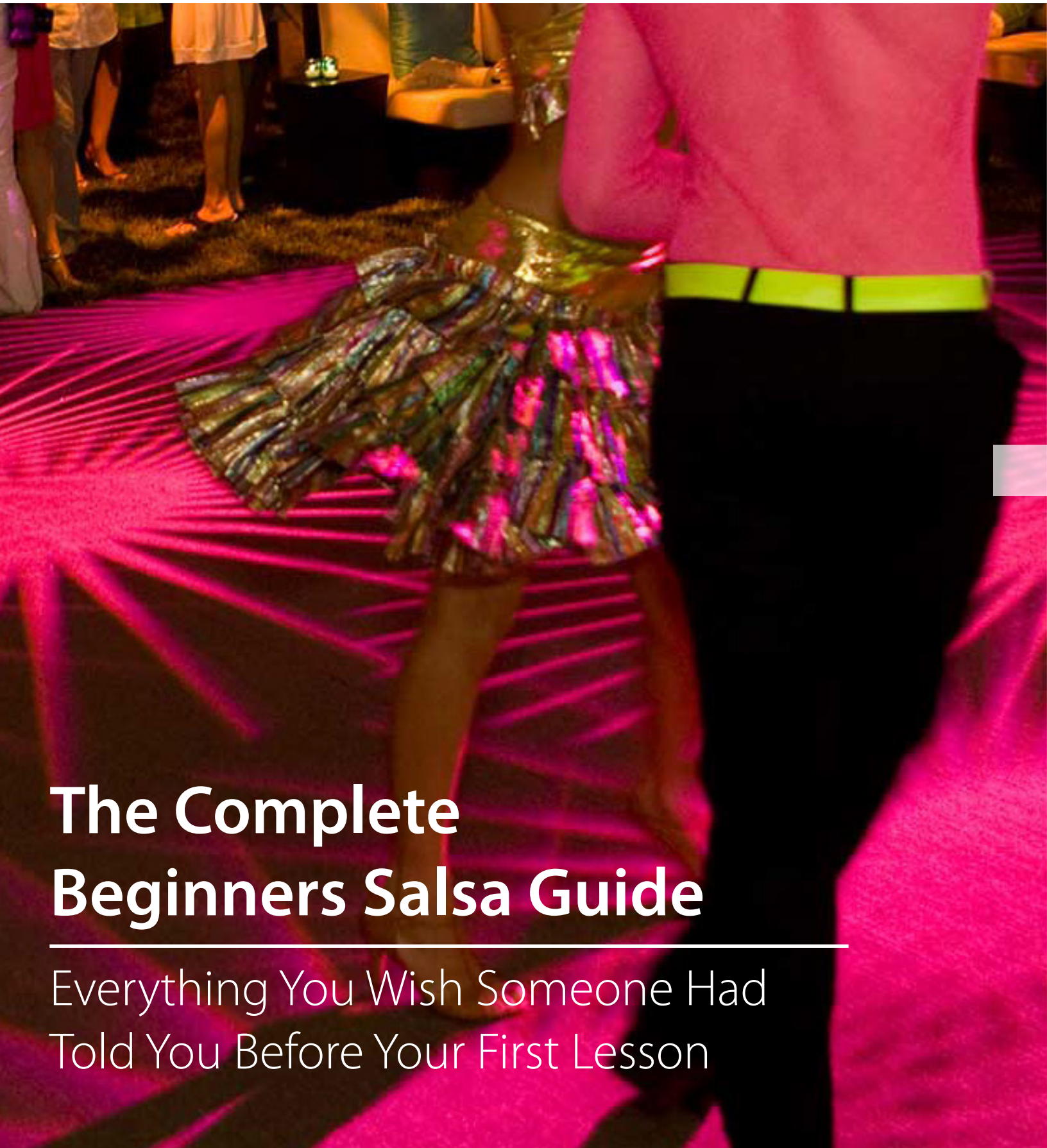
YOUR
DANCE STUDIO



The Complete Beginners Salsa Guide

Everything You Wish Someone Had Told You Before Your First Lesson

Latin Dance 101

03 **A Brief** Overview Of Salsa Music

05 **The Dances** You Need To Know

07 **How To** Develop Your Dance Skills

08 **How To** Practice The Right Way

09 **The Practice** Mindset

11 **What You** Need To Know About Musicality

14 **Unforgettable Ways** To Be A Good Lead

16 **Top 4** Etiquettes For Social Dancing

17 **What To** Wear Or Not To Wear At The Dance Club

A Brief Overview Of Salsa Music

Salsa clubs have been around since the 1930's and are still extremely popular. It isn't hard to see why Latin Dance styles are known for their fast pace tempo, dips, and lifts which flourish and evoke a sense of passion and intrigue within the dancer as well as the people watching.

If you've never delved into the world of Salsa don't be dissuaded by the seemingly elaborate style. Anyone can learn how to dance Salsa, Bachata or Merengue and own the dance floor, once you start on your new journey.

Keep in mind, this is a short version of the history of Salsa music that took place in NY back in the early Seventies. Ok, here we go…

In the 70s, a new form of social dance originated in New York and was strongly influenced by Latin America, particularly Puerto Rico.

It was here where the explosion of this music took place that we now know as Salsa music. This was the birth of a musical revolution that has spread worldwide ever since.

The names like Willie Colon, Hector Lavoe, Larry Harlow, Ismael Miranda, Celia Cruz, and Cheo Feliciano are some of the building blocks of this new musical revolution. The driving force in spreading this new found rhythm was The Fania All Start concert tour. They performed in the USA, then Europe, and finally Africa.

Toward the end of the 70s, the popular label Fania, who had propelled all these great singers, composers, and songwriters, closed their doors. The Fania's last record production took place in 1979, and in 1980 the label was sold.

