



If you walked down the street these days wearing tight flared satin trousers and a silver sequined top with matching platform shoes, you would raise more than a few eyebrows. However, in the 1970s, it was the standard dress for an evening spent at the local **discotheque** (the French word for 'nightclub'). There you could sway and spin the night away to the catchy tunes and danceable rhythms of disco music.

Disco is a style of dance music that was popular from the early 1970s until the mid 1980s. It was influenced mostly by funk and soul music, and is well known for its rich and varied instrumentation. A disco song may include percussion, bass, keyboards, horns, woodwinds, and even orchestral strings. Guitars are only used as background, or what is called "rhythm guitar". The sound of disco music is unique and for many people, hearing a few bars of a disco song will conjure up all sorts of images involving shimmering spandex and spinning mirrored balls.

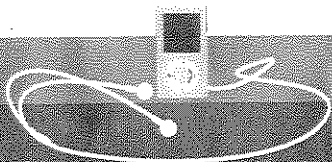
One of the best known disco groups was The Village People. Their costumes, depicting a police officer, soldier, biker, construction worker, cowboy, and Native American in traditional dress became as famous as their songs, *Macho Man* and the *YMCA*. The *YMCA* is a popular group dance even today.

Another well known group was ABBA, a Swedish band whose name is an acronym for the group members' names: Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny, and Anni-Frid. ABBA recorded many hits, such as *Dancing Queen*, *Take a Chance on Me*, *Waterloo*, and *Fernando*. The 2008 movie, *Mamma Mia*, is based on ABBA's songs and has helped ABBA regain popularity.

The disco dance movie, *Saturday Night Fever* came out in 1977 when disco was at the peak of its popularity. John Travolta played the part of a disco dancer. *Saturday Night Fever* made disco so fashionable that even Kermit the Frog and the M&Ms dressed and danced like John Travolta!

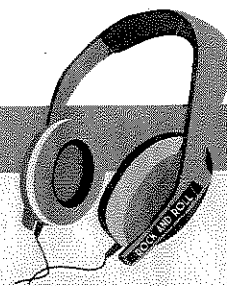
In the mid 1980s the disco craze began to fade as new forms of electronic dance music such as House, New Wave, and Hip Hop took its place. If you listen carefully, you can still hear the echos of disco music in these new styles.

Fast Facts



Time Span: Early 1970s to Middle 1980s
Influences: Soul, Funk
Primary Instruments: Keyboard, winds, brass (or horns), percussion, bass, orchestral strings
Major Artists: ABBA, Village People, Donna Summer, KC and the Sunshine Band

Fun Fact



On July 12, 1979, there was a doubleheader game between the Chicago White Sox and the Detroit Tigers. Chicago DJ Steve Dahl used to pretend to blow up disco records on his radio show. The Chicago White Sox apparently liked this idea and invited Mr. Dahl to destroy disco records between games that night. Admission to the doubleheader was \$0.98 and a disco record. Rioting started during the first game and the second game had to be forfeited. Today, ESPN continues to rank this in the top 10 most shocking moments in baseball history.