



SALSA SURVIVAL GUIDE

Everything you need to feel confident, from your first class to your first social.

you've got this!

Welcome

Our Salsa Success beginner series was designed for you!

I created this program to help you build solid salsa skills, gain confidence on the dance floor, and discover that dancing is something you can actually enjoy!

If you're nervous, you're not alone. Every great dancer started out exactly where you are - at the beginning. Our studio is a supportive space where we can learn and grow together. It's going to be an exciting adventure, and we'll have lots of fun along the way.

Congratulations on taking this first step. The best is yet to come!

Marcia Mitchell

Revolution Ballroom Studio Owner

GETTING READY

What to Expect in Your First Class

- Class begins with a warm-up. This is a chance to move your body to music and transition into dance mode.
- We'll teach the first step, and you'll learn your part slowly without music before trying it with a partner and adding music. Feel free to ask questions at any time; this helps everyone.
- During class we'll rotate partners. This is part of the learning process, builds your lead/follow skills and helps everyone learn faster.
- It's ok to make mistakes or feel like you're not getting it. Making mistakes is how we learn. Feeling awkward is totally normal, and you'll get better and feel more confident as you progress through the series.
- Try not to compare yourself to anyone else. Everyone learns at a different pace, and we all become confident, smooth dancers in time. Focus on getting a little better each class and, when you look back, you'll be amazed at how much you achieved in just 8 weeks.

Dance Etiquette

- Don't correct your partner, try to teach a fellow student, point out someone's mistakes, or offer unsolicited feedback during class. Even if you think it would be helpful. This is a big no-no in the dance world.
- As a partner, our role is to dance with someone *as they are* – not to correct them, teach them, or to make suggestions for improvement. Your partner is doing the best they can in that moment, and that's good enough. So leave teaching to instructors, and just enjoy dancing together.
- It's ok if someone you're dancing with makes a mistake or doesn't do a move perfectly; this is a normal part of the progression in learning to dance. Pointing out their mistakes isn't helpful; it puts undue pressure on people and makes it harder for them to dance well.
- No one is a perfect dancer. If we pointed out every error someone makes, salsa dancing would be the most dreadful activity with constant complaining.
- So give every dancer the grace to work through the stages of learning in their own time. And, whenever you're tempted to correct your partner – offer a compliment instead 😊

GETTING READY

What to Wear

- Wear comfortable shoes with a smooth sole such as tennis shoes or flats. Anything besides flip-flops will work as long as you feel comfortable and can dance for an hour.
- Bring a reusable water bottle. We have a water cooler so you can refill as needed.

Beginner Mindset

Learning anything new feels a bit awkward at first.

- I wish there was a way to skip the uncomfortable parts and instantly download salsa to your body, but I haven't discovered that yet :-)
- The only way to get better is to be ok with being a beginner; everyone starts there and you'll only get better.

We learn by repetition.

- If you're struggling, that's totally normal. Keep at it, and your confidence and skills will grow each week the more you practice.
- Also, don't stop practicing just because you can perform a move correctly once or twice. Keep practicing steps you can do to build muscle memory so that you can execute them without thinking on the social dance floor.

Common Beginner Mistakes

Looking at your feet

- Practice keeping your head up while dancing.

Making your steps too big

- Keep your steps small and under your body.

Not changing your weight fully on each step

- Complete your weight transfer rather than just tapping your foot.

GETTING READY

Hygiene for Dancers

Since you'll be close to others while salsa dancing, please take extra care with your personal hygiene. Your partners will appreciate it!



Brush your teeth before class



Wash your Hands



Wear Deodorant



Shower



Don't wear Perfume or Cologne



Avoid eating strong-smelling foods



Don't smoke or vape before class

GETTING READY

Practice Tips

Here are some simple ways to improve between classes. You don't have to do everything on this list or spend hours practicing. Even 5-10 minutes of practice once or twice a week will help.

Listen to salsa music.

- This will train your brain to understand the rhythm, even if you're not actively concentrating on it.
- Bonus points if you listen to the music and count out loud. No need to dance, just listen and count until you feel comfortable with the timing.

Practice your basic step for five minutes a day.

- Once you can dance this without thinking, it will be easier to learn other steps.

Practice your moves slowly without music.

- At first, it's better to dance slowly so you can train your body to do moves correctly rather than rushing and making mistakes.
- Once you feel confident, you can speed it up and add music.

Count the music out loud while practicing your steps.

- While you don't want to count out loud while you're social dancing, it's a helpful exercise for at-home practice.

Record yourself occasionally.

- You'll likely notice things you didn't know you were doing ("wow, I'm taking huge steps" or "I didn't realize I was ducking my head during that turn")

Beginner Practice Playlist

This is our curated playlist of salsa songs with an easy-to-find beat and beginner-friendly tempo.

[\[Salsa Success\] Practice Playlist](#)

GETTING READY

What to Expect at Your First Salsa Social

Social Dancing

At a salsa social you'll want to dance with a variety of partners. While it's fun to dance with your partner, a teacher, or people you know from class – try mixing it up! You'll learn so much by dancing with others, and it helps everyone grow and feel included.

If you attend with a partner or date, it's traditional to dance with them for the first dance and the last dance, and of course other dances sprinkled throughout the evening.

Asking Someone to Dance

Everyone has the right to ask anyone to dance, regardless of their role, gender, age, or experience level. At a social, it's safe to assume that people are there to dance and would be delighted to dance with you. You may ask simply "Would you like to dance?" or "Want to Salsa?".

