

Couple Dance Tip Sheet

~ General Tips ~

Internalize the rhythm & tempo. First, feel the rhythm throughout your body—move in time to the music. Don't just do the steps by rote —have a feel for how they fit with the rhythm.

The all-important dance “frame”. A good frame maintains the connection and good spacing between you and partner. In the **closed position** frame the gent's left hand and lady's right hand are palm to palm at about shoulder height, and the man's right arm reaches around his partner's back; lady's left hand on top of man's right shoulder. Ladies, you should feel yourself pushing, but not leaning, into the hand that is on your back. The joined hands should be relaxed with a little pressure against your partner's palm (but don't clamp down like an “alligator clip”) The frame works best when bodies are parallel, rather than a V formation, and offset (nose to right shoulder, rather than nose to nose).

Small steps work best. Small, short steps enable you to keep up with the music, especially when the tempo is fast. Small steps conserve energy and they help keep your feet underneath your weight, thus maintaining better balance.

~ Waltz ~

Waltz is the beautiful dance that never goes out of style. It's a graceful dance, light on the feet.

Waltz music has 3 beats/steps per measure. Try starting by standing in place and **sway to the rhythm** before starting to move your feet.

Feel and dance to waltz music in phrases of two measures (six beats). The gent starts on his left foot: *Left, R, L (1,2,3); R, L, R (4,5,6)*. Each odd measure starts on the gent's left, each even measure starts on the gent's right. The opposite is true for the lady.

The **hesitation step** is a handy rest during fast tempos: You can take one step per measure—take a step on the 1st beat and hold for beats 2 & 3 before taking a step on the 1st beat of the next measure.

(waltz cont'd)

When waltzing in line-of-direction without turning it works best for the feet to go straight ahead rather than side-to-side. (Imagine you're on railroad tracks that go around the room.) Step styling: think *long, short, short, or step, toe, step*.

~ East Coast Swing ~

East Coast Swing can be smooth or exuberant to match each particular swing tune.

The partner connection can be “open” (connecting with one or both hands) or “closed” (gent's arm around women's back.) The basic step pattern is 6 counts/beats: counts 1-2 man steps on his left foot; counts 3-4 he steps on his right foot; 5-6 rock-step (quick springy steps back & forth (left & right)) Lady mirrors her partner.

~ Polka ~

The polka is a lively 19-century Bohemian dance.

Each 4-count measure has three steps and a hop, and you alternate feet on each successive measure.

~ Schottische ~

The schottische is a light-hearted relatively easy dance that makes for a nice change of pace.

Part 1 is danced in promenade position (8 counts): Step, step, step, hop, step, step, step, hop.

Part 2 in closed position and rotating (8 counts): Step, hop, step, hop, step, hop, step, hop.

Stay close to the ground on the hops.

~ Zwiefacher ~

The zwiefacher (pronounced tswee' fa khur) is a traditional dance associated with Bavaria & Austria.

Zwiefachers alternate between repeating measures of 3-beat (waltz) and 2 or 4-beats (pivots). Each tune has its own pattern—some that are simple and predictable; others are complicated and challenging.



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