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Adapting to COVID-19: Fun Friday with Gurdeep Pandher (Bhangra)
October 23, 2020

Gurdeep Pandher - Facilitator

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Introduction

Gurdeep Pandher:

Hello everybody. My name is Gurdeep Pandher and I'm from the Yukon. Currently, I'm in the wilderness, 40 minutes north of Whitehorse, close to Lake Laberge in the wilderness. So this is my cabin in the wilderness. And I live in the traditional territory of Kwanlin Dun First Nation and Ta'an Kwach'an Council and why I acknowledge their land where I am at. And I'm also thankful to them for many centuries, from the time [inaudible 00:00:40] keeping our land a sacred, wonderful, safe, pure, and most importantly, taking care of it. And I'm so thankful to our First Nations, all indigenous friends. And thank you so much. And I'm also thankful to BCcampus for doing everything, like putting this event together and they're doing an awesome job. So thank you so much BCcampus for doing these wonderful sort of events, especially in COVID when we can't meet in person. So it is great to find these types of alternatives. And also you as participants. Thank you so much for coming and joining and sharing our energy together. That's awesome to have you. Most welcome.

Background of Bhangra

Gurdeep Pandher:

So today we will learn a little bit about Bhangra. So before I started showing you the move and everything, I would like to give you a little bit background of this dancing. So first, pronunciation is Bhangra. I know that people say Bhangra, which is okay, because it's hard to pronounce, but if you can say Bhangra, that will be better. Bhangra was originated in Punjab. A long, long, long time ago this form of dance was created by Punjabi or Sikh farmers. A long time ago, farming was manual. There was no tractors or combines at that time. It was a very difficult job. It was so hard to work. So those farmers, they created these moves to add fun and entertainment into their farming activities.

Gurdeep Pandher:

Even after harvesting their crops, they used to dance Bhangra to show a sense of accomplishment, to show their productivity, and to show their joy and happiness. That's why this dance has a lot of connection with the land and also with happiness. And then Bhangra evolved a lot and nowadays it's everywhere. In Our weddings, in parties, and all sorts of happy gatherings. People love to dance Bhangra. You can even find Bhangra in movies or music videos. Lots and lots of people go to Bhangra sessions to get a good workout because you are going to see it very soon, it's not just a dance, it's also a great workout as well. It's a high energy dance.

Warm Up

Gurdeep Pandher:

So that is little background of the dance. So now we will start learning, but before we start learning the move, we will do little bit warming up activity just to bring our energy level up. Okay, folks, I will request everybody to stand up at this point.

Gurdeep Pandher:

So first and foremost, please stand up. Stand up straight and stand up tall. Engage your core. Bring your chin up. Bring happiness on your face. Happiness is very important in Bhangra. I will continue talking

about happiness again and again. First of all, as I just mentioned, we will do some basic stretches just to warm our bodies up so that we are ready for dancing. Everybody first, with your right elbow, stretch your left arm. Just basic stretch. Smile, breathe. Just give a nice stretch. Beautiful, amazing. Now, switch your arm. The other side. Just nice stretching with a good smile on your face. Create that good movement. Very nice. Beautiful. Awesome. Now, stretching from behind, just like this. You have a good stretch with a good smile on your face. Now, the other side, stretch your other elbow. Beautiful, awesome. Breathe and smile.

Gurdeep Pandher:

Bring your arms down, and now stand the spread on one leg and pick up your other leg and gave a nice stretch. If you are finding it harder to stand on one leg, maybe bring a chair or you can stand by anything. So give a nice stretch. Feel good. Don't forget to smile. That is very important. Very, very nice. Awesome. Now bring this leg. Now keeping this leg straight and slowly pick up the other leg. Just give a nice stretch like this. Very nice stretch. Bring the smile out. Bring that happy energy out. Slowly bring your leg down.

