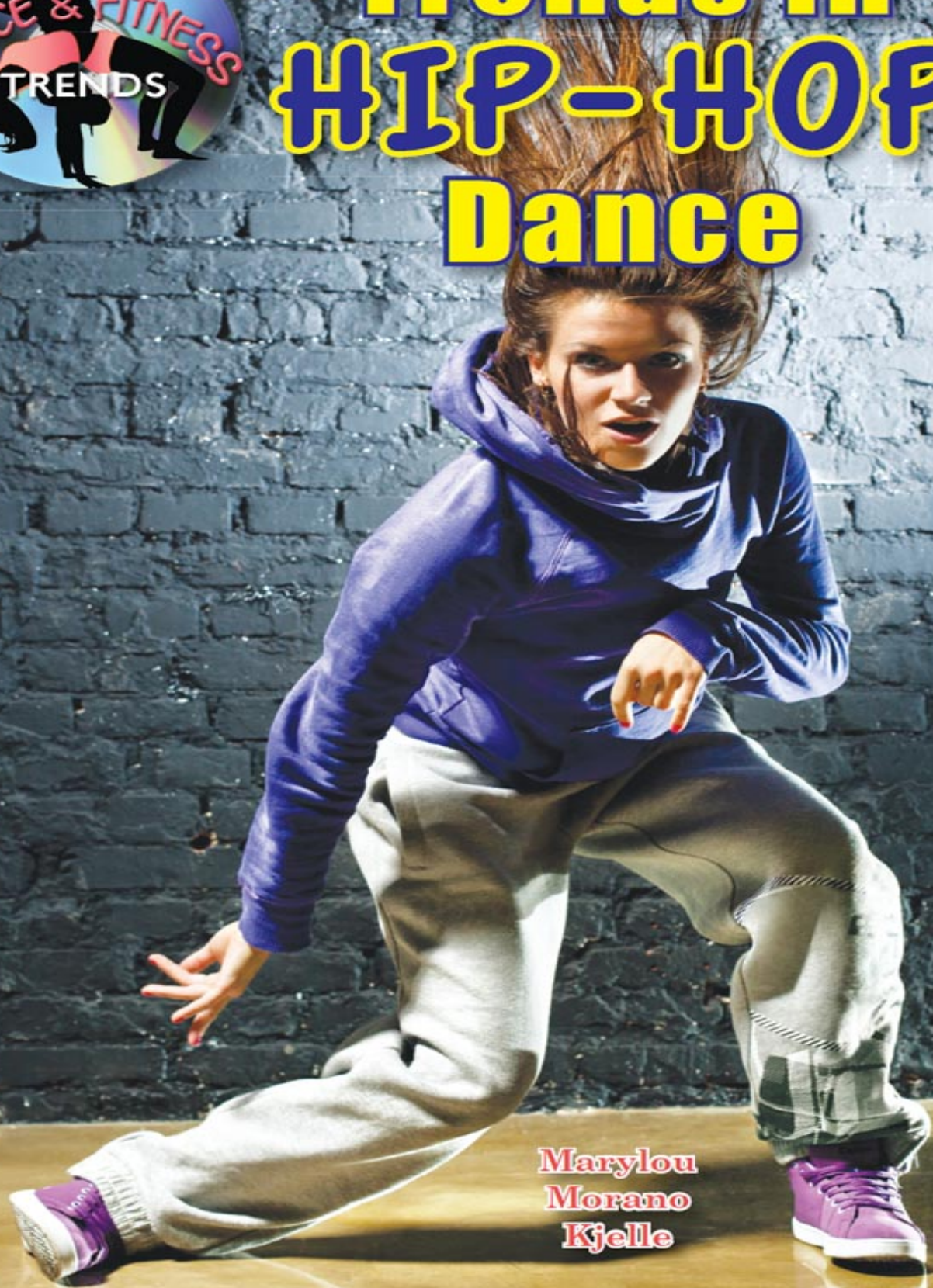




# Trends in HIP-HOP Dance



Marylou  
Morano  
Kjelle



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# Introduction



Staying healthy and fit has never been more important. And with hip-hop dance, it has never been more fun. Most young people enjoy listening to popular music and practicing cool dance moves; using them in a hip-hop dance fitness program is a great way to get in shape.

There are many benefits to using hip-hop dance as a workout routine. Hip-hop dance uses the body's strongest muscles, including those of the arms and legs. Working these muscles tones and strengthens them, makes you strong and lean, and gives you endurance. Hip-hop moves support your cardiopulmonary system, giving you a healthy heart and lungs. Hip-hop dancing also burns calories. It's great at relieving stress, and as you become a better hip-hop dancer, your overall self-confidence will increase as well. All

of these factors make hip-hop dance a great workout routine for both kids and adults.

Hip-hop dance is becoming such a popular way to exercise that many schools are offering after-school hip-hop dance classes as a way to get kids moving. In addition, hip-hop dance gives kids and teens a positive and creative way to express themselves.

