

# Class Notes: Swing Tier 1

## Week 1: Basic Footwork and Rotation

- Swing is danced on 4, 6, and 8 Beats
- Basic footwork is 8 Beats = 10 Actions:
  - Push - Push (1,2) - Triple Step (3+4: Push - Step - Step) - Repeat (5,6,7+8)
- Body position is kept low through the knees, with each step pushing into the floor. The push through the second two steps of each Triple Step is typically softer.
- The push into the floor is through the inside edge of the foot, using the stomach muscles to provide pressure through the body. The pressure into the floor rolls from the inside edge of foot to the outside of the foot with the side to side motion.
- The push and roll from the inside of the foot to the outside of foot produces a natural body motion. This may be deliberately emphasized (particularly by the woman) for hip movement and body roll/sway through the dance.
- Hands are connected man's left hand to woman's right hand. The woman's hand is cupped over the back of the man's fingers, with both man and woman achieving a solid **WRIST ANGLE**.
- Gentle pressure through the hands in the basic position is kept **INWARDS & UPWARDS**.
- In **CLOSED POSITION**, the man's right hand rests on the woman's waist or is kept in relaxed hold at the shoulder blade. A rolling pressure through the hand can assist the lead and momentum into moves. Similarly, the woman's left hand rests upon the man's shoulder and may be used to push or balance through the dance.
- Elbows remain close to the side in the basic position and keep returning to this position throughout the dance. However, the arms must be allowed to flex with the movement through the dance (**SQUEEZE / STRETCH**).
  - **DON'T CHICKEN WING.**
  - **DON'T LOCK IN.**
- The man uses a cross-step (5,6), the right leg crossing forward in front of the left, to initiate the (clockwise) rotation. The man uses the pressure through his left arm to push back towards the woman's right hip, while using the right hand help turn the lady with him and maintain a closed body position (**FRAME**).
  - The man may lead the woman into an anti-clockwise rotation by pulling in toward his left hip with the motion of the ladies back-step, maintaining a slight pull (left hand) through the triple step(2→3+4). The right arm provides reinforcement for the lead, gently pushing the woman around as the man's body moves with the woman in **FRAME**.
- During the rotation the woman uses a similar cross step to the man, but steps forward on the left first and then crosses in front with the right leg before stepping to the side into the triple step.

Your Notes:



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## Week 2: Under-Arm Turn and Return; The Shunt

### *Under-Arm Turn*

- Following the 1,2 the man's left arm is raised like a boom-gate. The upper arm for both the man and woman should be positioned straight to the side of the body, with the elbow at woman's shoulder height.
- The man and woman's arms form an "A" shape, hands meeting in the middle. The **WRIST ANGLE** is maintained at all times.
- The woman maintains the cup shape of her hand and applies a gentle pressure into the back of the man's fingers **INWARDS & UPWARDS**.
- The man applies pressure from his wrist through his fingers **DOWN INTO THE PALM** of the woman. **DO NOT** grip the woman's fingers with the thumb.
- The Under-Arm Turn is executed through 5,6 using an extension through the man's elbow and gentle push through the wrist and fingers. The woman will complete most of her rotation on the first step into the turn (5), using the second step to position herself relative to the man (6).
- The hand movement is relaxed and consistent around the woman's head. ***The lead should match the pace of the music, rhythm and motion of the woman's footwork, and not extend away from the man.***
- A slight pressure back through the man's wrist and arm is used to help keep the woman close through the Under-Arm Turn. The woman's footwork should also be kept tight to limit travel and overextension through the arms.
- The woman uses her eyes as she executes the Under-Arm Turn; first, looking out under her arm as she steps into the turn, then back to the man as she steps to position on the 6 count. This improves balance through the Under-Arm Turn and preparation for move or footwork variations through 7+8.
- Upon completion of the Under-Arm Turn neither the man nor the woman should feel like they are coming apart from each other. Remember:
  - Maintain **WRIST ANGLE**
  - Maintain compression through the arms
  - Don't lean away from your partner during the turn
  - Use the step on the 6 count to achieve good body position
- **STRETCH OUT - SQUEEZE IN - STRETCH OUT.**

