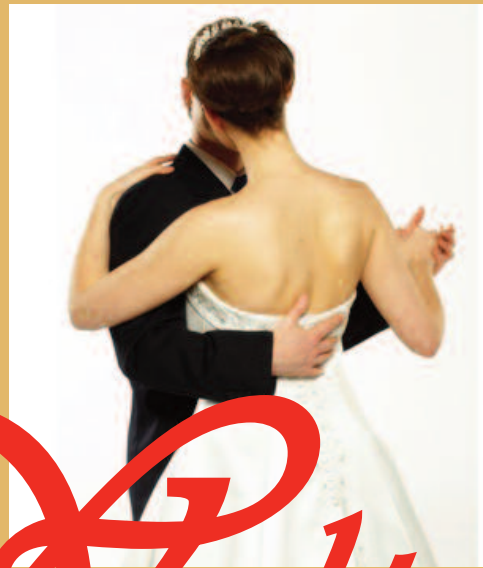


All you need to know about your....

# Bridal

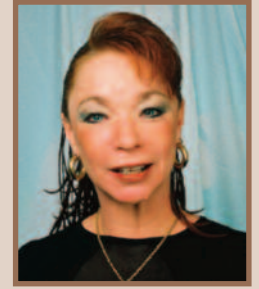


# Waltz

Written by Julie Tresp  
professional dancer, teacher, choreographer, lecturer  
and wedding dance specialist

## About the author

Julie Treppe is a professional dance instructor with a lifetime professional dance performance background and is the principal of two Sydney dance companies. She has danced since the age of 3, studying formal ballet & theatrical dance in her youth and Dance Sport Int. syllabus (Ballroom and Latin dancing), in latter years. She has performed, choreographed and taught professionally most of her adult life, teaching for dance studios in Australia and Europe, schools & colleges in Australia and is a lecturer, teacher and adjudicator for the Dance Council of Australia.



As the principal of Fandango Dance Studio and Wedding Dance Sydney she has been teaching wedding couples as a specialist field for ten years and currently personally teaches more than 300 wedding dance lessons a year as well as manages a team of professional and qualified teachers providing lessons for hundreds of couples each year at various locations around metropolitan Sydney including Maroubra, Casula, Baulkham Hills, Lane Cove and Annandale.

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## About this booklet

The information in this booklet will give you an overview of the Bridal Waltz / Wedding Dance / First Dance, it's tradition, when and how it is performed at your wedding, what to do and not to do, along with information about non-traditional choices and lots of tips to help you plan your Wedding Dance including how to go about arranging lessons if needed and how to get the most out of them.

## About the Bridal Waltz and how it all started

Music and dancing have been a major part of western culture's festivities, celebrations and special occasions for centuries and this tradition continues to present day.

Historically, the dancing at a society ball would be kicked off by the person's the function honoured or the highest ranking personages in attendance (often royalty) and this tradition continues today at weddings in the form of the First Dance for the bride and groom; they being the 'royalty' of the event.

Traditionally, the First Dance was the first dance of the evening, but nowadays it can be that or simply the newly married couple's first dance as man and wife. It is often called the Bridal 'Waltz' because of the influence of Queen Victoria and her wedding to Prince Albert, she was a keen ballroom dancer and the Waltz was the latest trendy dance at that time. As a result the first dance for the bridal couple at a wedding became known as the Bridal Waltz. (As an interesting piece of trivia, it was also Queen Victoria that started the white wedding gown tradition.)

Regardless of its history however, your wedding is a day of ceremony and celebration and nearly all Australian weddings include music and dancing as a major part of the reception.

Whilst the majority of weddings follow the tradition of the bride and groom leading off the first dance or performing a Bridal Waltz, there are no longer strict requirements or expectations of the type of dance done, nor the music used for the dance and on any given day one could expect anything from a traditional waltz to a modern jive or Latin dance to a funky or even funny, hip hop, disco or anything you can dream up.



## Do we have to do a First Dance?

It's the 21st century and you are not bound by tradition to do anything you don't want to at your wedding, but having said that, it's worthy to note that virtually all weddings that have music as part of the reception entertainment will include the First Dance of the new husband and wife.

