

Guide to Line Dance Level Definitions



Guide to Line Dance Level Definitions

First edition v2.0 | Published December 2014

FORWARD

This guide has been compiled by Linedancer Magazine working in close collaboration with experienced and knowledgeable dance professionals, social Line dancers, instructors and choreographers.

It provides a simple guide to help identify the appropriate choreography to form the basis of the five commonly used line dance levels – Absolute Beginner, Beginner, Improver, Intermediate and Advanced.

Additional contributions, suggestions and recommendations are welcome.

It is **the content of the choreography** and **not the experience or ability of the dancer** that determines the level of a dance.

LINEDANCER MAGAZINE

Clare House, 166 Lord Street, Southport, PR9 0QA, UK

Telephone: +44 (0) 1704 392 300

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of this Guide are to:

- Create an acceptable method for grading the appropriate level for social Line dance routines.
- Provide a reference for choreographers when grading new dances.
- Assist dance teachers when selecting appropriate dances to teach.
- Avoid dances being categorised incorrectly and eliminate confusion.
- Establish the grading criteria for dance nomination in the Crystal Boot Awards.
- Help establish a consistent and accepted formula for grading social choreography.

CONTENTS

1. Choreography content at each level	5
2. Recommended steps at each level.	7
3. Suggested number of counts at each level.	10
4. Tags - Restart - Phrased Routines	10
5. Dance Rhythms	11
6. Turning Steps	11
7. Beats Per Minute (BPM)	12
8. Key Objectives	13

ABSOLUTE BEGINNER LEVEL

This classification refers to a line dance routine that is choreographed to suit those who have had absolutely no previous dance experience.

The routines will contain a short sequence of easy steps (Standing Steps e.g. touches, sways, heel digs, kicks, stomps etc.) plus easy Travelling Steps e.g. forward, backwards, sideways).

Generally at this level choreography should be without syncopations, tags, restarts and would have no more than one turn - perhaps one 1/4 or one 1/2 turn. They will be moderately paced and use a strong 4/4 beat or 3/4 beat. Ideally they would have no more than 16 counts although some routines with mirror image steps may increase the count without increasing the steps used.

An AB routine will give a very basic understanding of how to dance different steps to different music. Those absolutely new to dancing should be able to perform an AB routine after brief instructions without stress or panic. It is at this stage that correct dance terminology and dance floor etiquette should be introduced.

BEGINNER LEVEL

This classification is referring to a line dance routine that will build upon the skills learned at the Absolute Beginner level. Routines will be suitable for those who have some previous dance experience.

Beginner level choreography will introduce additional step patterns and may use up to two turns for example two 1/4 pivot turns in sequence or two 1/4 turns at the end of a travelling pattern e.g. chasse or grapevine. Routines may also include different rhythms like Waltz or Cha Cha and the tempos may range from slow to moderate. Routines at this level will show how different steps flow one into the other and provide some basic styling principles - looking up and body posture.

At this stage, cross body movement such as cross rocks and weaves could be introduced. Generally dance routines at this level would not be more than 32 - 48 counts but may contain more than one direction change as in two 1/2 turns in opposite directions.

Routines will use different rhythms and dancers should begin to feel the music and gain self confidence.

IMPROVER LEVEL

This classification is referring to choreography that will assume some previous dance experience and basic skills. Improver level dances will introduce additional step patterns, such as Electric Kicks, Rolling Grapevines, Ronde Sweeps, Swivets, and Figure Eight turns. Syncopation like Anchor, Coaster, Mambo, Sailor, steps will be used together with more turning techniques. At this level choreography will use various rhythms and tempos. For example Samba, Tango, Swing, Rumba reflecting different timing and styling.

Dance routines at this level could be up to 64 counts and will almost certainly have several turns. If not already achieved, dancers would be introduced to routines that feature tags and restarts.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

This classification will feature dance routines suitable for experienced dancers. Those who have mastered a comprehensive range of step patterns and movements. An Intermediate routine is likely to feature interesting step combinations, pauses, syncopations, body movements, timing variations and styling.

Routines could embrace any amount of turning techniques and run up to 64 counts as normal but, at this level, counts can be considerably more as routines may be phrased to the music and contain tags and bridges.