With all this introduction of new sound, dance, and new talent across the board, a sweet and fantastic era came into being, which we still enjoy today. Songs like "Todo Tiene Su Final," "El Cantante," "La Murga," and "Abran Paso" are still being heard in clubs and Salsa events everywhere. In my humble opinion, this is the best and most exciting Salsa music ever created.

The 4 Dances You Need To Know

ONE | SALSA

Salsa embodies a heart-racing dance rhythm, with its roots firmly established in Latin American culture. The fun and sexy dance steps are now taking hold of cities from Miami to LA to New York. Salsa dancing is for fun. Salsa dancing is for health. Salsa dancing is for life.

Even in its short history, Salsa has evolved into a variety of different dance types that we get to enjoy at the clubs: **LA Style, Miami Style, Casino Style**

TWO | BACHATA

Bachata is a Caribbean dance step that features a distinct hip ot tap motion. With beautiful music, sensual body movement, and a sultry sway, Bachata is a growing dance style that has spread around the globe.

There are a variety of types of Bachata. Development over decades has created distinct styles that are iconic to certain geographical areas. Below are several of the Bachata styles popular in the clubs: **Traditional Bachata, Dominican Bachata, Bachatango (Bachata-Tango)**

THREE | ON2

If dancing would fall into the category of a spoken language, Salsa would be considered casual with lots of slang. On2 or Mambo would be considered "textbook" as the original Latin dance craze.

This dance has very strict timing and a solid emphasize of a strong frame.

FOUR | MERENGUE

This one is the ultimate party dance with a fast tempo and easy steps for anyone to learn and keeps you smiling.

The technique used in its sideways movement is the basic form for most other Latin dances. It is the national dance and music of the Dominican Republic. The Dominicans like their Merengue hot and fast.

| Great dancers stay on the dance floor |

To get better results faster, get coaching on your salsa dancing.

Start Your Free Salsa Lessons

How To Develop Your Dance Skills

1

Learning | Listening

This skill is very important to develop right way to ensure the **proper mind set** for the training ahead. Dancers are taught to listen and watch more than speak. They must learn to listen to the music and to the instruction given for a faster result.

