

Dancing Levels - Where do I fit?

How do I know which level of dancer I am? This question came up again when we hosted our recent workshop and of course it is a question with no clear definitive set of guidelines. I will however, attempt to help you understand better just where you fit in.

The RSCDS Sydney Branch has published guidelines for progressing through the levels of dancing and I will summarize their outline.

There are 6 levels which are:

- Beginners (level 1)
- Elementary (Level 2)
- Intermediate (Level 3)
- Upper Intermediate (Level 4)
- Advanced (Level 5)
- Very Advanced (Level 6)

They also separate social dancing which can usually be done successfully by intermediate dancers.

In this issue I will concentrate on outlining the expectations for levels 1 & 2.

Beginner's level 1 should be able to perform:

- Slip step
- Skip change of step
- Pas de Basque
- Strathspey travelling step and
- Strathspey setting step.

Dancers should also be competent in:

- Turning
- Dancing down the middle and up
- Circling (hands round)
- Casting off
- Promenade
- Figures of eight
- Stepping up and down
- Bow and curtsy
- Rights and lefts
- Allemande
- Advance and retire
- Simple reels of three

Grand chain

Elementary level 2 dancers should have danced at least 12 months and be able to do the above formations with no hesitation.

Dancers should understand progressions and be able to do the basic steps without hesitation.

They should also have knowledge of these formations:

- Poussette for 2 couples in reel and jig time.
- Basic reels of four
- Back to back
- Balance-in-line
- Petronella turns
- Finding corners
- Reels of three with corners
- Ladies' chain
- Corner chain.

As you can see there is a lot to learn and cover and even the best dancers will take about 2 years of dancing to reach level 2.

Dancing also includes phrasing, technique, teamwork and dance etiquette and I will expand on these terms and the next levels of dance competence in the next issue of the Thistle — stay tuned.

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