

BELLY DANCE HABITS QUIZ

Thank you for taking part in the quiz.
Here are your personalized results.

BECOME AN AWAKENED ARTIST

Unlock your creativity

You are a good student, deliberate with your practice, working hard on improving mistakes and following the teacher's instructions. But it looks like it's hard for you to transition into a full blossom artist, and unlock your own creative potential. You perfectly follow directions and guidance, but struggle with your own creativity and expression of personality in dance.

You need to focus your energy on activities that will help unleash your inner creativity, and find your personal style in dance. That doesn't mean that you don't need to continue working on technique, learning choreographies from other teachers, or deepening your knowledge of history or music theory. It just means that right now your main blocking issue is lack of self-expression in dance.

Here are some tips on how to unlock your inner artist:

- **Stop punishing yourself.** “I’m a bad dancer”, “I’ll never get it”, etc... - This one is our inner critic whose voice I’m sure you heard many times. If you keep repeating to yourself: “I’m a bad dancer”, “I’ll never get it”, then no wonder you don’t see any ease in your creative process. Being extremely self-critical will kill any desire to express yourself before you even start. **Add mindset exercises, like guided self-empowering meditations, and positive affirmations** to your practice along with improving your dance habits. Remember: a blocked artist is not a lazy artist, nor bad artist. She is just blocked.



- **Discover music that actually inspires YOU.** How do you choose songs to dance to? What's your relationship with inspiration? Are you trying to squeeze it out of yourself at a specific time, and make it follow your commands? Or do you allow it to flow easily and freely, and let it hit you whenever it hits? Since inspiration is a flow, then let's create time and space for this flow to occur. Think about when you can simply plug your headsets with a playlist during your day. Maybe while you are cooking? Or cleaning, doing dishes, working on costumes? Not for expectations of performing. Not for expectations of choreographing anything in your mind. But simply for the sake of listening to the music. Let your mind and body relax, and I bet at some point you'll catch yourself swinging your hips. That's the moment we want: simple, pure, free-flow joy of the music. Mark that song, and add to a separate playlist of your favorite inspirational compositions to possibly work on later.



- **Learn choreos from other dancers.** I know that you already do it, and do it a lot. But I want to stress the importance of learning from many DIFFERENT teachers. Don't limit your experience to only one master, because you face the risk of becoming someone else's copy. Learning from many different dancers will create a unique blend that eventually will inform your own style.
- **Go outside of your comfort zone.** Every choreography is a little transformation. And if it's an unusual style, it triples your transformation exponentially. Every internal resistance is an indicator for potential growth. Make it as a rule to dive into topics that you don't particularly feel excited about. It's one thing to like a certain style, or not like it. But it's a different thing when you resist even the idea of trying! That's a sign for you that probably there is a creative block somewhere within that topic.



- **Watch and analyze videos of dancers who you admire.** Notice which combinations/movements catch your attention. I'm not talking about copying someone else's dance. That's absolutely unprofessional and against any basic creative ethics norm. However, maybe you found it interesting how that dancer put her arm during a turn, or that she unexpectedly combined two movements that you had never thought about putting together... These kinds of jewels could and should be incorporated into your dance. This is not only a tool to widen your movement vocabulary and train your body with new challenging skills, but also a way to vary your dance, and give you more creative ideas instead of repeating again and again the same familiar movement patterns.
- **Just start the process.** There are many ways that you can start creating your own choreographies. Sometimes it begins with an idea and general vision, sometimes with a melody, sometimes with a teacher's assignment... **Understand that your first draft won't be perfect.** Of course, miracles happen, and sometimes you may get it right away. But most often it will take you a number of revisions until your choreography gets to a good level. Just remember that in order to do even your first revision, you need to have a draft first. So take the pressure off your shoulders, and start doing something, even if it's just a simple marking, even if you need to skip a part of a song for now because nothing comes to your mind. It doesn't matter. You'll come back to those gaps later. A first draft is a first draft: nothing more, but also nothing less than that. You need to have some base to work with, and in the case of the first draft, "done" is better than "perfect".
- **Find your own creative pace.** Not all of us are geniuses who can choreograph all day long. And even if you happened to be so inspired to work the whole day, and completed the choreo in one set, it doesn't mean that the next time will be the same. Choreographing is both a physical and mental process. It's too easy to get frustrated when our inspiration flow gets stuck, and we start feeling incapable of anything, or not talented enough. Sometimes we simply need to take a break and come back later to it with some fresh ideas and renewed enthusiasm.



- **Focus on joy in your improvisation.** Dance improvisation is a terrifying challenge for so many dancers... We get nervous, forget any possible movements, don't hear the music, our body stops listening to us. So how can we stop worrying if we look good while improvising? Here is my secret trick. I apply this not only to improvisation, but even when I simply perform some uncommon dance styles, and I'm not sure that my audience will actually get it. And the trick is this: **MAKE SURE** you **ENJOY** the moment **YOURSELF!** How would it help? Well, my logic is that even if nobody else enjoys watching my performance, at least I had fun, lol. Better than nothing, right? But in reality, once you get into the joy of dancing and stay present with your experience, truly enjoying the moment, some magic happens! You capture your audience's attention. They follow you on your emotional journey. Dance technique and cool fancy movements are good. But at the end of the day, what matters the most are emotions.
- **Ask for feedback.** Make sure you specify that you want feedback not only about your technique, but *about creative aspects of your dance too*. Share your work-in-progress and explore the advantages of having a third-person's perspective. It can be your teacher, dance colleague, or a friend. You may even consider getting a private class in person or online with a dancer you admire, in order to hear their feedback and suggestions about your choreo. Be open and ready for what they may tell you. I would even say, be willing to hear the critique. In this situation, you are not looking for someone to praise your choreographic skills, but to indicate what can be improved. Give them full permission to be honest and straightforward because in the end it will benefit **YOU**. But always remember that the final decision is up to you. You don't need to blindly follow whatever your mentor suggests. At the same time, the opportunity to hear the other person's opinion can provide you with more ideas to explore, and highlight areas of possibilities that were hidden from your eyes before.
- **Start attending dance events.** It doesn't need to be huge international trips. Start by exploring nearby events in your country. Seeing the work of other dancers and connecting with the community will inspire you to keep developing your own dance skills. Also, enroll in open stage performances and competitions. Make it as a rule to present your own choreographies or improvisations as often as possible. Knowing that you need to prepare a performance will boost your commitment to your dance practice a lot because you'll want to showcase your dancing in the best possible way.



