

u3a members take to the dancefloor



in Strictly Come Dancing, u3a members

As Angela Rippon wowed at the launch

of Strictly Come Dancing as the oldest ever contestant on the show, u3a members already know the power of hot-stepping across the dance floor.

Dance is hugely popular at u3a, the 400,000-strong movement for people who are no longer in full-time work and would like to learn new skills, make friends and have fun.

There are u3a ballroom dancing groups across the UK and members will be glued to their televisions every Saturday night willing Angela to take the floor by storm, with dance partner Kai Widdrington, to prove that age is no barrier to being vibrant, vital and able to live life to the full. Members Greg and Gill lead one of these groups in Cockermouth, Cumbria. They have been dancing for more than 30 years and for the past six years they have been the ballroom dancing subject leaders for u3a. The couple have loved helping to set up new groups, advising on music and dance steps.

They have taken lessons with Strictly professionals and even danced in the famous ballroom of the Blackpool Tower.

Gill says: "To enjoy ballroom dancing, all you need is the right attitude. It doesn't matter if you think you have two left feet, because it can all be worked on.

"You don't have to be the top of the tree at dancing, if you have a ready smile on your face and you're happy to have a bit of a giggle, you will enjoy it."

Greg jokes that the reason he enjoys dancing so much is because it's the only time wife Gill allows him to take the lead. On a serious note, he says ballroom dancing has enormous physical and mental health benefits.

"It's good for bone health, circulation, posture and it is great discipline for maintaining balance.

Dancing also helps keep the memory active because you must remember the moves."

Whether you love dancing - or have a completely different interest altogether, there's something for everyone at u3a. You can join as many groups as you like for an average of less than £20 per year. [Join a u3a](#)