

# Class Notes: Kick-Step Tier 1

## Week 1: Basic Footwork

- 6 Beats = 6 Actions: Back - Step - Kick - Step (Forward) - Kick - Step (Back)
- Body position is slightly forward over the balls of the feet, with the knees bent. SHOULDERS over KNEES over FEET.
- The feet of the man and woman form a “V” shape (**PROMENADE POSITION**). The motion of the dance is FORWARD AND BACK down the centre line of the “V”. Maintain position through the kicks - DO NOT end up side by side.
- The feet push through the back-step. THE HEEL KISSES THE FLOOR. Do not move the foot without taking your body with it *or* take your body further back than your foot.
- The kicks come from the hip, with a flick down through the leg. Each step pushes into the floor, through the ball of the foot. Kicks should be relaxed, but not loose - particularly through the foot. SQUASH THE BALLOON or DUNK THE TEABAG.
- 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.
- The man’s right hand rests on the woman’s waist. 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. DON’T CHICKEN WING.

*Your Notes:*

## Week 2: Under-Arm Turn and Return; Basic Link

### *Under-Arm Turn*

- Following the back-step, 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 on the 4 count 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**.
- The man may use the right hand to assist the woman's rotation - but it should not push the woman away into the spin.
- 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. **STEP back out of the spin, don't FALL out of the spin!**
- It is normal for the woman's spin to take her slightly away from the man. Any additional distance from the man is recovered through the following back-step.
- The woman uses her eyes as she executes the Under-Arm Turn; first, looking out under her arm as she steps into the spin, then back to the man as she kick-steps back out of the spin. This improves balance through the Under-Arm Turn and preparation for the next move.
- 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
- **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 through the back-step. Both the man and woman PUSH gently away from partner on the back step and PULL in with the forward step (PUSH-PULL). The pull comes from the side towards the man's right shoulder.
- The woman moves towards the man's right shoulder. On the second kick-step, the man may either step in towards the woman to immediately return to **PROMENADE POSITION** or step slightly back to be in an open face to face position.
- Momentum through the rotation of the dance encourages the open face to face position. STRETCH OUT - SQUEEZE IN - STRETCH OUT.

### **Basic Link**

- Continuing through the **PUSH-PULL** out of the back-step, the man leads in towards his left hip. The man and the woman kick-step towards each other, with the man initiating a gentle body roll to his left.
- The man catches the woman, right hand on her waist, to move back with her on the second kick-step into **PROMENADE POSITION**.
- Remember: kick-step down towards the floor, not out towards your partner!

### **Your Notes:**

## Week 3: Open and Closed American Spins

### *Open American Spin*

- The lead commences with a 45° **WRIST ROLL** towards the woman's left hip, continuing with the momentum of her forward kick. The man's elbow 'locks in' at the hip, with the arms forming a right angle with his body.
- **THE LEAD IS NOT SIDE TO SIDE!** This promotes either over- or under- rotation by the woman and exerts unnecessary strain through the shoulder and neck muscles of the man and woman.
- As the woman steps into her spin, the man pushes straight back down the woman's arm toward her right hip. A flick through the back of the man's fingers is used to provide momentum into the spin; the woman may push through the palm of hand.
- The man **TRACES** from the woman's elbow to catch. Left hand under, right hand over. The woman should not need to go chasing after the man's hand.
- For the left hand lead the man's arm comes across the body, using the back of the hand to block (**REVERSE WRIST BLOCK**).

### *Closed American Spin*

- Holding right hand to right hand, the lead continues with the momentum of the woman's forward kick, raising the upper arms to shoulder height:
  - Man's right elbow is positioned in front of woman's left shoulder.
  - Woman's right elbow is positioned in front of woman's right shoulder.
  - Forearms form an "A" shape, with hands meeting in the middle just above the woman's head.
  - Both the man and the woman achieve a solid **WRIST ANGLE**
  - Pressure is maintained **INWARDS & UPWARDS**
- The push into the spin is achieved through an extension through the man's elbow and gentle push through the wrist, using the fingers to push down into the woman's palm of hand. The hand movement is around the woman's head - **THE LEAD SHOULD NOT EXTEND AWAY FROM THE MAN.**
- The woman maintains a gentle upward pressure into the man's fingers and keeps her hand cupped. This should match the man's push into the hand, not push his arm away
  - **DO NOT** open up the palm of hand.
  - **DO NOT** grip onto the man's fingers.
- The man halts/steadies the spin upon completion using a grip through the fingers and heel of palm. **DO NOT** clamp onto the woman's fingers with thumb and forefinger.
- Arm/hand motions remain close to the body and should not swing out to the side as the spin is completed.

