

WONDRIUM

Topic
Hobby & Leisure

Subtopic
Hobby

How to Dance

Course Guidebook

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Dance Professional

Alyssa Lundgren
Dance Professional



WONDRIUM

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A portrait of Rob Glover, a man with short brown hair, blue eyes, and a well-groomed beard. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid, vibrant red color.

ROB GLOVER

DANCE PROFESSIONAL

Originally from Liverpool, England, Rob Glover has been involved in the performing arts since he was a young boy. He first trained at Chiltern School of Dance and Drama during high school and then at Merseyside Dance and Drama Centre, a private performing arts college.

Rob is a world-renowned professional dancer and choreographer. He's skilled in the dance styles of ballet, tap, modern, jazz, Latin, ballroom, American rhythm and smooth, lyrical, contemporary, swing, and more.

Rob holds many championship titles and is a certified judge in multiple styles of dance. As a creative director within various worlds of entertainment, including TV, theater, and other large-scale event formats, he has worked on many celebrated and diverse productions. He owns a production company based in Boston and serves as director of FLX Movement for Millennium Tower.

Alyssa Lundgren is a woman with long, wavy, light brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a black, off-the-shoulder, long-sleeved dress. The background is a solid, deep red color.

ALYSSA LUNDGREN

DANCE PROFESSIONAL

Growing up in Charlottesville, Virginia, a young Alyssa Lundgren dreamed of becoming a ballerina and a doctor. While her journey took a slightly different path, her love of movement, science, and the arts was already evident. She took jazz, ballet, and ballroom dance at a young age, ultimately becoming an instructor by the age of 16.

Alyssa attended James Madison University and graduated with a BS in Biology. She spent more than a decade managing a medical research lab at the University of Virginia, all while continuing to cultivate her dance, movement, and coaching profession.

After finding national competitive success and recognition, Alyssa has since routinely served as an instructor and a judge within various esteemed dance circuits and conventions throughout the United States. Her passion for body mechanics, movement, and science has also led her to become a certified personal trainer.

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HOW TO DANCE

Dance is so much more than just moving to music. There are many benefits of dance that relate to all aspects of life. It is a physical activity, a creative outlet, a stress reliever, a means to maintain mental and cognitive functioning, a way to engage socially, and an educational tool that offers a glimpse into many cultures.

Whether this is your first time hitting the dance floor—or your living room rug—or you’ve already enjoyed previous dance training, after taking this course, you’ll gain an understanding for all the tools and techniques necessary to dance with confidence and ease.

To best utilize this course, you’re encouraged to rewind, rewatch, and review the video lessons as often as you would like. Keep in mind that learning to dance for more than about an hour at a time may result in retention fatigue, so if you feel you’ve reached that optimal point for the day, simply take a break.

Your home practice space won’t have to be large. The dance professionals teaching this course—Rob and Alyssa—have kept the patterns tight and concise, with only some of the traveling dances requiring slightly more room to move. And if needed, you can always dance around your coffee table or over and around pets or family members.

In this course, you’ll learn all the fundamentals you need to feel confident on the dance floor. You’ll learn some of the best-known dances in four popular genres: Latin, swing, smooth ballroom, and country.

Whether you like the spicy salsa, the lindy hop, a flirty foxtrot, or the good old two-step, this course will get you on your feet and tapping your toes. In 25 lessons packed with exercises, you can practice on your own or with a partner—right in the comfort of your own home.

You'll discover the history of each dance and its musicality. Following along with the video lessons, you'll work through solo body mechanisms, partner communication and frames, and dance-specific patterns. You'll even be introduced to some advanced techniques so you can add in a bit of flair.

Dancing really can transform your life. So grab your partner—or just your favorite pair of dancing shoes—clear a space in the living room, and get ready to step into a fantastic new way of having fun.



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BEGINNING YOUR DANCE JOURNEY

Having originated throughout the world, the various dances you'll be exposed to in this course have been influenced from many different cultures and utilize all genres of music.

This course focuses on four main dance genres: Latin, swing, smooth, and country, with three to five dances per genre. The course has been designed so that you don't have to experience it in any particular order, so choose the musical style that intrigues you the most—and makes you want to move—and start there.