Gurdeep Pandher:

And we will try to give a little bit twist in the middle of the body. Now, separate your feet little bit apart like and now extending your both arms like that. Point your both feet towards one side like this. Now, bend your body towards that side. Keep your legs and your arms straight just to stretch in the middle of the body. Breathe and smile. Breathing and smiling, both are very important for the happy dancing. Slowly come back in the middle position. Now, point your feet towards other direction and slowly bend towards other direction. Be happy. Be happy.

Leg Movement

Gurdeep Pandher:

Nice. Breathe and smile. Great. Awesome. And now shake your arms because we will be working a lot with our arms and shoulders. You can roll like this, like this. Okay. Awesome. Beautiful. So movements we are going to learn, first I'm going to show you how it looks like, then we are going to learn it together. It looks like this. One, two, three, four. And one, two, three, four. Okay. To make learning process easier, I will break down movement into three smaller pieces. First, I will show you how to use your legs and feet, your lower body. Then I will show you how to use your arms, upper body part. Then I will show you the importance of your face in this dancing. First, we are going to love this part only. Like one, two, three, four. Okay. So now, everybody, if you're not standing, please stand up, engage your core. It's very important to engage your core. Bring that smile on your face.

Gurdeep Pandher:

So I probably look opposite on your screen. Probably my left looks right on your screen. So this is my left. So everybody together standing straight on your right foot. Just kick once with your left leg like this, like this. If I show you from this direction, it looks like this. Kicking with your left leg. Okay, cool. Now, we will do the same thing to the counting of number one and two. Be ready. Stand straight. Stand tall. Pick up your foot. Bring it back. Then you bring them forward, say number one, and then number two. So it's like, one, two, one, two, and one, two. Amazing. Awesome. Thanks for trying. So one more thing to keep in mind in terms of counting, at which point we need to count. For example, sometimes new foot is first,

they start the count like one. For example, if I do like one, I'm making a mistake. Why am I making a mistake? Because I started counting as soon as kicked my foot and brought it back.

Gurdeep Pandher:

How can I fix it? To fix it, I will first pick up my foot. I will not start counting. When I bring it forward at the front side, when my foot is at front side, then I will say number one. That is the right way to count. Same thing. I will bring it back, and when they bring it at the front side, I will say number two. So one, two, one, two, one, two, and one, two. Great. So that's how you kick with your left foot. When you are kicking with your left foot or your right foot, you will be hopping. You will be hopping like this. One, two, one, two. Okay. So now let's learn how to hop. So that you can have all the details, I will bring my camera a little bit closer to my feet.

Gurdeep Pandher:

So hopping works like this. One, two, one, two. You can either keep your other foot close or you can pick it up so that you focus only on the foot which is hopping ... with which you are hopping with. So now we will learn how to hop. So when we jump with our right foot, we jump actually four times, but we count only one and two. We count accordingly the foot with which we are kicking. But on the other foot we jump four times. We jump like one, two three, four. But when we actually combined with this foot, it sounds like we are doing one, two. So now let's learn, when we kick twice with the left foot, or we can jump four times on our right foot. The technique is that we skip counting after every jump.

Gurdeep Pandher:

For example, if I show you in a slow motion, it will look like this. One, then skip, and we do not count. Then two, then skip. It's like one, skip, two, skip. Some people say and and and in the beginning, they said that it's helpful to keep it in mind. So if you want to say like, one and two and one and two and. So when we jump, we use mostly toes. Not the full foot. If you have a healthy foot, try to use your toe, but if you have any foot injury, you can also use your full foot too. Okay. So now we will try to jump. We will try to make an actual jump on a right foot. So you can pick your other foot like this or like this so that we focus on this and we will start together. I will say five, six, seven, then we will start. Five, six, seven. Start, one, skip, two, skip. So it's like, we will do it once more. This time, I will say and and and. That would be easier. So five, six, seven, eight. One and two, and one, two, and.

