

Beginners Assessment Checklist

Beginners are expected to take the Beginner series multiple times in order to acquire and master basic skills, concepts, and patterns according to the chart below. We recommend taking all four beginner classes at least twice and taking at least one 30-minute private lesson to receive personalized feedback about your dance to fill in any gaps and prepare you for the Beyond Beginner Class.

Students who feel they have achieved these standards may move up to the Beyond Beginner. We suggest that students converse with their instructor to see if the instructor recommends any additional instruction prior to moving up.

There is a world of information behind each of these skills. Please note that even if you have heard the information once or several times before, in order to meet the standards, you must consistently apply them in your dancing. Any standards you do not understand are good things to bring up in class or in private lessons.

Skill Group: Community standards and consent

- Invites others to dance
- Gracefully accepts a “no” to an invitation to dance

Skill Group: Feet

- Starts patterns on correct foot (leaders left, followers right)
- Maintain rhythm of 6-count move without a partner, while traveling
- Use the appropriate footwork for each pattern in time to the music
- Emerging technique: rolling of the feet

Skill Group: Body

- Uses correct, connected handholds
- Demonstrates an ability to move their body through the movements under their own control
- Demonstrates an understanding of the anchor at the conclusion of each pattern
- Emerging technique: pitch and poise

Skill Group: Connection

- Connection is present throughout the movements
- Stretch or compression before direction changes
- Leader leads from the body
- Leader creates connection changes to signal changes in followers’ direction
- Follower demonstrates patience waiting for the leader’s signals and interprets them
- Follower moves in direction being led (idea of inertia)

Skill Group: Turns

- Follower travels in the direction of turn while maintaining balance
- Leaders pre-lead (prep) and then create a comfortable shape for followers when they turn

Skill Group: Conversation

- Demonstrates awareness of partners position on the dance floor (spotlighting)
- Demonstrates awareness of partner being ready to dance

Skill Group: Comfort

- Fixes their movement when there is a mistake