People come to socials to dance, and they'd be happy to dance with you. Even if you're a beginner or don't know a lot of steps. Every dancer starts out as a beginner, so we've all been there. It's totally fine. You don't have to be a superstar to ask someone to dance.

The only way to get better is to dance more – so ask away!

Accepting a Dance

A good practice is to accept most dances when asked. It can take great courage to ask someone to dance, so it's helpful to say yes when possible. Once you accept, a warm smile and eye contact go a long way in starting the dance off on a positive note.

Declining a Dance

You're never obligated to say yes to a dance. If you decline, do so politely, and then sit out the remainder of that song. You may accept new invitations when the next song begins.

You don't need an elaborate excuse, you may simply say "no thanks" or "thank you, but I'm going to sit this one out".

GETTING READY

Some situations when you may want to decline a dance:

- You're resting, eating, or talking with friends
- You don't know the dance
- Someone hurts you or is unsafe on the dance floor
- Someone is creepy, handsy, or makes inappropriate comments

You're in control of who you dance with and when. And, even if you say yes – you can stop dancing and leave the dance floor at any time if you feel unsafe.

No Teaching on the Social Dance Floor

Salsa Socials are a time for enjoying dancing and to practice moves you already know. The floor is crowded; the music is loud – so it's not the time or place for instruction or classroom-style Q&A.

During a social, it's not appropriate to ask your teacher questions or to try to get help working through a move. If a step isn't working or you can't remember something, move on to something else.

Enjoy salsa socials for what they offer – a chance to step out of learning mode and into enjoyment mode. 🌐

Don't Teach Your Partner

Don't try to coach a fellow student or offer unsolicited feedback or suggestions while social dancing. Even if you think it would be helpful.

This is a big no-no in the social dance world. They said yes to dancing with you; they haven't signed up for your class. They just want to dance. So leave teaching to instructors, and just enjoy the party.

GETTING READY

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will it take for me to feel comfortable?

- Week 1: You'll see that salsa is something that's possible to learn.
- Weeks 3-4: You'll begin feeling more comfortable with basic steps and moving with a partner.
- Weeks 5-6: You gain confidence with turns and hearing the music.
- Week 8: By the end of the course, you'll feel comfortable dancing your moves to music and will be ready to enjoy the dance floor.

What if I miss a class?

- We've built repetition and review into this program so you can stay on track even if you miss a class or two.
- While regular attendance is recommended for best results, we understand that life happens. We begin each class with a review of the previous steps, plus you'll receive weekly recap videos so you can review anything you missed.
- It's helpful to let us know ahead of time if you can't attend.

What if I mess up or step on someone's toes?

- Everyone will make mistakes during class (even your teacher!). We're human and making mistakes is how we learn and grow.
- So no need to apologize to your partner when you make a mistake. It's totally fine.

Dance Shoes

While we don't require any special dance shoes for this Salsa Success series, dance shoes are helpful, and you're welcome to purchase them if you wish.

GETTING READY

SALSA DANCE SHOES



While we don't require any special dance shoes for this class, you're welcome to invest in a pair if you wish. They make a big difference, even for beginner dancers, and you'll be able to turn and control your movement more easily.

Here's your essential guide to choosing the perfect pair of shoes for Salsa dancing!

Pro tip: If you have a Rhythm dance shoe – it works for Salsa!

GETTING READY

DANCE SHOES FOR SALSA

✓ Suede Soles vs Street Soles:

- For indoor ballroom use, choose shoes with suede soles which allow you to spin and turn with ease while maintaining control on the dance floor.
- For outdoor use, opt for "street sole" dance shoes which have a hard plastic sole that allows you to turn more easily on rough, uneven surfaces.

✓ Heel Height:

You may choose flat shoes or heels, depending on your preference. Choose a heel height that suits your comfort level and preferences. Heels typically range from 2 to 3 inches, offering style and stature. Men's salsa shoes are usually flat or have a 1.5 inch Cuban heel.

✓ Straps and Secure Fit:

Ensure your dance shoes stay securely on your feet with ankle straps, T-straps, or cross straps. Alternatively you may choose lace-up dance sneakers or booties.

✓ Style and Design:

Salsa shoes come in a variety of styles including open-toe sandals, dance booties, dance sneakers, and lace up dress shoe styles.

✓ Color and Pattern:

While nude and black are classic and versatile, don't be afraid to choose shoes in metallic shades, bold hues, or fun patterns. Add sparkling embellishments to express your unique style on the dance floor.

Where to Buy Salsa Dance Shoes:

- [Yami Shoes](#)
 - Get 10% off your salsa shoes with Promo Code: REVOLUTION10
- [Fuego](#)
 - Get 10% off dance sneakers when you shop through our studio link
- [BallroomShoes.com](#)
 - Get 10% off all purchases with Promo Code: REVOLUTION

Whether you're a pro or just getting started with Salsa, the right shoes will help you shine on the dance floor.





SEE YOU ON THE FLOOR

Thanks for learning with us — we can't wait to dance with you.

you've got this!

A Note from Your Instructor

My friend, I want you to know that you're in the right place. Not everyone has the courage to sign up for something like this, so bravo to you for being brave.

And know this:

No matter how awkward or nervous you feel when you begin – if you stick with it – you will learn and get better.

And one bright and sunny day, you'll be breezing through the moves at class or out enjoying social dancing at the club and someone will come up to you and say, "Wow, I wish I could do that."

So, just relax and enjoy this time together. The best is yet to come!

Marcia Mitchell

Revolution Ballroom Studio Owner