## Return

- From the Under-Arm Turn the man has shifted from looking at his WRIST TO WATCH. The arms remain at woman's shoulder height, with the hands roughly at the woman's head height. The woman matches the man's arm angle.
  - DO NOT tense up through the neck and shoulders
  - DO NOT drop or raise the elbow from shoulder height
  - Maintain arm pressure, but DO NOT "lock up" through the arms
- The arms stretch gently through 1,2. Both the man and woman PULL in towards each other with the forward step. The pull comes from the side, towards the man's right shoulder.
- The woman's rotation takes place through the first triple step (3+4), the remaining footwork following the basic pattern. *Optional:* A second turn can be lead through 5,6.
- The woman moves towards the man's right shoulder. On 7+8, the man may either step in on the return to immediately return to **CLOSED POSITION** or step slightly back to be in an open face to face position.
- *Variation:* The man may step forward and around the woman on 1,2. He continues the clockwise movement while leading the turn through 3+4 so that his body faces the opposite direction from his starting position (RETURN with a CHANGE OF PLACE).
- Momentum through the rotation of the dance encourages the open face to face position. STRETCH OUT - SQUEEZE IN - STRETCH OUT.

## The Shunt

- The first 4 beats are executed as per THE RETURN.
- As the woman's rotation nears completion, the man continues to apply pressure through the lead, pushing through his left arm towards the woman's right hip. This causes the woman to step back into the 5,6.
- The man maintains the steady pressure through 5,6 by stepping forward to follow after the woman. At the end of 6 the man changes the direction of his pressure, pulling back towards his body to halt the woman's motion away from him on 7+8.
- There is a strong emphasis for the lead through the man's wrist, both in providing changes in pressure or direction and in keeping the rhythm of movement through the dance. The man moves with the woman and should not over-exaggerate the motion.
- The size of the woman's steps is determined by how much push away from the man is supplied. Try to keep footwork small, keeping a strong pressure between you and the man. DON'T RUN AWAY!

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## Week 3: Basic Swing-Out; Turning Swing-Out

### *Basic Swing Out*

- Timing is the same as the basic footwork. However, the direction of the footwork is forward and back, rather than side to side.
- The woman follows a straight line *through the man*, then back to her starting position (**THE SLOT**). The man's footwork moves around the woman, getting out of her way as she moves back and forth down the line. To achieve this:

#### *Woman:*

- 1,2 - Swivel (forward\*), pushing through the pelvis and pulling through with the arm. Footwork pressure remains through the inside edge of foot, with a solid push into the floor. *The legs and hips move through the swivel, NOT your shoulders!*
  - \*There are several ways in which the Swing-Out may be lead through the woman's first two swivel steps. Each variant brings a distinctly different presentation to the dance and allows different motions to match the music. A good lead may use any variant as it suits - good frame and connection assists greatly in following accordingly.
  - 'Running' steps, involving quick movement down the line of dance, generally commence forward motion immediately (1).
  - 'Smooth' steps, which tend to move with the natural flow of the dance, allow the first swivel to be placed as preparation (or additional recovery from the preceding figure) commencing movement forward with the second swivel (2).
  - 'Emphasised' steps, which are designed to accentuate the motion through the (particularly first) triple step action, lead forward after the swivels have completed (2+).
- 3 - The step turns in toward the man, almost in the same position as where the man *used to be*. Keep tracking the man's right shoulder!
- +4 - **PUSH-Step!** The second step of the triple step should face the opposite direction from the woman's starting position. As this step is taken, there is a roll through the left foot from ball to heel. This provides a strong push back in the other direction for the second half of the SWING-OUT. The pressure through the foot roll is matched by pressure back through the shoulder-blades into the man's fingers (**RUBBER BAND MOTION**).
- 5,6 - Straight back down the line! Use the momentum from the **RUBBER BAND MOTION** to drive through these steps. Unless the music is fast, these steps roll through the foot from heel to ball.
- 7+8 - The triple step is used to position in front of the man, with pressure back through the left foot ready to repeat the swivels forward.



### Man:

- 1,2 - Step-CROSS! Use the back-step to get out of the woman's way as she steps down the line. The right foot crosses in front of the left, which matched by initial clockwise body rotation.
- The lead into the SWING-OUT comprises of a controlled wrist roll left/back (1) and right/forward (2) towards the man's right hip. This complements the woman's hip movement as she swivels, pulling her smoothly forward.
- 3 - The step comes in around the woman, back in line with **SLOT**. The man assists the woman's turn using pressure back through the left arm to the woman's right hip. Simultaneously, the man's right hand raises to the woman's shoulder blade, the palm of hand positioned against her side with the fingers curve to grip gently behind the back. Both arms are used to reinforce **FRAME** with partner.
- +4 - A similar **PUSH-Step** is used to the woman, but is less pronounced. Rather, emphasis is through the arms to match and strengthen the **RUBBER BAND MOTION**. The arm extension must be made to match the woman's body movement, with the pull forwards primarily coming through the fingers and NOT the arms.
- 4+ - The man continues to pull through the 4 count, bringing the woman forward through into the second half of the SWING-OUT. The man releases before 5 - "Real men lead on 4+"
- 5,6 - **CROSS-Step!** Again, the men need to get out of the woman's way. The right foot crosses behind as the body rotation continues, with the left foot then stepping back in line with the **SLOT**.
- 7+8 - The triple step is used to position in front of the woman, with pressure back through the right foot ready to repeat the SWING-OUT.
- The footwork is a lot easier when the body position is kept low and knees are bent. To keep the footwork tight, the steps should also be no larger than required to move past your partner. This means that the rotation in the middle should be close, with no over-extension or pull away from partner during the **RUBBER BAND MOTION**.
- It is the man's job to maintain the direction of the **SLOT** by keeping a solid **FRAME**. However, the woman should keep track of where she is going and keep herself in line, particular as she positions for the **PUSH-Step** back down the **SLOT**.

