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THE EASY WAY

TO GOOD DANCING



A guide for use with the Dance Guild home instruction courses.



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***The Easy Way
To Good Dancing***

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***THE EASY WAY
TO GOOD DANCING***

*"Dancing is the loftiest, the most
moving, the most beautiful of the arts,
because it is no mere translation or
abstraction from life; it is life itself."**

* Quotation from *"The Dance of Life,"* by Havelock Ellis

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Introduction

Even if you've never danced before, chances are you've always wanted to be a really good dancer . . . you may even have thought about going to a studio to learn to dance . . . but somehow you just never got around to taking the first step through a studio door.

There could have been any number of reasons.

Perhaps you were embarrassed to have to admit that you didn't know how to dance and you thought you would be laughed at.

Maybe you hesitated because you were just unable to get to a studio during their regular hours of operation.

Or it could have been that you just didn't want to spend the large sum of money required to learn dancing in a studio.

If any—or all—of these problems have kept you from learning to dance—the New Dance Guild Home Dance Program is for *YOU*.

You can now learn to dance in the privacy of your own home at a time of your own choosing. You practice dancing when you are in the mood to dance, not when the clock says it's time for you to dance.

If you are an experienced dancer taking a Dance Guild course just to learn the latest popular dance, you will find our simplified method of teaching

very much to your liking. You may be able to progress faster than the beginner, but don't overlook any of the instructions. Every step we give you is important in its own way and nothing should be glossed over.

If you are an experienced dancer and have taken your previous instruction at a private studio, you will appreciate the low cost and convenience of the complete and thorough Dance Guild Home Instruction Courses.

LEARN BY SEEING

One of the most unique and exciting things about the Dance Guild Home Dance Program is its easy and precise method of instruction.

Easy-to-follow foot patterns and illustrations, along with simply written, easy-to-understand instructions now make it possible for you to learn to dance in your own home in just a short time.

You actually *see* the pattern that your feet make when you perform a dance figure. Each foot print in the foot pattern represents a step you take. Each step is numbered in order. All you need do to get the correct foot positions is follow the numbers and place your feet the way the foot prints clearly show you.

Numbers on the written instructions that explain a dance figure match the numbers on the foot prints. So, when you read step No. 1 of the instructions, you take step No. 1 of the illustrated foot pattern.

Other illustrations in the dance instruction books show you the proper body positions for partners in such movements as "Breaks" and "Turns".

Learning to dance by *seeing* the correct foot patterns and body positions and imitating them is a sure way for you to learn quickly and easily.

LEARN BY HEARING

The electronic marvel of the recorded voice has been with us for so long that we no longer regard it as magic. But through the wonder of recordings Dance Guild can bring a dance instructor right into your home at a cost so low that now no one need be denied the chance to learn to dance.

The two extended play 45 rpm records you receive with each Dance Guild dance instruction course will help you acquire the proper rhythm quickly and easily.

These durable, non-breakable records supplement the written instructions in your book and can be played as many times as you wish—both for the instructions and the music to dance by.

On one side of each record you *hear* the basic dance instructions . . . spoken *slowly* enough for you to follow along while the record is playing.

On the other side you *hear* top name artists in the musical world playing "Best for Dancing" music that gives you ideal accompaniment for your dancing practice.

Your Dance Guild instructional records will do more than just help you learn to dance. They'll be a big hit when you entertain your friends and neighbors at dance sessions and parties in your own home or in their homes.

Selections for these recordings were made especially for the Dance Guild Home Dance Program. All recordings were made in the finest recording studios to assure you of the best tone and rhythm for your dancing pleasure.

LEARN BY DOING

There is but one ultimate purpose for all Dance Guild instructional material—and that is not merely to tell you how to dance—but to get you on the floor and *actually dance!*

Dancing is something you can't learn merely by reading about it, or hearing about it. You must *do it* to learn it.

When we show you a foot pattern, we want you to do the steps and perform that pattern.

When the instructor on your record tells you how a step is made, we want you to do it.

You may feel uncomfortable or self-conscious at first—whether you are learning alone or with a partner. But that feeling will wear off in a short while and you'll really enjoy yourself as you begin to acquire confidence and know-how.

When you learn something at a dance studio the only way for you to get those instructions again is to have it repeated for you—at *your expense!* But with your Dance Guild instructional material everything is there for you to refer to as often as you wish—and all for only the small original price it cost you.



What Is Dancing?

Dancing is the oldest form of self-expression known to man. Back in the dawn of history, dancing achieved an importance in social, religious and cultural life that it has never relinquished. You are probably familiar with the rain dances and the war dances of the American Indians and various other ritual and courtship dances of primitive groups.

Through the centuries dancing has reflected the feelings, knowledge and the lives of the people. Today, dancing serves a social purpose—a direct

link with the courtship dances of the past. In other words, the pleasure in dancing today is two-fold: first, there is the joy of companionship and contact with a member of the opposite sex; second, dancing is as healthful and stimulating as it is enjoyable.

A basic urge of all men and women is the need for self-expression. Some people are so gifted that they can express themselves by writing or painting, thus creating something distinctive and individual. Most of us express ourselves by revealing our personalities in our relationship with the people around us—our families and friends.

Too often, it is difficult for people to know us as we really are, because we hide our light under a bushel. In other words, we are unable to express ourselves adequately.

The combination of the basic need for self-expression and the frustrating inability to express ourselves is not, as you might think, a problem peculiar to our own time. Primitive man suffered from it; and it has been a vexing dilemma in all ages and civilizations.

The first expressions of religious feeling were in dancing. The first expressions of passions and beliefs were in dancing. For in dancing man found that he could truly express himself to others and to his own satisfaction.

What Dancing Can Do for You

In this country today ballroom, or social, dancing is really a social necessity. To realize the fullest enjoyment of life—to mix well with other people—you must know how to dance.

Children who start dancing at an early age acquire a keen sense of rhythm and balance that stays with them all their lives. They gain poise and self-confidence that aids them in the development of their personalities and in whatever they do, both in school work and other activities.

