

Top Tips for Taqsim

(Note: these tips, as well as a set of improvisational follow-along minidrills can be found in my 'Oriental Choreography' [DVD/Online Class](#) – as there is a taqsim bit in the music)

1. Think 'round' movements

A good place to start would be to experiment with movements that are fluid, or 'round'. For instance:

- Circles
- Figure 8s
- Undulations, Camels
- Bellyrolls
- Bodywaves
- 1-Hip Circles
- Jewels

And simply feel how they 'flow' with the music.

Another way to 'do more with less', is to think top-down or bottom-up with your attention.

Where do you feel the weight? How does this part of you move? How does the movement feel? What else is reacting to it?

For instance starting with the feet, going up through the legs, then the pelvis/hips, then the lower torso, the upper torso, your shoulders, your arms and hands, your fingers, and not to forget, your neck, your face, and your gaze.

This will help you feel more at ease during improvisation practice, as you will 'know where to go' with your movements, and you will be more 'at home' in your body.

To transition between movements, or 'places of attention', think of bringing them 'in' through your core before changing.

2. Breathe with the Music

Before improvisation, before dance, before any practice actually - take a moment to connect to your [breath](#).

Taking a full, deep breath - all the way to the lower belly and sides and back of the ribcage - holding it for a moment, then relax fully as you exhale. Repeat a few times and check how you feel.

This and immediately helps you to settle down (or fire up!) your energy, connecting you more deeply and naturally to your body, the music, and the moment.

Whenever you can, take a moment for gently revisiting your breath - before, during and after your dancing.

Feel how the music influences your breathing, and how your breathing influences your movements.

As a variation, pay attention to when the music goes 'up' or 'down', and work with your movements and 'place of breath' to reflect the melody.

3. Take your Time

Imagine, just for a moment, that you have all the time in the world.

See if you can compress it, stretch it, play with it, using your breathing (see above) to help you modulate your timing, as well as the movement's flow with the melody.

[Slow it down](#), catch up, enjoy. There is no rush. Only now.

4. Simple Arms & Frames

When you're not sure what to do with your arms.. keep it simple.

You can gently frame your movements, transitioning slowly, bringing the attention to wherever the movements are (or will be) happening.

Experiment with what feels good for you, and every now and then check which frames, transitions and [arm pathways](#) you like.

You can film yourself while improvising to learn what works well for you, and to observe how your body naturally moves.

5. Choose one or two moves

It might feel counterintuitive at first, but limiting yourself can help unlock creativity.

If you feel overwhelmed by choice, simply pick one movement, and do your best to fill a whole taxem sequence using variations and modulations of Just. That. Movement.

Maybe add a [shimmy layer](#) here and there if the music calls for it :)

Then choose another movement, and repeat!

You can start with about a minute - and work your way up to a longer taqsim.

Usually, when I dance a taqsim, I've found that one or two movements really are enough.

6. Stay Calm

If you had to choose to follow only one tip, this would be it.

Stay calm.

Or, [get calm](#).

Then stay it :)

All the rest will be easier this way.

7. Engage your Core/Glutes

I could say 'engage your center', as this is about more than just your core/glutes, but it will work just as well.

If you focus your attention to keeping just a bit of 'elastic tension' in one (or both) of these areas, every movement you make will automatically have just that bit of extra connection, depth, and engagement.

Working on your [relaxation](#), [strength](#) and [flexibility](#) in general will help you enormously with this, especially if it is something you tend to struggle with.

This goes for life, not just in dance!

8. Enjoy!

Enjoy it. Simple as that.

Remember that everything gets easier with practice, over time, so fully take part in the creative and powerful process of (self)discovery.

Go first.

Even if it's scary.

[Inspiration](#) always follows.

Bonus Tip:

Try all of the above (except maybe the limitation to 'round' moves) with a full piece of music of any type (oriental, fantasy, fusion, a different dance style) or maybe a drumsolo even :)

A great (and fun) way to expand your improvisational skills.