This is the most popular dance level. It is where experienced social dances feel the most comfortable. It offers a wide variety of dance routines that should satisfy most dances and often feature new challenges that will be fun as well as rewarding.

ADVANCED LEVEL

Choreography at this level contains the full spectrum of step patterns in any combination and will embrace all tempos and rhythms. The routines are likely to include complex dance moves that push the boundaries.

Advanced level dances can range from a quite short routines, to very complicated, lengthy or totally phrased choreography.

Invariably they will feature a range of turns and direction changes and a host of step patterns all of which will require good technique and co-ordination.

Choreography at this level will be challenging for most people but very satisfying when mastered. Dances can go beyond a social dance routine and feel and look like an accomplishment dance performance.

ABSOLUTE BEGINNER LEVEL

Standing Steps	Travelling Steps	Turning Steps
Brush	Stroll	1/4 Pivot
Clap	March	1/2 Pivot
Drag	Prissy Walk	Waltz 1/4 Turn
Fan	Diva Walk	Waltz 1/2 Turn
Heel Flick	Hustle Walk	Grapevine 1/4 Turn
Heel Bounce	Hip Walk	Slow Chassé 1/4 Turn
Heel Dig	Fish Tail	
Heel Hook	Heel Strut	
Heel Split	Toe Strut	
Heel Tap	Grapevine	
Hip Bump	Slow Chassé	
Hip Rock	Waltz Forward	
Hip Thrust	Waltz Backward	
Hitch	Waltz Twinkle	
Hold		
Hop		
Kick		
Jump		
Monterey (without Turn)		
Slap (hands to hips/thighs)		
Scuff		
Shimmy		
Slide		
Step Touch		
K. Step		
Stomp		
Sway		
Swivel		
Toe Point		
Toe Touch		
Toe Tap		

Full descriptions of all the dance steps indicated here will be available on the new Linedancer website which is launching soon.

BEGINNER LEVEL (INCLUDING PREVIOUS AB LEVEL)

Standing Steps	Travelling Steps	Turning Steps
Charleston Kick	Camel Walk	Camel Walk 1/4 Turn
Charleston Step	Chassé	Camel Walk 1/2 Turn
Cha Cha Cha	Lock Step	Chassé 1/4 Turn
Chug	Running Lock Step	Heel Bounce 1/4 Turn
Coaster Step	Ramble	Jazz Box 1/4 Turn
Electrick Kick	Shuffle Step	Jump Turn 1/4 Turn
Heel Switches	Weave	Mambo 1/4 Turn
Hip Roll		Rock 1/4 Turn
Jazz Box		Rumba Box 1/4 Turn
Jumping Jack		Sailor 1/4 Turn
Kick Ball Change		
Kick Ball Touch		
Kick Ball Point		
Kick Ball Step		
Kick Ball Cross		
Kick Out Out		
Mambo Step		
Sailor Step		
Rocking Chair		
Rock Steps		
Rumba Box		
Slap (hand to heel or instep)		
Shimmy		
Scot		
Toe Switches		

Full descriptions of all the dance steps indicated here will be available on the new Linedancer website which is launching soon.

IMPROVER LEVEL (INCLUDING ALL PREVIOUS LEVELS)

Standing Steps	Travelling Steps	Turning Steps
Anchor Step	Extended Weave	Chassé Turn
Boogie Walk	Hitch Ball Slide	Cross Unwind Turn
Heel Grind	Rolling Grapevine	Figure Eight Full Turn
Knee Pop	Samba Cross (Cross Shuffle)	Hinge Turn
Lunge	Skater Step	Monterey Turn
Night Club Two-Step (Basic)		Reverse Turn
Ronde Sweep		Reverse Unwind Turn
Scissor Step		Twist Turn
Sugar Foot Swivel		
Swivet		

Full descriptions of all the dance steps indicated here will be available on the new Linedancer website which is launching soon.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (INCLUDING ALL PREVIOUS LEVELS)

Standing Steps	Travelling Steps	Turning Steps
Heel Jack	Mash Potato	Full turn
Vaudeville Step	Dorothy Step	Full turn +
		Hesitation Turn
		Pencil Turn
		Spiral Turn

Full descriptions of all the dance steps indicated here will be available on the new Linedancer website which is launching soon.

