

# SCHOOL'D BY FUNKMODE

You want to become a Hip Hop expert? Learn the info below and you're on your way, yo!

## WHAT IS HIP HOP DANCING?

Ever since Hip Hop dancing started, the world has had a difficult time saying exactly what Hip Hop dancing is or is not. Even the very first Hip Hop dancers didn't use the term "Hip Hop". To make things more confusing, new styles keep coming in year after year and old styles keep changing. So, how is anyone supposed to know what is or is not Hip Hop dancing?

It's usually helpful to go back to the beginning when trying to answer such a question. Most of what we call Hip Hop dancing today started in the 1970s. Back then, all we had were a bunch of very different styles, each with their own names. In California, we created styles like Locking, Boogaloo, Waving, Popping, Gliding (where Michael Jackson got his famous "Moonwalk"), and Tutting. In New York, they created styles like Rocking and B-boying. What eventually brought all of these styles together was the fact that, although very different from one another, they were all done to the same type of music\*. Kids in NY were B-boying to the exact same songs that kids in California were using to wave and pop. Kids in California were Locking to the same songs kids in NY used for Rocking. Eventually, they all started to come together and teach each other their dances. As people from the outside (like reporters) came in and saw all of these kids doing these great new dances together, many of them didn't realize the styles were all very different and came from different parts of the country. In the media, all of these styles started to be called Breakdancing\*\* or street dancing. The dancers knew that each dance style had a different name and some even tried to correct the outsiders, but the name Breakdancing spread faster than anyone could fix the mistake. However, what was really important was that all of these dancers were being brought together by a love of the same kind of music and a desire to share dance styles with each other.

Another thing that all of these styles had in common were that they came from freestyle party dancing. Each of these styles started off small, with just a few moves. But, as people came to parties or got together in groups to freestyle dance, they added new moves to each style and entertained the crowds with them. The crowds and dancers went home, practiced the moves they saw and then added their own moves and style to them. This is how every one of these styles began to grow into what we know them as today. Freestyling created Hip Hop dancing. This is why at FUNKMODE we always tell you, if you can't freestyle, you're not really a Hip Hop dancer.

As Funk music started to die out in the early 1980s, it was quickly replaced by a similar style known as Rap or Hip Hop. Hip Hop began to dominate the dance parties. As people freestyle danced to Hip Hop music instead of Funk, even more moves and styles were created. In the 1990s we saw NY and California again create styles that would take over the party scene. This time, they spread largely because of music videos. In NY, there was a style of music and movement called New Jack Swing that became really popular. In California, music artists like MC Hammer popularized a hard hitting dance style that most Hip Hop dancers still imitate today. These newer styles mixed with the older styles and helped to further grow Hip Hop dancing.

Today, we have even newer styles like Hyphy, Krump, and Jerkin (all also from California). So how are you supposed to keep track of all these? And how do you know what's real Hip Hop dancing? Here is one simple guideline. In order for it to be Hip Hop dancing, it needs to allow freestyle and be connected to either Hip Hop/Funk music OR one of the original New York/California styles (B-boying, Locking, Rocking, etc.). If it's not connected to either of those somehow, it's probably not Hip Hop.

\* This music style was called Funk and it was one of the most popular styles of music in the United States during the 1970s in the African American and Latino communities.

\*\* The term "Breakdancing" comes from the fact that those who created this style primarily danced to a special part of the music called the break. The more accurate term is "B-boys" which stands for Break Boys.

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## HIP HOP WORDS OF THE WEEK

**Hype:** excited, powerful, energetic. EX: "The audience was really hype tonight! You could hear them all the way outside." (opposite: Chill)

**Flossy / Fitted:** really well dressed and having a lot of style. EX: "Those new shoes have matching rhinestones and laces. They are super flossy!" "That guy always flosses the best outfits. He's mad fitted!"

## EXTRA LEARNING

- 1) Who is the creator of the Locking style?
- 2) Who created New Jack Swing?
- 3) Is Justin Bieber a Hip Hop dancer? What about Chris Brown? Usher? Michael Jackson?