## **Both**

- The woman kicks across her body with her leg, but does not turn her whole body. This causes the woman's body and stomach muscles to 'wind up' in toward the man. The woman's hand will also compress into the block, which if required may be softened by some yield through the man's arm position.
- The woman's step into the spin uses the momentum from her 'wind up' to push into the floor. Combined with the stomach muscles, this energy is used to 'drive' the woman's spin. This prevents slow or dragging spins.
- The woman steps slightly back and to the side to position her body straight above the ball of right foot. The woman pushes into the floor through the right foot and closes her left knee into the right knee to provide additional momentum for the spin.
  - Eyes up, looking for the man at the end of the spin.
  - Additional momentum may be generated by pushing off with the right arm into the spin and using the left arm about the body.
  - Step out of the spin, don't fall out.
- While leading an AMERICAN SPIN the man may continue to move with the momentum of the dance. However, care must be taken not to move past the woman or step in too close. This will cause the lead to be uncomfortable and may unbalance the woman.

## **Your Notes:**



## Week 4: Pass Behind The Back; Belly Rub; Back Rubs

### *Pass Behind The Back*

- From an OPEN RETURN, the man transfers the woman's hand from his left hand to the right hand during the back-step.
- Coming forward out of the back-step, the man's draws the woman's hand toward his right hip. This should pull the woman gently forward through her kick-step.
- During the man's kick-step, he takes a definite forward and slightly side-on step. The resulting position places the man and woman almost side by side, with the man's body turned slightly away from the woman.
- The man continues the anti-clockwise rotation into a  $-180^\circ$  pivot. The step on the left foot is CLOSE and SLIGHTLY BEHIND the right foot as his body turns.
- The woman's steps are kept small and are used to position the woman close behind the man's back in readiness for the following lead.
- The man transfers the woman's hand from his right hand to the left hand. The arms stay close to the body, with the transfer occurring in the middle of the man's back near the waist line.
- Finish face to face, controlling the kick-step back away from partner to prevent over extension.

### *Belly Rub*

- Body positions and footwork for both the man and woman is much the same as the PASS BEHIND THE BACK. Key differences are:
  - The lead occurs on the man's left hand. There is no initial transfer of hands.
  - The lead places the woman's hand on the man's left hip.
  - The woman runs her hand across the man's stomach as the man completes the turn (BELLY RUB).
  - The man may spin and over-rotate (or double spin).
  - The man catches with his left hand over the top of the woman's left hand.
- Finish face to face - may be followed by a RETURN or BACK RUBS.



### **Back Rubs**

- A **DOUBLE HAND HOLD** (left hand to right hand/right hand to left hand) is taken during the back-step.
- On the forward kick-step the man leads towards his right shoulder, the left arm moving over the woman's head.
- The man takes a definite forward and slightly inwards step as the lead continues the momentum of the woman's rotation. The resulting position rolls the man in towards the woman, the woman coming forward across the man's right forearm with her left arm wrapping across her stomach.
- The man releases the woman's left hand and traces his right hand across her back (**BACK RUB**) as he continues the turn inwards.
- The woman achieves a ~180° rotation, positioning her left arm out straight from the body so that a double hand catch is made as she completes the second kick-step.
- The man stays facing the woman as she rotates; the woman keeps looking for the man.
- The man's back rub is effectively the same, commencing with the man leading himself across the woman's right arm, raising her left hand over his head.