Whether you are a teen-ager, or a young, middle-aged or elderly adult, you know that social dancing today is one of the most popular pastimes in the world—enjoyed in every country, by persons of every age.

Dancing is not only good fun, it is good exercise too; and there's even more to it than that. It's a wonderful way to make new friends and enjoy greater popularity.

Church socials . . . parties . . . celebrations . . . picnics . . . important business conventions . . . vacations . . . holiday occasions . . . All these activities usually include music and dancing. To have fun and mix well with the rest of the crowd, you have to know how to dance and be a good dancing partner.

The self-confidence you develop as a dancer will carry through into many other phases of your life by improving your business and social contacts.

Age is no barrier to dancing enjoyment. Unlike more strenuous activities that have to be abandoned as you grow in years, dancing is one recreational pastime you can continue to participate in. *As long as you can walk—you can dance.*

Dancing takes you off the sidelines and puts you right in the middle of the floor . . . you get a feeling of really “belonging.” You don’t have to feel “left out” of things.

Since an individual is either accepted or rejected by a group of society on the basis of what we call “personality and character,” it is important that each of us be able to get along with others, to mix well.

Dancing—that is, the ability to dance well—serves this purpose in a number of ways. To begin with, being a good dancer, as you will soon discover, gives you the necessary social graces for attracting the admiration and respect vital for social success.

The ability to dance well gives you poise, not only from the grace of movement you will develop, but also from an awareness of being able to appear to good advantage anywhere with any partner.

With this poise goes confidence and self-assurance, necessary for your true personality to show through and appeal to others.

In addition, you gain pride in the trim appearance and sparkling vitality you acquire by the wonderful combination of entertainment, exercise and relaxation that is dancing.

The individual who knows how to dance well is like the individual with good manners—he or she has social know-how—and is welcome anywhere.

There is, in addition, the fact that dancing is an ideal form of recreation because it is pleasant, relaxing and stimulating.

In fact, many doctors recommend dancing as a relaxing and healthful activity for men and women. People in all walks of life have benefitted from the pleasure that dancing brings.

When Cyd Charisse, the beautiful Hollywood dancing actress, was 8 years old, her family doctor advised that she take dancing lessons because

she was so underweight. Her fabulous success in the entertainment world is the result of following that advice.

Conrad Hilton, president of the multi-million-dollar international hotel chain bearing his name, has made this comment about dancing.

"Ten years ago my doctor advised me to take up ballroom dancing as a vigorous recreation for busy men. He is eminently pleased with the results in my case. I dance almost every evening and I refuse to take my business worries with me."

Yes—no matter who you are or what you do—dancing can be good for you.

Rhythm

All men and women are born with a natural sense of rhythm. The first musical instrument ever developed was a rhythm instrument—the drum. This sense of rhythm must also find its way into our self-expression—in dancing.

Dancing, then, is a form of communication—like talking. It is the use of the body in rhythmic self-expression. Dancing as we know it today is one part of man's never-ending desire to express himself and establish his relationship with the world around him.

Each dance has its own distinctive rhythm. When you learn the rhythms for the various dances, your ear should tell you after hearing just a few bars of a song what dance is being played.

To feel the rhythm of the dance, tap your fingers or your toes to the basic beat that is being played. Usually the beat is carried by the drums, the bass violin and the piano, so train your ear to catch the beat from these instruments.

The same rhythm can be played in different tempos—slow, medium or fast. The speed may vary but the basic beat is always the same.

Your dance instruction records will be of immense value in helping you learn the dance rhythms.

Dancing Positions

In ballroom dancing there are three basic positions, or ways of holding your partner. These are:

1. The Closed Position.
2. The Open Position (also known as the Promenade or Conversation Position).
3. The Step-Out Position (also known as the Side Position).



1. THE CLOSED POSITION

This is the position most often used in ballroom dancing. The partners stand close together, facing each other. The man's right arm is around the woman's waist and his right hand is placed flat on her back, just below her shoulder blades. His left arm is extended to the side, with the elbow bent at a natural angle, and he holds his partner's right hand with his left hand.

The woman's left hand is placed on the man's right shoulder, not heavily, but with sufficient firmness to maintain good balance. Her right arm is extended to the side with the elbow bent naturally—and her right hand rests in her partner's left hand.

Each partner stands with feet together, heels touching and toes pointed slightly outward. Although they are facing each other their heads are turned slightly to the left, so that each can look over the other's right shoulder.

2. THE OPEN POSITION

There are two variations to the Open position. One is the conservative or partial open, and the other is the standard or full open.

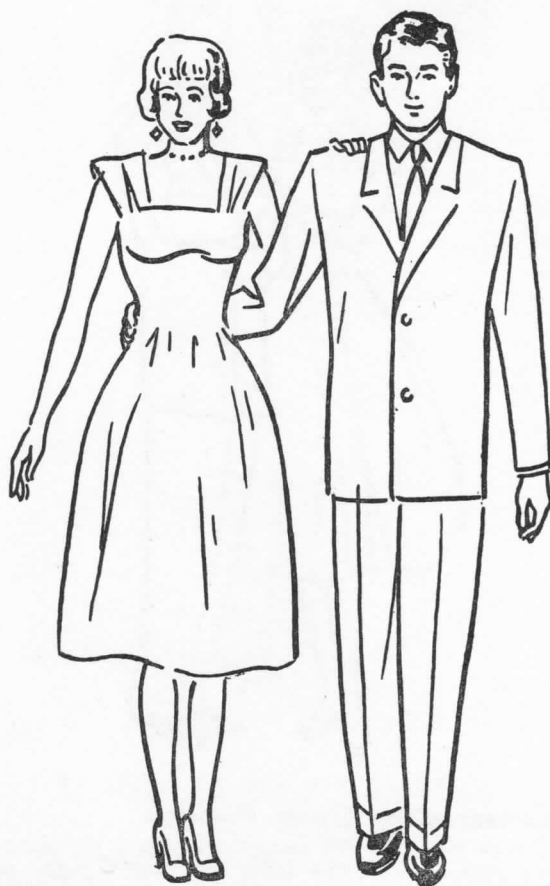


A. *The Conservative Open Position*

The partners stand sideways with the man's right side touching the woman's left side. The man's right arm is around the woman's waist, and his right hand is held flat against her right side. His left arm—with the elbow slightly bent—is extended forward, and he holds his partner's right hand in his left hand.

