

a *Welcome!!* a

To Oriental Dance with Andalee

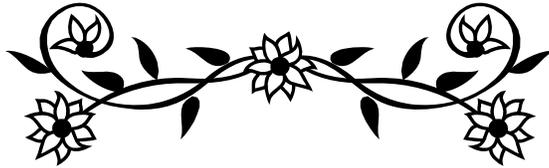
Thank you for joining this class. I hope this class will meet your expectations and that you will be able to open yourself up to the joy of belly dancing.

Belly dance is the Americanized term for Middle Eastern dance. Among the genre there are many forms. Each individual can pull from the various forms and make the dance their own. In this class we will learn Egyptian Oriental dance (Raqs Sharqi in Arabic). This form of belly dancing is most well-known style. The other styles of belly dance are American Cabaret, Tribal, Fusion, Turkish, Lebanese, and Folk, among many more. The basics that you will learn of Egyptian Oriental dance can be used in all the other versions of Middle Eastern dance. You must have a solid foundation of the dance before you can create choreographies, experiment with different styles, and perform in front of an audience.

Here are the core elements that you will learn in this class:

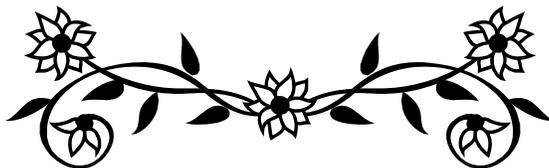
- 1) **Posture.** Correct posture is essential for any dance form, especially Oriental dance. You will find that once you learn how to align your spine properly, you will be able to access specific isolations easier.
- 2) **Isolations.** An isolation is a series of muscle movements or contractions that look like they occur independently of other body parts. In fact, this is slightly misleading as you often have to use many muscles to form one isolation. It often involves counter-acting muscles. The different types of isolation occur in the head, shoulders, chest and hips.
- 3) **Traveling steps.** Most Middle Eastern traveling steps are quite simple and they allow you to float from one area to another.
- 4) **Layering.** Layering movement is the most dynamic part of Oriental dance. Layering can involve traveling while performing an isolation, shimmying while performing an isolation, or moving seamlessly from one isolation to another.

Everything else, like combinations, choreography and improvisation come together after you learn the four basic elements.



Class information

1. You must sign in. There is a notebook at the front desk for you to check in at. If there is no attendant at the front desk, please sign yourself in.
2. Payment is due at the beginning of the session.
3. You may want to call or e-mail if you have to miss class. This is not required, but it will be appreciated. Refunds are not given for missed classes.
4. Please provide me with an e-mail and phone number in case I need to cancel class. I will try to arrange for a substitute if I have to miss class.
5. Turn off your cell phone ringer, or turn down the volume if you must keep it on.
6. Ask questions as they come up or after class. Try not to ask classmates around you questions.
7. Let me know if you have any health problems that may affect your ability to perform certain movements. Consult your health care provider before starting any new physical activity.
8. Have respect for the instructor, fellow classmates and the art of Middle Eastern dance.
9. You may perform choreographies that I teach, if you give credit to the choreographer (me). Please do not teach others choreographies that you did not create yourself. Choreographies are copyrighted material.
10. Please feel free to contact me. I am always willing to listen to your concerns, and talk to you openly and honestly. If something needs to be clarified, feel free to ask. I can be reached at andalee.oriental@gmail.com or at 919-923-8801.



The successful Oriental dance practice

Practice: verb 1) to repeat something to do better. 2) To do something as custom or habit. noun 1) Repetition in order to improve. 2) Usual pattern of action. 3) Performance of religion, profession, or customs.

Each class or practice time should involve a basic structure. Structure is essential to improving. If no outline is followed your dance will be undisciplined, sloppy, and you may become frustrated about your lack of results.

- 1) Make sure you are healthy enough to dance. Consult a health care provider if you have any questions about your health. If you are ill, tired or sore you may hurt yourself. Oriental dance should not hurt your body. Yes, you may get sore from time to time as your muscles become stronger, but it should never be painful. Listen to your body, acknowledge what it is telling you and decide whether or not you want to continue.
- 2) Posture. Keep your spine straight. Do not overextend or crunch anything. Stay lifted and controlled throughout your torso. Slightly curl or tuck your tail bone under you. Pull your shoulders back and down, without arching your back. Keep your head and chin lifted. Use your ears as a guide; the tips of your ears should be pointing straight up. Your knees should be soft and slightly bent. Nothing is locked, stiff or hard. Throughout your dance practice (or even your day) take a second to check your posture.
- 3) Warm up every time. Warming up increases blood flow and conditions your muscles for movements. Spend 10-30 minutes stretching, breathing and moving your body before you start to dance.
- 4) Become present. Understand why you are here and what your goals are. Are you dancing today for exercise, pleasure, both, or some other reason? Greet the current practice with an open mind. Do not tell yourself that you can't do something. Try it and see what happens. Staying positive goes a long way.
- 5) Make use of technique drills. Drills help to refine technique and create muscle memory. Drills are repetitions of specific movement (usually isolations), which allow you to improve range, speed, angle and most importantly, how precise you can make your movement.
- 6) Dance! If you are in class I will lead the dancing either by introducing new moves and concepts, teaching combinations or choreography, or by leading an improvisation. If you are practicing at home you can use this time to play around with creating your own combinations or choreography or just

freestyle dancing. You could work on specific moves you want to master or you could try experimenting.

- 7) Listen to the music. Oriental dance is the physical manifestation of Middle Eastern music. Your body interprets the music and a successful Oriental dancer becomes one with the music. It can be hard for a Westerner to really understand and interpret Middle Eastern music properly. The timing and rhythms are different than American and European music. It may help to practice belly dance to music that you are familiar with. It also helps to listen to Middle Eastern music without dancing to it at first. Sit down with it and listen actively, then get up and try to dance to it. The more music you listen to, the easier it will be to interpret the nuances and themes.
- 8) Take notes. Use a dance journal, notebook or any type of device to remember important lessons. If you have an "ah ha!" moment and something comes together for you, you may not remember it later. Write down anything from movements, choreography, music you want to buy for yourself or just how you are feeling. Taking notes is a great way to make a permanent record of your progress. You can look back on your notes later and congratulate yourself on how far you've come.
- 9) Cool down. Now that your body is all warm and loose from dancing and exercising, it is a great time gain flexibility. Your muscles are stretchy and not as tight as they were when you started. Bend deeply, lie on the floor, breathe, stretch your spine and create length.
- 10) Have fun!