The key components to good dancing are

- ▼ musicality (how you as a dancer hear and interpret the music);
- ▼ solo body mechanics (how you create movement and momentum);
- ▼ partnering skills (how you connect to your partner and communicate movement and timing);
- ▼ partner-specific patterns (how the unique puzzle pieces of each dance fit together); and
- ▼ enhanced dance techniques (how to add style and make your dance individualized to you).

The course will tackle each of these components in turn for the four genres.

To aid in the learning process, multiple versions of the music tracks are provided.

- ▼ As Rob and Alyssa describe the music for each dance, they will use a percussive-only drum track. This will allow you to identify the beats and rhythm structure of each dance.

- ▼ A slow-downed teach-speed track is provided to assist in pattern breakdowns.
- ▼ The full-speed versions will be used only toward the end of each genre, once you feel confident with the material. At this point, you are encouraged to dance along with Rob and Alyssa.

You can access all of the course music tracks here:
thegreatcourses.com/dance

Each genre is broken down into multiple lessons. As you progress through the course, the dance professionals—Rob and Alyssa—will first introduce the history and origins of each genre. Then, they will ask you to stand and start moving with them.

In the first instructional segment of each genre, called the Get Up and Move section, Rob and Alyssa demonstrate posture and alignment, genre-specific techniques, and partnering essentials. Next, they dive into each individual dance.

The best way to be a good partner is to first master the body mechanics and movement patterns on your own. So Rob and Alyssa begin these sections with a solo dance portion, where you'll learn the dance-specific musical elements and then move on to master the necessary footwork.

It's all been building to learn how to dance with a partner. Though no partner is required to learn these sections, they will prepare you for when you're ready to connect to another dancer.

These pattern breakdowns will be done in three parts:

- ▼ a demonstration of the pattern;



- ▼ a breakdown of the moves by role (leader or follower);¹ and
- ▼ a demonstration of each pattern with counts.

The Progressive Dance Techniques section will introduce additional concepts and stylizations to enhance your dance.

Finally, the dancers will recap all the patterns and techniques you've learned using the teach-speed versions of the music.

¹ Rob will describe the pattern and the leader's role, while Alyssa will demonstrate the follower role. For these sections, you can choose your preferred role. After you've completed the course, try switching roles and repeating any or all dances of your choosing.

At the end of each genre, Rob and Alyssa will provide two separate demonstrations. The first are the dance-alongs, where Rob will dance Alyssa through a typical lead-follow social dance.

Note that Rob and Alyssa will not be dancing the patterns in the order in which they were taught, and they encourage you to do the same. The fun part of this section is that as you progress and gain more comfort with your own dancing, you can use these sections as rehearsal time.

This is also where standard-speed music tracks will be introduced for all the dances for you to practice to.

At the end of the day, dance is all about having fun. So as each genre concludes, look out for a hidden gem. This is where the glitz and glamour are added to the dances you'll learn.

GETTING STARTED WITH **LATIN** & **RHYTHM** **DANCE**

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The Latin dances—including the rumba, mambo, cha-cha, and salsa—reflect the rich and vibrant culture of the collective Latin American countries.

These dances emerged from a convergence of many cultures: the European-influenced Cuban *danzón*, which was brought by Spanish and Caribbean immigrants; musical instruments and rumbas of African slaves; the *son* of the Cuban people; and Spanish troubadour music.

Through the slave trade, the Spanish and Portuguese brought the musical culture of the Africans to the New World. It is said that without dance, the enslaved Africans would never have survived the journey across the Atlantic. It was a means to stay healthy and practice their religious rituals.

Much of the Latin dances evolved in Cuba. Therefore, you will learn a technique known as Cuban motion, which not only gives Latin dance its iconic look and feel but also is how dancers generate momentum and movement.

At busy ports, these musical influences and dances merged with those of the indigenous Caribbean peoples. Originally crouched and bent at the waist, the African dances slowly became upright as they were influenced by European court dances.