2

Practice | Applying

Applying what you are learning is very important to a dance skill. Whether you are practicing at a dance party, at a club, or in the kitchen, **the implementation** of these skills allows for strategic improvements to be made and to build your confidence as a dancer.

3

Refining | Fine Tune

If Applying is the cake, then Refining is the frosting. This is where refining your frame and the way you hold your partner, **adjusting to** various rhythms and timing or the way you move your body by means of styling your dance moves, will create your natural and unique way of dancing that can't be duplicated.

How To Practice
The Right Way

When I was learning to become a ballroom dance instructor, the person who was teaching me used to say to me, "Practice makes perfect." Boy, was she right about it, too. This statement holds true today. But there's a little tiny thing missing to complete this statement.

1

Acknowledge the Challenge

Be honest with yourself about the difficulty of learning something new, especially when you're learning to dance without any previous experience. Expect mistakes because we ALL DO make them. Celebrate the efforts and risk-taking rather than your skill level. Do not worry when your early attempts are less than perfect.

2

Limit the Scope

Understand that training often includes information on many different behaviors, approaches, skills, and techniques. It isn't possible to practice and master all of them at one time. One step at the time is what worked for me. Focus your practice on just one thing, at least to start with. Be great at it, then move to the next, and then to the next.

3

Commit Your Time

Commit time every week, ideally every day, for practice. Block time on your calendar. Minimize distractions, and work on skill development as seriously as you would to sleeping or eating.

4

Leverage Tools and Materials To Help You Get There Faster

Find video training that will help you with your goal to be a good dancer. Most videos programs include training on how to practice at home. Use them as much as you can, individually or with your partner. These can be extremely helpful for practicing a new dance step.

As you can see, making a commitment to practice is essential to maximize the impact of training. After all, practice is the only way to become proficient in a new skill, or a new behavior for that matter.

The **Practice Mindset**

There are two important kinds of "practice mindsets" you need to know, and they are both crucial to determine how far you want to go. There is the **"non-recreational practice"** and the **"recreational practice."**

The non-recreational Practice

This is the kind of practice that you would do in a manner that is very technical, timing-driven, and focused on proper lead and follow execution. It is ideal for training for a performance routine or becoming an expert, if your desire is to teach others every level of dancing.

If you are only training to perform, you will concentrate on the routine, or a fixed sequence of patterns, with all the styling cues, to make you feel like an expert. The downside to this kind of practice is that it would minimize your creative side as a dancer.

The recreational Practice

This one, simply put, is the one you do for fun at Salsa dancing clubs or social events. Keep in mind that there are both basic and advanced ways of how and when to lead or follow, which enhance your dance experience. "Recreational practice" brings out your dance persona, your creative side, and your fun factor.

The more you practice, the more it becomes part of you. With either kind of practice, your skill level will greatly improve.

