

Larry's Corner

Volume 4, Issue 04

Read online at <http://www.dancempls.com>

April 2004

Aol

Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters

Questions about Singles All Together Dance Class talk to

Donna Miller or

Carol Ann Carlson



Donna Miller

763-427-7058

donnagnm4444@msn.com



Ballroom Dance Lessons

SINGLES ALL TOGETHER

West Coast Swing Lessons

Carol Ann Carlson

952-930-0867

Carolcarlson121@hotmail.com



Inside this issue:

How To Lead An "American Spin" ECS	1
Followers Strongly Dancing Their Own	3
Turns In Closed Dance Position	3
Left Turning Box Step for Waltz	4
Swing Clubs	4
Dance Etiquette	4

How To Lead An "American Spin" In East Coast Swing

This is a Tuck-style spin done on the third step of the first triple-step. You can also both spin (man to his left, lady to her right). The lead is to draw her in at the beginning of the first triple, and she should feel a slight wind-up to her left. This wind-up should place your hand near your navel. That way, you won't be torque left or right when she pushes off of you. She should feel you brace your leading arm (I like to tuck my elbow into my side for an instant to help brace the arm. Think "brace", but understand that you don't become stiff as a board, and there is some limited follow thru.) She must then take her weight change step onto her right foot. Here is the important thing - she must commit some of her body weight forward to you. You will feel a building compression, and then a releasing compression as 'SHE' pushes off of 'YOU' ! As a man, you are only pushing back as hard as she pushes on you. Never think of pushing her - make her think she is pushing against a wall. Push lightly and the wall pushes back lightly; push hard and it pushes back hard. This is where the leader must really "follow" her level of connection as it changes.

The woman must commit weight to you because her push does 2 things:

1. It creates a torque about a vertical axis which spins her.
2. It creates a torque about a horizontal axis which causes her to fall backwards.

Torque (1) is what she desires, and (2) is what she must deal with to stay balanced. By committing her weight forward before pushing off, torque (2) stands her back up straight instead of toppling her over. Of course, the better she is, the less weight is committed, the less wind-up is

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

required, the lighter you can brace and still have her read the lead, etc.

It's easy for the man to get the timing wrong so the lady can't feel the prep at the critical point in her step. When not dancing we practice a push/pull exercise where we come in (compress on to the lead hand) and push out. This exercise helps get the feeling for the correct timing. The lead has to come just 'before' she finishes the triple, because once she's placed the third step without anticipating the spin, it's hard for her to do a good spin. Keep your arm firm, because she needs to push off of you. If you're giving your lead down at waist level, she 'can't' turn the wrong way. She can fail to turn, but if she's 'able' to turn the wrong way, then your lead isn't right.

To lead an American Spin, one rotates ('tucks') her to her left during the preceding triple, then braces so she can push off of the man's leading hand with her right. Obviously, this doesn't work with ladies who don't know the step, since they won't know to push off. Beginners with one step under their belt can't be expected to follow it, and you shouldn't try. When I dance with beginners, I sort-of 'test' for the Tuck Turn reaction by leading an underarm turn and adding a bit of tuck. Beginners just follow the underarm turn and fail to compress or tuck. OK, we just stick to basic steps. Since I still have hand contact the lead doesn't falter. More advanced dancers follow the (overhand) tuck just like an Tuck turn. Then I know I can use Tuck style moves.

You can't just push the lady with the left hand because this will tend to push her backwards, when you really want her to stay in place and spin. However, there is a way to refine this lead so that ladies who don't know the figure can still follow it. It requires a two hand hold though.

As you tuck the lady, drop 'both' hands to just below waist level. Your left hand will now be holding the lady's right hand in front of a point about two inches below your belly button, and your right hand will be on the top of the lady's left hip. You now rotate the lady to her right, into the spin, primarily by pulling with your 'right' hand. Your left hand helps with the rotation, primarily by providing resistance so the lady isn't pulled into you, but also pushing gently away from you, following the lady's rotation. This method results in a much smoother action

than the 'resistance only' method.

