



7 *Essentials* to Preparing for Your First Competition or Showcase



1. Choose an Event in which to participate. **GOAL DATE**
 - Give yourself a minimum of 3-4 months to prepare for it.
 - 12-16 weeks of prep time is a *realistic* amount of time for a first time competitor to prepare.
 - This will also allow for any unexpected interruptions in practice and lesson times.
2. Decide Your Genre. **DANCE STYLE**
 - Discuss with your partner/instructor what style category you will participate in.
The two main Styles are American and International and each contain two categories within:

<u>American Style Smooth</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Waltz- Fox Trot- Tango- Viennese Waltz	<u>American Style Rhythm</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cha Cha- Rumba- Swing- Bolero- Mambo
<u>International Standard</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Waltz- Tango- Viennese Waltz- Fox Trot- Quickstep	<u>International Latin</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cha Cha- Samba- Rumba- Paso Doble- Jive

- Set yourself up for success by focusing on one style the first few times you compete.
- This provides you with a chance to spend the time to really focus and hone your skill in that style.
- Being good at anything requires time so don't overwhelm yourself with too many things to focus on at the start.



3. Know where you are at. **STARTING POINT**

- Discuss with your instructor your current **Level status** of dance.
- Are you a newcomer to dancing (dancing less than one year)?
- How often do you study/take lessons?
- How often do you practice?
- Decide what level you will be dancing at:
 - o Newcomer
 - o Bronze
 - o Silver
 - o Gold
- Decide the **age category**. There are rules regarding being able to compete in different age categories. Make sure to check the rules and regulations of that event.

4. Set Your Expectations. **CLARITY**

- Your instructor will be well equipped to guide you through what to expect at the event.
- If you are a beginner, you want to be realistic about how much ability or skill you have acquired so far.
- Understand the time commitment it takes and how much you are able to give at this point.
- Ask the **WHY** question: Why are you doing a competition/showcase?
 - o You want to add some spice to your dancing or try something new.
 - o You want to push yourself to progress at an accelerated rate.
 - o Having a deadline gives you a sense of accomplishment.
 - o You want to see where you stand in comparison to others at this same point in their dancing.
 - o You enjoy the idea of dressing up and performing.
 - o You want to do something that scares you.
 - o All of the above!
- Whatever your reason, own it and use that to help motivate you to move forward in your dancing.

5. Rehearsal Planning **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!**

- Work out your schedule ASAP! (Set a schedule). Once you have a date and you know how many weeks you have, you can decide how often each week. How often can and will you realistically practice and/or take lessons?
- When working towards a comp should have at least three hours per week given to working towards the event. This would include at least one lesson and two one-hour practice sessions outside of lesson time.

3 hours/week X 12 wks = 36 hrs of prep time

- This will give you a solid and comfortable footing to participate with ease and confidence.
- This is the base minimum! We always recommend more. Up to 5 hrs/wk would really give you an advantage to feeling much more confident and prepared.



6. Costume and Accessories **ATTIRE**

- Do you need a proper costume to wear or can you get away with something more subtle?
- Check the event’s policies and guidelines so you are well versed about the event’s expectations.
- If costumes are required, find out how many different garments you will need.
- Different attire is required for Ballroom than for Latin.

Ballroom / Standard Attire	Rhythm / Latin Attire
<p>Ladies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ballgown (make sure it is appropriate for the style you are dancing. Standard gowns are not always appropriate for American Ballroom dancing.) - Ballroom style shoes (closed toe shoes) - Hair accessories (hair must allow be pulled back and secured) 	<p>Ladies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latin Dress (should show good leg action, usually no longer than knee length) - Latin Shoes (open toe shoes) - Hair accessories (hair must allow be pulled back and secured)
<p>Gentlemen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ballroom Shirt (should tuck in neatly and stay secured into pants) - Ballroom Pants (should stay stretched and flexible throughout all movements and should stay over the lip of the show and not ride up to expose the ankle) - Ballroom Shoes (these have a lower heel than Latin shoes) - Vest - Jacket (depending on current trend. Sometimes a vest will suffice.) - Tie (type will vary depending on current trend) 	<p>Gentlemen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latin Shirt (can be long sleeve or short sleeve and may be collared or round neck depending on current trend) - Latin Pants (usually higher-waisted. They should stay stretched and flexible throughout all movements and should also stay over the lip of the show and not ride up to expose the ankle) - Latin Shoes (these have a higher heel than Ballroom shoes)

- If you are getting a garment made, make sure you have plenty of time for it to be finished and allow for fittings and possible hiccups.
- Start getting your tailor or seamstress organized early.
- Do you need new shoes? If so, make sure to dance in them in advance of the competition so that they have time to stretch and for your sense of balance in them to settle in.

***Remember:** *Latin shoes are different than Ballroom shoes. Make sure you have the appropriate shoes for your category events. This goes for gentlemen as well as ladies.*



7. Time and Money Factor. **COST**

- How much money will you need to budget for this event?
- Will you need to take time off work?
 - Some events take place during the week and run for the full day, so make sure you are able to make arrangements to attend before you commit.
- Is the event out of town?
 - You will need to think about transportation and accommodation logistics and cost if you are going to another city to compete.

What's you Budget?

Cost

Competition costs	- registration fee - per entry fee	\$
Teacher fees	- Daily rate - per entry fee	\$
Extra dance lessons	- how many?	\$
Attires	- Gowns / Tux / Latin pants - shoes - accessories	\$
Transportation	- gas - train fare - airfare - taxi/Uber fees	\$
Accommodation	- Hotel stay (how many nights) - parking fees	\$
Miscellaneous	- meals - ballroom entrance fees - extra entertainment	\$

* **Understand and be well informed** of **ALL COSTS** involved in the event and be realistic about being able to afford the event. Make sure that you find true value for **you** in doing it.

Some people swear by competitive events and find them extremely valuable and fun. But the first time is usually an eye-opener on the cost that can be involved. Make the choice that's right for you and don't feel obligated because your instructor asked you to participate. If you are being suggested to do one, it's because they feel you are ready to take on a new challenge but no good teacher will ever want to put you in a position of financial stress to do such events. A good instructor will make sure that the fun and personal value aspect of dancing still remains above all else.

Good luck and have a blast!