

## Glean the Most From a Dance Workshop

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So you're going to a dance workshop! Congratulations on deciding to further your dance horizons! Dance workshops can be fun, exciting, and creatively inspiring. They can also be extremely disappointing! So I thought I'd share some thoughts on how to make dance workshops the most beneficial for you.

First off, what do you want from the workshop? Technique? Choreography? Inspiration? A weekend away with your dance friends? Examine what you want, and then find a workshop that fits your needs and expectations. If you're thinking you'd like to perfect your technique, and all that is being taught is choreography, you'll be in for disappointment. On the other hand, sometimes it's more about your attitude than anything else; we can all learn technique from choreography, so just relax and try to focus on what's important to you.

There are some things you should pack into your dance bag for a workshop as well. A water bottle is a must. There are usually drinking fountains around, but you won't want to run out of the room just to get a drink. I usually pack some dry snacks (like nuts & dried fruit) just in case the schedule runs over time and I'm getting famished. A notebook and pencil can prove invaluable to the learning process. An all day workshop covers a LOT of ground, and taking notes will help you feel more accomplished when you get home. Some people bring cameras. Limit your use of the camera to the end of the workshop, when people often like to have their picture taken with the instructor.

I usually leave my wallet at home (or in the hotel) and only bring my ID, and some cash for buying lunch. Lots of workshops have vendors, in which case I'd bring my plastic money as well. Sometimes the shopping is the only reason I go to a workshop!

Comfortable clothing, like yoga or dance wear, is imperative. It won't interfere with movement, and the instructor can see what you're doing. I dress in layers, because sometimes it's cold when you start out, and later when the room warms up from lots of bodies it's nice to be able to shed a layer. Although we're often barefoot in this dance form, a pair of dance shoes, like ballet slippers, is a good idea. You usually don't know what type of surface you'll be dancing on. If you're on carpet, or if you're turning a lot, it will save your feet. And bring a hip scarf that does not have noisy coins or bells on it. Too many scarves with noisy decorations in the room make it difficult for the instructor to be heard. And don't forget to tie up long hair if it will bother you when you're heating up, or if you don't like it getting in your face.

If there's a show in the evening, you'll want to dress up a bit, like you would for any concert. And if you're performing, don't forget to wear clothing that will minimize red marks on your body that will be seen in your costume.

One last thought: If you go home and remember only *\*one\** thing that you learned *\*really\** well, you got your money's worth. Often the things we're taught at workshops aren't necessarily what we really glean. Sometimes it's the essence of a dance, or a dancer / instructor, that impresses and inspires us the most. In such case, be grateful that you were able to spend some time

absorbing what that person had to teach you, even if it was not the subject of the workshop.

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