### Turning Swing Out

- The first 4+ beats are the same as the BASIC SWING-OUT.
- Following the 4+ lead, the man raises his left arm towards his right shoulder as the woman steps forward. The man continues his body rotation around the woman and takes his left arm over her head as the woman turns through 5,6.
- The 7+8 beats are the same as the BASIC SWING-OUT.

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## Week 4: Lindy Circle; Swing-Out from Closed Position

### Lindy Circle

- Timing and rotation is very close to that of a SWING-OUT. However, the first 4 beats are used to move into a **CLOSED POSITION** before the dance rotates clockwise 360° (the circle). To achieve this:
  - *Woman:*
    - 1,2,3+4 - Footwork is the same as the SWING-OUT. However, there is a body push into the side of the man as the move closes (+4) and the upper **FRAME** begins to rotate.
    - 5,6 - The step is back and around, moving in towards the man. The right foot then crosses in front as the rotation continues. Maintain pressure back through the shoulders into the man's right arm. *Stick like glue and push into the turn!*
    - 7+8- Complete any necessary rotation, travelling slightly back down the line to get back in the **SLOT**. Push back through the inside ball of foot.
    - Be prepared to back-step with the man on 1,2 rather than using the swivel. **CLOSED POSITION** = Back-Step
  - *Man:*
    - 1,2 - Footwork is the same as the SWING-OUT. However, the back step tends to be smaller as the man will be essentially on the spot. *Don't move in to grab the woman - wait for her to come into your arms!*
    - 3+4 - As the woman moves into position, the man's triple step makes an ~90° clockwise rotation. Round through the arms and upper torso, using this **FRAME** to provide body rotation and pressure for the lead.
    - 5,6 - Continue to 'wind up' through the body while making the cross-step into the **CIRCLE**; right foot in front of left foot. Use the pressure through the body to drive through the rotation. Maintain **FRAME** so that the woman pushes into the rotation with you, rather than being dragged or swung around.
    - 7+8- Complete any necessary rotation, travelling slightly back down the line to get back in the **SLOT**. Push back through the inside ball of foot.
- It is the man's job to maintain a smooth rotation through the **CIRCLE** by keeping a solid **FRAME**. This is achieved using a constant backwards pressure through the rotation:
  - The left arm pushes through the woman's right arm toward her hip *for as long as the CIRCLE is to continue*
  - "Hug" the woman with the right arm to keep **CLOSED POSITION** during the **CIRCLE**.
- The woman helps maintain **FRAME** by using the body push into the man and ensuring her arm position and pressure is where it needs to be - *elbow on hip, pressure INWARDS & UPWARDS.*

- The footwork is a lot easier when the body position is kept low and knees are bent:
  - Easier to cross legs during the rotation
  - Better pressure in towards partner - and consequently balance
  - Prepared to push through 7+8 - *wherever that may take you ...*

### **Swing Out from Closed Position**

- The man steps in front of the woman to physically block any forward movement down the line of dance, and then completes the SWING-OUT. This is the basic way of changing from **CLOSED POSITION** to **OPEN POSITION**.
- 1,2 - The man uses his back step to ease the woman in hold and turn his body in towards her. The right foot should face back towards the woman as much as possible, as the right hand is positioned at the woman's shoulder-blade as per the SWING-OUT.
- 3+4 - Step-PUSH-Step! Use the arms to initiate a small but definite **RUBBER BAND MOTION**.
- The woman keeps all of her footwork very small as the man steps in front; it is essentially on the spot. The triple step may (should) be used to match the **RUBBER BAND MOTION** provided by the man.
- The remaining beats from 4+ are the same as the SWING-OUT.

