

How to dress at a Competition

Standard/Smooth (Ballroom):

Ladies:

DRESS: For ballroom, think a longer gown, but with some restrictions. You want to wear something that's not so long that you will step on it when you try to step backwards, but not too short, either – that's Latin. The dress should also be similar to an A-line cut – the skirt should flow and leave you plenty of room to move your legs and plenty of room for your partner to be able to step in between your legs. It's no fun for anyone if every time your partner tries to take a step, his knees bounce off your dress because it's too tight! Black is all right, but colored is even better, let's make people notice us!

SHOES: Any kind of high heeled shoe with a relatively thin sole will do. You do NOT have to buy dance shoes. If you can manage it, try to wear a closed toe shoe so that you won't get painfully stepped on and so that when you step backwards you don't stub your toes.

MAKEUP/JEWELRY/HAIR: Think showgirl. Okay, classy showgirl. You do want to pile on the makeup and make your eyes and lips and cheeks stand out so that the judges notice you. Theatrical is good. Gaudy jewelry is also good – we like things that are big and sparkly! As far as hair goes, tie it neatly back into a bun or at least out of your face.

Men:

CLOTHING: For ballroom, men wear a nice pair of dress pants (black), like Dockers or whatever it is that you guys buy! As far as a shirt for ballroom goes, the standard is usually a white button up collared shirt – we're striving to look elegant!

SHOES: Guys do not need to buy shoes specifically for dancing. You can wear a pair of black dress shoes with as little sticky rubber tread on the bottom as possible so you can glide across the dance floor without tripping, which is actually not so elegant, believe it or not!

HAIR: LOTS OF HAIRSPRAY! We don't want that sucker to move!

Latin/Rhythm:

Ladies:

DRESS: Latin is about having fun, about being flirty and sexy and seductive! You want to wear either a shorter dress that is sleeveless and strappy (stay away from strapless, it's no fun to try to keep your clothes up AND dance at the same time!) or a cute little skirt with some kind of top. Colors for Latin are of course black and red (sexy colors!) but you should wear anything bright – fuschia, hot green, blue, purple, etc. We want to be eye-catching to the judges.

SHOES: See shoes for ballroom, but wear open-toed if possible unless you have real ballroom shoes (in which case they would be closed toe)

MAKEUP/HAIR/JEWELRY: Remember being a classy showgirl for ballroom? For Latin, forget the classy part. Go to town, pile as much makeup as you can on your face... and then add more! Jewelry is flashy, but don't wear anything that will smack your partner in the face as you cha cha or swing!! Hair should be tied up and frozen in place with massive quantities of hairspray!

Men:

CLOTHING: Same as ballroom except a different color shirt – black, red, or whatever you have will work. If you're feeling adventurous, ask your partner what color her dress is and match your shirt to her outfit, it will catch the judges' eyes! With such little time to notice all 20 couples on the floor, you can use any trick you can think of to get noticed!

SHOES: Guys, you have it easy – same as ballroom!

HAIR: Again with the lots of hairspray. Your hair should still not be moving from the morning ballroom events, so you've probably already got it covered. ☺

Hopefully these basic guidelines will help you to shop, pack and put your mind more at ease. Looking good will make you feel good and dance well... If you have any questions, make sure you ask, because someone else probably wants to know the same thing.