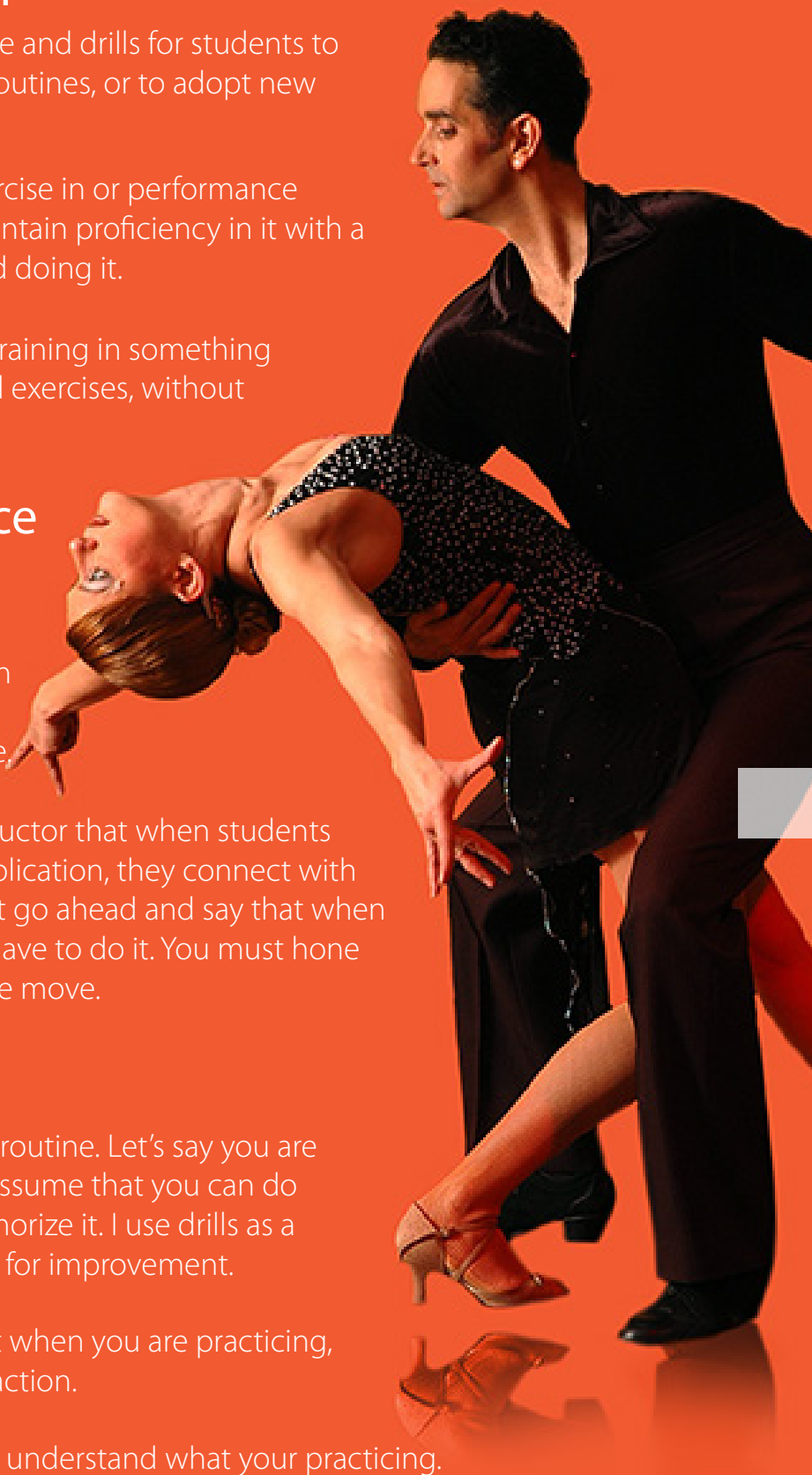
Focus is the key to mastery

The difference between practice and drills

Traditional instruction incorporates practice and drills for students to memorize dance steps and performance routines, or to adopt new dance concepts.

- Practice can be defined as repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it with a completely understanding the why behind doing it.

- Drills, on the others hand, are intensive training in something like routine, typically by means of repeated exercises, without fully understanding the inner workings.



The advantage of practice

The benefit you get from practice is that you are able to apply knowledge through interaction of a new step. You connect with the material when you're working with the concepts beyond just a one-time exposure.

It has been my experience as a dance instructor that when students practice using the knowledge through application, they connect with the information on a deeper level. Let's just go ahead and say that when you're learning about a dance move, you have to do it. You must hone the mechanics, tone, and style of the dance move.

The advantage of drills

Drills are used successfully when teaching routine. Let's say you are learning multiplication tables. It is safe to assume that you can do drills on each number set to help you memorize it. I use drills as a method to hone skills that need repetition for improvement.

It is extremely important to make sure that when you are practicing, there is a clear link between concept and action.

Similarly, drills are not effective if you don't understand what your practicing. Furthermore, drills are typically more for basic knowledge and physical repetition

What You Need To Know About Musicality

What exactly is musicality?

Musicality is the interpretation a dancer gives to a piece of music with her or his body movements. Musicality definition is a dancer's sensitivity to it or knowledge of the music. At its core, dancing is showing music in physical form. This is the nonverbal way of telling people "this is how I feel, hear, and interpret this song."

