



Larrys Corner

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*Happy New Year and
thank you all.*

This is called Larrys Corner because when I teach I stand in the corner so I can see everyone.

If you want to read dance stories they are under Headlines or Larrys Corner.

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com) Or
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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. If you have anything you would like to write about, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you.

Come Dance With Us

American Style Waltz

Until the 18th century, dance was strictly divided between courtly and country forms. In the courts, dances like the Minuet were refined affairs with an elaborate language of bows and curtsies. There was little physical contact between dancers, and proper form, like turned-out feet, was considered essential.

Everything changed with the Waltz. Born of a German and Austrian peasant dance called the Landler, the Waltz was the first widely popular dance to feature a closed position. The speed of the Waltz required intimate physical communication between dance partners; for this reason it was denounced in every nation as scandalous and immoral. "We feel it a duty to warn every parent against exposing his daughter to so fatal a contagion," according to The Times of London in 1816.

Although some variations on the basic dance like the "Boston" were briefly popular in the U.S., the Waltz was ultimately standardized with the box pattern and the hold we know today. The Waltz dominated much of the dance scene right until the First World War, when the Tango and Foxtrot was popular to a whole new generation.

Three types of Waltzes are commonly taught in ballrooms: American style, which you will learn in this class, International style, which is mostly for competition, and Viennese Waltz, a very fast dance with numerous turns. All variations progress along the line of dance.

The Waltz is characterized by rise and-fall and by sway on side steps but the foot remains in contact with the floor at all times. A good frame is essential to maintaining balance and control. The Waltz is in 3/4 time, at about 32 bars per minute. Much of the music owes a debt to 19th century composer Johann Strauss.

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Waltz Basic Step

STEP 1: Get into position by facing your partner. If you are the leader, extend your **left hand** to your side with your elbow bent and your palm raised, and With that hand, grasp *followers right hand in a loose grip*, facing her. *Follower places left hand on leaders shoulder palm touching arm and fingers touching shoulder with elbow bent.* Leader places **right hand** under followers left arm, Palm on side, fingers on back, with elbow bent. Follower should mirror leaders movements.

STEP 2: Beat 1 On the first beat, step forward gracefully with your left foot. *Follower should follow your lead by doing the opposite of what you do on each beat - in this case, stepping back with her right foot.*

STEP 3: Beat 2 On the second beat, step forward and to the right with your right foot. Trace an upside-down letter L in the air with your foot as you do this.

STEP 4: Shift your weight to your right foot. Keep your left foot stationary.

STEP 5: Beat 3 On the third beat, slide your left foot over to your right and stand with your feet together.

STEP 6: Beat 4 step back with your right foot.

STEP 7: Beat 5 On the fifth beat, step back and to the left with your left foot, this time tracing a backward L. Shift your weight to your left foot.

STEP 8: Beat 6 On the final beat, slide your right foot toward your left until your feet are together; now you're ready to start over with your left foot.

STEP 9: Repeat steps 2 through 8 turning your and your partner's orientation slowly to the left by slightly turning left on beat 2 and 5.

Tips & Warnings

- It helps to count as you go - 'one, two, three; one, two, three' or better yet one, two, three, four, five, six'- placing the emphasis on the 'one' as you count.
- Practice to a slow waltz until you become comfortable with the moves.

Waltz Rhythm

The standard Waltz has a tempo of 28 to 34 measures per minute (84-102 beats per minute). It consists of three steps taken on the three beats of a 3/4 time musical measure. A step is taken on every beat, and all steps have the same timing. Which foot is free at the beginning of the dance phrase alternates from one phrase to the next. 3/4 time means that there are three beats to each measure or bar of music. When listening to the music to identify the type of rhythm, you should notice that the inflection of the notes repeats in groups of three. Usually, it is not "easy" to tap your feet to, unless you only tap at the beginning of each measure. The emphasis, in both the music and the dance, is on the first beat of the measure. The beats of Waltz music are not as pronounced or easy to recognize as those used in 2/4 or 4/4 music. Most 2/4 or 4/4 music uses the heavy bass cadence tones of a drum, or brass instrument. The heavy evenly spaced bass beats of 2/4 and 4/4 music are easy to hear and identify. The three beats in a Waltz measure may not be from a bass instrument, but rather from a piano, organ, or violin and vary in tone from one beat to the next. The Waltz cadence is usually more subtle and requires closer attention to identify. Heaviest beat is one, Next heaviest beat is four. So for Leader beat 1 3 and 5 is left foot, 2 4 and 6 is the right foot. Follower is the other foot.

Waltz Styling

You don't dance to the melody, or to the harmony; you dance to the rhythm. Each measure in waltz starts on the downbeat, which is an emphasized note usually played by one of the low-pitched instruments: a drum, bass guitar, bass fiddle, tuba, or accordion. Waltz steps always begin on the downbeat beat 1 heaviest. There are 6 beats in basic step.