### **Your Notes:**



## Week 5: Double Turn-Out (to Closed Position)

### *Double Turn-Out*

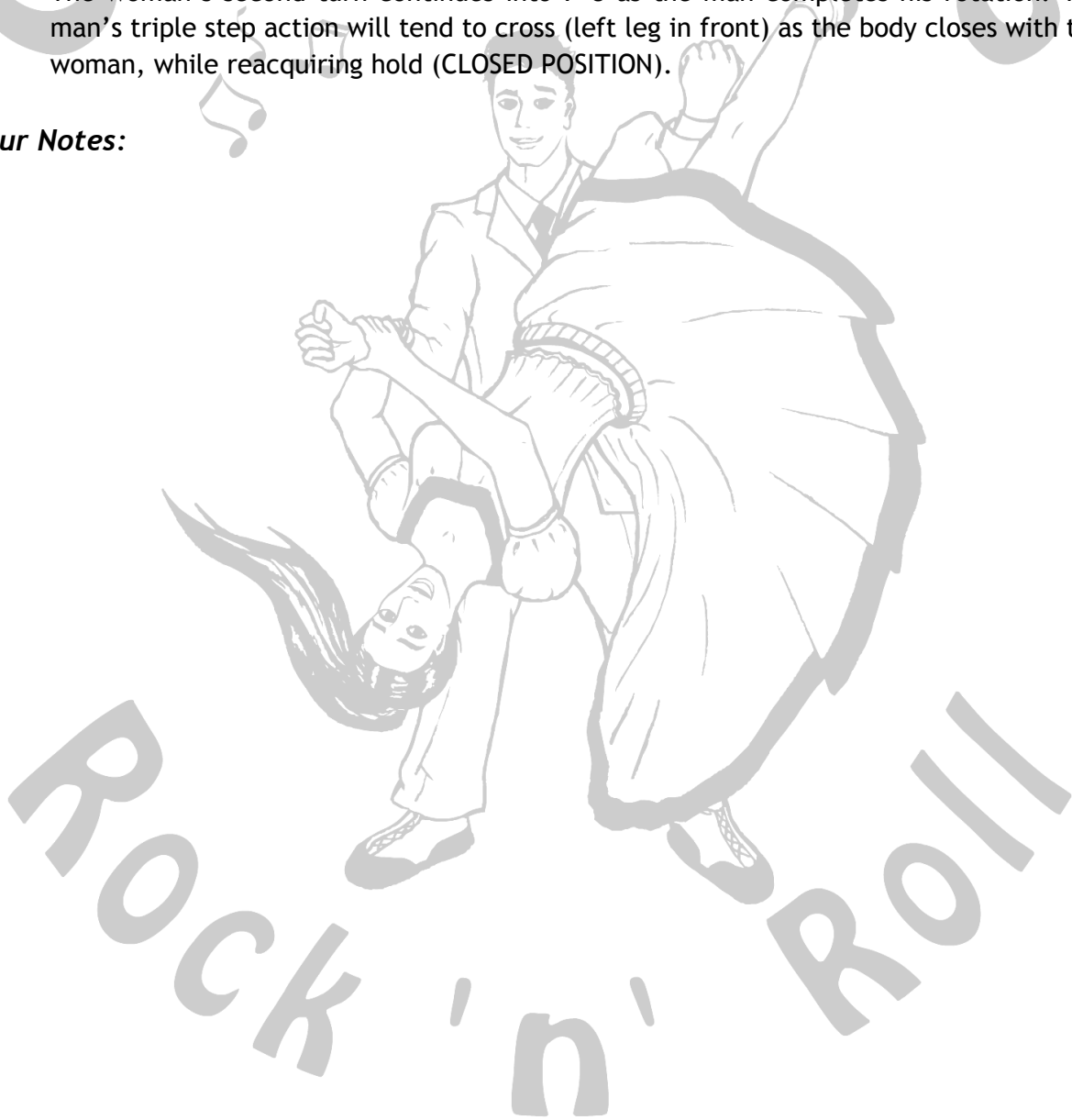
- From **CLOSED POSITION**, the man uses the first four beats to bring the woman directly in front of him:
  - 1,2 - With the momentum of the woman's back-step **PUSH** back through the woman's right arm and hip so that she will rotate slightly, then **PULL** around toward the front of body. **PUSH-PULL!**
  - 2/3 - The left arm swings up through into 3 count so that the upper arm is positioned to the side of the body. The elbow should be at approximately woman's shoulder height, with the hands just above her head.
  - Use a consistent momentum through the upper body **FRAME** so that the lead into the turn is smooth.
  - 3+4 - The triple step moves slightly forward into the woman. Maintain **FRAME** so that a gentle pressure through arms and motion down the **SLOT** is achieved.
- The man and woman's arms form an "A" shape, hands meeting in the middle, pushing palm to palm. The pressure into the palms is **INWARDS & UPWARDS**. The first turn commences on 5 using an extension through the man's elbow and gentle push through the wrist and fingers. The hand movement is around the woman's head - **THE LEAD SHOULD NOT EXTEND AWAY FROM THE MAN**.
- As the woman turns (5 through 6) she creates a cup shape with her hand and applies a gentle pressure into the man's fingers **INWARDS & UPWARDS**. The man similarly curves his hand and pushes through his fingers to lead the turn.
- The woman steps down the line as she turns, making ~180° rotation with each step through 5 and 6. Keep your eyes up and spot the man as you turn make sure you stay in the **SLOT**.
- The second turn continues into 7+8, the man providing a constant pressure through his wrist and fingers to maintain the momentum of the woman's rotation. The woman continues to spot and travel down the line as she turns.
- The man follows after the woman so that after her turns are completed body position remains close. Close body position is also facilitated by keeping a slight pull back in through the arms during the woman's second turn. **DON'T LET HER RUN AWAY ON YOU!**
- (After the back-step) the **DOUBLE TURN-OUT** travels down the **SLOT** at all times, but this does not mean that it must take a lot of space! Keep the footwork small and direction can be achieved without distance.

