

Viva! Latin Rhythm Workout

Elise Foss leads you through the hip-pest dance workout around

by Désirée I. Guzzetta

The problem with many aerobics tapes is that after a while, you get bored with the same routine. The tapes wind up collecting dust on the shelf. Or they find a new home in the trash!

Elise Foss knows this, and her unique solution is to incorporate Latin dance steps into her workout routines. Her new video is both fun and effective. After you learn the dance steps in her "Viva! Latin Rhythm Workout," you can use them to impress your friends when you hit the clubs.

Foss began studying dance at age five and started teaching jazz classes in 1985 while she attended college in Brazil. When she began adding steps from the samba and the mambo to her classes, her students responded enthusiastically.

Foss decided to combine her love of dance and aerobics into a career. After moving to the United States in 1992, she became certified as an aerobics instructor and personal trainer by the American Council on Exercise.

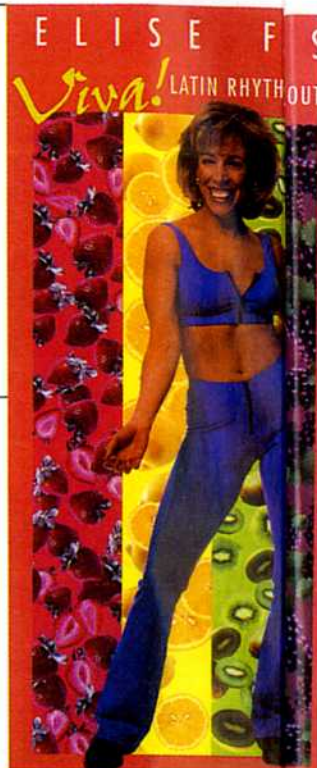
Now based in Chicago, Foss owns the Feeling Good Wellness Company, which provides in-home fitness training and group exercise classes. She also conducts corporate presentations in the Chicago area and writes a monthly column for a Chicago newspaper, *Deportemas Sportheims*.

Though targeted specifically to the Latino market, "Viva! Latin Rhythm Workout," available in both English and Spanish versions, can be used by anyone who wants to get fit. The workout focuses on the mind-body connection, self-expression and fun!

Geared to beginning and intermediate levels, the video's content may be a little difficult to master at first. The routine has a primary focus on hip movement, which is not common in aerobics workouts.

After the beginner's section, Foss pauses briefly to explain the intermediate portion and gives the beginner the option of fast-forwarding to the cool-down. There are plenty of exercise tips in the beginning of the tape, as well as a quick primer on the Latin dance steps.

Foss herself is a tireless and charming motivational presenter. Estylo recently talked to her about "Viva! Latin Rhythm Workout."



Estylo: What gave you the idea to do a Latin dance workout video?

Foss: People really enjoy my Latin rhythm classes. They don't feel it's hard work; they think it's fun. I knew there weren't many Spanish-language videos on the market, so I thought it would be great to make one. I also know we Latinos love dancing, so I finally combined all those ideas and created "Viva! Latin Rhythm Workout."

Estylo: Why make a fitness tape in both languages?

Foss: I wanted to fill the void in the Spanish market. Also, while teaching aerobics with Latin rhythms to non-Hispanic people, I realized they wanted something other than traditional low-impact classes. So I decided to reach both audiences.

Estylo: What do you feel are the special exercise needs of Latinos? Are they generally motivated to keep themselves fit?

Foss: I think Latinos are very much into dancing, but perhaps not as much into exercising as the general American population. I believe Latinos need ways to relate exercise to something they enjoy. It's important for all people to pick something fun so they stay with their exercise routine.

Estylo: What is the mind-body connection?

Foss: The mind-body connection is a term used to describe exercises or techniques that don't just focus on the physical being, but get people in touch with themselves while exercising. That means they aren't making plans in their heads or thinking about what they need to do later. When you are able to get into the music and enjoy the workout without being concerned about other things or how you look, then you can really take the workout to a different level.

Estylo: What are the extra benefits of adding Latin dance to an aerobic workout?

Foss: First, it's fun. All the hip motion is great for toning the abdominal area and waist. Besides that, there have been studies that find dancing to have the most stress-relieving effects of all exercise. I would love for people to look at exercising as something that, besides all the physiological benefits, makes them feel good.

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The tapes are available at <vivaelise.com> and <Amazon.com>, through Collage Video Catalogue (800-433-6769), through the Discovery Channel video catalog (800-207-5775, item E3079), and at retail stores and other outlets near you (check <www.vivaelise.com> for locations). Suggested retail price is \$14.95 each.