As one of the few rights not taken from enslaved Africans, drumming and dance continued to be a powerful source of expression and joy and eventually laid the foundation for the grandfather of the Latin dances, the rumba.



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RUMBA

Rumba is a romantic and passionate ballroom dance. It is also the go-to dance for many slow, contemporary love songs.

The word *rumba* means “party” in Cuban Spanish. At social gatherings in the mid-19th century, enslaved Africans drummed on stools, tables, and glass bottles, weaving the melodies of the Spanish colonizers with the percussive influence from their homeland. And where there was music, there was dance.

Eventually, rumba was adopted by the Cuban middle class—but in a slowed down and more stylized version.

Yvonne Daniel, author of *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*, writes:

Rumba is a passionate dance ... it embodies important elements of life: movement, spontaneity, sensuality, sexuality, love, tension, opposition, and both freedom and restraint.

Rumba jumped to the United States in the 1930s, but more as a Cuban-styled ballroom dance with little resemblance to the original. The music of the rumba had once again been influenced, this time by jazz and big band music.

Contemporary rumba takes two forms: The international style mostly uses forward and backward steps, while the American version is done in a box step. Both utilize Cuban motion, a hip action characterized by delayed weight changes and a drop of the hip, with slight differences between the two styles.

Rumba music is in the $4/4$ time signature, meaning there are four beats in every measure, and it tends to be slower than the other Latin dances.



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MAMBO

Evolving from the rumba, modern mambo music is a fusion of Afro-Cuban rhythms and big band music. It was conceived in the mid-20th century and went mainstream in the 1950s after Cuban bandleader Dámaso Pérez Prado introduced it at the Tropicana nightclub in Havana. It first appeared in the United States in New York's popular Palladium Ballroom.

While the mambo gained huge popularity, it was ultimately eclipsed due to evolving music preferences. Under the influence of rock 'n' roll and swing music, dancers started favoring more contemporary dances, such as the cha-cha and salsa.

Mambo is fun, flirty, and upbeat.

Today, mambo is still taught in ballroom studios and is one of the five competitive rhythm dances. Popular mambo songs include “Mambo Italiano,” “Papa Loves Mambo,” and “Mambo No. 5.”

You might remember the mambo from the end of *Dirty Dancing*, too. After Patrick Swayze says his famous line, “Nobody puts Baby in the corner,” he and Jennifer Grey proceed to dance the mambo.



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CHA-CHA



Cha-cha is a lively, entertaining, and very popular dance. Since it evolved from the mambo, you'll find many of the same patterns and elements, just adjusted for the change in music.

In Cuba in the 1940s, traditional mambo dancers sometimes struggled with the evolving syncopations in the music of the time. So the innovative band Orquesta América began composing music to accommodate the style of the dancers.

When dancers adopted the new syncopation into their hip action and added a triple rhythm to the footwork, the cha-cha was born. It gained popularity especially among tourists, since it was slower and easier to learn than its predecessor.

Originally called triple mambo, the name *cha-cha* is widely believed to be an onomatopoeia. However, there is some dispute on whether it refers to the sound of feet shuffling across the floor in triple rhythm or to the noise made by the scraping of a gourd-like instrument, the guiro, often used in early ritual music.

The cha-cha craze exploded in the United States in 1954. Soon, American rock music was infused with the infectious cha-cha rhythm, with songs like “Louie Louie,” “Rock ’n’ Roll Cha-Cha,” and “Everybody Loves to Cha Cha Cha.” The sound lives on today in songs like Carlos Santana’s “Oye Como Va” and “Smooth.”



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SALSA



What do you get when you blend Cuban music with a bit of flirty mambo and New York jazz? Spicy salsa!

In 1930, Cuban composer Ignacio Piñeiro wrote a famous song called “Échale Salsita,” or “Spice It Up a Little,” which was a major inspiration for salsa.

But the true formation of salsa dance took place on the streets of New York and then Miami, where Puerto Rican and Cuban immigrants mixed their unique flavors of dance and music with American jazz.

By the 1950s, with the help of the lindy hop, the traditional mambo was transformed into salsa.