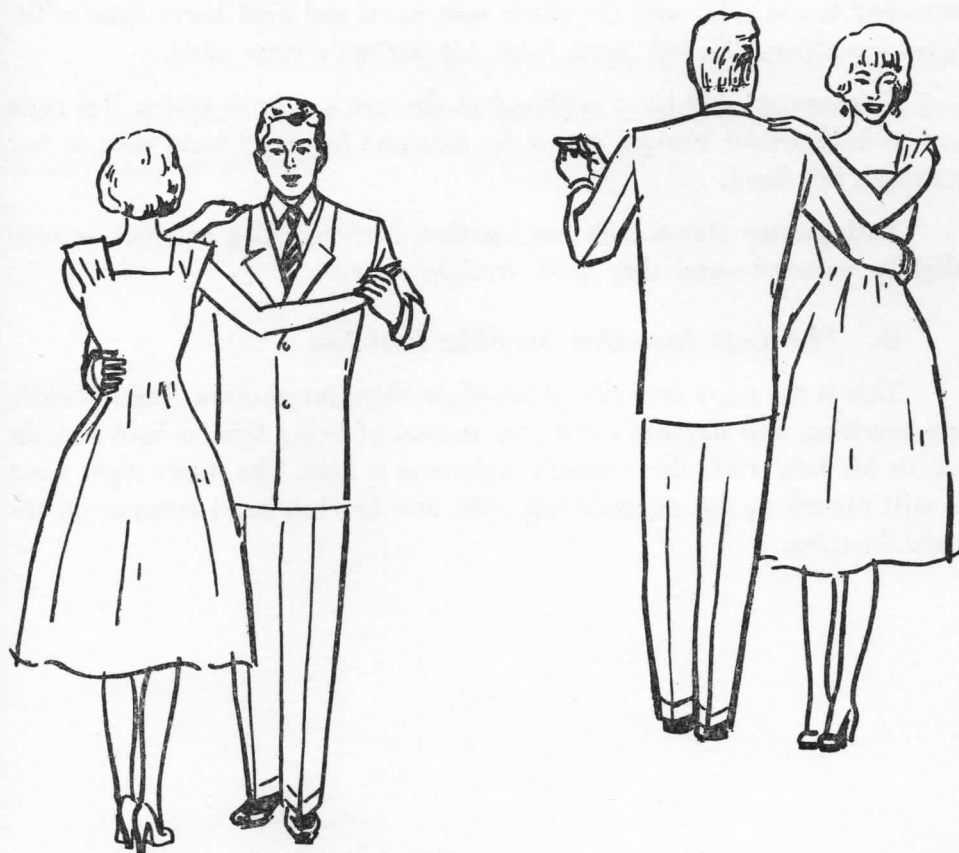
The woman's left hand is placed on the man's right shoulder. Her right arm—with the elbow slightly bent—is extended forward, and her right hand rests in her partner's left hand.

Each partner stands with feet together, heels touching and toes pointed slightly outward. The man's head and shoulders are turned slightly to the left so that he looks straight ahead. The woman's head and shoulders are turned slightly to the right.



B. *The Full Open Position*

In this position, the man and woman stand farther apart, and each partner drops his or her extended arm to the side.



3. THE STEP-OUT OR SIDE POSITION

The two forms of this position are the *right* Step-Out or Side position and the *left* Step-Out or Side position.

A. *The Right Step-Out or Side Position*

28 The partners, facing in opposite directions, stand alongside each other with their right sides touching. The man's right arm is around the woman's waist and his right hand is placed flat on her left side. His left arm is extended to the side, with the elbow bent more and held lower than in the Closed position. His left hand holds his partner's right hand.

The woman's left hand is placed on the man's right shoulder. Her right arm is held almost straight out to the side and her right hand rests in her partner's left hand.

Each partner stands with feet together, heels touching and toes pointed slightly outward—and they look straight ahead.

B. *The Left Step-Out or Side Position*

This is the exact opposite of the Right Step-Out position. The left sides are touching, and the man's left arm instead of being bent, is held straight out to his left, while the woman's right arm is bent. The man's right hand is still placed on the woman's left side, and her left hand remains on his right shoulder.

VARIATION POSITIONS

In all of these positions the man starts out facing in the Line of Direction. In all except the Open position, the woman backs in the Line of Direction.

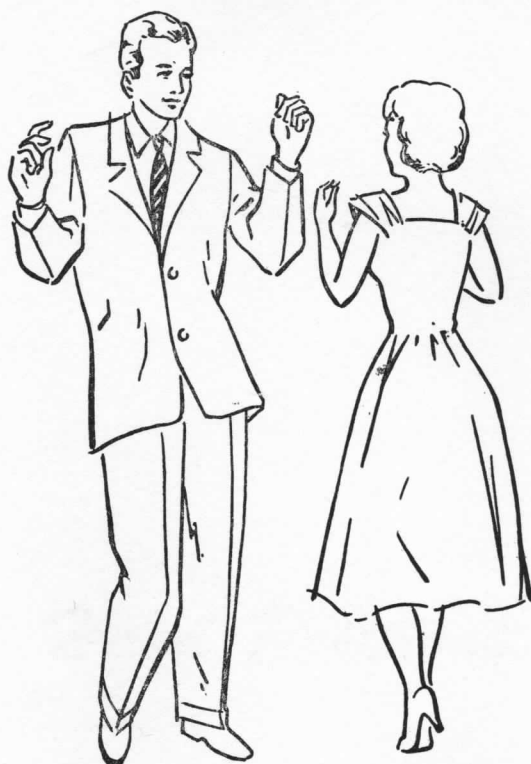
In addition to these three basic positions, there are two variation positions that are used frequently. One is the Hand Clasp position and the other is the Challenge position.