The emphasis of the **first beat** should be observed by the dancer who desires to Waltz properly. The accentuation of the first beat invites the dancer to take a longer step on the first beat (but not too long). This step should be larger than the others, but this is done by making the other two steps smaller. It is a common mistake for men to make their steps too large for the woman to follow. The first beat is the step for initiating turns, crosses, dips, progressing around the room, or making significant adjustments in the body position. The height of the dancer should fall slightly as the step is taken on the first beat. It is the longest step, and as your weight is between feet, the body drops slightly. At this point in the dance phrase, the body of the dancer is at its lowest. The height begins to rise again as you move onto the stepping foot, and you should rise onto the ball of that foot at the end of the first step.

The **second beat** is a short step taken on the ball of the foot. This step is a rising step, with very little movement. The slight rise on the second step tends to accent the rise started at the end of the first step. This helps the second step continue the flow of body weight or momentum generated by the first step. The height begins to fall as soon as the second step is completed. It is hard on the leg muscles to hold the body weight at the high point of this rise, so don't try -- let it begin a natural controlled fall.

The **third beat** of the Waltz is a step in place, next to the foot you're on. The weight transfer during this step causes the dancer to drop to the original height; the height from which step one started. The three Waltz steps are a "Big Step, Little Step, Step in Place." The dancer will appear to "Fall, Rise, Fall"; with a continuous flowing motion in time with the rhythm of the music. The second and third steps should not be shuffled, but honest steps. One way to try to get the proper rise and fall is to waltz so that the heel only touches the floor on the first step of the dance phrase. The Waltz appears very smooth and beautiful when danced in a continuous flowing motion. Swing the body smoothly in the direction of the lead foot on the first count. Turns and significant changes of direction should be accomplished on the first beat of a measure. Move across the floor with graceful curves. Use the full time allotted by a measure and don't rush turns.

Beat Four five and six same as one two and three except for using the other foot.

So in summary fall on 1 and 4 rise on 2 3 and 5 6

Common Mistakes

Losing the timing of the music, usually by rushing it (going too fast). Usually lady rushes step. Wait for leader.

Turning the wrong amount. (more than partner can handle)

Poor closed position.

Slumping, or otherwise not keeping erect posture.

Dropping to your heel on moves like Whisk and Hover.

Little Rise & Fall. (Fall on 1 and 4)

Bouncing on the rise & fall.

Not taking full size steps. (should be 1 and 4 bigger than 2 and 5.)

Waltz History:

Through the 18th century, "polite" society was accustomed to decorous dances such as the Quadrille (a forerunner of square dancing), the Gavotte and, in the second half of the century, the Minuet. Such dances had couples dancing with no more partner contact than holding hands. While some "country" or "folk" dances involved more of a couple feel (e.g., English country rounds, which date back to the 13th century), the first dance that we think of as a "ballroom dance" was the Viennese Waltz, which became fashionable in Vienna in 1773. Like the modern waltz, the Viennese Waltz contains gliding and turning movements. However the Viennese Waltz is much faster than modern Waltz. At that time, it was the fashion to be a dashing dancer. The man had to waltz his partner from one end of the hall to the other with the greatest possible speed. Each couple tried to outdo each other. Vienna was the home of the composers most associated with the waltz, Josef Lanner and Johann Strauss, Sr (1804-49) and Jr. (1825-99).

The waltz was the first time a close hold was used (to maintain balance). Naturally, the pleasure it gave to the couples who lost themselves in each other's arms was met with strong criticism, primarily by the "elders" of society. One review even warned, "we feel it a duty to warn every parent against exposing his daughter to so fatal a contagion." In parts of Germany and Switzerland the waltz was banned altogether (1799). That did not stop the dance's progress. Napoleon's soldiers spread the waltz from Germany to Paris. The Waltz spread to England, with Queen Victoria dancing it in 1791, and conquered ballrooms throughout Europe in the early 1800's. While other dances, such as Lancers, Polka, and the Schottische, became popular later in the 19th century, the Waltz maintained its position as the most popular ballroom dance up until about 1890.

Waltz Notes

Posture and position: Your bodies should form a "V", with feet very close together, in between partner's feet. The Woman's left arm should rest lightly on the Man's right arm. Man's hand and wrist should be as flat as possible just below lady's left shoulder blade. This is extremely important, as this connection is where the Man or leader signals his lead.

Measures of music: Each waltz step uses one three-count measure of music (1, 2, 3), but try to think in terms of 6 -- two measures. Man begins on left foot, Woman on right. These are referred to as the "first foot". So two measures would be counted:

1 (first foot) 2 3 4 (second foot) 5 6.

Turning Step: Ideally, one complete rotation is accomplished in two measures or two waltz steps. After the end of the second waltz step, you are facing the direction you were before you began turning, with the Man facing towards LOD (line of dance). Step into partner's place as you turn. Man's first step is around partner; on the second step, Woman steps around partner. Turn with confidence. It's important to give weight and support when turning. If it's too hard to do a full rotation in two waltz steps, try breaking it down into quarter turns, thus taking four waltz steps for the complete rotation.

Giving Weight: It's important, when turning, for each to give weight. When moving straight, Woman can give weight by making sure she is leaning into partner's right hand (without making him "carry" her). It's okay to ask verbally for weight, if you need to.

Phrasing: Most of the waltzes played at contra dances or elsewhere are written in eight-bar (measure) phrases. Most of the choreography is done in groups of eight measures or eight waltz steps, so that a move can be begun and completed in one or maybe two eight-bar phrases.