

Answers to the most frequently asked questions about ballroom and latin dance

Contributed by Administrator
Wednesday, 12 May 2004
Last Updated Thursday, 29 January 2009

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I learn to dance?

Dancing is as easy as walking once you are taught by an dance trainer. There is no age limit. Our oldest students are over 70, our youngest in their early teens. The great majority is between 25 and 50.

How long will it take?

The amount of time it will take depends on how many dances you would like to learn and how proficient you would like to become in each dance. However, you will be able to dance after your first dance lesson.

How much do lessons cost?

The cost depends on a number of factors: how good you want to be; what dances you want to learn; the number of days and weeks in your dance schedule, etc. After your Introductory lesson, your instructor will be in a better position to recommend a program and you will have the knowledge to make an intelligent and informed choice.

Will I learn the latest steps?

You can learn the very latest in any or all social dances: Swing, Hustle, Disco, Samba, Merengue, Waltz, Salsa, Casino Rueda, Bachata, Cumbia, Fox Trot, Rumba, Cha-cha, Mambo, Tango, Country, Hip Hop, Belly Dancing, etc. Novelty or fad dances are also taught.

Will I have to return each year to learn the newest steps?

After a good foundation, you will be able to analyze the new steps and pick them up yourself without difficulty. However, many students return because they enjoy their lessons and the confidence they've acquired.

May I take the lesson at any time convenient to me?

Take your lessons any time you wish. Our lessons are by appointment only, and we will try and accommodate your scheduled as best as we can. Most of our lessons are taught in the evening.

Will I have a professional teacher?

Yes! All our teachers have been Trained and Certified to instruct

What are some of the benefits of learning partner dancing and what benefits do I derive?

Partner dancing is great for many reasons: Its fun and exciting, Meet new people, Relaxation, Year-round exercise, Improved coordination, sense of rhythm and body movement, Creative Outlet. Partner dancing is a timeless and exhilarating form of non-verbal communication. All of us here at Starlight can attest to the positive mental and physical benefits of dancing.

Dancing is our first line of social activity. Good dancing is a lifetime investment in fun, poise, confidence, improved personality and new friends. Beyond these, dancing is a superb physical conditioner- providing fun without working at it! It opens up a wonderful new world of togetherness and a thriving year-round social calendar!

Do I need a partner in order to take lessons?

Absolutely not. If you have a spouse, partner, or friend that you want to take lessons with, that's fine but is not required. In private lessons, your instructor can teach you equally well by yourself or with a partner. In group lessons, where there is often a mix of singles and couples, we rotate dance partners frequently. This helps everyone refine their skills, meet new people, and make new friends. Either way--by yourself or with a friend--is just fine.

What should I wear to Class?

Dress code is casual. Some wear jeans. Some come straight from work. Come as you are, but make sure you wear comfortable shoes, preferably with leather soles. For our dance classes, Rubber soled shoes are discouraged, because they grip the floor and you may hurt your ankles and your knees. No special outfits are needed, although people sometimes like to dress up for the dances. For our fitness classes you can wear comfortable sports clothes and sneakers.

What kind of shoes should I wear?

The best are shoes made specifically for dancing that have either suede or leather soled shoes. There are also a wide variety of styles to choose from. If you intend to dance regularly, we strongly encourage you to buy a good pair of dance shoes--your feet will thank you.

Next to suede-soled shoes, any shoe with a regular smooth-leather sole is usable. Since you are unlikely to have suede-soled shoes already, leather-soled shoes are an excellent temporary substitution until you can get a pair of dance shoes.

Worst of all are rubber-soled shoes. Sneakers, canvas deck-shoes, tennis shoes, or anything else with a rubber sole should be avoided. Rubber soled shoes grip far too much for comfortable dancing.

Where can I buy dance shoes?

Showtime Dance Shoes

Peachtree Lake Business Center

4458 Peachtree Lakes Drive; Suite B

Duluth, GA 30096

www.showtimedanceshoes.com

What is the quickest, most effective way to learn to dance?

