

18 THE DANCE INSTRUCTOR

The first dance on your wedding should be a couple's perfect romantic moment. Even if you danced together before, the wedding dance still is something special. When you start to practice as early as 6 months in advance, with the help of a dance instructor, you have all the time of the world to make the first dance your best one ever. Learn everything about the first dance at your wedding from Chi "Club Dance King" Szeto of iDanceAcademy.

"iDanceAcademy was founded by Chi "Club Dance King" Szeto. Chi is the most popular Club and Dance Seduction Expert on the internet with over 25 million views at www.youtube.com/ClubDanceLessons. He helps people feel comfortable and confident in their bodies on the dance floor. Chi has performed internationally on tour with pop artists and has been featured on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno. The iDanceAcademy instructors are the best teachers in various styles such as Hip Hop, Salsa, Ballroom, etc. They are based in Los Angeles, and are available to travel internationally to students for convenience."

What should an engaged couple bring to their dance lessons?

Comfortable clothing, shoes, water, towel, change of clothing if necessary, deodorant. If there are props or specific outfits those should be brought to the later rehearsals closer to the wedding date. Any music, specific videos for reference and ideas. Preferably tell the instructor either ahead of time on the phone, or meet up with them to discuss your vision of what you want for your dance.

Why should an engaged couple take dance lessons prior to their wedding?

A couple should take dance lessons if they are totally uncomfortable with dancing and might look awkward on their wedding night. Dance lessons will help you feel more confident and comfortable in your body and being in front of other people on your big night.

If there is a formal choreographed dance then obviously unless the couple wants to plan the dance, they would hire a professional choreographer to make them look great. Make sure the choreographer can choreograph for your skill level, ask them for their résumé, or just talk to them about their experience with choreographing.

Should the engaged couple already have their wedding song picked out, prior to their lessons?

It would be best if the song(s) is picked out prior to the lesson so the choreographer can prepare ahead. If they don't know what songs, then the choreographer can help them find one. Again the couple should have a vision ahead of time depending on what style of dance they want whether it be a waltz, or something less formal, perhaps like many of the contemporary surprise wedding dances that have gone viral on YouTube.

How long should the couple's main wedding dance last (i.e. the couple's first dance)?

The couple's first dance can last anywhere from 2-5 minutes or more. If the couple doesn't want to choreograph anything, they can just slow dance, which can be learned very quickly.

What are some of the most appropriate dance styles for the couple's main wedding dance?

Traditional styles such as Waltz and Foxtrot are often danced for couples who want to do something formal. Many couples in recent years have done more pop video/hip hop style videos with new music and more fun and energetic choreography. Other styles can be mixed in as well.

How many lessons should an engaged couple typically take so that they are prepared for the big day, and what will they learn at these lessons?

A couple could learn a 2-minute dance in as little as 4 hour-long lessons. Learning and perfecting routines depends on many factors such as student's current skill level, how fast they learn, how many lessons are taken, how much the student practices on their own, and how good they want to get for their performance. A more realistic minimum amount of lessons to learn a dance comfortably would be 8-10 lessons.

Do the bride-to-be and groom-to-be both need to attend the dance lessons at the same time? If not, how do ballroom dance instructors typically work around situations where both people can't be present for their lessons at the same time?

It's best for bride and groom to both attend the lessons at the same time. Often times there are friends and family involved in the dance as well. Everyone should schedule to meet and rehearse at the same time. If someone cannot make it, then they need to get with another person to learn what was missed and catch up. If all parties are not available a great idea is to videotape the practices, or at least the choreography and the steps broken down so whoever missed can review and get an idea of what was covered.

What are some of the main differences between group and private lessons? What are the advantages and disadvantages to each?

Some benefits to group lessons are that you get to meet and dance with new people, and that they are more inexpensive than private lessons. Benefits to private lessons are that you will learn exponentially faster, as the teacher will give their entire attention to you. Often times they will give you corrections a teacher in a group class may not have time to.

Should the couple wear any specific types of shoes to their lessons?

Depending on the style of dance, dress shoes should be worn to lessons. If there is any spinning to be done more than likely the shoes should have leather or suede bottoms. Be sure to be aware of what type of soles your shoes have, i.e. rubber soles, versus leather; flat sole, versus treaded. These different shoes may grip differently, and injury is possible from either too much grip (knee pressure), or too little grip (too slippery).

What is the best way for a couple to select a wedding dance studio and/or an instructor?

A couple should choose a wedding dance studio/instructor by talking to them at minimum on the phone if not in person. After they've seen 2-3 teachers, they can get an idea of whose personality and experience matches their needs. Ask to see videos of the instructors performing/or to see their choreography from other events or past weddings. Testimonials from previous clients are also useful.

Does the couple typically bring their own music to each lesson?

The couple can bring the music to the first lesson on CD or the best way is to probably have the song available online as an mp3 so it can be accessed through email and then uploaded to a mobile phone/mp3 player. The instructor should also be able to access the song if the student does not have the technical know how. The studio should be able to provide someone to cut and mix the music for the performance.

What if the bride-to-be or the groom-to-be is far more experienced in dance than their partner? Is it still possible (and advisable) to take lessons together?

Even the most beginner inexperienced dancer can learn to dance. If their partner is way more advanced they will really have to show their love and patience to their partner during the learning process. Learning to dance together is a fun and sexy way for a couple to spend time and bond together.

What types of clothing should students wear to their dance lessons?

Rehearsals generally can be in very casual clothing such as sweat or athletic pants. Closer to the wedding couples should plan 2-3 dress rehearsals in the actual clothing and shoes they will be wearing. This will allow the couple to be more comfortable when they're performing and allow any wardrobe changes to be addressed beforehand.

How far in advance should a couple start taking dance lessons before the big day?

Depending on the couple's schedule, skill level, and budget they can start taking lessons 6 months to 1 month ahead of the wedding. Once-a-week lessons are ok further out, and as the wedding gets closer couples may want to consider a few extra lessons right before the wedding to perfect the dance and get very comfortable with the choreography.

Is a wedding dance usually a choreographed/pre-planned routine?

Some wedding first dances are just slow dances. These can be choreographed if the couple likes, but can be improvised with a little instruction from a dance teacher.

You can contact Chi Szeto from iDance Academy here:

Phone: 001.323.393.3875

Email: Chi@iDanceAcademy.com

website: www.iDanceAcademy.com

www.Facebook.com/ClubDanceLessons

www.youtube.com/ClubDanceLessons

Skype/Twitter/Instagram IDanceAcademy /

iDanceAcademyLA iDanceAcademy