Now, let's get into how I can help you master this new, but so controversial, skill in your dancing.

The Mastering of Musicality

If you put a musical dancer and a nonmusical dancer side by side and you'll see why it's so important to grasp the concepts of rhythm, melody, and mood of a song when you are dancing or performing.

The **nonmusical dancer** is the dancers without a connection to the music. They might seem stiff, disconnected or robotic—often, they're a little bit hard to watch.

They seem unable to transmit the emotion or attitude to the songs while they are dancing. A strong but nonmusical dancer is like a painting on a canvas without any colors. With the nonmusical dancer, you can see the effort put in. They are often step-driven.

The **musical dancers**, on the other hand, never disregard the music to fit in more tricks or moves. This kind of dancer doesn't just turn until they stop for the sake of turning. They turn until they move on to the next point in the music, with the intention on the next thing. Musical dancers never get so caught up on steps that they ignore the music.

There is no right or wrong way to interpret music.

As a dancer who wants to perform, you must be ready for any approach they use.

The Hearing Factor

One of my favorite artist of all time, Oscar De Leon, was asked to share the story on how he manages to write such great melodies all the time. He said that in the beginning he would gather the members of the band together, point his finger to a particular instrument, and he then make the sound for that instrument with the desired tempo.

The person who played the instrument would mimic his request to his liking. Once he was happy with it, a songwriter would write it for him. Oscar De Leon didn't have proper training to do this.

So how do you hone on the musicality if you don't have formal training?

With a little bit of natural intuition and a whole lot of practice. Spend some time listening to the genres of music you are using to perform or dance. You can even choose to "choreograph" music that challenges you. The by-product of doing this is exercising your brain's musicality muscle.

Learning to differentiate between instruments will help you translate what you hear into movement, which will, in turn, give your dancing shade and texture.

Learn the difference between a trumpet and a trombone, and a bass guitar and an upright bass. Another way to hone your ear is to listen to recordings of the band you're performing to and identify the differences between them.

In time you'll be able to hear both the instruments individually and the tune as a whole. And then you'll be able to freestyle and dance to rhythms you never heard before.
It will change your life as a dancer.

The Facial Expression

Now that you have your own ideas about music and movement, it is important to remember the following. If you are going in for an audition, every dancer must be able to hear and interpret the music exactly the way the choreographer wants.

But if you're just learning a new step, it is also important to interpret what you hear in the music. It takes just as sensitive of a dancer to perform another person's vision as it does to choose your own interpretation of the music.

Side note… When I watch people perform, I always pay attention to their facial expression as they do their routine. Why? Because, as crazy as this might sound to you, it is also important to be aware of how your face expresses the emotions in the music while you do the routine.

It's a clear indication of how the dancers are interpreting the routine. By adding such a small yet powerful detail into the performance, the audience will be captivated.

I use this to add drama and flavor to my dancing as I execute any step. Indeed, dancing is making music with your body.

The Forgotten Element

This next thing might not be as important as the points above, but the key thing to grasp here is that your body needs to understand and move like the song. Experimenting with different textures is also the key to great musicality.

So, what's texture?

Textures are like dynamics and musical articulation in piano. They accentuate the music and match the changes and flow of the song. Textures can be sharp, fast and direct to the point or it can be smooth and flow with the melody.

And textures all depend on your interpretation of how you hear the music and wish to portray that to your viewer.

Dancers are physical interpretations of music. Textures allow people to see the music more clearly with such interpretation from the dancer.

