

## What Level Argentine Tango Dancer am I? (i.e., Which level class should I take?)

During tango festivals students often attend workshops more advanced than their current level of expertise. Some of the basic reasons are:

1. Students overestimate their ability and mistakenly believe no one in class will notice.
2. Students mistakenly believe that they will learn faster.
3. Students think that more advanced dancers only need to learn advanced patterns.
4. Students want to only dance with “better” dancers.

The problem is, students who do this fail to realize that:

1. It hinders the instructors from completing their class objectives.
2. It frustrates and angers the students who have met the criteria and now have to struggle with students who have jumped their level of expertise.
3. It decreases the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the class.

What level tango dancer you are depends on many factors including:

1. Whether you are a leader or follower — learning to lead generally takes more time and persistence than learning to follow, initially.
2. The quality and quantity of classes and workshops you’ve taken.
3. The quality and focus of teachers you’ve studied with — e.g., learning and dancing “close embrace” is quite different than “open embrace”. Studying technique is different than learning patterns.
4. How long, how often, and how well you practice.
5. With whom you dance and practice.
6. Natural ability.
7. Other dance experience.
8. The number of years you’ve been dancing tango — dancing properly for a few years can make you more advanced than dancing poorly for many years.

Thus it is difficult to write a precise guideline to determine each student’s exact level of tango expertise. However, with the intent of providing some guidance, and for the purpose of making each participant’s experience optimal, we offer the following broad guideline of minimum criteria.

### Beginning Argentine Tango Dancer:

- ◆ Has zero, or less than one year of experience in dancing **Argentine tango**. This includes advanced professional grand champion dancers and prima ballerinas who have not yet studied Argentine tango.

### Intermediate Argentine Tango Dancer is comfortable with the following:

- ◆ Can hear and stay on the beat of traditional Argentine tango as well as vals and milonga.
- ◆ Understands both open and close embrace and can dance comfortably in both.
- ◆ Leaders maintain line of dance and wait for the follower to complete her step before leading another.
- ◆ Followers collect and wait for the lead.
- ◆ Understands the concept of parallel and crossed feet and can lead or follow from one to the other.
- ◆ Can correctly and consistently execute the following steps solo and with a partner in time to the music while maintaining their own axis and balance and the line of dance:
  - marking time
  - walking forward/backward
  - side steps
  - check left turn
  - crusada
  - back ocho
  - forward ocho
  - ocho cortado

### Advanced Argentine Tango Dancer:

- ◆ Has *mastered* all of the criteria listed above for intermediate tangueros, and:
- ◆ Has the ability to lead/follow from the chest only.
- ◆ Can interpret the musicality of tango, vals and milonga — dancing the melody as well as to the beat.
- ◆ Can correctly and consistently execute the following steps solo and with a partner in time to the music while maintaining their own axis and balance and the line of dance:
  - molinetes
  - boleos
  - ganchos

**NOTE: Classes designated “All Levels” will contain material suitable for all levels of dancers, not just for the lowest common denominator. You are encouraged to take “lower” level classes to refine, review, and reconsider concepts – things you hear the first time around may not click until months or years later.**