

Tribeca Citizen | Dancing for Yourself

About the author: *Rebecca Sadek is a Tribeca-based health and wellness coach (@atrighnyc.com) who received her training at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. She believes that being healthy is not about restraint or isolation and works with her clients to help them find a balance that works for them and their lifestyle.*

I'm not the type of person one would describe as a dancer. Don't get me wrong: At a party, I can get down with the best of them, but organized dance has never been my thing. I've always excelled at the traditional "masculine" sports and failed miserably at more "ladylike" athletics, such as gymnastics and dance. I took a dance class my senior year of college, thinking I was getting away with something, only to learn that the reduced amount of homework wasn't worth the embarrassment of attempting capoeira in front of 50 peers. So you can imagine my anxiety walking into [Downtown Dance Factory](#).

The facility is gorgeous, with three dance studios, a girls' dressing room, and two bathrooms. They mostly host children's dance classes, with a few classes for parents and other adults looking to boogie. The two owners are very friendly and play hands-on roles: I was greeted at the desk by Melanie Zrihen, who gave me a quick tour of the studio and calmed my nerves about the class. The other owner, Hanne Larsen, taught the class. From the moment the class started, I could tell that Hanne knows how to have fun and is a pro at teaching kids.

The class started with light stretching that led into dancing. The style of dance was contemporary, but they change it up every few weeks. Over the hour-long class, we learned increments of an entire dance routine that we put together in the last five minutes. Considering my negligible skill level, the class was a little hard for me to keep up with, but that *really* isn't saying much. Hanne did a really great job of making everyone feel comfortable—throughout the class, she encouraged us to freestyle if we couldn't remember a step. Her laid-back attitude put me at ease, allowing me to loosen up a bit and drop my childhood fear of dance; I even broke into laughter multiple times. Had I been lucky enough to take a class with Hanne when I was younger, I might not have been so terrified of



Dance photos by Phoebe Vickers
(phoebevickers.smugmug.com)

organized dance to begin with.

If you like to dance than this class is a no-brainer, but I also think it's a great class for beginners and more timid dancers like myself. You sweat, you laugh, and you move. What could be better than that?

Downtown Dance Factory's one-hour adult classes are Monday and Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. and Thursday at 9:15 a.m. Advance registration is not required. Classes cost \$20 or \$150 for 10 classes.

Recent articles by Rebecca Sadek:

- [Stroller Boot Camp](#)
- [Butt Kicks and Suicides, All Before Sunrise](#)
- [The Tracy Anderson Way](#)
- [Suspension Training at Alycea Ungaro's Real Pilates](#)