A. The Hand Clasp Position

The partners face each other, as in closed position, but stand further apart. The man holds the woman's right hand in his left hand, and the man's left arm and the woman's right arm are extended forward as shown in the accompanying illustration.

This position is used primarily in the Lindy and some of the Latin American dances, such as the Mambo, Merengue and Cha-Cha.



B. The Challenge Position

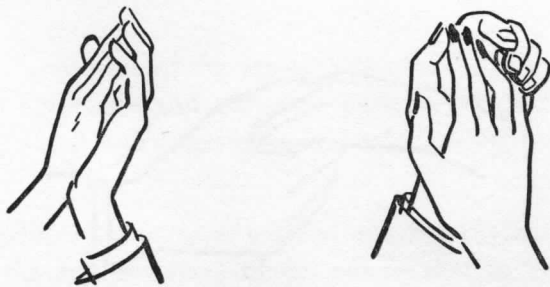
This is a variation of the Hand Clasp position. The partners still face each other, but there is no contact at all. The hands do not touch. It is most often used in such Latin American dances as the Mambo, Merengue and Cha-Cha.

Since the man is not able to exert a strong hand lead in the Challenge position, it is usually used by dancers who have practiced together long enough so that the woman is able to follow without the hand lead.

Once you have mastered the foot patterns and can do them in the proper rhythm, you will have no trouble at all doing figures in the Challenge position.

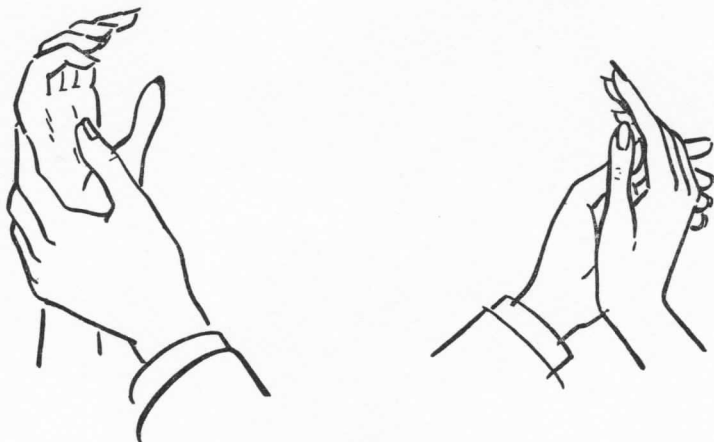
Hand Positions

In most dances, the standard hand position used is that shown in the following illustration.



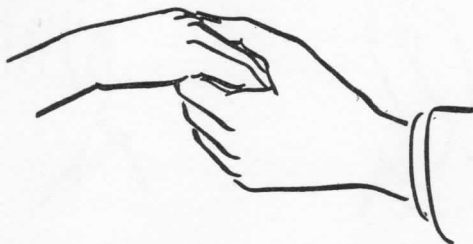
Note that the woman's right hand rests in the man's left hand. The palms are touching, and the man's fingers curl gently over the woman's in a very light grip.

The second hand position is used in such dances as the Mambo and Rumba.



The edge of the woman's palm rests in the man's hand, which is cupped so that his thumb is held against her palm, and his fingers rest on the back of her hand.

The third position is that used in the Lindy.



The fingers of the woman's hand point down and are held in the cupped hand of the man. His thumb is held against the backs of her fingers, just below the knuckles.

Leading and Following

Certainly a large part of the joy and pleasure in dancing comes from dancing with an agreeable and attractive partner. "Partner," incidentally, is a good word, for it aptly describes the relationship between a dancing couple.

The two partners perform as a team, moving rhythmically in unison. One partner is the mirror image of the other—that is, each movement is exactly opposite, as if it were seen in a mirror. The man leads off with his left foot, the girl with her right. The man moves forward, the girl backward.

Let us take each partner individually so that we can see how two people become "dancing partners." Since the man leads, let us start with the man.

The first thing for the man to know is how to hold his partner. Hold your partner directly in front of you or slightly to your right, so that you can look over her right shoulder.

Your left arm should be extended with your elbow bent and in line with a spot halfway between your shoulder and your hip. The exact position depends on the individual and you should find a position which is comfortable and natural for you.

Hold your partner firmly with your right hand placed in the middle of her back, under the shoulder blades.

There you have the position. Now to the leading.

The most important thing is to know what you are doing. If you know the steps and have the confidence in your ability to do them, you will be a good leader. By being sure of yourself, you will be able to lead boldly and smoothly. Your assurance will be imparted to your partner; you will be able to guide her easily. And by being known as a good leader, you will find yourself a popular and sought-after partner.

As long as you hold your partner properly and dance with confidence, your partner will be able to follow your lead without any difficulty. It's that easy.

And following is actually as easy. Again, the important things are the proper position and a good knowledge of the steps.

The girl, since she is following her partner's lead, must be in position at all times for doing whatever steps, and moving in whatever direction, her partner chooses. She must avoid being off balance. The way to do this is by placing the left hand firmly on her partner's right shoulder. Do not wrap your left arm around your partner's side. It will only pull you—and him—off balance.

Remember always to take a long step back, with the toes pointed down. Not only will it be easier for you to dance with your partner and him with you, but you will look more graceful—not to mention the wear and tear you will save on your feet, shoes and hosiery.