Great dancers stay on the dance floor

Get unlimited access to a complete video library of dance steps

Start Your Free Salsa lessons

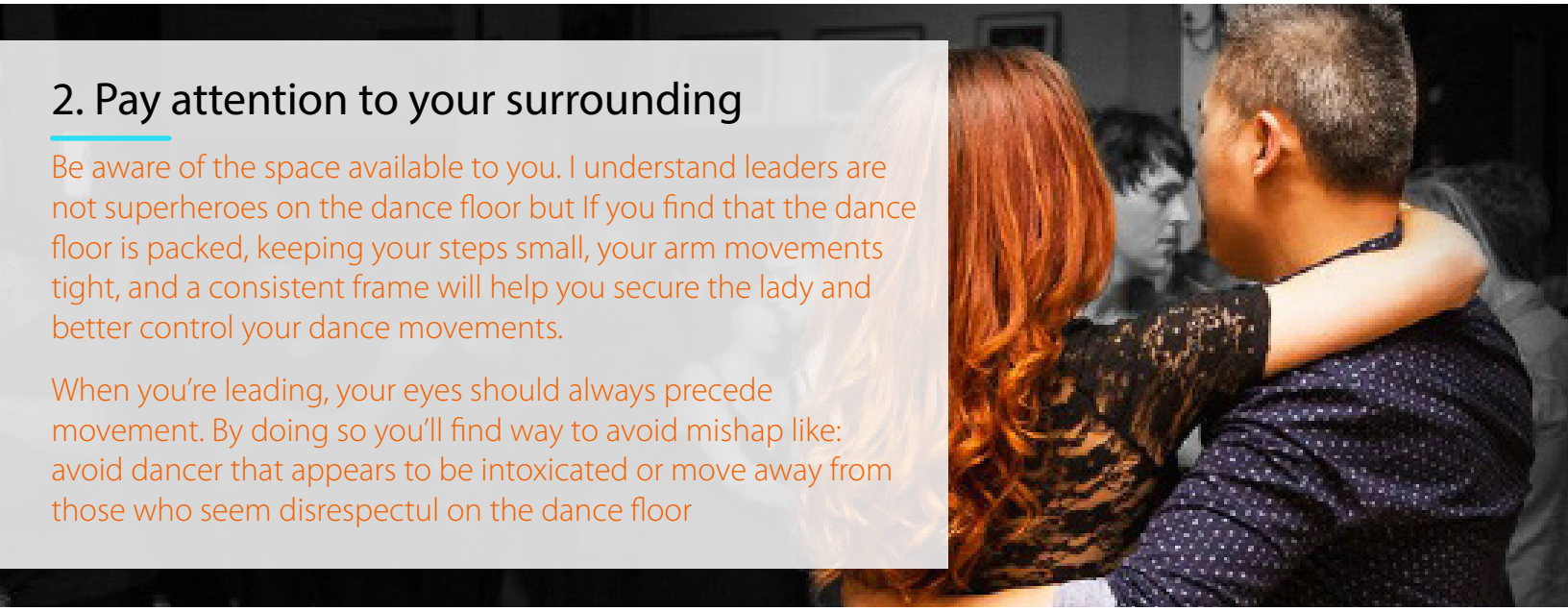
4 Unforgettable Ways To Be A Good Lead

Do you want to dance a lot more and be remembered every time you do it? Well, you are in the right place. I'm going to show how the 3 characteristics of a good leader that I've used and has taken my dancing to a whole new level. The best part? All of these are proven tips that will bring you a better dancing experience for many years to come.

1. It's all about the lady

This is the first commandment of dancing. It 's all about the lady. Guys, this is and will ALWAYS be what you need to understand both on the dance floor and throughout your day-to-day activities.

Even if your partner is not as good of a dancer as you are, one of the qualities of a good leader is that **YOU should always give her your full attention** for the duration of the dance.



2. Pay attention to your surrounding

Be aware of the space available to you. I understand leaders are not superheroes on the dance floor but If you find that the dance floor is packed, keeping your steps small, your arm movements tight, and a consistent frame will help you secure the lady and better control your dance movements.

When you're leading, your eyes should always precede movement. By doing so you'll find way to avoid mishap like: avoid dancer that appears to be intoxicated or move away from those who seem disrespectul on the dance floor

3. Conduct yourself like a gentleman

Another quality of a good leader is to be considerate of other dancers and stay in your space. They are also there to enjoy themselves, just like you are. If you do bump into someone, please do not ignore the situation. Make eye contact and apologize at that moment if you can.