When danced with a partner, the salsa tends to be tighter and more circular than when danced solo and has lots of quick arm turns and styling.

Thanks in large part to Fania Records in New York, salsa really took off and was hugely popular by the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1990s, a renewed wave of Latin music and popular singers, such as Gloria Estefan and Marc Anthony, gave rise to a salsa resurgence.

Like a language with multiple dialects, salsa dance has a large number of local variations. The Los Angeles version is called “on one” since it dances on the first beat of the measure, whereas New York salsa is called “on two.” Both of these are linear dances, which makes them different from the circular versions from Cuba, Venezuela, and Colombia.

Regardless of the style, salsa is still very reminiscent of its parent dance, the mambo, and uses many of the same figures but with an emphasis on spins and intricate turn patterns.



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LATIN & RHYTHM DANCE- ALONG

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Join Rob and Alyssa in the video lesson as they play some music and dance all of the patterns you have learned so far.



DANCES INCLUDED

▼ rumba

▼ cha-cha

▼ mambo

▼ salsa



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GETTING STARTED WITH **SWING DANCE**

The story of swing reflects how music and dance can unite people and create something novel and exciting.

In the 1920s, jazz bands often highlighted a solo instrumentalist who would improvise the melody on top of the original arrangement. Pioneers such as Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines would emphasize the offbeats, creating a sense of rhythms pulsing between the dominant beats. This “swung” feel is what gave swing music its name.

At the time, the Savoy Ballroom in New York’s Harlem district was one of the few places where Black and white dancers were not segregated and could be exposed to each other’s popular dance styles.

It was here that the lindy hop went from street dance to social phenomenon. This high-energy, eight-count dance containing triple steps, swivels, and a signature bounce or pulse blended European ballroom styles with the rhythms and techniques of African dance. It is one of the earliest truly American dances and is an expression of the culture and attitude of the era.

“It don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that swing.”
—Duke Ellington

From the lindy hop—the grandfather of swing—many dances evolved, including the jitterbug (or east coast swing), the balboa, and the collegiate shag.

As rock ’n’ roll and rhythm and blues music became popular, more dances popped up across the nation. Western swing in particular gained in popularity, later becoming west coast swing, which today is danced to contemporary pop, blues, rock, and swing music. And disco emerged in the 1970s, giving birth to the hustle.

The swing dance umbrella encompasses a wide range of styles danced to a huge variety of music.

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SINGLE-TIME SWING



By the 1930s, the lindy hop had taken on the nickname “jitterbug,” which described the wild jumping of dancers—typically white dancers—cutting loose.

As a relatively simple and forgiving version of swing, single-time swing is the ideal dance for some of the fastest songs in the swing genre.

Early on, the jitterbug was rejected by more formal dance studios as a fad. It wasn't until quite a few years after the dawn of swing that Arthur Murray Dance Studios, a popular dance instruction company, saw a market for a “refined” and less complex version of swing dancing.

As the lindy hop was trimmed down and simplified, a new dance was born, with triple steps like the lindy but done in six counts (instead of eight) and more circular. First known as eastern swing, it was renamed east coast swing in the late 1970s.

During the 1950s, another variant emerged. *American Bandstand*, hosted by Dick Clark, featured energetic, quick music that was too fast for the triple steps and Latin hip motion added by the ballroom studios. Because of this and due to censoring the “wiggling hips” on television, an even simpler, tamer version of east coast swing was demonstrated on the show. Teens across the country began to emulate this single-step version, which is still danced today under the name single-time swing.



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EAST COAST SWING



Even though single-time swing and east coast swing coevolved, east coast swing has retained its popularity throughout the years and is even included as one of the five competitive American rhythm dances.

East coast swing represents a progression and graduation from single-time swing, with the big distinction being the inclusion of a triple step. Because there is more footwork, east coast swing is typically danced to medium-tempo music in the swing genre.

East coast swing is energetic, and thanks to the implementation of the triple step, it tends to be bouncier than single-time swing.



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LINDY HOP

After the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem opened its doors in 1926, it soon became the king of swing. Its raised double bandstand and block-long dance floor attracted the best dancers in New York City.