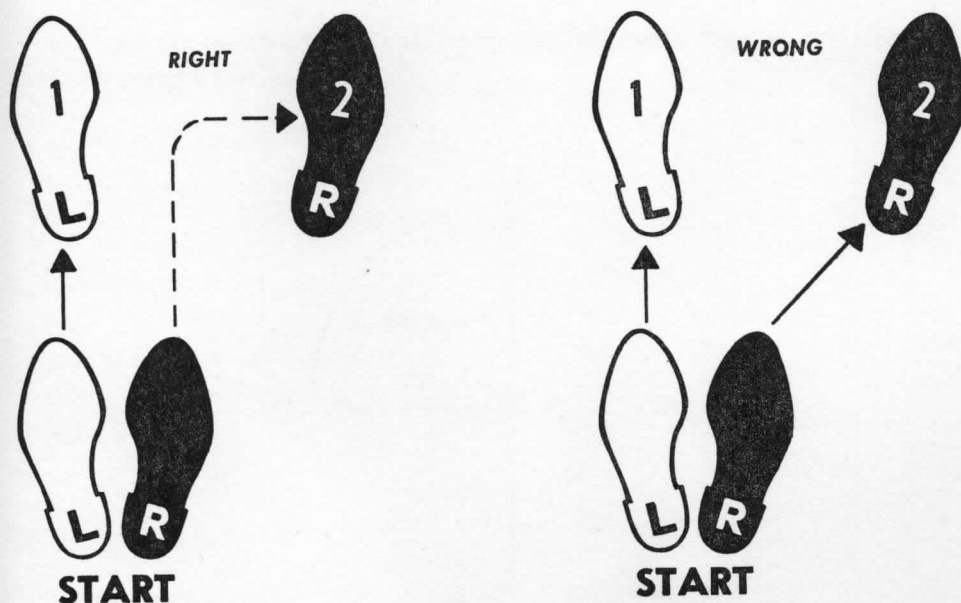
It is vitally important for a girl to know a variety of steps. Although a limited knowledge of the steps will enable you to get by with a fair or average dancer, it will not serve when dancing with a good dancer—and it is usually the good dancer you want to dance with. Remember, no good dancer wants to be held back by a partner who is unable to follow him.

FOLLOW-THROUGH

Proper attention to follow-through can mean the difference between a graceful dancer and an awkward one.

When you take a step forward or backward with your left foot and place your weight on that foot, it then becomes what we call the “supporting or inactive foot.” The right foot then becomes the “free or active foot” and should pass by the other, brushing it lightly, before it is placed in position. The right foot can then go forward, backward, or to the side, as the pattern may require. This “brushing” of the supporting foot by the free foot is “*follow-through*.”

It is especially important when stepping to the side, in order to avoid an ungainly, sprawling or straddling appearance.



As you can see from the illustration above, follow-through is indicated in the foot pattern by a dotted or broken line.

The follow-through is done between steps, so there is no count for it.

FOLLOW-UP

When you make a sharp turn by pivoting on one foot so as to require the entire body to turn, the other foot must swing around with the pivoting foot to avoid tangling your feet. The count is taken only by the pivoting foot. The other foot does not take a count until you place it in the position called for in the foot pattern.

In all of our dance instruction books where this movement is indicated, it is referred to as "*follow-up*."

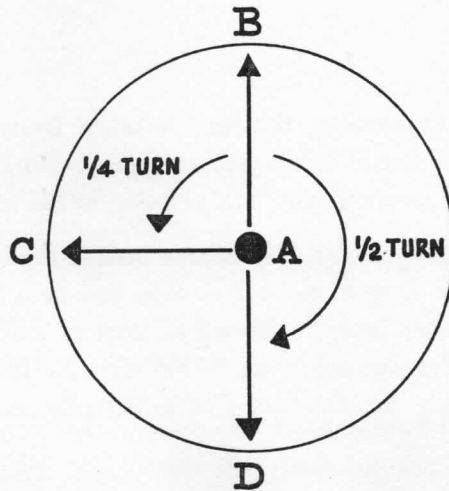
Turns and Pivots

The prettiest dancing figures to see when you watch good dancers performing are the turns and pivots. To the person who is not a good dancer, these figures seem to be complicated and difficult but this is not at all true.

If you know the rhythm of the dance and practice the foot patterns you can glide through a turn and pivot figure as easily as cutting through butter with a sharp knife.

When doing a turn, you turn your head and shoulders and the rest of your body follows along. In defining the direction of a turn, we use the right shoulder as a lead. If your right shoulder goes *forward*, that is a *left* turn; if your right shoulder goes *backward*, that is a *right* turn.

There are quarter turns, half turns and full turns. We can best illustrate these by using a circle:

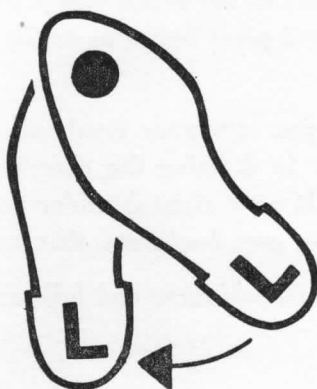


A full circle is 360 degrees. If you make a full turn, you go all the way around the circle. For example, if you are standing at point A, facing in the direction of line B, you turn all the way around and return so that you are still facing in the same direction.

A quarter turn is one-fourth of the way around the circle, or 90 degrees. Standing at point A and facing in the direction of line B, you turn until you are facing in the direction of line C (left turn).

For a half turn, you go half way around the circle—180 degrees—so that you face in the direction of line D (right turn).

A pivot is a turn on the ball of the foot and it is shown on the foot patterns like this:



In pivoting, as in turning, the lead is taken from the right shoulder. If your right shoulder moves *backward*, you are pivoting to the *right*; if your right shoulder moves *forward*, you are pivoting to the *left*.

Some figures call for a full 360 degree turn of the body on one pivoting step. It is important to keep in mind that when you do a full turn by pivoting on one foot your whole body is forced to turn to maintain balance. This makes it necessary for the other or "free" foot to follow up. The count, however, is taken only for the foot that is actually taking the pivot step.

How to Use Your Instruction Material

To make it easy for you to learn the various steps and figures, we have illustrated them in two ways. First we show you the correct position for your feet and the order and direction in which you move your feet. Of course you know that dancing is more than just moving your feet from one spot to another—so wherever it is necessary we show you illustrations of dancing couples in the correct body positions.

