

## **Get the most out of a dance class**

Let's face it...most quality dance classes aren't cheap. Strive to get the most for your money by using every dance class as an opportunity to improve your dance skills and techniques. The following tips will ensure that you have a successful dance class every time.

### **Arrive Early**

Plan to arrive to class 10 to 15 minutes early to give yourself plenty of time to prepare and warm up. Most dance teachers appreciate students who are on time and ready to work. Get into the habit of arriving about fifteen minutes early and use the time to stretch. If you happen to arrive late, try to enter the studio quietly to avoid disrupting the rest of the class.

### **Save Big Meals for Later**

Don't eat a heavy meal right before you go to class. Dancing on a full stomach is never a smart idea. Have a small, high-energy snack before class instead. Good choices for pre-class snacks include fresh fruit, yogurt, nuts or dried fruit.

### **Wear the Right Clothes**

Go to class in the proper dance attire, as specified by your teacher. Many dance instructors have strict dress codes. Always wear dance clothes that fit your body well. A leotard that is too tight in the shoulders or too loose in the bottom will certainly disrupt your dancing. Also make certain that your shoes are the correct size.

### **Fix Your Hair**

Take the time to secure your hair, preferably up and out of your eyes and face. Ballet teachers usually prefer that hair be worn in a tight bun. If your hair is too short to be pulled up into a bun, try a tight ponytail instead. Make sure to secure bangs away from your face.

### **Clear Your Mind**

Before you enter the room, clear your mind of any outside issues or concerns. Many people find dancing to be a stress-reliever...use your class time to relax and clear your mind. Instead of focusing on your worries, concentrate on your dancing.

### **Claim Your Space**

When you enter the studio, find a spot to stand with plenty of room to move and stretch out freely. Many dancers arrive early to claim the best spots, usually in the front row. Wherever you choose to stand, make sure you can see and hear the teacher.

### **Be Sensitive to Injuries**

If you have an injury, don't overdo it. A sore muscle is vulnerable to further injury. Realize that your injury will not last forever, but forcing it will probably prolong your recovery time. Always listen to your body...if you feel like you probably shouldn't attempt that split jump, don't. Give yourself a much-needed break.

### **Learn at Your Own Pace**

Everyone learns to dance at different speeds. Don't compare yourself to others in your class. Some people just seem to catch on faster than others. Ask questions if you are unclear about a step. Do your best, smile and have fun!