

Tango Fundamentals (Level 1) - Course Syllabus

The course aims to provide a solid foundation in the key elements of Argentine Tango in an enjoyable sociable environment. The Autumn Term (first ten weeks) concentrates on how to lead and follow the fundamental steps of Tango to enable you to quickly get dancing. Once completed you will be able to move on to follow the full Level 1 syllabus.

Course Pre-requisite: The start of the course is open to everyone and no prior experience of dancing is required. If you wish to join the course part way through, please contact the course teachers via the Suffolk Tango website.

During the full course you will learn:

- how to lead or follow this improvised dance (there are no long set sequences)
- how to execute turns, pivots, ochos and cross steps
- to develop musicality in the dance, and how to adjust the elements of Tango to suit the different musical styles found on a typical Buenos Aires dance floor.

We will focus on developing skills so that you can enjoy dancing at a Tango social event (called a *Milonga*) and to be able improvise the dance with any partner – wherein lies the pleasure of dancing Tango.

There will be time to practice what you have learnt both in the class and also at optional prácticas (practice sessions) on Sunday evenings at Martlesham Leisure.

Autumn Term (10 weeks)

What is Argentine Tango? Understanding the improvised nature of the dance (the difference between show dancing and social dancing) and the music, which makes it so different from other dances.

The Connection: How to 'connect' with your partner and its importance for leading and following.

Walking:

- Walking in 'two-track' with your partner in an open embrace ('parallel system').
- Leading and following side-steps.
- Pausing at the end of musical phrases to help meld your dance with the music
- More advanced walking – moving in and out of 'four-track'; walking in 'cross system' – 'three-track'.
- Developing and understanding the importance of dissociation and spirals in the body.

The Check Step: A rebound step danced in 'double-time' to the music.

Pivots: Rotating on axis using the torsion in ones' own body.

Ocho: A figure of eight step using pivots forward or backwards in the line of dance.

The Cross: Returning to "two-track" with the cross step for the follower, from 'four-track' and 'three-track'.

Milonga Etiquette: the simple "dos and don'ts" to observe at a Tango social event. Note that the Autumn Term concludes with a special X-mas Milonga for the course attendees.

Spring Term (10 weeks)

Walking: Revisiting the connection, the rock step and walking in half time.

Half Turns: Half turns on the open and closed side of the embrace and the importance of understanding the axis of rotation.

From Half Turns to Ochos: The forward ocho in parallel system on the closed side of the embrace.

From Half Turns to Full Turns (Giros): Adding a joining step to the half turn to make a full turn.

Dancing to a Milonga: An introduction to the basics of dancing to the fast-paced, syncopated *Milonga* rhythm.

Summer Term (10 weeks)

The Traspie: Understanding the traspie and other double-time steps and how they can be used to add musicality to the dance.

Dancing to a Vals: An introduction on how to modify your Tango repertoire to meld with the more lyrical and livelier waltz rhythm; modifying double-time steps to the first and second beats of the bar (dancing the "1-2").

Turns from the Side Step: Quarter turns, half turns and forward ochos initiated from the side step.

The Ocho Cortado: An interrupted (cut) turn.

Close Embrace: Ahead of the Level 2 Course, a gentle introduction to close embrace, for those that wish to explore this.

Revision: A recap of the key learning points from the course.

Note that the order in which the above topics are covered in the Spring and Summer terms may vary slightly from year to year.