Note that the right hand must be on the hip, not the waist. Two reasons: first, the hip is farther from the lady's center of rotation, so you can provide the required torque with a gentler pull; second, the rigidity of the hip bone helps prevent your pull from having inadvertent side effects, like pulling just the lady's waist towards you.

Also, it really helps if the man moves a little so the woman has to turn less than a full 360 degrees. In fact it is the man's duty to move enough that both partners end up right after the woman turns. This is an example of one of the most basic principles of good leading: Lead her, then follow what she does.

This bears repeating. Leading is following. A good leader has to compensate for his partner. Maintaining the balance point and connection is more important than where any individual ends up, in social dancing. This means the leader provides the lead, then waits to see what the follower does to that lead. Then the leader adjusts his leading so leader and follower remain in sync. In some dances you can go one step further and compensate for the follower as she does her spin. In hustle or ECS you can just rotate or move the slot around to match wherever the follower ends up. I've helped build the confidence of a few ladies who didn't think they could do "double" spins, by moving around them so that however much they actually spun, we ended up in the right position for the next pattern and in time to the music.

Overdone preps confuse the lady and are not desirable. If she responds to the tuck by throwing herself into a spin, she was over-led, or she is over-reacting. It's most likely the former. Two step instructors teach a "prep lead." It's NOT supposed to be very visible, because it's not supposed to be a frame rotation. It's supposed to be a signal. When doing a tuck turn in ECS, the man stops the lady with his hand and they build pressure against each other, palm-to-palm (or thereabouts). A follower comments about how this feels when done incorrectly "When I have experienced the prep-lead, there was no build-up of pressure on the hand through a palm-to-palm type of connection, there was just another direction change. As it was, it felt like a lead for a single inside turn, the guy changing his mind

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

then the lead for a single outside turn."

For ECS beginner followers, I can easily see where avoiding the tuck-turn could be helpful because a beginner follower is more likely not to provide enough resistance with her right arm. Of course, opening out may be difficult too, but at least it's pretty easy to recover from.

A tuck lead can be used from one hand contact or where speed is desired (double turns in a fast swing). Basically, during the previous step the man rotates (a little) in one direction and then stops. When the man stops the lady can use pressure on the man's hand to stop and reverse herself. This pressure can then be used for very fast turns and spins. Since the pressure is developed from an early stop rather than a late shove, it's much more comfortable for the lady. This only works if the lady is connected with her hand. If she's just chasing her hand around, she'll never feel the pressure and won't be able to catch up with the change of direction or rotation fast enough.

Followers Strongly Dancing Their Own Part

The follower should "go" when prompted. When the leader "indicates" a turn, the follower should be confident and go through the turn without having to be forced through the turn. Furthermore, the follower can step through the turn quickly, making the next figure easier to indicate because of the elimination of potential delays in sensitivity/response time."

Followers should not complain that leaders are stirring or cranking them if they themselves are not doing the work of turning their own bodies. A "lead" is just that - a controlling, guiding signal, which the follower must "amplify" by supplying the momentum of the turn.

Followers, don't let your arms collapse during a turn. This encourages the leader to stir or crank you.

In one of the workshops, instructor talked about how followers were usually taught to offer resistance in the arm when doing a spin and to always keep that arm in front of you. She said

that the way they usually ended up implementing this was to become very stiff in the arm. This requires the leader to use quite a bit of force to get the follower spinning and that makes her more unstable in the spin. The next thing the followers may learn is to use their shoulders to give her some momentum in the spin. This helps, but what really works well is to learn to turn from the center of your body; learn to take the lead as a cue for what you are to do but then provide your own momentum from your center.

