

# *Maral & Mariano*

Argentine Tango School™

## Tango Level Guide

Helping you choose the classes that are right for you.





**Connection  
Expression  
Creation**

## How we define levels at Maral & Mariano Argentine Tango and at Tango Garden.

Here are some guidelines as to how we define levels at Maral & Mariano Argentine Tango School™ and at Tango Garden™.

Working through these levels will take you from zero tango (Level 1), to becoming a professional dancer (Level 7).

Please read our overall Philosophy before reading this page.

The guidelines are intended to help you know which tango classes are for you. It is important to appreciate that people develop at different rates, so please look closely at the 'Must' column as the length of time you've been dancing alone is unlikely to be an accurate reflection of your level.

Also, remember, it's good to take lessons below your own level for revision and for deeper understanding, and taking lessons a little above your level may also enrich your understanding and help you see what you're aiming at. HOWEVER, we do not recommend you take classes far above your own level as it is unlikely to help your development; firstly, because it is not easy to build anything solid on shaky ground and secondly, because the experience may well cause you and others in class unnecessary frustration.

\* The hours refer to taught hours.

# Level 1



Level	Could be considered	Minimum requirement
1	Absolute Beginner	0 hours*

**Must:**  
No experience necessary

## Material Covered in Class

### Basic structural elements of Argentine Tango:

- Changing weight
- The walk (la caminata)
- The embrace (el abrazo)
- Traveling using forward and side steps and stopping in a connected way.





2 Beginner 2 hours\*

Be familiar with the Level 1 material

**Structural Elements:**

- Gaining fluidity with the Level 1 material
- Changing systems
- Pivots
- Basic Isolations
- Single & double time

**Vocabulary elements:**

- The standard cross
- Ochos
- Ocho cortado
- Paradas and sandwich
- Simple barridas
- Simple turns (giros)
- Chain steps

**Expressive Elements:**

- Rhythmic awareness
- Line of dance awareness

**Level 2**

Key work in this level is learning the basics to circulate on the dance floor.



3

Improver

15 hours\* +  
some social  
dancing

Be able to  
integrate all the  
level 2 material  
into a free dance.

Be able to pivot  
90° alone

Be familiar with  
basic technique

Have an  
appreciation of  
partners axis

#### **Structural Elements:**

- Fluid sequencing of Level 2 material
- Change of weight uses
- Walking with projection
- Free leg use awareness
- Controlling angles
- Controlling speed
- Application of circularity
- Changing the embrace
- Common combinations

#### **Vocabulary elements (inc.):**

- Uncommon crosses
- Barridas
- Simple sacadas
- Simple ganchos
- Giros & simple enrosques
- Calesitas
- Introduction to low voleos

#### **Expressive Elements:**

- Rhythmic development
- Melodic awareness
- Applying combinations with line of dance awareness
- Introduction to styles
- Introduction to decorations

## Level 3

Key work in this level is broadening your dance and giving you tools for improved control.

## Level 4

4 Lower Intermediate 1 year of regular classes + social dancing



Be able to integrate all the level 3 material comfortably into a free dance.

Be able to pivot 180° alone with ease

Be working on technical precision

Have a good understanding of partners axis (as leader)

### Structural Elements:

- Fluid sequencing of Level 3 material in different combination.
- Managing sequences
- Working with new vocabulary in different combination.
- Quick weigh changes
- Flexibility and adaptability in the walk
- Free leg uses
- Controlling unusual angles
- Controlling speed of all material learnt.
- Fluid changes in the embrace (inc. muscle tone).
- Breaking common combinations
- Introduction to energy use
- Introduction to use of breath

### Vocabulary elements (inc.):

- Sacada varieties (inc. follower to leader sacadas)
- Gancho varieties
- Leg wraps
- Giro varieties
- Voleo varieties
- Introduction to Mini-off axis uses

### Expressive Elements:

- Rhythmic play
- Connection to melody & voice.
- Awareness of different orchestras.
- Appropriate use of vocabulary.
- Appropriate use of styles.
- Applying decoration appropriately.

Key work in this level is deepening your understanding of the dance and technical skills.

## Level 5

5 Upper Intermediate 2 year of regular classes + social dancing



Be able to improvise with all known material comfortably into a free dance.

Be able to pivot 270° alone with ease.

Be serious about dancing with technical accuracy in a comfortable and well connected way

Have a clear understanding of partners axis as leader and growing understanding as follower.

### Structural Elements:

- Fluid sequencing of Level 4 material in different combination and continuing to develop this in more complex ways, to encourage versatility, accuracy, speed, connection and comfort.
- Working with new vocabulary in different combination.
- Managing longer and more complex sequences.
- Superimposing elements.
- Managing energy use.
- Managing use of breath.
- Recognising that you can follow the movement as a leader and stop working so hard to 'do' and lead everything.

### Vocabulary elements (inc.):

- Combination and superimposition of vocabulary

### Expressive Elements:

- Training improvisation skills
- Creating own combinations
- Recognising different layers in the music including emotional level
- Recognising the main orchestras and their context
- Using changes in dynamics as a form of expression

Key work in this level is raising the quality and complexity of your dance.

6      Advanced\*\*      3 year of regular classes + social dancing + other body work recommended

Be able to improvise with material in previous levels comfortably into a free dance.

Be able to pivot 360° alone with ease

Have a clear understanding of partners axis.

Be technically precise with all known material.

## Level 6

### Structural Elements:

- Developing the Level 5 material and concepts.
- Combining superimposed elements.
- Understanding and training of the constant subtle changes required to dance fluidly and comfortably with complex movements.
- Integrating the breath as inspiration for movement.
- Training accurate use of energy and direction of energy.
- Integrating energy exchange as a motor for movement.
- Creating 'instability' in the dance as a generator of movement.

### Vocabulary elements (inc.):

- Combination and superimposition of vocabulary
- Leading and following vocabulary accurately (i.e. dancing well) with little contact or no embrace.

### Expressive Elements:

- Reflecting different layers in the music with choice of vocabulary, structure and dynamics.
- Dancing the mood, tone and emotions of the music
- Allowing the music to move through you to lead to spontaneous and connected movement.
- Training the balance between 'leading' and 'following the movement you have lead as a leader.
- Training the balance between 'following and expressing yourself and the music as a follower.
- Playing with styles as a form of expression.

7      New professional



Key work in this level is finding subtlety and dancing as one with your partner and the music

\*\* The term 'Advanced' tends to be relative to the community/country people are dancing in. Some people may be considered advanced in their city but would be barely considered intermediate in another, this is why we ask you to refer to this chart.

In more absolute terms a genuinely advanced tango dancer must have a great deal of technical clarity and precision, must have an all around high level (e.g. large vocabulary alone is not enough, nor is the fact that you have danced for X number of years).

The advanced dancer must be learning to manage dynamics, the channelling and redirection of energy and starting to find comfort with complex musical expression. He/she will likely be physically more agile than the average social dancer and have greater overall body awareness (usually acquired through a variety of other non-tango studies alongside tango).

It is important to avoid the pitfalls of becoming arrogant or pedantic as one improves. A mature dancer understands and appreciates the beauty and richness there is at every stage of development. A mature dancer is kind to others on their journey and recognises that we all (professionals included) have a great deal to learn and we can always develop greater sensitivity for more understanding and enjoyment.

[www.maralmariano.com](http://www.maralmariano.com)

Tango with an open heart and warm embrace  
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