So that both men and women can learn to dance from the same book, we have divided each figure into the parts for the man and the woman. The man's part for each figure is given first, and then the woman's. Incidentally, we have found over the years that a woman can learn her own part easier and better if she is acquainted with the man's. This is because a knowledge of the man's steps will enable the woman to follow better—since she knows what to expect and unconsciously prepares for it.

For your ease in learning, we show the left foot like this:



MAN



WOMAN

and the right foot like this:



MAN



WOMAN

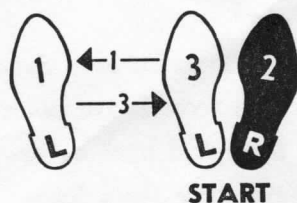
You will see that a line is drawn from one foot print to another, showing the direction taken for any particular step. Where the line is broken or dotted, like this:



a follow-through is indicated.

In addition, each foot print is numbered to show you the proper order of the steps—and each foot print is lettered “L” or “R” to indicate Left or Right.

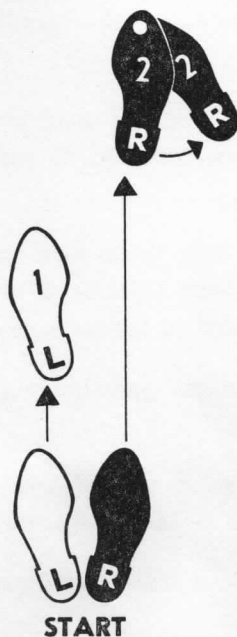
In some figures you will note that the arrows, also are numbered. This is done, for example, when a foot is placed to one side for one count and is returned to its original position on the next count.



You can now see that on step No. 1, the left foot is placed to the left. Step No. 2 is an in place step. On step No. 3, the left foot returns to its original position.

Note, too, that the foot prints showing the starting position are numbered. You will find many figures in which you return to the starting position to end the figure. There should be no difficulty as long as you start the figure where the starting position is indicated and followed the numerals in regular 1, 2, 3 order.

In figures calling for a pivot, you will often see one foot print with the same numbers repeated, like this:



This will show you that on step No. 2 you place the foot down and make a pivot, *all on one count*.

To see a mental image of each step, you need only follow in your mind the numbers of each pattern. But even better still—just practice the actual pattern by moving your feet in the order and direction shown by the foot patterns.

Use of the instruction records for each dance is explained in the book for that particular dance. The records are placed for your convenience in envelopes attached to the front and back covers of each book. By keeping them there, you will always have them handy for use and they will be protected from any damage that might be caused if they were kept loose.

Practice

Since rhythm is something we all have, we are all potentially good dancers—and learning to dance should be no more difficult than learning to walk. For dancing is walking—rhythmic walking—following certain patterns and steps.

As you know, once you have learned to walk, you do it without any conscious effort on your part. It becomes automatic, because practice and habit quickly make it so.

So it is with dancing. You study and learn the various steps, and through practice you can do these steps easily and effortlessly, resulting in that relaxed and easy style so essential to being a good dancer.

Learning to dance is like learning anything else. You get out of it just what you put into it.

Don't expect to read through your dance instruction just *once* and start performing that dance like a professional. It just can't be done—by anybody.

Probably the most important word for you to remember in learning to dance is—*PRACTICE*.

The old saying, "Practice makes perfect," was never more true than it is in dancing. Many people have spent hundreds and thousands of dollars

on dance lessons in expensive studios with highly paid instructors only to find that they did most of their learning in their own homes—practicing.

So keep practicing. You will soon find that you no longer have to think about your feet; they will follow the patterns with automatic smoothness and ease. Practice each step by yourself until you feel an automatic smoothness. Then—and only then—go on to the next step. Follow this system and you will be amazed at the skill and style you will acquire in a very short time.

No one knows the importance of constant practice better than those people who earn their living in dancing—professional dancers and dance teachers. If you have ever had the opportunity to know personally a professional dancer, you would see that the major part of their working day is taken up by practice.

The exciting dance scenes you see on your television set or in a motion picture may last only a few minutes. Yet the highly talented dancers performing for you have probably spent hour upon hour of practice before stepping in front of the cameras.

But dancing is one of the few things one learns in which practicing is so much fun. After all, you are learning to dance because you want to and because you want to enjoy the popularity and good times that being a good dancer can give you.

So what could be better than learning to dance by dancing!

When you practice, first *walk* through the steps. Without music, place your feet in the order of the numbers shown on the foot patterns in your book. When you are satisfied with your ability to follow the patterns, try it with music. Count the steps:—"1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4," etc. A man can then graduate to saying; "*left-right, left-right*," etc.; and a woman to; "*right-left, right-left*," etc. Or you can use the words "*quick*" and "*slow*" to help you take your steps in the proper rhythm. You will be amazed at how easy it is when you give yourself sufficient time to grasp the instructions.

In practicing steps that seem difficult to learn at first, practice them as if you were performing for a slow motion camera. Just take each step slowly and deliberately according to the numbered instructions. When you feel that you have mastered the steps of the figure you can increase the speed of your movements until you are finally able to keep time with the music.

If you are married, engaged or "going steady," you may want to dance with your partner even while you are learning. Perhaps both of you may



learn together. This is fine, and in such cases two can probably learn as quickly and easily as one.

But it is just as easy and quick—and in many cases more so—to learn to dance without a partner. In fact, you are more likely to build up your self-confidence and gain the proper poise by practicing alone at first than by taking on a partner too soon and running the risk of being awkward.

When you know that you have mastered the proper technique for a dance you can, without any hesitation or self-doubts, ask a partner to share your new knowledge and skill with you. You will be pleased to discover that everything you did alone is done exactly the same when you dance with a partner.

You be your own judge of when to ask a partner to dance with you. When you do take the floor with a partner, drop any feeling of timidity or self-consciousness you may have because this will only interfere with your dancing and, if extreme enough, could discourage you from your goal of becoming a good dancer.

