

DVD Title: Bellydance for Core Fitness  
Instructor: Ayshe  
Production: World Dance New York

Review by MISHA 2007

Bellydance videos seem to fit into one of two genres: instructional or performance. The instructional types can be further broken down into those videos that are fitness oriented and those that tend to focus more on bellydance technique. Generally, I prefer the latter as many of the fitness videos are simply routines that implore viewers to do their best to follow along. Often these fitness videos contain little, if any, information on how to do the movements. There is usually very little time spent on actual technique and movement breakdown. Instead, the instructors tend to err more on the side of producing a video that will have their watchers up and moving, even if they are not necessarily moving safely or with proper bellydance form.

Finally there's a bellydance "fitness" video that corrects this issue, providing a fun, sassy "follow along and dance" format while *also* including enough technical information to make the best instructional videos fear being sent to the bellydance swap pages. Ayshe, seeking to provide dancers with a way to improve their core abdominal strength, has created a DVD that offers viewers three distinct sections. The first includes all aspects of the typical fitness video (warm up, combinations, a dance section featuring the combos, and a cool down) combined with Ayshe's detailed voice-over description. This part of the video is a great bellydance workout as it is designed to specifically target key muscle groups important for technique such as the psoas and glutes. Each section of this "workout" portion could serve as a stand-alone exercise plan on its own, allowing viewers a nice variety of options all wrapped up into one DVD. For those seeking to simply follow along, the second section provides the same format without the narration. This part is in the standard fitness video style, allowing viewers to work at their own pace along with the video.

The third part of Ayshe's creation is, on its own, easily worth the price of the video. Here the instructor reveals her special talent of analyzing and clearly explaining the technical details of each movement. Ayshe spends a *lot* of time discussing the muscles that drive each move, presenting her information clearly and concisely. I was pleased that, although Ayshe certainly knows her human anatomy, I did not need a medical degree to understand her descriptions. And, in addition to all of this technical stuff, Ayshe shows several short drills with each movement and muscle group, a nice bonus for those of us who desire less to practice combinations to improve our dance and more to simply drill, drill, drill!

A particularly interesting aspect of this video was Ayshe's choice of movements. Rather than include the "standards" that many dancers know and love, Ayshe instead chose to highlight those moves that would improve core strength. Ayshe provides an interesting, diverse selection of movements, many of which are rare to find on instructional video. She even includes several folkloric steps, a nice and unexpected touch for a fitness offering.

I confess that I normally steer clear of bellydance fitness videos, but I can honestly say that I not only enjoyed Ayshe's work but will also actually *use it regularly*. This video is definitely worth a look and one I'd recommend for everyone's collection.