



The Bellydance Academy DMCC

Bellydancing - Level 1

Exam Syllabus

Prepared By: The Bellydance Academy Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Exam Date: Saturday 16th May, 2026 at 3.30 pm

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About The Bellydance Academy

The **Bellydance Academy Dubai** is the UAE's premier institution dedicated exclusively to the art of Oriental Dance. Founded by Master Teacher and Choreographer **Shayma**, who brings over 25 years of international experience, The Bellydance Academy offers a holistic approach to bellydance education. As the first academy in the region to provide **KHDA-approved certification**, The Bellydance Academy stands at the forefront of professional bellydance training in the Middle East.

The Bellydance Academy is committed to promoting the art of bellydance through education and performance, while creating a safe and welcoming environment for all dancers, regardless of experience or ability. The academy believes in the power of bellydance as a form of self-expression, physical fitness, and cultural exchange. Its goal is to provide students with an enjoyable learning experience that enables them to reach their full potential as dancers and dance teachers.

With a strong belief in building a vibrant community centered around Oriental Dance and Middle Eastern culture, The Bellydance Academy encourages diversity and creativity. Students are given the opportunity to explore their unique style while learning from experienced instructors in a supportive and inspiring atmosphere. The Bellydance Academy offers a comprehensive journey through bellydance, integrating music, movement, and cultural heritage, guiding students from foundation to professional levels with internationally recognized certifications.

Introduction

The aim of this course is to introduce participants to the fundamental techniques, movements, musicality, and cultural context of bellydancing. Students will gain a strong foundation applicable across multiple bellydance styles including Egyptian, Lebanese and Folklore.

Level 1 - Belly Dancing Aims

In this course, students will:

- Establish a strong foundation for your dance journey, preparing the body and mind for the next levels of bellydance.
- Embrace good posture as key to safe and beautiful dancing. Awaken full body awareness and learn to move with grace, strength, and intention.
- Learn the language of belly dancing — understanding rhythms, styles, and how each movement blends to the music.
- Find freedom in improvisation, expressing yourself through both traditional and modern songs. Flow with the music, letting rhythm and movement become one.
- Build confidence in following improver-level choreography with ease and joy.
- Refine the elegance of hands, arms and shoulders to create a powerful, flowing performance.
- Move effortlessly across the floor through fundamental traveling steps.
- Create and perform a short personal choreography. Including the art of storytelling through dance by controlling facial expression and emotional projection.
- Honor and respect your body, dancing in a way that nurtures health, safety, and natural expression.
- Research about the history of middle eastern dance.



Level 1 - Belly Dancing Overview

The Bellydance Level 1 Exam assesses the student's ability to demonstrate the fundamental technical, musical, and expressive skills needed for safe and confident dance progression.

Students will be evaluated on their ability to maintain good posture, show full body awareness, and execute basic isolations, traveling steps, and arm techniques with grace and control.

Understanding of musicality will be essential: students must be able to match appropriate movements to the music, and improvise naturally to both traditional and modern songs.

Candidates will be required to perform a short self-created choreography, showcasing their ability to blend movement with rhythm, apply facial expression and storytelling, and demonstrate control of arms, hands, and shoulders.

Respect for the body's limits, safe dance practices, and fluid adaptation to the rhythm are central throughout the evaluation. Additionally, students must show basic knowledge of the history and cultural background of Middle Eastern dance.

Successful completion of the exam indicates readiness to progress to intermediate-level training with a strong, mindful, and expressive dance foundation.



Teaching Approach

This program is based on practical bellydance training, where participants engage in regular classes to develop technical, musical, and expressive skills essential for Level 1 examination.

Students are encouraged to fully immerse themselves in foundation bellydance techniques, choreography, improvisation, and effortless body movement. Through structured exercises, repetition drills, improvisation practices, and choreography tasks, students build the physical and musical understanding necessary to dance safely, expressively, and with confidence.

The teaching approach is **practical and movement-based**, centered on **consistent attendance and active participation**:

- A minimum of **50 regular classes** is recommended to ensure full explanation of techniques, correct muscle memory development, and mastery of all skills required for the exam.
- Students who feel prepared and demonstrate sufficient knowledge and technical ability may also present themselves for the exam **without completing the full 50-class requirement**, subject to approval.