The dance is one of those highlight moments of your wedding reception: most commonly there's the arrival, the toasts, the speeches, the cake cutting and ...the dance, the garter, the bouquet toss and the departure. Just weigh up whether you want it included in your day or not, the fun and the lifetime memory of it will most likely far outweigh the hesitation or nerves you might feel about it.

At the end of the day, (even though as a dancer I am of course understandably biased!), I just give one word of advise to most couples and that is "It's a once in a lifetime occasion, so milk the moment!, do everything and don't hold back".

## What sort of dance should we do?

As I said in the above section, you are not bound by tradition, so it really is entirely up to you. Even if your wedding is going to be mostly traditional, it still does not have to be followed rigidly.

If you don't know anything about dancing, don't try to make decisions about it, instead, make decisions about how you want to look and the mood of your dance (see the following sections for tips about this) and take it from there.

Alternately, just choose your music based on either sentimental value or your music preferences, (tips of choosing music are written in further pages), and let a dance professional guide you for the dance. A good professional can set a dance to virtually any music, so if you've the time and the inclination, the sky is the limit. And if you want to dance a specific style of dance (eg: the Waltz), make sure you read the section 'Choose the music or choose the dance' in following pages.

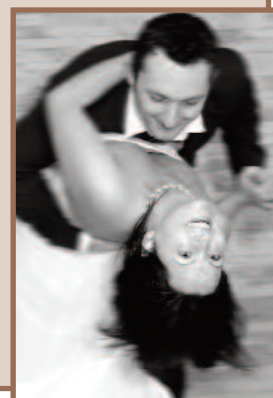
## When do we do the dance?

The most common time to do the First Dance is after the cake cutting, making it the last formality of the day and the start of partying on. However as the Bride and Groom it's your choice and you can work it in for whenever you feel suitable.

Some couples choose to do their dance at the very start of the reception and actually dance from the moment of their entrance to the reception venue, down the red carpet to the dance floor and complete the dance on the dance floor, making it a lively and entertaining start to the reception.

If you want your guests up and dancing early in the reception, either at the beginning or between courses, it's a good idea to do your Bridal Dance as the first dance as many people won't get up dancing until the bride and groom have danced.

The timing of your dance won't breach any protocols, just work it out so it suits the rest of the activities of the function.



## How long should we dance for?

There isn't a 'set' time to dance and it is entirely up to the bridal couple however the usual thing is to try and dance for the whole song. This is more aesthetically pleasing as the Bridal Waltz song remains 'Your song' and you can define the beginning and the ending, giving a nice twirl, dip or flourish at the end to make it complete.

Sometimes it's just too much to dance the whole song, perhaps the Bridal couples dance skills are a bit stretched or it's a long song or they just don't want the limelight for that long. You've a choice of asking the DJ to fade out the music as you finish your dance or getting the wedding party / parent / other guests to come and join you for the remainder of the song.

I tend to favour fading out the music as you've finished your dance because it's more definitive. It breaks the mood to finish your dance with the music still playing and changing from your First Dance to a group dance mid-song further disrupts the mood. It also takes more seconds than you realise to get people to join you on the dance floor and often by the time they do the song is either finished or in its last 30 seconds which makes it all a bit futile.

Even for couples who want a very short dance I advise them to dance for about 2 minutes, maybe 1 minute and 45 seconds at a push if they are really nervous about it, anything less is too little and looks like a brush-off. However, the average song is only around 3 minutes and with a just few lessons it's not hard to put together simple steps than can remain interesting for the entire song.

## What happens after the Bridal Dance?

The Bridal Waltz is most commonly followed by one song where the bride and groom dance with a parent and the wedding party join them on the dance floor and then all guests are invited to the floor for the third song.

This of course works well if the parents and wedding party are up for it, but can be a bit of a flop if they are not. You need to discuss it with everyone concerned before making that decision. If you really want everyone dancing and they don't feel confident or have reservations you can always organise one or two group private lessons for your wedding party and/or parents.

