

Getting started in Belly Dance



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Is there an age to start belly dancing?

You have become interested in belly dancing, but you do not know where to start from. This guide will give you some ideas.

There is no age limit to start belly dancing. Some women, brought up in Arabic cultures, start as children by copying older women dancing. Other women start even in their seventies; there is really no limit, as belly dance is a type of exercise perfectly suited to the feminine body and does not force the body into unnatural positions. Of course, you need to learn according to your fitness level, listen to your body and slow down or stop if you feel too tired.

Is there a perfect body shape for belly dancing?

No, there is not. Every woman tall, short, thin or big can belly dance.

Looking for a belly dance teacher

Nowadays it has become easier to find a belly dance teacher, as belly dance has increased in popularity. There are various places where you can look for a belly dance teacher:

- The internet – just go to one of the main search engines and type in the name of the place you live in, or an area nearby and the words belly dance or belly dance teacher. In alternative to the words belly dance you can use: Arabic dance, rakhs sharki, oriental dance, Turkish dance, Egyptian dance, folkloric, tribal or baladi dance. You can also look at our [page on belly dance classes, clubs and groups](#), which is updated regularly. Also, you can join a [belly dance chat group](#), such as ours, and ask the other members of the forum if they know of a good belly dance teacher in your area.
- Your local community – quite often, some shops (especially those selling natural products) have some space on their window or on a wall, displaying ads or leaflets for local classes such as yoga and other activities, including belly dance.
- Cultural centres or dance centres – some cultural centres or dance centres (like, for example, Dance City in Newcastle, UK) offer belly dance classes.
- Word of mouth – ask around if somebody knows any good belly dance teacher in the area. If you are lucky, this is sometimes the best way to find out.
- Arabic restaurants – some Arabic (Egyptian, Lebanese, Turkish) restaurants have regular belly dance performances. Often performers are also teachers or if they are not, they surely know some belly dance teachers. You can ask the dancer, or maybe she will herself advertise belly dance classes.

Learning belly dancing from videos or books

I think that the best way to learn belly dancing is through a teacher, as she will be able to correct you if you adopt a wrong posture. However, videos and books are a very good source of additional information. If you are a beginner there is plenty of videos with basic moves available. You can find them easily on Amazon. Also, you can check our page on [belly dance books for some ideas](#).

If you are learning from a belly dance video, make sure you do not rush through to the end, but take your time learning not more than four moves at a time. Also, watch the same move several times, as every time you will notice things you did not notice the first time. Watch out for every detail, such as the movement of the hands and arms, the belly dancer's posture, where she places her weight and listen carefully to what she says.

What to wear during a belly dance class

In order to learn belly dancing, you do not need to buy expensive gear. You need to wear:

- Comfortable gym trousers (or yoga trousers, stretch leggings or jazz trousers) or a large skirt.
- A top, such as a sport bra, or anything that allows you to move in comfort and that gives adequate support. It is better if the top is cut short above the midriff, so the teacher will be able to check your torso movements better.
- No shoes - the best thing is to dance barefooted but if you prefer you can use hermes dance sandals or non-slippery socks.
- A hip scarf. It can be just a normal scarf with fringes, or a belly dance hip scarf with coins or beads. You can buy it online, in some stalls or shops selling Egyptian items or from your teacher.

Finding belly dance music

If you wish to practice belly dancing on your own, you will need some Arabic music. You can buy belly dance CD's online, ask your teacher or buy them from stalls or shops specialised in selling Egyptian, Turkish, Lebanese or northern African items. Also, big music shops usually have a section reserved to world music, where you can find some belly dance music CDs.

This article was written by Valeria Lo Iacono, who writes for World Belly Dance in addition to, [the Korean Business Portal](#).