

What level class should I take? What level Argentine Tango dancer am I?

Tango dancers often attend workshops more advanced than their level. Some of the reasons for this are:

1. Students overestimate their ability and mistakenly believe no one will notice.
2. Students mistakenly believe they will learn faster.
3. Students think 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 instructors from completing their class objectives.
2. It frustrates and angers 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. Number of years you have been actively dancing tango.
2. Whether you are a leader or follower - learning to lead usually takes longer than learning to follow.
3. Quantity and quality of classes and workshops you have taken - e.g. learning from tango videos offers no instructor feedback.
4. Quality and focus of teachers you have studied with - e.g.. learning and dancing “close embrace” is quite different than “open embrace.”
5. How long and how often you practice.
6. Who you dance and practice with.

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 to try to help everyone get the most out of workshops, we provide the following guidelines of minimum criteria.

Absolute Beginner

- Has had zero to four months of weekly lessons and practice in Argentine Tango. This includes advanced professional grand champion dancers who have not yet studied Argentine Tango.

Beginner Level Argentine Tango Dancer

- Has had four months to one year of weekly lessons and practice in Argentine Tango.
- Can recognize and walk on the beat of traditional Argentine tango, vals, and milonga

Minimum Criteria for Intermediate Argentine Tango Dancer

- Has completed beginner level criteria and has been dancing Argentine Tango weekly for at least two years.
- Understands open and close embrace and can dance comfortably in both.
- Leaders can maintain line of dance and wait for the follower to complete her step before leading another.
- Followers collect and wait for the lead.
- 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:
 - walking forward and backward
 - side steps
 - check-step turns
 - cruzada
 - back ocho
 - forward ocho
 - ocho cortado
 - clockwise and counter-clockwise turns

Minimum Criteria for Advanced Argentine Tango Dancer

- Has been dancing Argentine Tango weekly for at least four years.
- Has mastered all the criteria listed above.
- Can lead/follow from the chest only.
- Can interpret the musicality of tango, vals and milonga - dancing to the beat as well as the melody.
- Can dance using syncopia, cadencia, and traspie.
- Can adequately adapt to the level and style of any partner.