If none of your wedding party or the parents want to be in the limelight and nothing you can do will convince them, just throw the floor open to all guests once you've finished your Bridal Dance. Just make sure the DJ has a couple of easy and popular dance songs ready to play so the music encourages people to get up.

I've given lessons for weddings for a dance for the Bride and her father as the second dance, choreographed complete songs for the whole wedding party as the second dance, had both sets of parents come for lessons for a surprise second dance and various other combinations.

There's been weddings where the Bride and Groom, the parents and the wedding party have had a series of lessons learning routines for several songs so that they were the reception entertainment, and there's been weddings that have had me teach the Bride and Groom their Bridal Waltz, then had my partner and I attend the wedding as their Dance DJ's and hosts, providing the dance music and getting guests up onto the dance floor for group dancing.

So it's worth a bit of thought as to what how much or how little dancing you want at your reception and plan accordingly.



## The Wedding Gown and Wedding Shoes

If your wedding gown has a train it is vital that you have your dressmaker make a tucking/pleating arrangement, or a wrist strap, so that the train can be pinned up for the dance so it does not drape onto the floor. This is a common arrangement and is often done as a matter of course and without being requested. It is not possible to dance in a gown that has a train draping on the floor.

If you are having dance lessons you should describe the style of your gown to your teacher so that they can factor in any limitations to your movement. Petticoats, hoops and trimmings are not a problem, they may seem bulky to you, but wedding dance teachers deal with that every day and is part of the normal lesson process to take that into account. On the other hand, if your gown is very tight and restricts the size of your steps or inhibits your leg or arm movements in any way, you should inform your teacher so they can modify any steps and moves accordingly.

If the Bride's shoes are high thin heels, you should be aware that you may not be able to wear them for dance lessons due to the damage they cause to dance floors. Take your wedding shoes to the lessons but also take a flat or a low thicker heeled shoe with you to be on the safe side.

### So how do you want to dance at your wedding?

Your Wedding Dance can really be any style of dance, music and mood that you wish and if you don't have a firm idea yet of the song you wish to play for the dance or the specific dance you want to do, the first thing to look at is how you want to look as you dance. This does not necessarily mean choosing a dance, the first step is to decide how you want to look doing that dance. For example:

Romantic and graceful, like a prince and princess		Like a traditional bride and groom waltz
Lively and fun with some funny bits in the dance		Weird and funky, very offbeat
Bright and happy modern dance, not traditional		A total wow factor with dips and spins etc
Just a few simple steps and look good together		Just don't want to look stupid

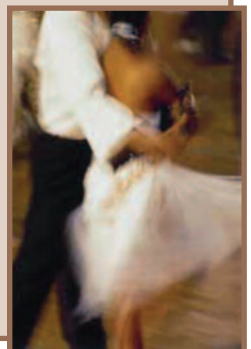
Once you've decided how you want to look you'll need to do a reality check, sit back objectively and ask yourself honestly "can we already do stuff that will give us what we want?". If the answer is no, then it becomes obvious that you have a choice of either getting some lessons to teach you how to do what you want, or changing your ideas about what you want.

### Choose the music or choose the dance?

Where you don't know anything about dancing, you would choose your music first. There's a section about music in following pages to help if you don't know where to start.

If you have a definite idea of how you want to look dancing then you've got to choose music that matches that mood. If, for example, you want to look traditional and romantic you need music that portrays romance, a heavy metal, rock'n'roll or R'n'B song would not fit the bill at all. Conversely, if you want a modern and funky dance, a song by Frank Sinatra would not suit.

Where you are very definite about the style of dance you want to do (the Waltz, the Salsa or the Tango for instance), then you must choose specific music of the right timing and tempo otherwise it won't work. The Waltz for example, can only be done to waltz music, (which is 3 / 4 timing). Where you want a specific dance and don't know anything about dance or dance music you'll need to consult an expert before you start selecting music because it is the music that determines what style of dance you can or cannot do. (Check my tips in the music section in following pages of this booklet).