But no matter how slow your progress seems to be, don't ever be dis-

couraged. You *can* learn to dance well if you give yourself enough time and have a strong enough determination to do it.

When you know that you can do one figure well, practice with a partner. Then you are ready to go dancing. Don't be afraid to do so. Remember, being able to do only one figure well is much better than doing several figures poorly. And actual dancing will give you the self-confidence and relaxed manner which will make learning the rest of the steps that much easier.

You are then ready to go on to the next step. Follow the same method and you will quickly become an accomplished, graceful dancer.



Helpful Hints

Dancing, as we have said before, is walking—rhythmically and in accordance with certain steps and patterns. Therefore, in order to dance well, you must walk well. This of course means walking naturally and gracefully.

There is one very common mistake people make—and that is, affecting an unnatural posture when dancing. There are two extremes to avoid. Don't hold yourself too stiffly; and don't hold yourself in a slouched or "loose" position.

There is no need for you to worry about or concentrate on your posture in dancing. Be relaxed and natural. If you have a pronounced posture

problem, then you should attempt to correct it by using proper exercises, such as balancing a book on your head while walking.



But most people have reasonably good natural posture, and that is all you need in dancing. Don't let yourself be misled into believing you must slink around like a silent movie queen or strut like a toy soldier. It just isn't necessary. The important thing is to be as natural in your dancing as you are in your walking.

Stand naturally and easily; move the same way. You will be more relaxed and will find it easier to learn the steps and acquire a good dancing style.

Keep your weight over the ball of your foot so that your balance is firm and you are in a position to move in any direction without losing your balance. When in position to start dancing the man's weight is over the ball

of his right foot since he starts with his left foot. The woman's weight is over the ball of her left foot, since she starts with her right foot.

In dancing, the man usually moves *forward*; and the woman *backward*. And the man starts off with his *left* foot, while the woman starts with her *right*. Lift your heels slightly so that no weight is placed on the heels, all of it being on the soles of the feet.

Place your feet together with the heels touching, and the toes turned slightly outward. See the accompanying illustration. There you have the starting position.



Here are some helpful hints to remember when you dance:

1. Move naturally. Keep in mind that you are walking in rhythm. Be relaxed and at ease.
2. Keep your weight forward on your feet. When moving *forward*, the heels can touch the floor, but *do not* place your weight on the heels. When moving *backwards*, the heels should not touch the floor.

This last point is especially important for the girls. The man generally moves forward, which means that the girl usually moves backward.

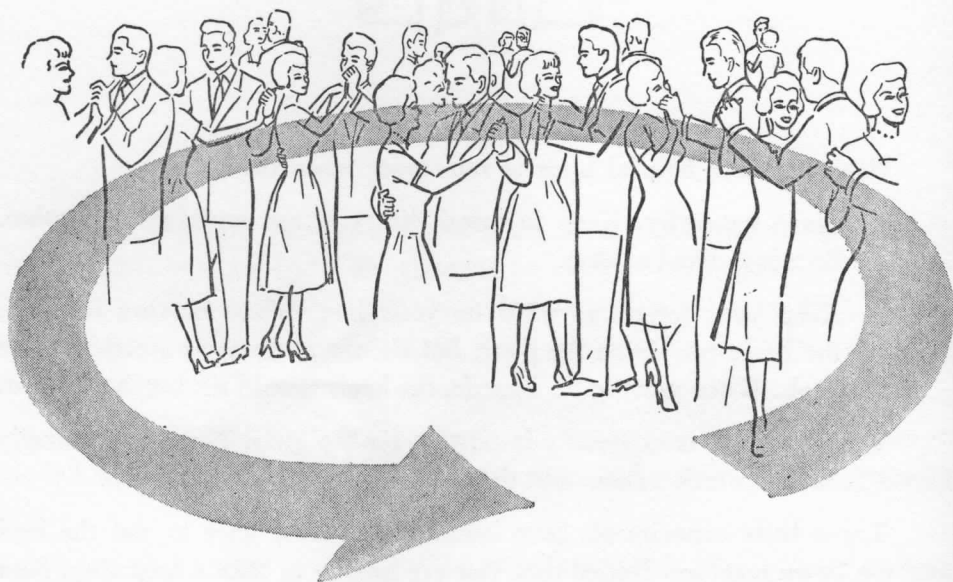
Try a little experiment. Step backward, making sure to put the heel and toe down together. Notice that you are unable to take a long step. Now step backward, pointing your toe down and keeping your heel off the floor. You can see that you have lengthened your stride considerably.

Too often the girl who doesn't know how to take a long backward step finds herself tangled up in her partner's feet—to the ruination of her nylons, her shoes and her toes.

3. When starting out, the feet should be together, with the heels touching and the toes outward. A wide golfer's stance or an angled boxer's stance do not belong on the dance floor. They make for awkward, ungraceful dancing.

When moving, the general rule is to keep the toes pointed outward. There are, of course, a few exceptions to this rule, but these will be taken up at the proper time. For now, concentrate on keeping your toes pointed slightly outward.

4. Don't walk like a deep-sea diver—dragging your feet along the floor as if you had lead-weighted shoes. Lift your feet slightly; it makes for light, pleasant-to-watch dancing.
5. When on the dance floor, observe the Line of Direction. As you can well imagine, a dance floor could become a formidable jumble if everyone were going in a different direction. In order to avoid this, the traffic, so to speak, must flow in one direction—and that direction is counter-clockwise.



In the normal starting position the man is facing forward in the Line of Direction and the woman has her back to the Line of Direction; the man's right side is toward the nearest wall as is the woman's left side. See the accompanying illustration.

Moving against the Line of Direction is like driving the wrong way on a one-way street. It can be pretty painful and embarrassing too.

Note: In performing the various dance figures you can move forward, backward, to either side, or around on one spot. But your general movement is always in the Line of Direction.