We recommend a comprehensive program of private lessons, group classes, and practice parties. If possible, taking private lessons and/or group classes one or two times a week is one of the best ways to learn quickly and retain what you learn.

I'm interested in learning to dance, but I'm not sure it's for me. What should I do?

Call us or stop by the studio to sign up for our Introductory Special. It is the most effective way to get an idea of what partner dancing is all about while learning a few moves in the process. We're confident that you'll have a great time and decide to continue having fun at our studio!

What happens on an Introductory Special?

During this program, our instructors will expose you to a wide variety of partner dances through private, group, and practice party sessions. This will give you the information you need to choose which dances you want to focus on further. Near the completion of this special, your instructor will sit down with you and tailor a customized dance program meeting your goals and expectations.

I don't know anyone who dances. Why should I learn?

Besides the benefits of dancing listed above, because it's fun! Also, you will find that taking dance lessons and attending the practice parties is a great way to make new friends, and those friends will know how to dance!

What is a group class like?

A group class is where one instructor teaches a group of students in a single dance.

What is a private lesson like?

Private lessons are a valuable tool for those who wish to get the most out of their dancing. During a private lesson, one of our professional instructors will be your partner and/or your teacher, depending on whether you are taking lessons by yourself or with a partner. On these lessons, your instructor will instruct you on elements of partnership, technique, and style, in addition to learning various dance steps. Those who take the time and effort to study partner dancing through private lessons learn more effectively and efficiently than through any other method of instruction.

What are practice parties?

We hold weekly dance parties to give our students an opportunity to practice what they have learned in their lessons in a "real world" setting, and to provide the general public with a fun dance venue. Our instructors will be present during practice parties, available to answer your questions, and help you have fun on the dance floor.

Aside from practicing your skills, practice parties offer an important element of learning that cannot be simulated in ordinary lessons. During our parties, you will have the opportunity to dance with people of all skill levels, which is very important for developing your partnership skills. Good partnership skills allow you to tailor your movements to your partner so that you both get as much enjoyment from your dance as possible.

If you're thinking about taking dance lessons, or just want a great dance experience, our practice parties are an excellent opportunity for you to check us out and see what we're so excited about; we welcome all ages.

Do you offer special wedding packages?

Absolutely! To help you and your beloved make your special day even more memorable, Starlight will custom fit a special package specifically designed for your needs based on the amount of time you have till your wedding. Our wedding packages, depending on the amount of time you have can include a professionally choreographed routine, help with music selection, and recommendations for the type of dance that would best fit your musical selection. We will work with you to craft the perfect "first dance" for your wedding day. We will create a lesson plan tailored to your specific situation, depending on your skill level, the type of dance, how long you have to learn before your wedding, and how proficient you wish to be. Contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment, and note that our facilities are also available to rent.

Do you have a mailing list?

Yes. We currently maintain an e-mail mailing list and a postal mailing list. These are strictly opt-in lists; we will not sell, trade, or transfer your contact information to third parties unless required for the conduct of normal business. Contact us if you wish to be added to either mailing list.

What are your hours of operation?

We are open for private lessons Monday through Saturday from 5:30PM – 9:30PM. All lessons are by appointment only. We offer lessons at other times, and will try to accommodate your schedule. You can reach us by telephone during studio hours Monday through Saturday or by email at:

Where is your studio located?

Our studio is located in New Hyde Park on Jericho Turnpike between South First Street and South Second Street. The formal address is:

102 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park, NY 11040

How do I take lessons at Starlight?

There are many ways to get started - private lessons, group classes, intro packages. We also have practice sessions where we set up the studio for students to practice their new skills with other students and outside dancers.

How do I register for a class?

Registration is a simple process and takes just a few minutes to complete. Either come by the front desk at Starlight Ballroom Dance Studio where you can view class schedules, or check out the class schedules online then give us a call at 516-326-7787.

Do I have to pre-register for a group class?

Yes, Session based group classes fill up very quickly so pre-registration is required.

What is a Starlight Ballroom Dance Studio lesson like?