Gurdeep Pandher:

Beautiful Thank you for trying. So now we won't use and and and. I will say just one and two and we will try. We will try once more. So five, six, seven, eight. One, two, one, two, one, two, and one, two. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. So that's the way we hop on our right foot. So now we will combine both feet together. When we combine both feet together, it looks like this. One, two, one, two, and one, two. And one thing more at this point. So when I'm teaching, sometimes I turn right side and sometimes I turn left side or this way. You do not need to turn. I know it happens. I turn so that you can see me from different angles so that you can learn better. You can build that deeper understanding.

Gurdeep Pandher:

Okay. Beautiful. I'll bring camera back on my foot and we will practice this part. One, two. Okay, everybody together. Stand straight. Stand tall. We will be kicking with our left foot. We will be hopping on our right foot. Be ready. Five, six, seven, eight. Start one, two, one, two, one, two, one, two. Yes, one,

two. Happy. One, two, happy, happy, happy, happy, happy. One, two. Beautiful. Awesome. So we will try the same movement with music. We will try with the music. Be ready.

Gurdeep Pandher:

With the music. Ready. Six, seven, eight. One, two, one, two, one, two, one, two, one, two, one, two, one, two. And one, two. Awesome. Beautiful. Amazing. So we have learned the left side. Now we will learn the right side. The good news is that what we have learned towards the left side, we will just copy it towards the right side. I mean that now we will be kicking with the right foot like this and we will be hopping on the left one. So this looks like, three, four, and three, four. So now everybody together, stand up straight and pick your right leg. Let's do three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four, and three, four. So same thing to keep in mind that you will be counting when your foot has arrived at the front side. So that is number three. So that is number four. So when you're kicking with your right foot, now you can easily make a guess what you will be doing with your left foot.

Gurdeep Pandher:

With your left foot, you will be hopping. Same way you were hopping on the right foot before. This way. Three, four and three, four. Okay. So now let's practice a little bit hopping part on our left foot, and once again I will bring my camera closer to my foot. So now we will practice on our left foot. Technique is same. We will escape after every beat, every counting. So what we will be doing, we will be doing three, skip, four, skip. So if I apply it to regular jumping, it will look like three, skip, four, skip, three, skip, four, skip. Okay. So this time I will say and and and and let's do it together. Let's do it together. Let's jump on our left foot. So be ready. Five, six, seven, eight. Three, skip, four, skip, three, skip, four, skip, three, skip, four, skip, three, skip, four, skip, three, skip, four, skip. Beautiful. Awesome.

Gurdeep Pandher:

So this time I won't say skip, skip, skip. I will say just three and four. So let's try once more. Last time. Jumping on left foot again. Be ready. Five, six, seven, eight. Three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four, and three, four. Nice! So now we will combine both feet together. I mean that now we will kick with the right foot and we will jump with the left one. So we will be doing, three, four, and three, four. Now, everybody together. Once more, stand up straight, stand up tall, bring your energy level up. Bring that big smile on your face. So kicking with the left one, hopping on the right foot at the same time! Five, six, seven, eight. Start, three, four, three, four, three, four, yes, three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four, and three, four. Awesome! Awesome! Let's try with a little bit music now.

Gurdeep Pandher:

With the music. Five, six, seven, eight. Three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four. So we have learned the left side. We have learned the right side, which was most difficult part. So now we will apply both sides at the same time. So we will do twice left side, twice right side. It will look like this. One, two, switch, three, four, switch. One, two, switch, three, four. Okay. Now let's do it together. Once again. Stand straight and tall. Engage your core. Bring that happiness on your face. We will start kicking with the left foot and hopping on the right and after every two count, we will switch the legs. Be ready. Be excited. Five, six, seven, eight. Start, one, two, switch, three, four, switch. One, two, switch, three, four, switch. One, two, switch, three, four, switch. One, two, switch, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. And one, two, three, four. Very nice! Now let's try this with drum beat. [inaudible 00:21:23]. Five, six, seven, eight. One, two, switch, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. [inaudible 00:22:00]. Beautiful!