## Do you WANT to have lessons Vs. Do you NEED to have lessons?

Most couples want to look nice as they dance the Bridal Waltz and more importantly, they want to feel good doing it, so the need of lessons is really determined by your personal preferences.

Avoiding the fuss of having to organise lessons might seem desirable but that's not really the issue. What you need to consider is the end result - how you'd like to look and feel for your First Dance. If you don't already dance comfortably together you need to ask yourself if you are happy to go out on that dance floor on your wedding day looking like a million dollars with all your family and friends looking on and then just awkwardly shuffling around the floor or feeling awkward?

It's fairly safe to make the assumption that you need dance lessons if.....:

You have a clear idea of how you'd like to dance but you can't do it already

You don't normally enjoy getting up and having a dance when you go out

You don't know what to do

You need to be half sozzled before you can be coerced or dragged onto the dance floor

You believe you and/or your partner have no sense of rhythm, no coordination or 2 left feet

You think you are a good dancer but have never been to a dance class in your life

Whether you want or don't want dance lessons can be a different story, but you do need to evaluate whether what you want to *do* marries up with what you want to *have*. You may not want to have dance lessons but if you don't know how to dance properly with a partner and you want to look nice dancing at your wedding, you may have to change your view.

Dancing with a partner is very different to dancing alone. You may be a great dancer, perhaps years of jazz or ballet, but that doesn't make you a great dancing *couple*. Partner dancing has it's own set of rules and skills as every step/skill/technique is related to unity as a couple. It's not a matter of how good a dancer you and/or your partner are, it's a matter of how good you are together.

If you don't want to have lessons and you don't care much about the Bridal Waltz and are happy to jig or shuffle around for the duration, then of course you don't need to have lessons.

However, if you don't want lessons but you do want to look nice dancing together, you will have to change your ideas about one thing or the other – either forget about worrying about dancing more than you currently can and be happy with what you have, or else have some lessons so that you know what to do in order to have what you really want.

## When should we start the lessons?

The earlier you start your lessons the better, and don't let anyone tell you different. The later you start the less choices you have to change anything, the more chance of last minute panic or nerves. Your dance will be restricted to only what you can pick up quickly rather than what you want to do, and you increase the likelihood of looking stiff & awkward for your wedding dance through lack of practice.

I've had numerous couples ask for lessons at the last minute based on their belief that they will remember the steps closer to the wedding, but they leave themselves with no practice time and no time to learn to do the steps comfortably and look nice dancing together.

So my best advice is if you are planning ahead, stay ahead. The best time to start your lessons is from 3 months to 2 months before the wedding (if you want an extravagant dance choose earlier) and schedule your last lesson for a few days up to 2 weeks before the wedding.



## How do wedding dance lessons work?

Wedding Dance lessons are private lessons with one teacher devoted to the one couple.

They are completely personalised and the teacher will structure your lessons to suit your music, your desired outcome, your skill levels and your personality as well as take into account the bride's dress and any restrictions it will cause, and set the dance and choreography to work within the specific size of the dance floor at your reception venue.

The lessons are streamlined to achieve the maximum result in a minimum time. There's a wedding date on the horizon and however fast or slow you are by normal standards, the result of your lessons must be that you are able to dance nicely together, in one way or another, by that date.

Now many couples might ask if they could learn a dance in a couple of lessons and the honest answer in most cases would be no. Dancing is a skill that is built over time and practice and even with regular lessons it takes years to be able dance a variety of dances and AND look good.

Wedding dance lessons use the expertise of professional dancers and teachers built up over a lifetime in the profession, to identify the fundamental / core skills that you and your partner personally need to be able to dance to your chosen song on your wedding day.

The lessons show you the unavoidable, essentials of partner dancing without which you would just look awkward or clumsy trying, and the teacher uses a foundation of a particular dance style to then show you the basic steps around which they'll build your dance. Your skill levels, or lack thereof, are constantly observed and the teacher works to create and develop steps and combinations that you can, or will be able to, dance without too much effort or stress by your wedding day.