ADVANCED LEVEL (INCLUDING ALL PREVIOUS LEVELS)

Standing Steps	Travelling Steps	Turning Steps
Ankle Rock	Roger Rabbit	Spiral Lock
Apple Jack	Moon Walk	Spiral Hitch
Body Roll	Worm	
Running Man		
Snake Hips		
Drop Recover		

Full descriptions of all the dance steps indicated here will be available on the new Linedancer website which is launching soon.

3 | SUGGESTED NUMBER OF COUNTS AT EACH LEVEL

Counts	AB	BEG	IMP	INT	ADV
Common Time	16 (32)	32 (48)	64	No limit	No limit
Waltz Time	24	36	48	No limit	No limit

4 | TAGS, RESTARTS AND PHRASED ROUTINES

Construction	AB	BEG	IMP	INT	ADV
Tags	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Restarts	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Phrased	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

Rhythm	AB	BEG	IMP	INT	ADV
1 2 3 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 & 2 3 & 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 2 3 & 4	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 & 2 3 4	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 2 & 3 4	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
1 2 3, 4 &	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
1a 2a 3a 4	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
1 2 3 (SLOW)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1 2 3 (FAST)	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

6 | TURNS

Turns	AB	BEG	IMP	INT	ADV
PIVOT 1/4 TURN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PIVOT 1/2 TURN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WALK AROUND	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BALANCE TURN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GRAPEVINE TURN	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
CHASSE TURN	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
PADDLE TURN	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
JAZZ BOX TURN	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
MONTEREY TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
HINGE TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
REVERSE TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
UNWIND TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
SAILOR TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
FIGURE 8 TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
SAMBA TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
RUMBA BOX TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
FULL FORWARD TURN	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
PENCIL TURN	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
SPIN TURN	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
SPIRAL TURN	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

This table indicates 1/4 and 1/2 turns as specified. Other turns of varying degrees as appropriate.

7 | BEATS PER MINUTE

BPM	AB	BEG	IMP	INT	ADV
SLOW 68 - 100	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MEDIUM 100 - 160	POSSIBLY	✓	✓	✓	✓
FAST 160 - 200+	UNLIKELY	POSSIBLY	✓	✓	✓

AB LEVEL

Absolute Beginners to line dance often find it confusing and difficult to begin with. Instruction should focus on simple repeating routines with no more one basic 1/4 or one 1/2 turn. Pupils will need to grasp weight change and timing values. They should begin to gain self-confidence and enjoy the lessons.

At the second stage of AB the teaching methods and dance floor etiquette should be understood and correct terminology should be used. As more routines and new steps are introduced dancers will gain a good sense of timing, rhythm, and spacial awareness. Before moving to the next stage dancers should be able to cope with direction changes and feel a sense of achievement.

BEGINNER LEVEL

At Beginner Level introduction to slightly longer routines at a moderate pace is acceptable. Simple shuffle steps, cross body rock and the chasse can be introduced. Dancers should begin to travel with the routines as routines can include more travelling steps.

At the end of this stage dancers should be familiar and confident with all AB and BEG step patterns. They will have enjoyed the different routines and be eager to progress as their confidence grows.

IMPROVER LEVEL

At Improver Level dancers will be ready to cope with longer routines and additional rhythms which will require a variety of new step patterns. This is an exciting period for dancer as the learning curve accelerates, confidence grows and pleasure is heightened. At this stage short but obvious tags and restarts can be introduced.

An experienced Improver will be able to cope with most steps and feel confident performing a variety of turning options as well as several directional changes in one routine. By this stage dancers will be able to hear and feel the difference in dance rhythms and will understand and cope with tags and restarts.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Moving to the Intermediate stage there will be very few new step patterns to learn. Dancers will be comfortable with most rhythms and tempos and be capable of performing dances with multiple tags and restarts and phased routines. The desire to improve styling and technique will become instinctive.

By this level dancers are verging on Advance routines and are capable of picking up and performing most routines up to this level with ease. They will have little difficulty with new step patterns and will cope with multiple directions changes and turning options.

ADVANCED LEVEL

Finally, Advanced Level dancers will be at the top of their ability. They will be capable of performing advanced routines and complex step patterns in any combination of rhythm or tempo. Most will have developed their own style and will prove excellent role models remembering that they too were once Absolute Beginners.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the help and support from many dancers in the preparation of this Guide.



© 2014 Linedancer Magazine. All rights reserved.