As the only nonsegregated venue, both Black and white dancers could come together to inspire each other and share dance moves. This was the perfect recipe to whip up the newest dance craze—which, after Charles Lindbergh’s transatlantic flight in May 1927, was dubbed the lindy hop.

Radio helped popularize jazz and then swing music across the United States, but without television and images of dancers, the lindy hop wasn’t as quick to take off outside of New York. It was the enlisted men in World War II who helped spread the dance.

The lindy hop is high energy, exciting, and fun. It takes us back to the roaring '20s.

As they were sent around the country to prepare for deployment, they would make a beeline for the dance halls, and it didn’t take long to realize that the lindy hop was the fastest way to break the ice with all the local ladies.

The dance soon took the hop across the Atlantic—much like its namesake, Lindbergh—and began its spread around Europe. It also made its way west; San Diego and San Francisco were major port cities for those GIs awaiting departure for the Pacific.

Although the lindy hop was ultimately eclipsed by the next generation of swing dances, it has seen a resurgence in recent years, and many dancers are still hopping the lindy today.



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WEST COAST SWING

After a long stint at New York's Savoy Ballroom, dancer Dean Collins arrived in California in the late 1930s dancing a distinctly smoother, more upright version of the lindy hop.

Collins made his big break in the 1940s, when his choreography hit the silver screen and more and more folks were exposed to his new style of swing.

During this time, the Los Angeles version of the lindy also became more linear, or slotted. Perhaps this was because Hollywood directors started using choreography that allowed the audience to view dancers in profile.

Or maybe the creation of the slot was due to the much smaller and now-packed nightclubs in Los Angeles. Couples squeezing onto the dance floor needed to maintain a tighter forward-and-back movement to avoid colliding with each other.

Whichever theory is correct, a new dance emerged in southern California. Laure Haile, the Arthur Murray Dance Studio instructor responsible for documenting the known versions of swing, dubbed this style western swing.

Later, Skippy Blair, a major driving force in the instruction and evolution of the dance, had the foresight to suggest changing the name to west coast swing so it wouldn't be confused with country-western dancing.

West coast swing can be smooth or energetic, bluesy or contemporary. The beauty of the dance is that it can be whatever you want it to be and as such can be danced to slower or faster music.

As Latin music and the cha-cha entered into the mix in the 1950s, dancers enjoyed the slower timing, which allowed for improvisations and syncopations.

Then, when rock 'n' roll music became popular, dancers adjusted to fit their dance to the music. Disco fever took the nation by storm in the 1970s, and practically overnight, swing dancers adapted once again.

Today, west coast swing is danced to all genres of music. It's this versatility that has made west coast swing so enticing to many dancers around the world.



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HUSTLE

In the summer of 1975, Van McCoy’s “The Hustle” became one of the disco era’s anthems—and for good reason. True to the nature of swing dancing, the hustle is once again a melding of different dance styles and patterns. This time, the Latin and swing genres join forces to create an energetic dance that incorporates the footwork of single-time swing with the hip motion of the mambo.

The name *hustle* originally referred to a line dance developed in Puerto Rican and African American bars in New York City. McCoy visited these bars and was inspired to write his chart-topping hit, which further popularized the dance.

The hustle is a lively, entertaining, and very popular dance.

The couples’ version can be attributed to Hollywood. The John Travolta movie *Saturday Night Fever* showed scenes not only of the line dance but of couples dancing a Latin-swing fusion to the driving disco beat.

As the disco era began to wane, so did the popularity of the hustle. But it is still danced socially and competitively today, and it can be done to most upbeat contemporary pop music.



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SWING DANCE- ALONG

Join Rob and Alyssa in the video lesson as they put on some music and dance all of the swing and big band patterns you've learned.



DANCES INCLUDED

- ▼ single-time swing
- ▼ east coast swing
- ▼ lindy hop
- ▼ west coast swing
- ▼ hustle

GETTING STARTED WITH SMOOTH & BALLROOM DANCE

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The *ball* in *ballroom* comes from the Latin word *ballare*, meaning “to dance.” Most people imagine ballroom dancing as swooping, graceful—maybe passionate—traveling dances.