In addition:

- A **final workshop** will be held before the exam, focusing on:
 - Techniques and movements that will be assessed, including improver-level skills.
 - Creating short choreographies.
 - Learning and mastering two pre-set combos.
 - Practical tools for improvisation and musicality development.

Students will also complete a **mock exam**, simulating the final assessment, allowing them to receive personalized feedback and refine their performance.

Consistency, dedication, and active engagement in all preparation stages are essential to successfully complete the Level 1 examination and advance in their dance journey.



Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the Bellydance Level 1 Exam, the student will have established the foundations of a dancer who moves with both technique and soul. They will demonstrate strong posture, full body awareness, and an understanding of safe movement that allows for both strength and grace. Students will be able to execute isolations, traveling steps, and elegant arm and hand movements with fluidity and control.

Throughout their journey, they will learn to recognize and interpret the rhythms and styles of Middle Eastern music, moving naturally to both traditional melodies and modern songs. They will improvise with confidence, letting rhythm and feeling guide their expression. Students will also create and perform their own short choreography, using dance as a tool for storytelling, emotional connection, and self-discovery.

Beyond technique, students will embody the art of presence — using facial expressions, emotional projection, and musical sensitivity to bring their performances to life. They will follow improvers-level choreography with clarity and understanding, ready for the challenges of the next stage in their development. With a deeper appreciation for the cultural roots of bellydance, students will dance with authenticity and a true connection to the music.



Techniques Level 1- Bellydancing

Category	Technique	Details
Shimmies	hip shimmy - Knee shimmy - choochoo shimmy	heels on the floor - free hips/controlled hips
Hips Isolations	Sharp hip drops & lifts	muscle control
Hip Drops	simple, drop & kick, 2 drops , drops on a circle	Different accents - knee always bend
Basic step	Front- Side - back (Travelling fwd or back)	Hip bump up - arms with it
Forward & Back	with shoulder shimmy, with hip bump, with twist, with hip shimmy and knee shimmy.	using arms.
Hip circles	small - regular - big / half circle front or back / traveling circle / one hip circle in and out	Full circle passing by all the points
Infinities / figure eight	infinite out & in - Maya in - Maya out	Heels on the floor for horizontal, heels up for mayas.
Chest isolations	out - up -in - sides - circle - square	
Traveling steps	Double & Triplets - Chase	
Side walks	with undulations - with vertical circles - with back hip bumps	Using arms
Camels & Reverse	Belly - Chest - Big camel - Traveling camel - Reverse	
Traveling twist	Flat & on releve	
Arms & hands work	hands techniques waves & circles - arms techniques	Wrist movements
Turns	spanish turn - turn & pose	
Pas de bouree/ cross		
Back step	with camel, with chest, with hip	with arms



Assessment

The Bellydance Level 1 Examination will be assessed through a combination of group and individual evaluations, designed to test technical skills, musicality, creativity, and understanding of the cultural background of bellydance.

Group Assessment (35%)

- **Group Class Evaluation**
Students will participate in a group class led by one of the Academy's instructors. This class will include a variety of techniques and drills aimed at screening students' body awareness, posture, movement precision, and musicality.

Individual Choreography (25%)

- **Choreography Performance**
Students must create and perform a **1.5-minute solo choreography**, using basic techniques learned during training. The music will be chosen by the student (traditional, pop, or fusion), and should demonstrate the use of a wide variety of movements, musicality, and expressive skills.
- **Personal Reflection Log**
Students will submit a one-page written reflection, or a 2-minute video, discussing their personal growth, challenges, and achievements throughout their training.

Individual Improvisation (25%)

- **Improvisation Performance**
Students will perform a **1-minute improvisation** to a traditional or modern song selected from an approved playlist provided by the Academy. The improvisation should show musical interpretation, emotional connection, and spontaneous movement ability.

Research Project (15%)

- **Research on the History and Origins of Bellydance**
Students must submit a **research paper** (5 pages max.) written in Arabic or English. The paper should explore the origins, historical development, and cultural significance of bellydance, including references to credible sources and an original editorial opinion section. Students are required to include all research links and sources used.