

HEY GUYS – HERE’S HOW TO GET INVITED FOR A DANCE!



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In a lot of our social dance scenes, the expectation is that men should ask women to dance. Some have that more engrained than others (think tango), but in most Latin scenes that’s the general rule. Men will do most of the asking.

I’ll tell you right off the bat – I don’t agree with that. First of all, when we define roles in dance according to “men” and “women” then we set ourselves up to exclude some people. Secondly, in the scenes I was part of as a beginner dancer (ballroom and lindy hop), I was always encouraged to feel free to ask people to dance. And I did! Sure, it could be scary at times, but it was something everyone was doing.



"With you? No." Ouch.

I also don't think it's fair to put the burden of rejection on men. Many of you know by now I don't

<http://socialdancecommunity.com/what-it-means-when-they-say-no/>, saying "No, thank you" to a dance should be vilified, but I also recognize that it can be hard to be on the receiving end. Why should the guys have to be the ones always pursuing partners and risking being turned down?

But the topic of this article is some advice for men who would like to have partners come and ask them. Read on regardless of your gender, because most of this is pretty universal! And hey, it's always nice to be asked.

1. Smile!

This is the quickest way to get more invitations. You don't have to keep a grin plastered on your face. Just show reasonably good spirits. You don't want to scare anybody off, right?



2. Clean Up

It comes down to two things: smelling nice and having a reasonably dry shirt. Ladies have to deal with some pretty high standards of hygiene when they come out to a party. It makes sense that they don't want that to be messed up by someone they ask for a dance. I know I have complained when someone's shirt leaves a wet mark on the front of my dress!

Let's be real - we all sweat. If this is a particular struggle for you, bring a small bag to the dance with a small towel, some deodorant, and a few extra shirts. When you feel your shirt getting wet (or when you notice people giving you some extra space), duck into the restroom for a chance to freshen up and switch to the next shirt. There's no shame in it; in fact, you're likely to get appreciative comments if anyone even notices that you've changed.

3. Dress Appropriately

At a minimum, wear shoes that you can easily move in. Ladies are rightfully afraid to dance with men wearing heavy shoes or boots – many of us wear shoes that expose much of our feet! (And all of us have stories of abraded skin and crushed toes.) If you



have dance shoes, it's worth the extra effort to bring them along in a shoe bag and change into them at the dance. If not, or if you're dancing at a bar, try some lightweight dress shoes or sneakers.

Of course, looking sharp never hurts. That could mean anything from a fitted tee and jeans to a jacket and tie, depending on the context or dance style. Given how much time I put into getting ready for a party, I enjoy inviting partners who have clearly made an effort as well.

4. Be Approachable

If you want to be asked to dance, you need to seem available. Sitting at the bar with your drink won't help. Neither will having your eyes glued to your phone. It can also be intimidating for women to approach you if you're always hanging out with your girlfriend. That's not to say you shouldn't spend time with her at the dance, but ladies won't be likely to interrupt your date.

Try to angle your body towards the dance floor. If 50% or more of your chest is facing the dancing, and especially if your eyes are on the floor, you will seem ready to join the dancing. Of course you should take time to have a drink and chat with people on the side! However, especially when one song is ending and another beginning, you want to seem open to being asked for a dance.

5. Get to Know People

The number one thing that will make a lady ask you to dance is if she knows you. That doesn't necessarily have to mean that you've danced together before. Strike up conversations with those who aren't dancing at that moment. If you're new to the scene or just visiting, let people know that you'd appreciate being introduced to other dancers. Particularly in a community-oriented scene, you just need a simple "This is ___ who's visiting us today for the first time" and you'll be welcomed and invited for dances.

If you're going to be spending time in one scene more consistently, it's worth investing time to get to know people regardless of their gender or preferred dance

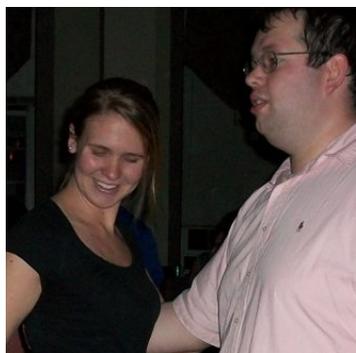
role. Ask people about their favorite spots to eat nearby, what draws them to this style of dance, what music they'd recommend to you – anything but the standard “What do you do for a living?” or “How long have you been dancing?”



When people feel that you are part of their community, they are far more likely to ask you to dance and encourage others to dance with you as well. Plus, it's hardly ever a bad idea to make new friends!

6. Be a Good Social Dancer

Obviously this one takes the most time and effort. Don't be confused, though – I don't mean that you need to have a certain level or know a bunch of moves. As long as you can do the basics well, you have the potential to be a good social dancer.



Ladies keep an eye out for men who make their partners smile. They appreciate leaders who are present and paying attention to their partners. That means not using a woman to show off and not being too aggressive in how they lead their partners. Followers deserve to feel safe and valued in the dance. As in so many areas of life, it's not what you do but how you do it that counts.

It also helps if you show you're willing to dance with all kinds of women. Ladies fear rejection just as much as guys do, and we carry plenty of insecurities, too. If you look happy when you're dancing with women young and old, fit or not, inexperienced to pro, then you open yourself up to a lot more invitations.

Plus, I have it on good authority that certain guys will happily ask other men to dance as long as they've seen them dancing with guys in the past. Not as a comedic stunt, but with genuine interest in leading or following. I'm not a man, but I've got enough of a reputation a leader that men will seek me out at kizomba festivals to ask me to lead them, because they want to work on their following. If you're willing to lead guys or are interested in exploring following, you'll have that many more opportunities to be invited to dance.

Thanks to all of the dancers who contributed to this post by sharing their thoughts on [my Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/racheldreamsindance/posts/10100972497404277)

[post\(https://www.facebook.com/racheldreamsindance/posts/10100972497404277\)](https://www.facebook.com/racheldreamsindance/posts/10100972497404277).

Sorrel Holliday wrote [an article](http://socialdancecommunity.com/how-to-get-men-to-ask-you-to-dance/) with some advice for ladies on how to get invited to dance.