Most of these dances evolved in Europe over the past few hundred years as court or folk dances. But ballroom dance as we know it today really took shape in the 20th century. It’s here that we first see a movement away from prefigured, sequenced dances, such as the minuet, and couples beginning to move independently around the dance floor.

In the early 20th century, the burst of new styles of music led to a frenzy of novel dances. Dance professionals, such as Vernon and Irene Castle in the United States and English dancers Josephine Bradley and Victor Silvester, began to standardize and publish many of the styles of the era. They provided basic, uniform patterns so that partners from all over the world could dance together easily and confidently. The Arthur Murray organization was paramount to driving this effort and then providing instruction to the wider public.

The First World War and other historical events influenced the younger generation to move away from older, constricting social norms to adopt the freer and more risqué new dances. Film and television were a massive influence, too. Actors such as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers danced on the silver screen, bringing glitz and glamour to social dancing.

While the days of social dancing in tuxedos and ball gowns are in the past, these dances are still taught and danced throughout the world. There are two iterations of this genre. The American styles are called smooth, while the international dances are categorized as standard.

The smooth dances are on the formal side, as they are directly related to courtly dances.



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WALTZ

The German word *walzen*, meaning “to roll or turn,” truly describes the elegant, graceful, and beautiful waltz.

Many notable waltz songs contain traces of yodeling melodies, betraying the dance’s 17th-century Austrian and Bavarian folk roots. It later spread and could be found in many of the courts of the Hapsburg empire.

However, by the early 1800s dancing masters throughout Europe deemed the relatively simple dance to be a threat to their profession—because most other courtly dances required ample instruction and practice to master the complex patterns and appropriate body positioning.

The waltz is grace and elegance epitomized.

The waltz was frowned upon for another reason, too: The closed dance frame meant that participants were brought close together in an embrace, which was considered by the clergy and many in the upper class to be vulgar and immoral. In England, one magazine even called the waltz a “wicked dance.”

In France, after the Revolution, the upper class adopted the waltz, and soon there were almost 700 dance halls in Paris alone.

Much of its popularity in the 19th century can be attributed to two Austrian composers, Franz Lanner and Johann Strauss, who set the stage for the faster Viennese waltz.

The waltz reached the United States in Boston in 1834, when dancing master Lorenzo Papanti gave an exhibition. By the end of the 19th century, the Boston waltz emerged—with a much slower tempo, allowing for long, gliding steps; more gradual turns; and additional forward-and-back movement. This version paved the way for both the American and international styles.

Ultimately, the waltz became overshadowed by the jazzy, flirty foxtrot after World War I.

However, the lively Viennese waltz and the slower American- and international-style waltzes are still extremely popular today with social and competitive dancers alike.



TIME SIGNATURE **3/4**

The waltz is the only dance featured in this course that uses the 3/4 time signature, which means there are only three beats per measure.

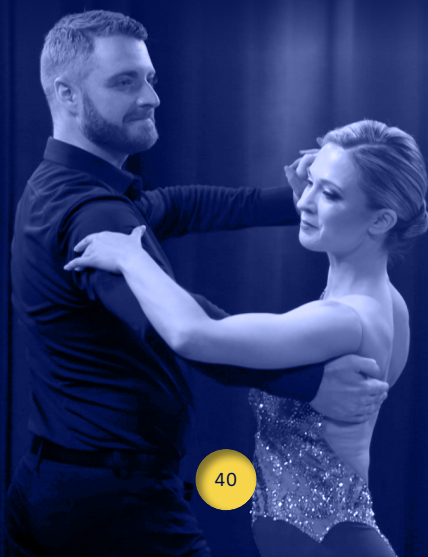


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FOXTROT



It's been said that Ginger Rogers could do any step that Fred Astaire did, except backward and in high heels. And when people think of the famous duo, they envision glamor, poise, flirtiness—and the foxtrot.

Foxtrot is a romantic, flirty, and elegant ballroom dance.

