

# Larry's Corner

## Specific to Hustle

12&3 count used throughout this Newsletter.

Hustle is a partner dance done in a slotted pattern similar to WCS. And just like WCS, it can be danced very smoothly, or with a lot of snap, acceleration and posing. Hustle began, freeform, in discos as a dance with simple footwork and a simple count; 1, 2 &3 (QQ&Q). In 3 count Hustle the pattern repeats every three beats, so to 4/4 music the accent changes continuously with respect to the pattern as the same step can fall either on a down or up beat. Typical Hustle music has every beat accented (e.g. the bang-bang-bang-bang of the bass drum in 1978 top 10 music) which is why disco music is so suitable for Hustle. In disco music there is no swing feel, so if your feet feel uncomfortable doing these '&' steps, it's because there is nothing to step to.

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The 2&3 in Hustle is a coaster step, which has a very smooth feel, hence does not emphasize the split point of the beat.

### The Count In Hustle

Many nationally known teachers, some who have been teaching Hustle since it evolved in the early 80's, prefer to count it as "&1 2 3" (quick-slow-slow-quick) Be careful with this, as at least two very reputable Hustle teachers of the &123 school verbalize this rhythm as quick-\*quick\*-slow-slow. The second quick (the '1') is taken twice as long as the first (the '&'). Why on earth they use the same word for two different timing concepts (first Q = Q, second Q = S) is unexplainable!

Here's another common incorrect way of teaching the rhythm: I have seen it counted out loud "one two and THREE", but a voice print would

show the rhythm:

1      2      a 3    <- dance count  
>  
step    step    hopstep  
(1/16 notes are written  
1e&a2e&a3e&a4e&a...)

In an effort to accent the 3, the "and" yell is 1/4 beat from the 3 instead of the proper 1/2 beat, rushing the together-fwd without adequate time to make the steps smooth. Consequently, people typically "hop" on the "and three" and either rock or do not take a proper step on count 3. The whole 1/2 beat is needed to change the motion and start moving forward. (When done wrong, it looks funny. Since there is not time to change the body motion, people hop in the air so their feet can do the step forward, but their body does not move.)

Reasons for the &123 count: If we use the convention that 1-2 is where FORWARD motion starts, then it becomes immediately clear that:

- in WCS, the woman starts forward on 1-2 (the double unit) and rests on 5&6 or 7&8 (the second triple unit),
- in ECS, she starts forward on 1&2 (the first triple) and rests in place on 5-6 (the double unit).

The &123 school says that by the

same logic, Hustle should be &123. One might be inclined to say that "1" is the first forward step, so the count should be 1 2 3&. The only problem is that this makes the man start on his right and the woman on her left, and this is just too out of touch with the rest of social dancing. So we put the "&" at the start so the man can start on his left and the woman on her right. So then the &1 is where the forward motion starts. The end points of "&1 2 3" have little velocity, but do have potential energy (the lean). The end points of "12&3" have near peak velocity (kinetic energy), but less potential energy (lean). Since the woman should be in motion between the "3" and the "1" of the "12&3" count, "3" is not a natural stopping point in walk-through mode (the only place where names and numbers are important - when actually dancing, all communication comes through the lead and follow; whether your partner counts base-2 in Swahili or learned Venusian names for dance figures, should matter not at all.).

When talking about and demonstrating named patterns in Hustle, it's nice to have the patterns start and end near the natural points of non-movement. That means when standing and talking, you get to stand still between patterns at spots where you're supposed to be standing still. (OK, everybody hop up, but don't land yet, because I want to explain the foot position you're supposed to use to start next figure :-). Both counts have

problems with freezing between patterns, but it seems clearer for beginners to stop near a minimum velocity point. The beginning and ends of figures counted "&1 2 3" are much closer to natural stopping points (still not perfect, but closer.) Hustle USA, a national Hustle organization, says: Regarding count: "It's &1 2 3."

Reasons for the 12&3 count: The &123 school says that their count has historical precedence. However one poster writes: First, I have a bit of a problem with those who characterize the &123 count as 'traditional'. I learned Hustle, in 1985, and I learned it with the 12&3 count, which was considered the 'traditional' count in my circles at that time.

It is useful to be able to demonstrate figures starting on count '1'. It is also true that the end points of "&1 2 3" have little velocity, but do have potential energy (the lean). The end points of "12&3" have near peak velocity (kinetic energy), but less potential energy.

However, 12&3 is a better count and the break point is more appropriate for teaching beginners. It's easier to add the correct velocity at the beginning of a figure than it is to add the correct lean. This is consistent with the way figures are broken down in other dances, as well. Starting on the & in Hustle is like starting on the & in the middle of the coaster step in west coast swing. Instead, WCS figures are generally accepted to start on the

second beat following, which matches the 12&3 timing. There's also a high potential energy foot closure in waltz, just like the '&' of Hustle. It comes at the end of the figure, on the 3, not at the beginning of the figure. Finally, there's the lady's quarter turn in quickstep (or the gent's chasse finish), which has the same dynamic exchange between kinetic and potential energy as the lady's Hustle basic. It's counted SQQS, corresponding to the 12&3 timing.