Good Manners in Dancing

Good manners in dancing are merely the same combination of courtesy and consideration that comprise good manners under any circumstances. The rigidly prescribed formal dances of the past are long gone—at least for most of us—and we no longer have to memorize a long list of the exact clothes to wear and the exact words to say at any given moment.

If, by chance, you are going to give or attend such a formal dance, we suggest that you consult any good, up-to-date etiquette book, such as Emily Post's or Amy Vanderbilt's. Our primary concern here is the proper relationship—in the light of our own times—between men and women at a party or any place where they may be dancing.

If a man wants to take a woman to a dance or out dancing, he asks in a simple, courteous way: "Would you like to go dancing with me on Saturday night?"; or, "Will you come to the Smith's party with me?"

It is best to avoid such extremes as: "May I have the pleasure of your company at a dance to be given at Mr. and Mrs. Smith's house this coming Saturday?"; or, "Hey, babe, let's me and you go dancing tonight!"

The woman responds to an invitation in a similar courteous way by saying: "Thank you, I will."; or, "Yes, I'd like to."

Nowadays it is not uncommon for a woman to invite a man to a dance. In such a case, her invitation also should be simple and courteous and she should include mention of the occasion, the place and the date.

At a dance, unless a couple is engaged or going steady, it is considered correct for the man to dance with more than one partner. He should always, however, dance the first and last dances with his date for the evening.

When choosing a different partner, the man should simply ask: "May I have this dance?" or, "Will you dance with me?" The woman responds in the same way that she does to an invitation to a dance or party.

It is proper for the man to thank his partner for the dance when it is finished. The woman does not customarily thank the man, but she may, if she wishes, tell him that she enjoyed the dance.

When a man takes a woman out to a night club or some similar place, the situation is quite different. He is expected to dance solely with her; or, if with a group of friends, he may dance with other women in their own group.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

When you are on the dance floor, it is up to you to show consideration for your partner and the other couples on the floor.

The most important way of showing consideration for your partner is by knowing how to dance well.

There are several ways of showing consideration for others on the dance floor. Here are some of the most important ones:

1. If the floor is small and crowded, do *not* attempt to do complicated and intricate figures requiring a lot of space. You won't enjoy it, and the other people won't enjoy having you on the floor.



2. Follow the Line of Direction. It will reduce the chances of continually bumping into other people, which is never polite.
3. Don't talk or sing too much or too loudly. It can be very disturbing.

CUTTING-IN

Cutting-in is a common practice these days; and there is nothing basically wrong with it—so long as a few simple rules are observed.

1. The man should wait until the woman he wants to dance with is dancing near him. He then taps her partner on the shoulder and says: "May I?"



2. The man who has been cut-in on should *not* refuse to give up his partner. If the partner is someone special for him and he wants to continue dancing with her, he can cut-in again after a decent interval—but *he should not cut-in on the man who cut-in on him.*
3. The woman should smile pleasantly at both the old and the new partners. She should *not* display either great regret or over-eagerness upon getting a new partner.

Good manners in dancing is another way you have of revealing your personality. The courtesy and consideration you show will mark you as a partner and companion to be desired—because on and off the dance floor you are a nice person.

How to Have Fun Learning to Dance

Keep in mind always that dancing is fun. And learning to dance can be just as much fun. It isn't difficult, and it is something which once learned, you will never forget. When you have learned to be a good dancer, you will always be a good dancer.

Learn the steps well—which will be easy through our simplified method of learning by *seeing*, *hearing* and *doing*. Once you have learned the steps and have practiced so you can do them with automatic smoothness, you are well on your way to being a good, sought-after dancing partner.

When you are learning anything new, your own frame of mind often determines the ease and speed with which you learn. If you approach something as a difficult and distasteful task that simply must be done and gotten out of the way, you can well understand that your rate of learning will be slow and difficult.

Naturally, you will not bring such a negative frame of mind to your dancing lessons. You want to dance—You know it's fun to dance well—You know that a good dancer doesn't have to sit on the sidelines for an entire, boring evening while other people have all the fun . . . a good dancer doesn't have to turn down invitations to parties and dances through lack of dancing ability and self-confidence.

So chances are you'll face your dancing lessons with a positive approach and really get enjoyment from them. As part of this positive approach to learning to dance, keep uppermost in your mind the *goals* you are striving for—the fun, popularity, poise and confidence that dancing can bring you. Do this and you're bound to have fun learning to dance.

And now you are ready to start learning the steps.

Good luck—and have fun!

DANCE DICTIONARY

A definition of dance terms used in this book

Closed Position—the usual beginning position for a dance in which the man and woman are face to face, their feet together.

Open Position—the position in a dance in which the man and woman have separated from the closed position. Usually they are standing side by side, facing in the same direction.

Slow—an average walking step, speaking in terms of time it takes to make the step.

Quick—half of a slow step, speaking in terms of time it takes to make the step. You do two quick steps in the time it takes to do one slow step.

Foot Pattern—the diagram showing how the feet are placed to perform a particular figure.

Figure—a group of steps done in order; also, the pattern formed when these steps are done in order.

Lead—to guide the direction of the dance and the order in which the figures are performed. The man leads with pressure of his hands or body to indicate which figure is to be done and the direction of the figure.

Follow—the response of the woman to the lead of the man.

Break—an abrupt movement made to change direction. A break can be made in one direction, then back; in the other direction, then back. Or it can be used as a transition figure to get from one figure to another.

Line of Direction—the counter-clockwise movement of dancers around the dance floor.

In Place—a step on one foot without moving that foot from its position. It is usually accomplished by shifting of the weight from one foot to another.

Pivot—turn on the ball of one foot.

Right Turn—a turn led by the right shoulder moving in a backward direction.

Left Turn—a turn led by the left shoulder moving in a backward direction.

Follow-through—a step in which the foot in motion draws up to the other foot before stepping into place. (A follow-through step is indicated by a dotted line.)

Follow-up—in those pivots on one foot when the entire body must turn the other foot must swing around with the pivoting foot. You must follow-up to avoid entangling your feet while turning your body.



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