This dance was named after vaudeville performer Harry Fox. Born Arthur Carringford, he adopted the pseudonym Fox in 1914 while working at the New York Theatre as a dancer entertaining patrons between films. His signature style of trotting to ragtime music quickly became a craze.

Initially a fast-paced dance, the draw of the foxtrot only grew with the advent of jazz and swing music, as it was even more easily danced to slower tempos. Over time, the quicker version of the foxtrot diverged completely into another dance known as the quickstep.

Professional dancers Vernon and Irene Castle revised the foxtrot, adding its signature grace and elegance, and it soon became the most popular social dance of its time. It was further standardized by Arthur Murray.

While the foxtrot is considered easy to learn, it's also one of the hardest to master. Contemporary foxtrot can be danced to a variety of music styles, but it is often best enjoyed to the likes of Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra.



TIME SIGNATURE 4/4



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AMERICAN TANGO

There are endless stories about how the provocative and passionate tango came to be. One describes lonely Europeans and Africans congregating in bars with the local girls and prostitutes of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Another describes gauchos, or South American cowboys, dancing with bent knees in sweaty, hardened chaps and ladies settling far into the crooks of their right arms, with their heads (and noses) turned away.

El tango no es en los pies. Es en el corazón.

Tango is not in the feet.
It's in the heart.

Exactly when and where the dance now known as tango materialized is unknown, but it is clear that it originated in the poor barrios of Buenos Aires in the 1800s.

In such neighborhoods, African slaves intermingled with Argentines and the large influx of European immigrants. Cultures mixed, and people swapped dance and music styles.

High society shunned these gatherings and the emerging dance style. However, the sons of wealthy families frequented these bars, and before long tango had become a popular pastime throughout Buenos Aires and other cities in Argentina.

In the early 1900s, those same sons of wealthy Argentinian society visited Europe, taking with them this risqué and invigorating dance.

The golden age of tango began in the 1930s and lasted through the 1950s. It is a dance that intertwines the desperation of financial and political repression with the intense longing of the lonely.

The tango is passionate, intense, and fiery.

Today, there are three main styles of tango: Argentine, international, and American. Even though the American style has been normalized—adopting steps from other dances, such as the waltz and foxtrot—it still evokes the smoldering passion and desire of its creators.



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SMOOTH & BALLROOM DANCE- ALONG

In the video lesson, Rob and Alyssa will dance all of the ballroom dances to music together with you. As they do, they'll also point out some finer details about leading and following.



DANCES INCLUDED

- ▼ waltz
- ▼ foxtrot
- ▼ American tango

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GETTING STARTED WITH COUNTRY DANCE



Country dance is a true reflection of the American melting pot. There are elements from Irish taverns, Polish towns, European ballrooms, Russian palaces, and African villages.

As various cultures converged in the New World and pioneers began to push west, their social gatherings took on a carefree quality that contrasted the stuffy and traditional society they left behind. In addition to partner dancing, folk dances such as contra and square dancing also emerged, as did the now-very-popular line dance.

The frontier and its cowboys greatly shaped these new dance styles. Joseph McCoy, the first great cattle baron, noted that the cowboy

usually enters the dance with a peculiar zest, his eyes lit up with excitement, liquor and lust. He stomps in without stopping to divest himself of his sombrero, spurs or pistols.

Throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, music was very regional. But once the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, began to broadcast nationally in the 1920s, country music became more accessible. And as country music went mainstream, modern country dancing took shape.

Country dances are varied in their design and styling, but there are some basic techniques that are used throughout the genre.

In the 1980s, Hollywood and the music industry brought country and line dancing back to the forefront of popularity. These days country bars are everywhere, so you can always go straight from the saddle to the dance floor.



POLKA

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It's been said that the polka has “the intimacy of the waltz combined with the vivacity of the Irish jig.” As the story goes, it was made up in 1834 by a Bohemian peasant girl as a means to entertain herself.

The name itself derives from the Czech phrase for “half step” and describes the energetic, flirty courtship style of lightly hopping from one foot to the other.

Polka is a skipping, hopping, jumping good time.

