

Larry's Corner

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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

Tricks For Leaders In WCS

1) If she's heavy during the anchor-step, the man can lighten it up by taking a slightly larger step on 4 or by doing free spins on the anchor. She will stop trusting you to hold her up and will maintain her own balance. This helps both partners since they are both free to play on the anchor without giving away balance to the other partner, but you must regain the connection on 6&. If she's too light during the anchor-step, the man's foot can be moved slightly back on the "step" of his "anch-or-step" to tighten the connection.

2) If she's heavy on 1, the man may be making too large of a lead on 1. Try taking a smaller step (while retaining the body lead.) She may be more comfortable taking smaller steps.

3) If she's like a puppy on a long leash, i.e. uncontrollable, you have to lead the entire move, rather than just 'opening the door for her' Keep your frame. This is important for the follower who gets past you by the 2 count. You can't even do a simple tuck if she's already at the end of the slot.

4) If she's lost in her own little syncopation world and letting the connection fail, put her into multiple spin-

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ning moves. It will make her concentrate on the connection. And when she's in a neckwrap she can't go for her personal record of 50 body waves in under three and half minutes.

5) If she walks out of her anchor step early, or comes in on 1 ahead of the lead, and the man reacts quickly he can a) stop her, or b) take extra walk-walks back. When a woman tries to walk in early, leave her out there for two more beats. She will never stop doing it if you try to fudge for what she is doing by leading her in on the 6 or 8. Besides it could become a habit that could be hard for a leader to break. It also could (and will) put you off time. I would think the best thing to do would be to lead a lot of basics and keep adding the extra two counts just to get her out of the habit of trying to come in on her own or early.

Tricks For Followers In WCS

1) (Besides not knowing better or lack of experience) for why a follower might intentionally go limp and let her arms fully extend on 1,2; she is doing it as a defense mechanism when given an arm lead. An arm lead is inherently more jerky and forceful than a body lead. Letting the arm fully extend allows for more of a shock absorbing effect for the follower. I've heard several very good instructors say that they purposely go limp when someone gives them a jerky lead or is too forceful so that they can protect their arms. However, for really bad cases of forceful leads, I've found that resorting to the traveling coaster step is the best defense since the forward momentum dissipates much of the force.

2) As a follower, when you dance with an inexperienced partner who gets off beat, first try to keep my footwork correct to help him feel the rhythm. End acting like a sort of dancing metronome which can really help a beginner who is *aware* that he has a tendency to get off beat. However some men have no clue about keeping the beat or knowing on which foot to turn the follower, and you can tell that "helpful back leading" would be useless. When you dance with this kind of partner, simply do your best to protect yourself from physical injury -- with these

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men, you have to literally run during most of their maneuvers to keep from either falling or getting your shoulder thrown out of whack.

3) Followers, it's OK to bend at the waist in some styles of dance. In fact it's required to do a duck out from a west coast swing basket whip. The technique for duck outs/tunnels; Ladies, instead of allowing your head to look down while ducking out, you must bend at the waist while keeping your head looking forward.

The Ballroom Look In WCS

When swing dancers talk about the "ballroom look" as something negative, these are the kinds of things they mean:

Experienced WCS dancers keep the upper body straight, but the legs of the partners will form a "V" because they are leveraged. It's what some people call the "water skiing" look. On the anchor-step, experienced swing dancers will turn their torsos away from each other slightly, rather than squaring up to one another. Ballroom dancers without much swing experience tend to stand upright, so there is hardly any leverage between the partners.

Experienced swing dancers make their whips look sharp and linear (up and down the slot) whereas the typical ballroom dancer tends to have a more "rounded" look on whips (circling on a pivot point). This is most obvious on the continuous whip (Gate). It's supposed to look like a series of whips, with a clean "freeze" at the end of each two counts, and with the man and woman moving toward and away from each other as well as around. Altogether too many folks slur this to the point where it just looks like two people walking around each other holding hands.

Experienced swing dancers tend to keep the elbows bent. The extended, long arms of ballroom-style Latin & international "jive" don't work for "street" swing & Latin. Dancing with ballroom trained WCS dancers can feel rather stilted since they keep emphasizing long, graceful lines rather than the "down and dirty" WCS style.

As done in the Swing community the end of patterns typically use an "anchor step" and not a "Coaster step." The follower is discouraged from moving forward under her own power at the end of the pattern. Instead, she hangs out until the guy remembers to lead.

Yet another distinction between the communities is in leverage and being grounded; the typical ballroom West Coast dancers are more "up", tending to stay too high, while in the swing community they dance low; more "into the floor." Similarly, in the ballroom circles there is little leverage while in the swing circles many dancers strive for leverage and connection that appears to be more "heavy."

Ballroom dancers tend to dance through the breaks in the music. Their syncopations tend to be just fancy steps, not interpretations of the music. They sometimes don't appear to notice swing rhythms and dance all their steps with straight eighths, regardless of what the music is doing (see the sections on Swing Music and Hitting the Breaks)

Come Dance With Us

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com)

We started a new Web site Bulletin Board, Photos and stories for Dancing.

If you have questions about dancing, learned a new dance step, have dance clothes or shoes you are not using and want to sell, or need you can use the Bulletin board.

If you want to see photos of Minneapolis, MN dancers, you can go to the Photo Gallery.

If you want to read dance storys they are under Headlines.

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 Nightclub 2 step 6/1/2004
Teach Ballroom at Jefferson Community Ed on Thursday at 26th and Hennepin 612-668-2740
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Web <http://www.dancempls.com> for where to dance in Minneapolis, MN

Web <http://www.comedancewithus.com> for Bulletin board, Photos, and Dance stories.