Note: To maintain the woman's motion down the same line of dance (rather than shifting it slightly left), the man may perform the figure: a) moving forward with the woman through the triple step, b) moving behind the woman through the triple step.

### **DTO → Closed Position**

- The first 4 beats are essentially the same as the Double Turn Out. However, the man should start to move in behind the woman (through the back step and/or triple step) as she moves down the line of dance.
- As the woman turns (5 through 6) the man crosses completely to the right of the woman and turns inwards (anti-clockwise) to turn back towards the opposite direction to which he started:
  - 5 - Step forward and to the right (right leg), positioning just to the side of the woman with adequate room to complete the turn comfortably.
  - 6 - Cross in front (left leg) to initiate the anti-clockwise rotation.
- The woman's second turn continues into 7+8 as the man completes his rotation. The man's triple step action will tend to cross (left leg in front) as the body closes with the woman, while reacquiring hold (CLOSED POSITION).

**Your Notes:**



## Week 6: Texas Tommy

- The first 4+ beats are the same as the BASIC SWING-OUT.
- Following the 4+ lead, as the man steps into the rotation around the woman he brings the woman's right hand behind her back *at waist height*, circling the thumb and forefinger of his right hand around the woman's wrist. **The following points should be considered:**
  - The greatest possible distance through the arms (i.e. around partner) is achieved when the man maintains a low body position, such that his arms can reach around the woman's waist. An upright body position accordingly brings the arms up, causing the hand transfer behind the back to pull up into the woman's shoulder. It is for this reason that the equivalent figure in Rock 'n' Roll is known as the *ARM-BREAKER*.
  - To wrap the arms around partner as easily as possible it is also essential that close body position is achieved as the first half of the SWING-OUT is completed. The man should aim to step in behind the woman as closely as possible through the step-push-step action - "*You are the Matador - she is the bull.*"
  - If it is not possible to achieve a thumb/forefinger hold comfortably two alternate hand holds may be used:
    - Man's fingers into the woman's palm, which may then be subsequently used to push into the woman's hip.
    - A hook through the fingers. This is a weak hold and the woman should be allowed to unwind down the line of dance in her own time rather than using a pull, which may place stress through the woman's shoulder.
- The woman **MUST** continue to step forward on 5, into the man's arms, so that the transfer of hands behind the back may take place comfortably. A slight upper body rotation with the man may also make the transition smoother. **Don't be shy!**
  - If the hand transfer has been achieved successfully and the arms are in the correct position, the man may lead the woman forward into the turn. This is achieved, **not by pulling through the arm**, but pushing into the back of the woman's left hip as she steps. This will bring the woman forward and commence rotation without placing any stress on the arm.
- The woman turns through 5 and 6 on the spot. The right foot crosses in front and back in towards the left foot so that this can occur. Any further rotation that is required is completed stepping back through the triple step on 7+8.
- As the woman turns the man **DOES NOT GRIP** with his right hand. Rather the woman's wrist is allowed to rotate freely within the circle formed by his thumb and forefinger. A standard hand hold, with the woman's right hand cupped over the man's right hand, may then slide into position on 7+8.

**Your Notes:**



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