By 1835, the polka could be seen in the ballrooms of Prague, and it had spread to Paris by 1840. It grew in popularity, especially among the French, and the Poles even adopted it as their national dance.

When Polish immigrants sailed across the Atlantic, they brought the polka to the United States. As they began to travel west, their national dance became a favorite among all the settlers and cowboys. Indeed, the iconic polka gallop resembles the swinging of the leg when dismounting from a horse.

Over time, the polka's popularity began to recede as newer dances and emerging music genres took over in the 20th century. But today it is still danced competitively and is considered both lively and exciting.



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TWO-STEP

In a scene in *Urban Cowboy*, Debra Winger asks John Travolta, “You a real cowboy?” He replies, “Well, that depends on what you think a real cowboy is.” She then asks for proof: “Know how to do two-step?” “You bet,” he says.

Country two-step might’ve gotten its big break because of Hollywood, but its Southern roots go back much further.

Thanks to the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, and the advent of radio broadcasting, square dancers across America could hear new country music. In Texas, they began to incorporate a more relaxed version of the foxtrot, called collegiate foxtrot, in between square dance sets.

Also called the poor man’s foxtrot, it was soon influenced by steps and patterns from the previous two-step dances. In fact, its timing (quick, quick, slow, slow) was just the reverse of the ballroom foxtrot’s (slow, slow, quick, quick).

Country two-step travels around the floor like the ballroom dances and incorporates many of the fun twists and turns from the swing genre.

As it grew in popularity and became associated with country music, it started to be called the country two-step or Texas two.

Whether you’re out at a country bar or on the competitive dance floor, the country two-step, with its iconic boots and cowboy hats, epitomizes the improvisational and carefree nature of the country dance genre.



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NIGHTCLUB TWO-STEP

Nightclub two-step was created by 15-year-old dancer Buddy Schwimmer in the 1960s. At his high school dances, he'd noticed that his friends would shuffle or hold their dates in place whenever a slow romantic song was played. Recognizing the virtue of this, he still wanted to provide a more interesting dance alternative for these ballads, so he devised nightclub two-step.

More than 10 years later, Buddy opened a dance studio in California and offered nightclub two-step lessons to his students. He would gain notoriety throughout the various worlds of dance as the “king of swing” and the “man with a thousand moves.”

This relatively young dance style has since evolved and now has a gliding, sweeping, graceful quality.

It is the perfect option for a night out with your sweetheart when you want an informal and romantic dance, as it can be done to many contemporary soft rock hits. Competitively, nightclub two-step has become a staple in the country dance circuit.

Nightclub two-step is a slow, graceful, romantic dance. It's the perfect choice for a night out with your sweetheart.



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COUNTRY DANCE- ALONG



In the video lesson, Rob and Alyssa will dance all of the country dances to music together and provide some additional tips and tricks on leading and following.



DANCES INCLUDED

- ▼ polka
- ▼ two-step
- ▼ nightclub two-step



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**TAKE YOUR
DANCING
TO THE
NEXT STEP**

Now that you've experienced the course—in whatever manner was most helpful for you—Rob and Alyssa have a few additional suggestions:

- ▶ Don't hesitate to rewatch any or all of the lessons. To master their craft, Rob and Alyssa have retaken many classes, as each exposure increases retention.
- ▶ Both Rob and Alyssa are proficient at leading and following. They switch roles regularly to aid in their understanding of the dance. They encourage you to rerun the course and try the opposite role, whether that's leading or following, to increase your skills.
- ▶ This course is a great way to have fun with your friends. Any of the sections can stand alone and make for a great night in. Pour a bottle of wine, invite over a few friends, and learn some dance moves.

Dance can be transformative!

There are many dance communities throughout the world. In your own neck of the woods, there are likely dance studios, swing groups, and country bars. Typically, these dance communities are extremely welcoming and offer a great way to meet new friends! So do a web search or check social media for communities near you. Dance can also be a great way to socialize and meet people on vacation.

This Spotify playlist was curated specifically for this course and features music from each of the four main genres of dance: <http://ow.ly/ysTr50DIYbe>

WONDRIUM

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