Private classes at Starlight Dance Studio run for 30, or 60 minutes and occur in the evenings by appointment. As you'll see by browsing our class schedule page. Dinner dances, practice sessions and workshops all vary in times, check the schedule for the specific event you are interested in. our group classes operate on a 12 week session, are 60 minutes in length and usually meet once a week.

Can I take group lessons without rotating partners?

Many people also take classes at Starlight Ballroom Dance Studio with a partner. Many of them start out insisting that they only want to dance with their partner, so they do not want to rotate partners. We understand your concerns and we are glad that love like that exists in the world. We also understand that some people initially feel frustrated rotating partners.

However, we rotate partners as a matter of course for several reasons. First, in our lengthy experience and the experience of every other dance instructor we know, it is the best way to learn. Every effective group dance class forces rotation as a matter of course as an instructional tool, not just a way to promote social interaction. Instead of learning how to lead or follow with just one person, you will learn how to truly lead and follow effectively and look good doing so. Most if not all people who learn with one partner end up unintentionally developing odd, quirky habits that show up in their dancing.

Another reason is that the ballroom and Latin dances are social dances. It is taught in group lessons so as to encourage group interaction and camaraderie. Although you might want to dance with just one person, and only have interest in dancing with the same person for the rest of your life, you might find that it is fun to dance with others after a short while. In addition, by going through the initial stages together, you not only can appreciate and understand the problems you are mutually having, but develop some camaraderie along the way.

Experience has shown that even the most stubborn couples who adamantly refuse to rotate end up appreciating and understanding the values of rotating partners after they give it a chance.

If you really just want to learn with one person, then we suggest private lessons, which are more expensive but allow you to learn with one partner, with focus on just the two of you. Doing so will also allow the instructor to give you the personalized attention you will need to avoid the pitfalls of developing awkward or bad habits because you are dancing with only one person.

How long will it take to learn one of these styles?

Each person has their own learning curve. We recommend you feel very comfortable at one level before proceeding to a higher level. Ask your teacher if they think it's time for you to move up a level. Obviously, your success will depend greatly on your dedication to the style. The more you practice what you learn, the faster you will become comfortable with your style.

What Classes / Levels should I enroll in?

There are a few different ways to choose what level you should take. In the Introductory Package, an instructor analysis helps you determine which level class would be appropriate. Otherwise, you may inquire with our front desk staff as to which level may be best suited. If you do sign up for a class and it is not the appropriate level, simply talk to the instructor and ask them what you should do.

If you are an experienced dancer but have not yet taken classes at Starlight Ballroom Dance Studio, perhaps a refresher course, at a level which you are most comfortable, will help you define which classes would offer you the most for your time. You can also read our informational reports that will help you decide in which type of classe(s) may be right for you by clicking here

How big are your classes?

Our semi-privates and group classes vary in size from a minimum of 6 students to a maximum of 12 students. Workshops and other special events vary in size from a minimum of 6 students to a maximum of 30 students.

Should I take group classes or private lessons?

There are advantages to both forms of study, and ideally you should experience both. Group classes afford a student more opportunities for social interaction and social dancing (i.e., dancing with several different people), thus improving "real-world" lead and follow skills. Group classes are also a good venue for learning basic patterns. Of course, the drawback to group classes is a lack of personal, one-on-one attention. If you are preparing to learn to dance to a specific song, for instance, your wedding song, you will of course need private lessons. Private lessons are also ideal for developing and improving your dance posture, basic movement skills, and "fixing" whatever elements are in need of improvement in your own dancing.

What if I want to compete?

Those who want to compete are encouraged to do so. While others are welcome to attend and watch, these lessons/practices will be more intensive and competition oriented. In addition to these, competitors are expected to have a higher level of dedication to dancing and to demand more from themselves, as well as attend outside practices and at least one competition per semester. There are competitions for beginning level students, so no prior dance experience is necessary. NO partner is needed.

What is the age range of Starlight?

Anyone from 7 to 100. Most members first learn to dance when they are single adults, any time from their late teens to their early 40s or 50s. An interest in a healthy, active, musical activity is a more apt similarity among our students than focusing upon age, alone.