

TAGS & RESTARTS

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Choreographers that know music will put in a tag or restart when the song requires a tag or restart because of phrasing in the song. Most true dancers prefer to dance "on phrase."

I'm not sure if you are familiar with phrasing, I'm guessing that you're not, since you're asking this question. You first listen to the "verse" and count out the number of beats in the verse. You also count the number of beats in the "chorus" and also the "instrumental" portion of the dance. For example, say the verse has 64 counts and the chorus only has 32 counts. This song/dance would probably be choreographed as a 32 count dance so the dance will end at the end of a verse or chorus. If that particular song has a 4 or 8 count "tag" (or "riff"/"bridge" as musicians call it) between the verse and chorus, you would want to put in a little 4 or 8 count "tag" there just so you can start the dance over with the first beat of the verse or chorus.

The above applies to "restarts" also. Say, a song has 32 count verses, chorus, and instrumental and one of the choruses only has 16 counts before starting the verse again, that's where you would restart the dance, again to stay on phrase.

I choreograph dances to songs that I like and make me want to dance. If the song has a "tag" in the music, then I will put in a tag or restart in the dance. If the dance is "phrased" all the way through, then I do not put in any tags or restarts. Choreographers don't put tags or restarts in a dance for no good reason, they just want the dance to stay on phrase and to fit the music.

The music dictates the tags/restarts. My husband and I have about 60 dances on Kickit, some with tags/restarts and some without tags/restarts. In all cases, the music dictated whether tags/restarts were included in the dance.

I teach phrasing to my beginner students so they can understand dance and can understand dancing to the music. Some of my students have been dancing less than a year and they can dance beginner dances with tags and restarts as long as they are simple tags.

There is no doubt that tags and restarts makes dances more difficult. Some choreographers make it a practice to pick only songs that are evenly phrased and that do not have rifs or bridges requiring tags or restarts. Generally, these dances are easier and, in some cases, are more popular. However, this does not imply that dances having tags or restarts are not high quality dances. These dances are often quite popular among intermediate and advance dancers who welcome the challenge.

I hope this helps to explain the reasons for tags and restarts.