hop umbrella started as a loose set of improvisational moves from Hip Hop partygoers and entertainers. To put it another way, freestyling is where all of Hip Hop dancing is created. Therefore, to progress from simply participating in Hip Hop dance to contributing, you need to put on Hip Hop music, then start moving and creating. To a certain extent, you want your moves to be connected in some way to the vast array of Hip Hop movement styles which have come before. However, on the most fundamental level, if you are listening to Hip Hop music and you understand the essence of its meaning and the culture, whatever your body creates is Hip Hop dancing. Most of Krumping looks nothing like B-boying, but they are still essential pieces of the Hip Hop dance fabric. Who is to say that the moves you come up with today are not the next step in the evolution of Hip Hop dance?

We will end today's lesson on a more general note. Important to this process is your motivation. Coming to be a representative of Hip Hop culture should be an extension of your love for what it is and what it embodies. If you find it to be difficult or unpleasantly effortful to dance or practice, then representing Hip Hop is probably not for you. On the other hand, if you find yourself naturally gravitating towards the dance culture with every new thing you learn and do within it, then you're just the kind of person who should one day say, "I am (a) Hip Hop (Dancer)!"

* Three great sites are ZuluNation.com, MrWiggles.biz and ElectricBoogaloos.com.

† DaveyD.com

‡ Book: "Hip Hop Dance" by Dr. M. Rajakumar. Documentaries: "The Freshest Kids", "Rize", "Planet B-boy".

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HIP HOP WORDS OF THE WEEK

Come up: A good thing that happens to someone.

EX: "Her come up was getting a part on that show."

Mainy: Short for maniac. When something extreme happens, either good or bad. Primarily used in Northern CA.

EX: "The headspin he pulled was mainy. I didn't even know he could do that!"

(Get) Buck: A term commonly used among Krump dancers to describe when a person has reached a high level of excellence in their movements, especially in creativity, wildness, or aggression.

EX: "I saw that Krump dancer Tight Eyez gettin' straight buck in that documentary 'Rize'."

BONUS: Create a sentence using all words of the week

EXTRA LEARNING

- 1) List a fun Hip Hop fact that you found at either ZuluNation.com or MrWiggles.biz.
- 2) Do you participate in Hip Hop dance culture? If so, how?
- 3) Do you contribute to Hip Hop dance culture? If so, how?