



For more information, or to bring Organic Dance to your campus or gym, please contact Sarah Hentges at sarah.hentges@maine.edu and visit her website at cultureandmovement.com

Women and Fitness in American Culture explores and explodes common representations and experiences of American fitness. This book takes women's experiences as the center of inquiry toward an understanding of the function of fitness in our lives and in our culture-at-large. Ranging from 1968 to present day, from Jane Fonda to WiiFit, from revolution to institutionalization, from personal to political, and beyond, this book considers a broad range of topics from an interdisciplinary perspective including: aerobics, yoga, health, business, pop culture, sport, science, dance, eating disorders, icons, generations, cultural appropriation, community development, art, choreography, methodology, healing, and social justice. Drawing on her experience as a cultural theorist, educator, and fitness instructor, the author offers critical and creative approaches that reveal the limitations and possibilities of fitness. This work asks us to think about our own relationship to fitness as well as the more abstract meanings of this term and ultimately argues that a multidimensional idea of fitness has some potential to transform ourselves and our worlds... if we're willing to do the work(out).

Organic Dance, Fitness, and Self-Care as a Practice of Effecting Change



NWSA

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Of the body or earth, organic denotes the ways in which the parts of something fit together to create a harmonious whole and is characterized by continuous or natural development. This activity-based workshop is a point of encounter between the mind and the body, the individual and the community. We will dance and discuss the ways in which our individual, literal movement can help inspire and sustain social movement and transformation. We will consider the importance of balance, flexibility, strength, and endurance not simply as individual physical fitness pursuits but also as means for effecting feminist change. No dance experience required!

Organic Dance: Move and Be Moved.

Organic Dance is a term that I use to describe my “brand” of feminist fitness dance. It is a fitness program designed to connect the mind and body, the critical and the creative. This innovative fitness dance provides structure and freedom and draws from a variety of popular styles of dance and fitness, adapting forms, methods, and patterns into a workout that encourages participants to move as it feels good to them. Other fitness brands also practice the ideas of Organic Dance, in part or whole, including Nia, Kaya Fitness, Yoga Trance Dance, Shimmy Pop, 5 Rhythms, and many more. I explore these fitness forms (and much more!) in *Women and Fitness in American Culture*.



On Theme 5: Practices of Effecting Change

Oppressive Structures and Ideologies shape our ideas and experiences of “fitness” and “remind us that the need for crafting solidarities and effecting lasting change is more urgent than ever.” While “effecting change in pursuit of social justice has long since been the central goal of feminist scholarship and pedagogy,” rarely do we see such work done in and through fitness. This workshop stands up to the call for “renewed focus” and asks how we might use fitness—and Organic Dance, specifically—to “effect change so that we might better negotiate/confront the challenges ahead.” Self-care is one aspect of this work; our fitness helps us sustain social movement toward justice.

Playlist and Ideas Toward Practices of Effecting Change

“This Isn’t Our Parade” by Santigold

Putting our energy where it works best.

“Girl on Fire” by Alicia Keys

Endurance, passion, finding a spark to keep going.

“Give Love” by MC Yogi

Be generous; giving love away and loving ourselves.

“Heads Will Roll” by The Yeah Yeah Yeahs

Letting ourselves be in the moment without overthinking.

“Tightrope” by Janelle Monaé

Navigating the demands, keeping our balance.

“Break the Chain”

by Tena Clark for One Billion Rising

Solidarity, world-wide feminist movement. Intervention against violence against women and girls.

“Breathe In” by B.Steady and BOOMCLAK

Focus on breath, sharing embodied consciousness.

“The Story” by Brandi Carlile

Writing our own stories, sharing others’ stories; embracing the journey.

Some Ideas for Discussion...

- ~The importance of balance, flexibility, strength, and endurance.
- ~The body as a site of resistance, action, and creativity.
- ~Importance of self-care in order to care for others.
- ~Challenges and promises of using individual movement toward collective struggles for social justice.