

# What to expect for your first few one-dance competitions

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One-dance competitions are especially for new dancers or those who have never competed before. So everyone is probably just as lost. Listed below are some tips to prepare you for your first few one-dance competitions.

1. **Registration.** Registration for competitions can be done through RpMerleon Studios. Most competitions usually charge a fee to take part, typically around S\$60 per couple. Typically, there will be one-dance competitions for **Waltz, Quickstep, Tango, Slow foxtrot, Cha Cha, Rumba, Jive and Samba.**
2. **Routine.** One-dance competitions have a **restricted number of variations that you can dance.** Most of these will be in your basic class routines. You will probably not be able to use much of your intermediate class routines as these may be out of the restricted variations. This is done so that every couple dances more or less the same variations, and emphasis is based on quality of execution of the basic steps, rather than fancy routines.
3. **Preparation.** While all of us are very busy, preparing for a competition does entail some time commitment. **At the minimum, at least come down during the Saturday practice nights** to practice. If there a **competition group classes**, do try to join these as extra tips will be given in these classes. For those really keen, private lessons are the best way to prepare.
4. **Dressing.** For ballroom ladies should have a **simple gown or party dress**, which allows proper movement. For ballroom gentlemen, **black pants, white shirt with a tie or bow tie** (bow tie preferred). For Latin ladies should have some **sharp looking outfit.** For Latin gentlemen should have **black pants with a tight polo neck T-shirt.**
5. **Shoes.** For competition, you should **wear proper dancing shoes**, which can be obtained from RpMerleon Studios. Make sure the shoes are nice and clean.
6. **Collection of number tags.** All competitors will be assigned a number tag. This is normally given on the day of the competition itself. This number tag is to be pin on the man's shirt back. Make sure you remember your number, as the **competition announcements will all make reference to your number and not your names.**
7. **Rehearsal and warm up.** There will usually be a rehearsal. Do take the opportunity to **try out your steps and plan your dance on a new unfamiliar floor.** Do some **stretching and loosening up.** Warm up enough on the dance floor so that you **sweat a little, but not so much that you are tired out.** Being warmed up is the best way to combat stage fright.
8. **Sequence of events.** Depending on the number of people taking part in a respective category, there may be a few rounds to dance. Typically, there may be **heats, quarterfinals, semi finals and finals** (down to six couples). You start off at the heats, if you do well; you go to the next round and so on.
9. **On the floor.** When your event starts and your number is called, move quickly to the dance floor with your **partner in hand.** Choose a spot that is near to the judges and that is not so crowded with other competitors. If the floor is very much larger than the place you normally practice, then start nearer towards the centre of the floor, rather than at the edge or corner of the dance floor, or you might not reach pass the centre line at the end of your groups. You need to quickly decide at which point of the routine are you going to start. Once the music starts, take a bit of time to listen to the beats before dancing. And you do not stop dancing until the music stops. Do a quick bow to the audience and walk off the floor with your partner in hand. Your priorities will be: timing, footwork, posture and movement. Typically, **most one-dance competitors don't have much knowledge of floor craft** and hence collisions or blockages may be encountered. If someone bangs into you, just smile and continue. If you get blocked, use floor craft to move around. If you really can't then just wait till the couple moves away before continuing (but not too long). Typically, most couples don't dance as well during a competition compared to dancing back at the studio (due to unfamiliar surroundings, stage fright, collisions and blockages etc); this is to be EXPECTED.
10. **Mentality.** When deciding to take part in a competition, go in with the mentality that you are go in to get experience, learn and improve yourself. If you happen to do well, it's a bonus. **Never take part in a competition with the mentality that you must win.** By all means go and try your best, but don't put that kind of pressure on yourself and your partner. Pressure is counter productive as you will likely to tense up, resulting in not being able to move as well. Whatever the result, **show sportsmanship by congratulating other couples with a genuine smile** and warm handshake.