

Solo Dancing

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One of the most challenging aspects of ballroom dancing revolves around how well both partners know their respective roles in the dance. It may appear to

some that all that is needed is to simply walk through the steps. This is a false notion that is especially prevalent among newer dancers. This article highlights solo dancing as a technique that will help to improve the essential lead and follow skills for more effective ballroom dancing.

Practicing solo means to dance through a routine on your own while simulating dancing with a partner. At face value this may seem strange; however, the practice of solo dancing has many benefits to partner dancing. Most individuals, especially those who are relatively new to ballroom dancing are eager to get out on the dance floor with the expectation of getting through a partner dance seamlessly. Claims are sometimes made to suggest that learning to dance can be achieved in a few basic lessons. Many individuals have been convinced that this



is the case. As such, there are instances where individuals struggle to make it through a partner dance in this scenario. Unfortunately, this can discourage many dancers early on, causing some to abandon their dance aspirations altogether. Ballroom dancing entails understanding the individual lead and follow roles respectively. Once this is achieved, lead and follow becomes a transportable skill. In other words, it not only works in the context of dancing with a regular partner but also with anyone who has acquired the same skill set.

Technique skills can always be refined at any level. This is as true for beginners as it is for the more experienced dancers. Both partners are responsible for knowing their essential roles as leader and follower. It is especially important to recognize that your partner may not possess the same level of expertise. For example, if the leader has more experience, he will need to accommodate the follower accordingly. The leader should never dance beyond the follower's capability in an attempt to show off flashy moves. This is all too common and will result in creating unnecessary anxiety for both partners. Likewise, followers need to know how to properly respond to the lead. For example, the lady needs to resist the temptation of back-leading even if she thinks the leader is not leading correctly. Conversely, the lady should not rely on the leader to physically move her through the dance. These and other similar practices will only serve to degrade the entire dance experience.

Everyone needs to know that they can confidently navigate through the dance in their appropriate partner role and at their own level. Practicing solo dancing regularly will greatly improve your overall abilities. When practicing solo, make sure that arms, elbows and hands are held as they would be with an actual partner. The frame is one of the most important fundamentals of ballroom dancing. Volumes have been written on the importance of holding and maintaining a good upper body frame. Each partner is responsible for their posture and connection through their frame. While keeping all of this in mind, both partners also need a good sense of rhythm. Solo

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dancing helps one to synchronize their dance movements to the music more accurately.

Many aspects of partner dancing can be improved by taking the time to dance solo routines. It is always best to do this privately and away from outside distractions. Making solo dancing a regular habit helps one to improve the many facets of partner dancing while affording the opportunity to refine overall dance skills. Finding the time and space to practice your part alone while paying close attention to posture, frame, rhythm and how you are moving through your dance space will provide valuable experience. For example, if you are a follower dancing an underarm turn, it is beneficial to take particular notice to the exact amounts of turn through and between each of the steps. Amounts of turn, feet positions, dance positions and footwork are all important elements that can be brought into closer focus through the practice of solo dancing.

One of the greatest pleasures that a dance couple can experience is the feeling of smooth navigation around the dance floor as one. This requires relaxed and skillful non-verbal communications between both partners. Solo dance practice sets the stage for dancers to become more confident and proficient in their respective roles. This fosters the common goal of making partner dancing a more enjoyable experience for both.