- **Dance creativity is a skill.** It CAN be learned. And just like any other skill, it needs time and practice to be mastered. So just keep going no matter what. :)

I hope you got inspired with some of the suggestions! Don't try to implement them all at once. Choose one or two that spoke to you the most, and implement them right now. Then in a month add one or two more, and so on. Gradual change has more chances for success, but your commitment needs to be consistent. Good luck with it!

ACTION-STEPS REVIEW:

- **Stop punishing yourself.** Being extremely self-critical will kill any desire to express yourself before you even start. Add mindset exercises, like guided self-empowering meditations, and positive affirmations to your practice.
- **Discover music that actually inspires YOU.**
- **Learn choreos from other dancers.** Don't limit your experience to only one master, because you face the risk of becoming someone else's copy.
- **Go outside of your comfort zone.** Make it as a rule to dive into topics that you feel resistant to.
- **Watch and analyze videos of dancers who you admire,** and notice which combinations/movements caught your attention.
- **Just start the process.** Understand that your first choreography draft won't be perfect. A first draft is a first draft: nothing more, but also nothing less than that. You need to have some base to work with, and in the case of the first draft, "done" is better than "perfect".
- **Find your own creative pace.** Sometimes we simply need to take a break and come back later to it with some fresh ideas and renewed enthusiasm.
- **Focus on joy in your improvisation.** Dance technique and cool fancy movements are good. But at the end of the day, what matters the most are emotions.
- **Ask for feedback.** Make sure you specify that you want feedback not only about your technique, but about creative aspects of your dance too. The opportunity to hear the other person's opinion can provide you with more ideas to explore, and highlight areas of possibilities that were hidden from your eyes before.
- **Start attending dance events.** Make it a rule to present your own choreographies or improvisations as often as possible.
- **Dance creativity is a skill.** So just keep going no matter what. :)



SUGGESTED BOOK:

“The Artist's Way” by Julia Cameron. This book is a 12-week course that helps people unlock their capacity for creativity – whether in art, at work, or in life.

RELATED EPISODES OF THE BELLY DANCE LIFE PODCAST:

[Ep 255. Marta Korzun: Dealing With Identity Crisis As a Dance Professional](#)

[Ep 223. Valerick Molinary: Practicing Honesty in Dance & Life](#)

[Ep 198. Victoria Teel: The Story of Fan-Veil Addiction](#)

[Ep 146. Alex DeLora: You Just Need to Start](#)

[Ep 107. Katalin Schäfer: Accepting Art Instead of Defining Art](#)

[Ep 82. Katerina Shereen: The Importance of Your Mindset for a Long-Term Dance Career](#)

[Ep 47. Sandra: Rules Of Improvisation](#)

[Ep 28. Nada El Masriya: How Studying Folklore Can Make You a Better Belly Dancer](#)

[Ep 21. Alex DeLora: Every Drum Solo Has Its Own Mood](#)

[Ep 13. Esmeralda Colabone: Music as Your Guide & Mentor](#)

SUGGESTED ARTICLES:

[**15 Tips for Creating Your Belly Dance Choreographies**](#)

[**Tips on Belly Dance Improvisation**](#)

[**Tips for Memorizing Group Choreographies**](#)

[**Dealing With Performance Anxiety**](#)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE IANA DANCE CLUB MEMBERS:

The Iana Dance Club is an online platform that offers 300+ video tutorials in the format of 20-min technique drills, choreography breakdowns, 3 to 10-week intensives, and in-depth full-length courses. If you are not a member of the club, you can join it for a 7-day free trial, and explore all the tools available there.

- We have plenty of **intensives designed to spark your creative seed**, challenge you with choreographing something of your own, or highlight the music as a source of choreography inspiration. I'm talking about such intensives as Developing Choreographing Skills, Dancing to Turkish 9s, and Listen to The Music.
- There are two more intensives that could **ease your tension with improvisation skills**. They are Baladi Improvisation, Drum Solo Improvisation intensives.
- Also, I highly recommend diving into the topics that you feel resistant to. For instance, many participants of the **Mahraganat intensive** never thought they would enjoy dancing to this style. Many dancers thought this style wasn't for them, but after doing our Mahraganat intensive and digging deeper into emotional expression, they discovered many things about unconscious blocks and limitations. There is also a **library of 50+ choreographies** that can help expand your current zone of artistic comfort.



SHARE YOUR PROGRESS:

I hope you've enjoyed this quiz, and found these suggestions useful and inspiring. You can save this pdf with all tips, and refer to it throughout the year to refresh ideas. Consider retaking this quiz after you implement all of the suggestions above, because you may need to shift your focus to other areas as your dance journey unfolds. Don't forget to share the quiz with your friends, and use hashtag #bellydancehabits to share about your training progress. Follow me on Instagram (@iana_dance) for more tips on habits, training and all aspects of your belly dance life.



www.ianadanceClub.com/quiz