The end result should be a nicely put together dance that you and your partner can perform in a relaxed and comfortable manner, look nice on the day and that you should actually enjoy. Your skill level, lack of coordination and/or rhythm and 2 left feet should make no difference to a good teacher, an experienced professional will be able to create and teach a dance for you, regardless.

I have taught couples where one partner was physically disabled, one had one arm,. One was in a wheelchair, one has a leg in plaster, one was recovering from a stroke, a true professional knows their craft inside out and can adapt dances to suit nearly anything.

There are an isolated few group classes around on occasion that are promoted as wedding dance lessons but like any group class these classes address and teach the most popular dances and steps and they don't teach you a personal dance to your chosen music. The group lessons can certainly get you started in ballroom dancing, but you would still need to have some private lessons to work to your specific music and to put together your personal dance.

If you want to get a head start and are planning your dance 3 to 12 months before the wedding it's definitely advantageous to take some ballroom dance beginners group classes prior to your private lessons as you will earn the fundamentals of partner dancing, basic steps to several dances and build up your confidence along the way. You will need less private lesson, the choreography will get more interesting and your dancing will be more natural.



## Make a clear objective to tell your teacher

Once you've decided to have some lessons you should determine what it is you want to achieve for your dance so that you have a firm agreement with your partner about the outcome and you can tell your teacher at the first lesson so they know what outcome you expect from the lessons. Make sure your teacher knows the wedding date so they can structure the lessons to meet your deadline.

Here are some examples of some of the most common objectives:

"We don't want to look choreographed and unnatural, we just want a few tips and a couple of moves so we look confident and relaxed."

"We want to dazzle our guests with a spectacular choreographed routine with flash moves."

"We want to dance nicely together, nothing fancy, but a few steps that we can do smoothly and look graceful, natural and not sloppy – perhaps a bit of a twirl here and there."

"We'd like a traditional wedding dance with a set routine we can learn and practice before the wedding and look comfortable and polished on the day."

"We want something modern, different and fun with some cheeky moves and a bit of pizzazz."

"We can already dance, we just want help to put some steps together and to make a nice entrance and a nice finish to the dance"

"We want the wedding party and our parents to have lessons with us so we can all dance together right after our Bridal Waltz."

## What if we've left it to the last minute?

Once you've let it slide to a couple of weeks before the wedding it's really a matter of what you can realistically manage in that time. There is still enough time to fit in 3 lessons and if you don't get any practice outside of the lessons you'll get it in the lessons.

Some, but not all, teachers are willing to give just one or two lessons at the very last minute and some offer a longer or double lesson as a one-of, and although certainly not optimum in terms of dance, a good teacher will be able to make quite a difference for you and that one-of lesson is definitely better than nothing and is worth the effort. The most important thing is that you take that lesson with realistic expectations and don't expect to cram 3 months of learning into one lesson.

It is more common that you'd think that couples leave the dance to the very last or even forget it amongst all the other wedding preparations. In the last year alone I've had 3 couples call me in a panic just 2 days (!) before their wedding asking for last minute help and I have been able to help them. At any given time I would have one or more couples come for a lesson or two only 1 to 2 weeks before their wedding.

You must also consider that in last minute lessons we have to work with what you've got and bring out the best of it. There's no time to cater for your every need as there's no time for experiment and practice, so your choices are limited to the instant imagination and the skill of the teacher to make simple movements look rhythmic and interesting. It therefore follows that the fewer lessons, the better teacher you need.

December and January Weddings should note that nearly all dance studios have a long break for Xmas and generally close the week before Xmas and do not re-open until mid or late January, so plan to have your lessons finished before Xmas.



## How to choose a teacher

Keep the above things in mind as you talk to dancing schools and teachers and compare them to what I have said. I always look for mature aged teachers, simply because of their years of experience. Certainly a young professional can teach you and no doubt do it well, but they might have 5-6 years of professional experience and a mature aged teacher might have 25 years or even 40 years of experience. It's that experience that can give you more options, more ideas and more confidence too.

Choose a studio that has at least a couple, or a team of teachers. If you don't like one teacher you can always ask for another and if your usual teacher is unable to work at any time another teacher will take their place without disruption to your lessons or your busy schedule.