Invite the lady to turn (or to do anything, really). It is then up to the lady to turn or not to turn. If she does not accept the invitation, you don't dance. Part of the essence of leading and following is for the man to make unambiguous invitations, and the lady to graciously understand and accept them. So the lady turns herself, but only upon the invitation of the man. This way, I don't wrench her arm in a hockey stick, but I invite her to turn, she accepts and turns, and I then invite her to the next sequence, and so on.

Turns In Closed Dance Position

Turns are difficult in Closed Position because it is very easy to lose balance and get out of position with your partner. Keep relative positions - each person has a "window" formed by arm, shoulder and head to look through. - "Don't lose your window as you turn" Each partner must work equally hard to maintain their window, adjusting their own body to their partner's. In closed dance position, always look and stay "left". When you look at your partner you encroach on your partner's space and you begin stepping on your partner's feet.

Couple pivots in closed dance position, the lady provides the momentum for her forward movement. In pivots or V. Waltz turns, the person going forward provides the POWER for the partnership - most of the top-ranked coaches that I've had describe this as, "The person going forward drives the couple." And both members of the couple have to provide power when in promenade. When you and your partner are providing equal and complementary and appropriate amounts of "drive" in the V. Waltz half-turns, the result is absolutely magical...

Note that the lady does not "lead" when she is going forward.

Swing Clubs

- **East Meets West; 952-949-3016; 1st and 3rd Friday Dance at Dancesport in Hopkins 816 1/2 Main St.
- **Minnesota West Coast Swing; 651-731-9768; 2nd and 4th Friday Dance at B-Dale Club South of the Dale and Cty. B in St. Paul.
- **TC Rebels Swing club; Hotline number 952-941-0906; Dances are at Harmonies Dance center Corner of Old Shakopee Rd and France
- **When dancing West Coast Swing be sure to line your slot with the boards on the floor. If no boards then line up with length of room
- **Singles all Together has Ballroom lessons on Monday night 8 pm at the Lenox Center in St Louis Park.
- **Singles all Together West Coast Swing on Tuesday night 8 pm at Medina Ballroom Next session starts 4/27/2004.

Basic Left Turning Box Step for Waltz

Beat	Mans Foot	Mans step	Ladies Foot	Ladies Step
1	Left	Forward	Right	Back
2	Right	Turn to left, step to side	Left	Turn to left, step to side
3	Left	Together	Right	Together
4	Right	Back	Left	Forward
5	Left	Turn to left, step to side	Right	Turn to left, step to side
6	Right	Together	Left	Together

Larry Ablin 952-898-3513
 Email: dancempls@earthlink.net
[Http://www.dancempls.com](http://www.dancempls.com) to find out *where* to dance.


Come dance with us

Leaders: If you only remember one thing, this should be it:
 Global lead/follow rule – Lead Direction Before Rotation.
 This means that if it's a traveling spin, you must lead her to
 travel before leading her to spin. If it's a stationary spin, you
 must lead her to stay in place before leading the spin.

Barb Johnson 952-898-3513 Cell 612-599-9915
 Email: westcoast65@earthlink.net
[Http://www.dancempls.com](http://www.dancempls.com) to find out *where* to dance.


Come dance with us



Larry L Ablin and Barb Johnson

Teach Beginners at Singles All Together dance class on Monday night, at Lenox center on Minnetonka Blvd in St Louis Park.

Teach at Singles All Together on Tuesday night 8pm at Medina. Starting West Coast Swing Intermediate again on 3/2/2004

Teach Ballroom at Jefferson Community Ed on Wednesday at 26th and Hennepin 612-668-2740 Next class starts 1/29/2004 630-830 8 weeks

Lakeville Class starts 1/30/2004 630 to 930pm Century Junior High 952-985-4610

Prior lake class start 2/19/2004 630 to 940pm Grainwood Elementary 952-440-2930

Phone: 952-891-9014 Email: lablin@earthlink.net westcoast65@earthlink.net or dancempls@earthlink.net Web <http://www.dancempls.com>