

LAKE LURE, N.C. — Do you have what it takes to perfect the famous “Dirty Dancing” lift? Join other fans and relive all the romance and memorable moments at the 10th annual [Dirty Dancing Festival](#) in Lake Lure.

During the weekend of Sept. 13-14, celebrate this beloved 1987 classic with various competitions inspired by the film. With watermelon carrying contests, talent shows and shag competitions, the highlight activity of the movie and festival is ...dun dun dun dun ... the lake lift competition. It gives movie fans from across the country the opportunity to test their skills in the place where the lake lift scene was filmed.

In the movie, Johnny (Patrick Swayze) and Baby (Jennifer Grey) practice the lift for days — on land and in the water. The entire plot leads to its perfect execution in the triumphant ending, which People magazine called “one of the most iconic dance moves in history.”

At the festival, the Lake Lift Competition is often a comedy of errors. Ann Dunn of Asheville Ballet & Dance Company offers these tips to help couples avoid bloopers.

Tip 1:

Practice with the guy lying flat on the floor to “feel” the center of balance for both of you (each person has their own center of balance, but in a lift you must share a mutual center of balance and it can be hard to feel). Do this before practicing in a vertical position — you need to know what balance feels like. Men, spread your fingers out wide and get the heel of your hand on her pelvis, without digging fingers into her lower abdomen. Both of you coordinate the deep knee bend before the jump and lift.

Tip 2:

The lifter's arms must get straight, right beside his ears. Ladies, jump up hard and then aim over his head. Hold onto his wrists on the way up before opening the arms into the wing position. Remember, it takes both of you! Breathe together ... go low together ... find that moment when the balance is just right to begin the lifting motion. Trust your partners muscles.

Tip 3:

When you get to the water, the lifter should be sure his feet are on firm, even ground. Take a deep breath, bend the knees, and bounce upwards as the base partner lifts at the waist and hips. In sync, count to three ... lifting on count three.

Tip 4:

The base partner holds (hold it, hold it, hold it!) position of the person in the air as long as possible. The person in the air holds their arms up and out to the side reaching for the beautiful blue Lake Lure sky. Keep those legs up, held tightly together and point your toes.

And THAT’S how it’s done!

Competitors can sign up at the festival. To purchase festival tickets or learn more about the event, visit www.dirtydancingfestival.com.

About Lake Lure’s Dirty Dancing Festival:

Lake Lure’s Dirty Dancing Festival was founded in 2010 in Lake Lure, where much of the classic movie was filmed. With the support from the production studio, the film’s writer, and several members of the cast and crew, the event was co-founded by Lake Lure resident Michelle McConnell Yelton of McConnell Group Public Relations and former dancer Jo Beyersdorfer of JNB Events in Los

Angeles. In 2016, JNB Events handed the festival over to the Chamber of Hickory Nut Gorge in Lake Lure, making it a true, homegrown event.

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