With so many benefits, why not give it a try? Hip-hop dance is a great way to spend time with friends, meet new people, and above all, keep fit. You'll be having so much fun that you'll forget you're also doing something good for your body!



**DJ Kool Here announces the launch of “Hip-Hop Won’t Stop: The Beat, The Rhymes, The Life,” the first ever hip-hop initiative at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in New York, on February 28, 2006. The multi-year project is tracing hip-hop from its origins in the 1970s to its status today.**



## Chapter 1

# **“B-Boys, Are You Ready? B-Girls, Are You Ready?”**

Take a hot, summer night, a bunch of inner-city kids with nothing to do, and a teenaged DJ (disc jockey) from Jamaica with a powerful sound system. Bring them all together and what do you have? A new cultural phenomenon called hip-hop.

The year was 1973. The kids were mainly African American and Latino teens hanging out in the parks and on the streets of the Bronx, a section of New York City. And the DJ was Kool Herc, the father of hip-hop.

Herc, whose given name is Clive Campbell, came to the United States in 1967. His friends called him “Hercules” because he was a big guy who was good in sports. Later he shortened the nickname to “Herc.” Music was an important part of Herc’s life as he was growing up. His father, Keith Campbell, was an auto mechanic and the soundman for a band. Herc went on gigs with them and entertained the audience by playing records when the band took its breaks. Sometimes he spun records the way it was done in Jamaica, by “toasting,” or talking over the music as it played.

By the time the summer of 1973 rolled around, Herc had been DJing for a few years. He organized and promoted his own dance parties, often renting the recreation room of the housing project at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, where he lived with his family. To meet his expenses, Herc charged an admission fee of twenty-five cents for

girls and fifty cents for boys. He always packed the house, mainly because of his unusual record collection. When you went to a party hosted by DJ Kool Herc, you knew you'd hear songs that weren't on the radio.

Herc liked to watch the crowd as he spun the vinyl, and as he did, he noticed something. The partygoers often waited for the part of the song with a loud, steady percussion, or drum beat, before getting up to dance. During these segments of a record, the rhythm was pure instrumental with a strong beat; there were no lyrics. Herc called these segments "breaks" or "break beats." During the breaks the dancers would "get down" and show off their wildest dance moves. They dropped to the floor, and then quickly rose to the beat. At other times they balanced on their hands, which left their legs free to move. Sometimes a few of the guys would stage competitions on the dance floor and try to out-do each other with crazy-mad moves they made up right on the spot. But the breaks, which lasted just a few seconds, were never long enough for the dancers to show off all their fancy footwork.

Herc figured he could lengthen the percussion breaks with two turntables, a mixer, an amp and two speakers, which he called the Herculords. Jamming with two turntables wasn't a new idea. It even had a name; DJs called it "turntabling," and they used it to change records or "cut" smoothly from the end of one song to the beginning of the next. Herc's idea was a little different. He played two copies of the same record, one on each turntable, at the same time. He cut back and forth between the two records by lifting the turntables' needles and dropping them back on the vinyl. This allowed him to replay the same part of the record over and over again, which lengthened the break from several seconds to several minutes. He could also play the breaks of different records together. Herc called this going back and forth the "merry-go-round." It gave the dancers exactly what they wanted: more time to dance.

Many years later, Herc looked back on those early days of hip-hop dancing and explained why he created the merry-go-round. "I started playing [music] from a dancefloor perspective.



I always kept up the attitude that I'm not playing it for myself, I'm playing for the people out there," he said.

The crowd loved dancing to the break beats. Soon Herc was skipping most of the song and focusing only on the breaks. ". . . [O]nce they heard that, that was it, wasn't no turning back. They always wanted to hear breaks after breaks after breaks after breaks," said Herc. This repetitious beat, which sounded a lot like the music of the Caribbean, was the starting point of hip-hop music and dance.

Herc called the dancing done during the break beats, "break dances." The dancers who danced during the breaks he called "b-boys" and "b-girls." "B-boys, are you ready? B-girls, are you ready?" he would shout into the crowd as he was preparing to cut to a break in a record.

Herc was the most popular DJ in the Bronx in the early 1970s. When his parties got too large for recreation rooms, he moved them to parks, and then to clubs in the Bronx, like the Hevalo, which could pack in several hundred people. Soon his new sound, and the

dancing that it gave rise to, reached other parts of New York City. Within a few years, people throughout the United States and the whole world knew of Herc's new hip-hop music and dancing.



**B-boying was an early expression of the hip-hop culture. It gave kids and young adults a way to compete without violence.**

But that was all still to come. No one suspected on those hot, summer nights in 1973 that breaks and break dancing were the beginning of a new movement called “hip-hop.” Nor did anyone realize that a new style of playing and dancing to music would grow into a way for young people to stand up and be noticed. It’s been more than forty years since DJ Kool Herc and his music brought about hip-hop dancing, and the world hasn’t been the same since.

Not bad for a guy who wasn’t even twenty years old!

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