Make sure your teacher is a Ballroom AND Latin dancer as then you will be able to draw on elements from all the dances of both styles and of course, these teachers specialize in partner dancing. If a teacher can only teach one style of dance, (eg: Swing, Salsa, Tango), that's all they can teach you and their ideas, methodology and choreography will be limited to that one style.

And lastly, you should ENJOY the lessons, they really are fun with a good teacher. You should have a good rapport with the teacher very quickly and you should feel they understand what you want and understand your personalities to some degree because they have to be able to inject that feeling into your dance for you. If you don't enjoy the lesson and you don't connect with the teacher, find another.

## How Many Lessons?

That's the burning question that you can never really answer before the first lesson. It all depends on what you want to achieve, how long you have to achieve it and your dance ability / potential, or lack of.

Lessons don't necessarily mean a huge amount of fuss, the amount of time you need to put into them is directly proportional to the outcome you want. If you want a fully choreographed spectacular dance with flash moves you will need to have a suitable chunk of lessons to achieve it and if you just want the bare fundamentals, just enough so you don't look awkward and nervous and just a few steps so you're dancing instead of shuffling, then just a few lessons is usually adequate.

Given the time, I'd advise anyone to have five lessons for their Bridal Waltz, it gives adequate time to cover the fundamentals of partner dancing to give yourself the best chance of looking comfortable, natural and graceful for your dance, and enough time to learn steps, some combinations and one or some twirls/spin/dips as suits. Three lessons is often the minimum package offered by dance schools and that's not a marketing ploy, it's sensible. Some teachers won't do less than three lessons because they feel it would be unethical to pretend you could really learn adequately in less. Others are more flexible and will accept lesson by lesson arrangements.

As a general rule, be aware that those offering a free first lesson do so to attract customers and generally the teacher for that free lesson is the best salesperson. Studio and expenses for that free lesson have got to be paid by some means so of course the package they'll offer would logically include covering of those costs.

The most important thing is that you achieve what you want for your wedding and because dancing is an activity and skill, (as opposed to purchasing a product such as the wedding cake that someone else makes for you and presents as a finished item), you may achieve it faster or slower than you plan and your ideas may change as your lessons progress. What you should ideally arrange is a lesson package or arrangement that allows you some flexibility.



## What's do lessons cost?

Most good Ballroom and Latin dance teachers and studios charge a similar fee for lessons. We all keep an eye on our competitor's fees and at any given time you'll find only a few dollars difference in prices amongst us, if any.

You can always find a few teachers who are cheaper than the average but they are generally those who are teaching as a part time or extra job, are perhaps not accredited or qualified teachers, or are perhaps just trying to get more business by undercutting others.

I am not mentioning prices in this booklet simply because I don't want to rewrite it every time there is a price change. All you need to do is a quick surf of the internet to pick up an idea of current prices, or make a couple of quick phone calls. Choose your teacher / dance studio based on the points I have given you in the above sections and not on price.

You will also find some variation in the length of lessons with different studios/teachers, but make note of the following because they actually are not very different at all. Most studios say the lessons are 50 to 55 minutes lessons but some promote 1 hour lessons. The actuality is that regardless of the stated lesson time (50, 55 or 60 minutes), the actual dancing/ teaching time of any of those lessons is still 50 to 55 minutes anyway. This is because we book lessons on the hour and teach one lesson after the other. So if your lesson is for 7pm, you are greeted by the teacher at 7pm, do your lesson, then wind up with a couple of minutes of summarising, chat and confirm or arrange your next lesson. All this takes place within the one hour and the teacher is then ready for the next lesson at 8pm.

Please note that when I refer to 'most' dance studios / teachers, I am referring to DanceSport or International Ballroom studios / teachers and not to the American franchised dance studios (who run a different system with contracts and packages and are usually more expensive).

## Is a consultation necessary?

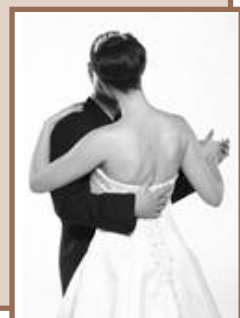
No it is not. Whatever it is you want for your wedding dance, whether it's traditional or totally weird and offbeat, it will still be an everyday matter to a true dance professional.

