

COMPETITION DANCER GUIDELINES & TIPS

Before we start our competitive dance season, here are a few guidelines and tips to get you ready. I'm sure most of us know this already, but it's always good to have a reminder.

BEFORE GETTING TO THE COMPETITION

- Check, and double check that you have each and every part of your costume. Don't forget to check for shoes, tights, earrings, hairpieces, and other small accessories. It helps to make your own checklist before so that you always have a quick way to check that you have everything packed.
- Make sure that your name is on every piece of every costume, including shoes.
- Stock up on little things that no dancer should ever be without – bobby pins, hair pins, safety pins, hairspray, extra elastics, sewing kit, etc. Nearly everything can be found at dollar stores, and is guaranteed to be put to use at every comp!
- Pack lots of water and healthy, stain free snacks. There can be a lot of waiting at competitions and they can run late.
- Most importantly, take care of yourself! Get plenty of rest, eat nutritious meals and try not to get too nervous. You will always dance your best when you are feeling your best!

AT THE COMPETITION

- Be in the change room completely dressed and ready to go (makeup, hair, etc. all done) **one hour earlier** than your scheduled dance time. This means that unless you are driving to the competition in costume (not recommended), you need to allow time at the venue to find the DM change room and get dressed. We also need time to warm-up, run through the dance and get focused. **If you are late, you may be ineligible to dance.**
- Share the dressing room space. Comps are busy places and the dressing rooms fill up fast. Just remember that everyone is as squished as you are so try to share the space as best as you can. Also share rehearsal space. Your teacher will let you know when it is your turn to run through the dance.
- Be kind and quiet backstage. Dancers from other studios love to hear "great job" or "good luck". You are representing DanceMakers so please be polite and pleasant.
- Practice proper audience etiquette. When in the audience, cheer for everybody. Respect fellow dancers by remaining quietly seated throughout their performance. There is always a short pause between numbers in which you can enter or exit the auditorium. Parents – this goes for you too!
- Be kind to your teachers! We have most likely been at the competition venue since 7am with very little time for eating or resting. We do it because we love working with you and want to support you so please be respectful.
- It is possible that you will encounter some dancers who are angry, rude, etc. We all have bad days so please try and ignore them and focus on the positive.

AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY

- You must wear your DM competition jacket and any other studio logo clothing during awards – show your studio spirit! Keep in mind that this is not a pajama party – you want to look presentable when accepting awards.
- Sit quietly while waiting for your dance to be announced. Listen respectfully and applaud while the other performances are being awarded.
- For group numbers, pick one or two people to go up and accept the award, there should be someone different at each comp so that hopefully everyone will get a turn.
- When accepting the award, make sure to look the judge in the eye, smile and say thank you.
- If ribbons/pins/etc. have been awarded, wait until you are off the stage to distribute to teammates. Handing them out on stage causes a commotion and is not very respectful to the other teams receiving their awards.
- If asked when accepting awards, please give the full studio name as well as your teacher/choreographers full name.
- Please be a gracious and good sport. You dance differently every day, and different judges are looking for different things in a dancer. Whether you place first or last, you should be proud that you have worked hard and shared your love of dance with the audience!

AFTER THE COMPETITION

- Double check that you have re-packed all the pieces of your costume. You don't want to be preparing for the next competition and realize you've left part of your costume at the last one. Double check for your comp earrings – these are lost far too often.

THE COMPETITIVE DANCER LOOK

- Hair needs to be completely slicked back. Use hairspray and gel. Your makeup must also look fresh before going on stage.
- If it can be bobby or safety pinned, it should be! Hairpieces and hats need to be pinned down securely to prevent them from flying off mid-pirouette. Similarly halter-tops, belts, etc. need to be safety pinned to prevent any embarrassing costume mishaps. Always be sure to bring a bunch of bobby pins and safety pins with you.
- Shave all appropriate body parts and wear seamless nude undergarments. Bras must be completely hidden if worn.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

- Clear nail polish works wonders to stop a run in your tights. Make sure to have some packed for an emergency. Or – pack an extra pair of tights.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Encourage your children and be their biggest fan. Be positive. Regardless of the outcome, your child values your opinion above all else. Encourage them to do their best and love them for dancing their hearts out.

- **Make sure that your children are easy to locate.** They should be prepared to go on stage, and should not be gallivanting with friends. They need to be prepared for emergency rehearsals, or schedule changes. It is not uncommon for competitions to be well ahead of schedule.
- Remember, you are just as much a reflection of our studio as your children. Your actions and behavior not only set a precedent for your child, but also represent the studio. Lead by example!
- Arrive on time and prepared as requested. Especially on the first day of competition, **allow yourself plenty of time to find the venue and get settled.** This will keep the kids calm and ready to do their best. It is not a bad idea to exchange phone numbers with parents that your kids dance with to stay in touch and informed.
- Yes it does count, so please don't bother asking if their hair really needs to be that tight, if they have to wear fake eyelashes, or if they really need that elaborate costume. Generally costuming and appearance factor into the judges scoring and we don't need judges docking points for something easily preventable when they have worked so hard.
- All competitions have rules banning videotaping and taking photos during performances (they are however permitted and encouraged during awards ceremonies). Please follow the rules.
- Part of the learning experience of competitive dance is watching other dancers perform. I know that we all have busy lives, but it is very beneficial for your dancing child to be exposed to dancers from other studios performing new styles and new steps. If you have an extra hour or two to stay and watch the performances, please do! And of course please be supportive and watch and cheer on as many DM numbers as possible.

TIPS FOR DANCERS

- Remember, you are there to dance! The experience should be fun, however, remember what you there to do.
- Stay for awards ceremonies. It shows respect for your teachers, fellow dancers and the judges who so kindly sat and watched you all day!
- Be responsible! Try not to rely on others to do your hair/make up or to borrow things.
- **Treat your parents with respect!!!** This means no arguing/fighting in the dressing rooms or anywhere in the venue. If it weren't for your parents, you wouldn't be where you are!
- Do your best and encourage each other as teammates, however, don't act condescendingly towards those who may not have performed up to expectations. Dance should be fun, and while competitions are serious, no one is perfect.
- As mentioned before... **it doesn't matter whether you place first or last. What matters is that you do your best, have fun and share your love of dance with the audience!**