Arm Movement

Gurdeep Pandher:

So we have learned how to use our legs. Now we will learn how to use our arm. Arm part is easier. Arm part looks like this. One, two, three, four. So what do you need to do when you start. Your both fists are closed like this. Your both fists are closed and you're standing like this. And your palms are facing your screen like this. So when you say number one, you bring your hands forward and you open the fist. When you bring them back, you close your fist. And when you bring them forward, you say number two, open the fist, you bring them back. So it's like one, two, one, two, one, two, and one, two. When you say number two, you bring them up like this and now your hands are up and your both fists are closed.

Gurdeep Pandher:

And from here, when you bring them forward, you open your both fist and say number three. Bring them back, close your fists, and when you bring them forward, open your both fist and say number four. So it's like three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four, three, four, and three, four. So fun. Once more from the top in a slow motion. Everybody ready and your hands are like this. So five, six, seven, eight. Start, one, two, from here bring them up, bring them up and close the fist. Start, three, four, bring them down, bring them down, and face your palms to the screen. So start, one, two, up, three, four, down, one, two, up, three, four, down, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, yes, one, two, three, four. Happy, one, two, three, four, and one, two, three, and four.

Gurdeep Pandher:

So let's practice the arm part a little bit with the drum beat because drum beat is a great beat. It's [inaudible 00:24:50] drum beat. It's a great beat to practice. Ready? And seven, eight, one, two, three, four, and one, two, three, and four. Awesome! Thank you so much for trying with me. So we have learned how to use the legs and feet. We have learned how to use the arms. So now we will learn the importance of our face.

Facial Movement

Gurdeep Pandher:

So why face? Because Bhangra is dance of joy, Bhangra is dance of happiness. So when we dance, we are supposed to be happy because those farmers in Punjab long time ago, they created Bhangra to be happy. So when you are about to be happy, happiness is not just smiling from lips. Happiness comes from inside. Keep your heart happy, keep your soul happy, reflect the happy energy. Reflect the happy energy. Be kind, be generous. Don't worry about the future, don't worry about the past, be in present. So being in present is a great way to be happy. So today, today is Friday, today's time to be happy. So please be happy. Bhangra and happiness, they both come together.

Gurdeep Pandher:

My teachers used to say that if you're not happy and if you're dancing Bhangra, you're not doing Bhangra correctly. So it's important to be happy when you're dancing Bhangra. So show your big smile when you dance Bhangra. So now we will combine all the elements together. When we combine it will look like this. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. One, two, and three, four. So now we will try

it together. Be ready. Everybody stand up, everybody stand tall, engage your core. Bring that big happiness on your face. Be ready. Five, six, seven, eight. Start, one, two, up, three, four, down, one, two, up, three, four, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, one, two, and three, four. Awesome! Now I will play Punjabi music, a Punjabi song, and we will dance this move to that beat. Be ready.

Full Dance

Gurdeep Pandher:
(Singing).

Gurdeep Pandher:
[inaudible 00:27:58] happiness. Five, six, seven, eight. [inaudible 00:28:45].

Conclusion

Gurdeep Pandher:
Thank you so much, everybody. Thank you so much for participating. Thank you so much for bringing your energy. Thank you so much for creating this happy session. Because happiness is very important. Happiness is everything. Especially these days when there's a pandemic and we don't have enough opportunity to socialize. So it's great to be happy for our good mental health.

Gurdeep Pandher:
So before I say my final thank you, be happy and smile! Thank you.

Duane:
Thank you, Gurdeep. Thanks so much. I honestly have not smiled this much in a very long time. And thanks to those of you that were brave and turned your cameras on. That added to the energy. And for the rest of you joining us, keep your eye open for upcoming fun Fridays. We'll try to build movement in, this was great. And thanks again, Gurdeep.

Gurdeep Pandher:
This is my honor. Thank you.

Duane:
See you all again soon, have a great weekend. Bye.