Discussing music and dance styles is really of little value as decisions should be made based on your skill level or lack thereof and your natural ability (or lack thereof!) to dance. The lessons are highly personalised and a good teacher will adapt movements to suit you as part of the teaching process.

If you feel you need a consultation to determine what your choices are in terms of dance, you are either limiting yourself to the teachers' vision (or limitations) or just wasting your time. Your choices are endless, just watch some movies or cruise around YouTube, find something that appeals, show the teacher or send them the link and tell them you want 'something like this'. A true professional dance teacher will casually say 'no worries, I can do that for you' and can get started on the spot.

If you want to find out if you can or are able to do the type of dance you want, a consultation won't solve that one either. You've got to get into a lesson and let the teacher commence the basics of that dance / style before they can give you an opinion or evaluation. However, once again, I will point out to you that a good teacher can adapt or simplify a dance for you, so even if you don't have the skills to tackle the exact dance you want to do, the teacher can modify steps and movements so that you can do a dance that is the same mood / character / feeling, of the dance you want.

And because of all I mentioned here, most studios / teachers don't offer consultations, because we can virtually do whatever you want, it's just a matter of getting started.



## How do we arrange lessons?

Lessons are easy to arrange by phone or email. Once you have decided where you want to have your lessons you should work out the evenings (or day times) that you could have them, the earliest time you could start and latest time you could finish and the dates of the week you would like to start. Be flexible, good studios get really busy during the wedding season and peak lesson times (such as 7 and 8pm) may be few and far between. Some studios offer lessons on weekends, some don't.

You should also note that most studios will want one lesson paid in advance at all times and that bookings cannot be changed less than 24 hours (some are 48 hours) beforehand otherwise the lesson is still charged. This is because studio time and teachers have been booked and allocated for your lesson and cannot be changed without expenses in less than 24 hours.

## My partner does not want to dance – what can I do?

Usually when someone does not want to dance it's because they a) feel stupid dancing and don't want to look foolish on their wedding day or b) they are uncomfortable about being the centre of attention with everyone watching them doing something they can't really do anyway or c) they cannot even see themselves dancing and just hate the whole idea.

A good teacher with a lot of experience with wedding dancing can usually deal with any of the above fairly easily as it is something we encounter frequently. My goal when I have couples in this position come for a lesson is to show the reluctant partner the most simple one or two steps (you only need to be able to walk to do them), and how they can look really nice with minimal fuss and effort, and I rarely fail. It is not uncommon that the reluctant partner turns into the enthusiastic partner if the lessons are structured exactly right for them.

All you can do is discuss it with your partner and try to convince them to have some lessons for your sake. I have found in these cases it is usually wise to also keep your ideas for the dance fairly simple and low key. In the worst case scenario, just convince your partner to have one lesson for your sake and if they don't like it you won't press them further.

## My partner does not want lessons and I really really do – what can I do?

This situation is not dissimilar to the one above, except their reasons are different. The most common reason is that the reluctant partner has been to a wedding where the couple have had lessons and thought that they looked awful (stiff and unnatural is usually the description given). This is unfortunate, because the reason the couple looked awkward was either that they did not have a good teacher or that they did not have enough lessons or practice.

Another common reason is that the partner who does not want lessons believes they can already dance well enough. The argument in this case is quite simple, they believe they can dance well enough, but a wedding dance is two people dancing together, it's not about how good one or the other of the partnership is, it's the combination.

The only thing you can do is ask your partner for the exact reason they don't want to have lessons and also clearly establish what they want to look like dancing at their own wedding. Then ask them if you can find a teacher who will promise to fulfil exactly what they want, if they would be prepared to at least try a lesson and see what they think of it.

If you can't figure out how to convince them, try speaking to your planned teacher about it and ask them what you could suggest to your partner.



## Choosing the music for your First Dance

You'll need a copy of your music with you at your first lesson so the teacher knows what to teach you.