Gentlemen, please respect your partner and treat her with care. She is entrusting you with her safety and this needs to be the prime consideration in every leading decision you make. This guideline alone will go a long way if you make an effort to do it every time and everywhere.

4. Lead intelligently

Many of you may have been taught the idea that you need to use a lot of muscles to get moves to happen. Really you don't need to be forceful. You just need to lead intelligently.

You often can fix this by providing a clear but intentional lead. **Focus on quality connection** not brute force. So, if you're dancing with a follower who is particularly rough or stiff, it is probably because they have been handled too harshly and have adjusted their frames in order to protect themselves.

A well calibrated lead and delicate touch is heaven for the follower, I know.

| 4 unforgettable ways |

to be a good lead

It's all about the lady • Pay attention to your surrounding
Conduct yourself like a gentleman • Lead intelligently

Top 4 Etiquettes For Social Dancing

As an individual who likes to dance and teach others the wonderful and fun art of dancing Salsa, Bachata, Merengue and Cha Cha Cha, this is a topic that never entered my mind to discuss until I experienced it, indirectly, several times at the dance club. So here they are…

1

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Don't forget to shower, use deodorant, and brush your teeth.
Yes, these are the most basic and most important things you can to do when you are ready for dancing. Dancing involves close contact with your partner, especially if you are dancing Bachata.

2

DON'T BE ROUGH OR TOO ROUGH

Your dance partner is a person, not an object. There is a difference between being firm and being rough. The idea is to give normal pressure to guide and lead your partner, but not so much that your partner doesn't have the freedom to move on her own.

3

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS

If you feel like trying out a cool new move that you just learned, you MUST make sure that there is enough room to lead it. The idea of crashing your partner into other couples or a wall is not a good way to gain her trust. This one is very simple but so important to keep in mind.

4

DON'T FEEL UP YOU PARTNER

This one should go without saying, but the chest and butt area are off-limits. Remember that NO means NO. Even if your hands unintentionally go where they shouldn't, do you really expect your partner to believe it was an accident?

1 2 3 4

What To Wear Or Not To Wear At The Dance Club

I always want to speak about this particular topic to all the women what are just starting to dance any kind of Latin dance. I know that you might be really excited to be out there and to show everyone what you have learned (Yay!), but no one wants to look like a Salsa club newbie, and as long as you dress in clothing that's casual, cool, and comfortable, you will be a big hit on the dance floor. Remember the following simple rules:

I agree that having little backless dresses and tops can be very sexy. You get to show off some skin without the risk of exposing yourself like you might when wearing a low-cut top or a short skirt.

This sexy image come with a BIG price, sadly. If you are dancing, then it is safe to assume that you are going to get hot, and when your back perspires, it will lead to a sticky experience for your dance partners. We might not say anything out of courtesy to you, but if you don't like, neither do we.

Finding the right dress or skirt for salsa dancing involves meeting some additional criteria besides simply fitting and looking good. If you think that size doesn't matter, the length of your skirt does matter.

Try to wear something that falls above the knee to avoid getting tangled up as you spin. You don't want to wear anything too short that you have to worry about potentially exposing yourself because you'll be moving a lot, and your skirt/dress can rise up·

What To Wear Or Not To Wear At The Dance Club

Shoes are arguably the key to dancing success, and it is incredibly important that you are wearing the right shoes. Why? Because you dance standing up on your feet, not upsidedown on your hands.

If you have to fight to keep your shoes from falling off all evening or are unable to balance yourself in them as you spin and move around, your dancing will be TERRIBLE.

Jewelry can accent your look all the time, but when it comes to dancing, less is more. A nice manicure will take care off this problem.

If you find yourself spinning a lot, you soon will realize that wearing a necklace might not be such a great idea. There is beauty in simple things.

Your personalized road map for becoming a better dancer is just one click away.....

Join The Waitlist. Save Your Spot

YOUR DANCE STUDIO

yourdancestudio.com