

“I DO”

## CREATE AN UNFORGETTABLE

# first dance

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Taking the dance floor for the first time as a married couple is a wedding moment meant to live on in both memories and photographs. However, for the large number of couples who are not trained dancers, this part of the wedding may be a source of undue stress. By taking a little time to prepare for your big dance, you can step onto the floor with confidence – and show the crowd how well you work together.

“The first dance requires time together to learn dance steps and how to synchronize those steps, as well as a special song that signifies the union,” says Irene Robles, master dance instructor and owner of Through The Motion Ballroom and Latin Dance Studio. “It’s a symbol of what you’re going to build together.”

### MUSIC MATTERS

To begin taking steps toward a memorable first dance, start by selecting music both the bride and groom find inspiring and meaningful, as well as fun and energetic. Often, this means choosing two songs for your wedding dance.



“What I like to encourage my couples to do is pick two songs, and I’ll splice the music together,” says Georgia Wright, social ballroom instructor at Dancin! Performing Arts Center. “So, they’ll do like a minute of a slow, romantic song and then go into a fun country song or swing or whatever feels good to them.”

### CONSIDER CLOTHING

When it comes to choreographing a wedding dance, the bride’s dress and shoes are almost as important as the music in determining which dance moves can be done. Be sure to practice in the same type of shoes you’ll be wearing on the big day, and keep in mind the limitations of different wedding dresses.

“If you’ve got a huge train, we can’t do anything going backward. If you’ve got a mermaid dress, you can’t open your legs very far,” Wright says. “These are things I need to know beforehand as a choreographer.”

### START EARLY

Whether you choose to get assistance from a professional dance teacher or choreographer and practice on your own, you can decrease stress by beginning to prepare for the big dance a couple months in advance. For those couples who want lessons with an instructor, Wright recommends six sessions over the course of six weeks.

“During these lessons, we begin by establishing roles – the guy is the leader and the lady is following and showing off,” Wright says. “From there, we break it down to the basic steps, and we also do fun dips and twirls for picture purposes and crowd pleasing.”

### NO CRITICS ALLOWED

According to Robles, one of the fastest ways to lose the magic of a wedding dance is to be critical of one another as you practice. She suggests replacing criticism with a whole lot of laughter, which is advice that might benefit couples well beyond their first dance.

“When we get into the habit of pointing fingers at each other, the dance becomes frustrating and dull,” Robles says. “You are both going to do goofy things and make blooper-worthy mistakes. So, laugh together, don’t take it too seriously, and turn those moments into memories that will last a lifetime.”