There are 2 sides to choosing the song for your wedding dance: one is the song itself and whether it's a favourite or has some sentimental value to you and the other side is the song's suitability for dancing. Most couples choose a song they like and then their dance has to be whatever suits that song.

However you should consider the fact that some music is just not suitable for dancing or is very hard to dance to, and the choice of the song should be made considering both the appeal of the song and its suitability for dancing. This of course is not real easy to do if you don't know anything about dancing, so I've written a few tips for you below;

1. Cull your song choices down to 2 to 5 songs, any of which you both like, and bring those to your first dance lesson. A good teacher will be able to show you in less than 2 minutes which songs are easiest for dancing and give you realistic advice.
2. Choose music that's not real fast and not real slow. Many people believe slow music makes it easier to dance and that is FALSE. Very slow music requires more musical expression and more technical dance skill to make it look both interesting and nice. Fast music requires more practice and usually more lessons.
3. DON'T ask your DJ for suggestions, they can only tell you what's popular for weddings but they are not dancers or musicians so you want get advice relevant to dance suitability.

If you have a particular style of dance in mind (ie: Waltz, Salsa, Rumba etc), you will need to choose music of the correct tempo for that dance. (For example, Waltz cannot be danced to disco beat music, salsa cannot be danced to Foxtrot music).

Nowadays it's not important to dance a traditional Bridal Waltz, you can dance Hip Hop, Rock and Roll, Ballroom, Latin or Tango or anything you fancy, but it is important that whatever you dance you look natural, comfortable and confident together and your choice of music will determine how easy or difficult your dance will be.

As a general rule, the Slow Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango and Rumba are the most popular dances chosen for the Bridal Waltz and they are all in the category of easy dances to learn (although Tango requires a bit more work and practice to make it look really good). If you want something more upbeat, the Salsa, Viennese Waltz, Swing or Jive, Cha Cha and Samba are amongst your choices.

At the end of the day however your choice of music is entirely up to you and a good teacher can work with just about anything from the old classics to R'n'B, pop, rock, even heavy metal.

If you want to explore some music created specifically for Ballroom dancing, have a look at the website: [www.dancesportinternational.com.au](http://www.dancesportinternational.com.au). They are a specialist music supplier and have hundreds of albums that are specially recorded for Ballroom and Latin dancing. Click on any album and the page will show you the name of the dance for each song and you can listen to previews of each. Even if you don't like any of the music, listening to the previews will give you an idea of the type of music for each different type of dance as regards speed and mood and it may help you choose your song.

You will need to cull through them a bit because Ballroom dancing is popular with all ages, so there is lots of quite old fashioned music as well as lots of modern music and there's no system of showing which is which.

Note that with the specialist dance music the title of a song does not mean that the same song by it's original artist will suit dancing. Some do, but many of the songs have been slightly altered from their original so that they are suited for dancing.



**Good Luck !** I hope this information has been helpful and I hope your wedding day is everything that you have dreamed of.

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## **About Fandango Dance & Wedding Dance Sydney**

Fandango Dance is a Sydney based dance studio specialising in modern social dancing for single and partnered adults of all ages and children from the age of five. The dance styles taught include International style Latin and Ballroom, Argentine Tango and Salsa styles plus Hip Hop, Funk and various styles for solo dancers.

Wedding Dance Sydney is a sister company of Fandango Dance and the companies share a stable of professional coaches who specialise in wedding dance tuition assisting hundreds of couples prepare for their wedding day every year.

They teach all styles of dance from Waltz to Swing, Tango and Latin styles, Jazz to Hip Hop to Disco and everything in between, including non structured freestyle dance.

All teachers have a minimum of 10 years professional dance and teaching experience, some have over 35 years experience and all have a background of structured formal dance training and have danced since they were children.

And the teachers all dance and teach dance because it is their passion and joy and sharing that passion is so incredibly rewarding and enriching to both their students and themselves.

It is with confidence that these companies say that they definitely can teach you to dance and can definitely help you make your wedding dance the one that YOU want and a very memorable part of your wedding day.

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