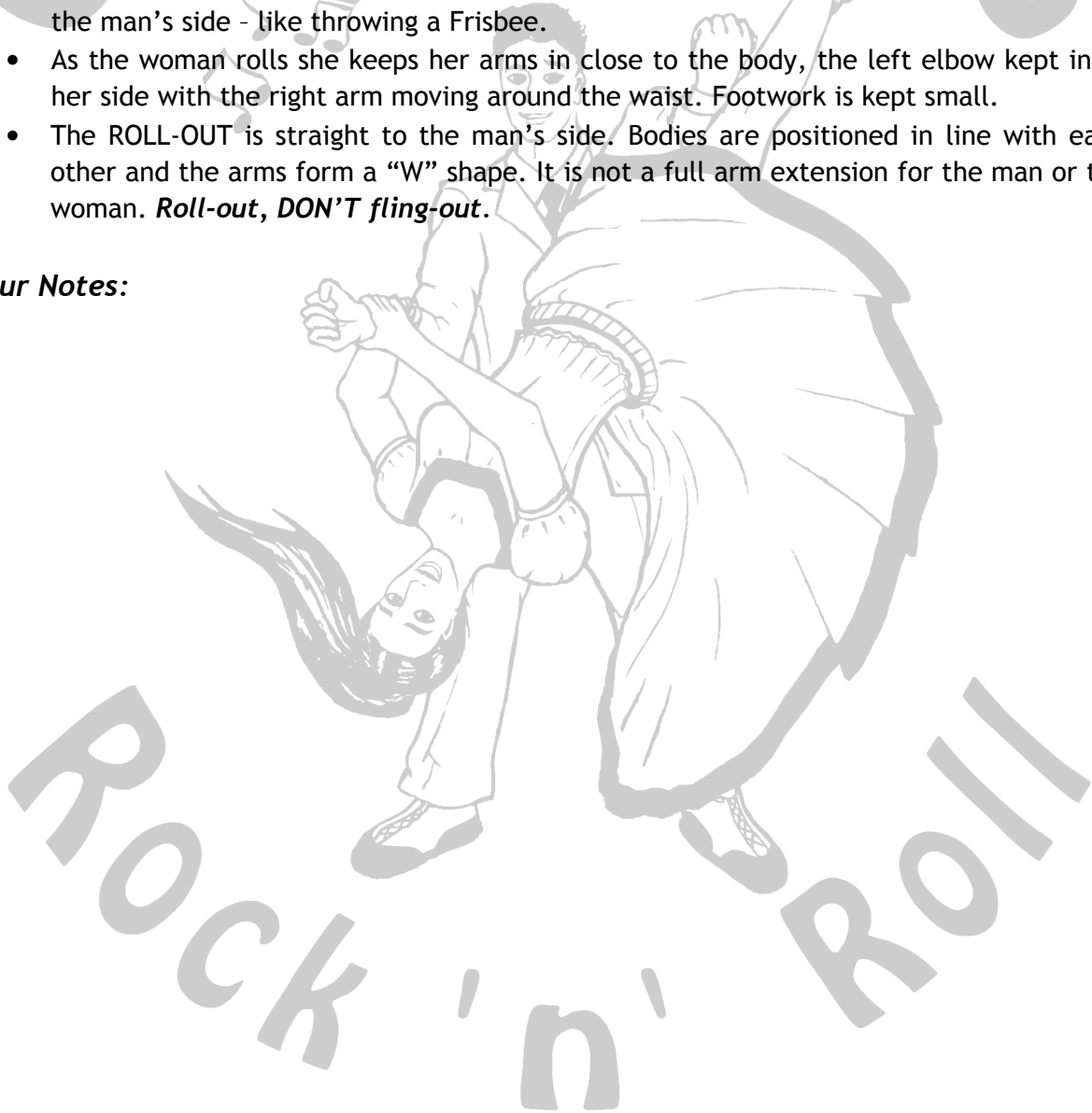
### **Your Notes:**



## Week 5: Cuddle and Roll-Out

- The man provides the same initial lead as for the BACK RUBS, but does not move forward and keeps hold of both hands as the woman turns in.
- The woman steps back in towards the man so that the CUDDLE is brought in close. There should be no space between the man and the woman as she completes her rotation.
- The man keeps his arms close to the body and 'locks in' the CUDDLE - give her a hug!
- The lead for the ROLL-OUT is a slight roll in towards the man with the woman's forward motion out of the back step. SQUEEZE IN, STRETCH OUT.
- Pressure is used through the man's right hand (wrist and fingers) to commence the pull into the roll out. The wrist rolls away to the right as the right elbow is brought in to the man's side - like throwing a Frisbee.
- As the woman rolls she keeps her arms in close to the body, the left elbow kept in to her side with the right arm moving around the waist. Footwork is kept small.
- The ROLL-OUT is straight to the man's side. Bodies are positioned in line with each other and the arms form a "W" shape. It is not a full arm extension for the man or the woman. *Roll-out, DON'T fling-out.*

*Your Notes:*





## Week 6: Gate - Side to Side

- The lead pulls through with the woman's forward motion out of the back step (through the 2 count). The man's right hand is brought straight towards his hip and is followed by a **WRIST ROLL**.
- The woman turns in to face the same direction as the man as she takes her kick-step back. Some space between the man and the woman is typically required so that the woman's arm position is comfortable.
- The man's fingers should turn inside the cup of the woman's hand to achieve a **HAND-SHAKE HOLD** behind the woman's back. A matching hand-shake hold is taken in front of the body.
- Pressure is maintained through the palm and fingers of the right hand. However, the woman's hand must be allowed to roll within the curved palm of the man's hand to achieve the correct position:
  - Woman's back of hand rests at waist height near the right hip.
  - The man is responsible for taking the final hand-shake hold. The woman should not try to fumble for the man's hand, but let her hand roll into position.
  - The man **MUST NOT** grip the woman's hand between the thumb and forefinger during the **WRIST ROLL**. Maintain connection by pushing into the woman's palm of hand as she turns.
- The man commences the **SIDE TO SIDE** with the woman's forward kick-step, using pressure through the woman's hand into her back to produce a slight body rotation to the left (through the kick):
  - The man steps back out of the woman's way through the back-step, rolling his body through the kicks (3→5) as he guides the woman around.
  - The woman kick-steps across in front of the man, allowing the man to roll the wrists/arms into position back to hand-shake hold.
- **Body position and momentum before arm leads!**
- The man uses a **WRIST ROLL** through both hands to help turn the woman. Pressure through the right hand and into the woman's back may be used to strengthen the initial lead.
- **Basic Exit:** From the side-by-side position the woman kick-steps forward and around, centering herself in front of the man before spinning. The man can assist the woman's positioning using slight pressure through the right hand. The man leads the woman's spin by bringing his left arm up over her head, leading past her right shoulder.
- **Alternative Exit:** The woman spins almost on the spot during the exit. The man steps forward and around (clockwise) while bringing his left arm up over the woman's head, leading past her right shoulder.
- The woman maintains gentle pressure through the arms as the exit is led, keeping the arms in towards the body as she turns. This is important to ensure good connection with the man and to allow alternative exit variations to be lead.

*Your Notes:*



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