There are many of the top dance teachers in the country using the "&1 2 3" approach, but that still doesn't explain how one justifies turns ending on half beats. I have taught many different forms of dance for many years and I have yet to find one where a complete step pattern ends on a half beat, other than the "&1 2 3" approach to Hustle.

- As one who promotes the 12&3 count) says "we start the dance on the music, not before the music. what a novel concept!". It's weird that a pattern starts before the 1 beat.
- A woman I danced with the other day said she had trouble with Hustle because starting on the left foot was so confusing. Huh? Well, using &123, the 1 is indeed on the wrong foot for her. I don't blame her for being confused.
- A point I heard from a local teacher is that it is reassuring that Hustle start 1 2, just like west coast swing.

## Tempo For Hustle

Times, and terminology, and the dance, have changed. We now tend to dance Hustle to slower music than was used in the disco era. This encourages longer slots and greater extension which makes it more difficult to adapt when a really fast song is played. (But it also gives more time for styling and for hitting your lines more clearly.) I was in a Hustle workshop a few years ago during which, they played some "old time disco music". We were all huffing and puffing by the end of the first piece. We can dance Hustle up to about 140+ bpm, but I'd say the more comfortable (i.e., normal) range is 110-124 bpm. It is even comfortable down in the 100 bpm range. So the range is about the same as WCS, but a little narrower (i.e., it doesn't work well on the low and high ends of WCS bpm ranges).



## Style Variations In Hustle

Note: Hustle is danced and taught differently in NYC, California, Florida, Texas, Michigan, etc. I've heard reports from various people that it's hard to lead or follow someone in Hustle when they are from some different part of the country. When I ask about the basic footwork, it sounds about the same. The difference in count, while messing up naming conventions and a common vocabulary, shouldn't matter when actually dancing Hustle. Some differences are:

- slotted versus rotating It might be slightly disturbing to be led off-slot when trained in the strictly slotted variety.
- smooth vs. sharp, sort of like how the styling of Argentine Tango

and International Tango evolved differently. Someone used to a more fluid Hustle might have trouble snapping in and out of a short freeze line.

- tempo range I've noticed that some people can't dance a Hustle at all at what some merely consider a faster tempo. (128 bpm+)
- amount of forward lead required Someone used to pulling the lady forward on "1" (&1 2 3 count) might be surprised at a lady who comes forward without an apparent lead. Someone used to a Hustle with a lot of independent dynamics might be lost when a lady seems stuck in place on the "1". Conversely, the lady may feel pulled off balance at a funny time.
- turnaround timing The basic description of Hustle leaves a lot of room for interpretation as to the exact point at which the lady CG reverses direction. It could be as early as the beginning of the together step ("&" in "1 2 & 3 " count). It could be up to 250 milliseconds later just before the forward step ("3" step in the "1 2 & 3 " count, 120 bpm tempo). With a "kick and step" or "point and step" as in "&3&1 2" the reversal could be even as late as 100-250 milliseconds into the "3" count. This (up to 350-500 milliseconds) could be a significant difference, enough in physiological terms to make it feel like a completely different rhythm or dance. This might be the hidden, hard to describe, difference between Hustle in different regions of the country.



## Hints for Life

1. It hurts to love someone and not be loved in return, but what is more painful is to love someone and never find the courage to let that person know how you feel.
2. A sad thing in life is when you meet someone who means a lot to you, only to find in the end that it was never meant to be and you just have to let go.
3. The best kind of friend is the kind you can sit on a porch swing with, never say a word, and then walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you've ever had.
4. It's true that we don't know what we've got until we lose it, but it's also true that we don't know what we've been missing until it arrives.
5. It takes only a minute to get a crush on someone, an hour to like someone, and a day to love someone but it takes a lifetime to forget someone.
6. Don't go for looks, they can deceive. Don't go for wealth; even that fades away. Go for someone who makes you smile because it only takes a smile to make a dark day seem bright.
7. Dream what you want to dream; go where you want to go; be what you want to be; because you have only one life and one chance to do all the things you want to do.
8. Always put yourself in the other's shoes. If you feel that it hurts you, it probably hurts the other too.
9. A careless word may kindle strife; a cruel word may wreck a life; a timely word may level stress; a loving word may heal and bless.
10. The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.
11. Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss, ends with a tear. When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live life so that when you die you are the one smiling and every one around you is crying.
12. Final thought - Only one person in this world will make you happy and that's yourself.

I hope this makes a difference in your lives. Once in a while I'll share my thoughts with everyone. If you don't like my thoughts or you have some of your own let me know, we can add it to future newsletters.

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. If you have anything you would like to write for us, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you. LARRY

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