

POLKA

Rhythm: 2/4 meter, a bright lively dance in uneven rhythm.

Posture: Polkas are performed in closed dance position, proleaderade, semi-open or in the more common Eastern European shoulder waist style, with the follower's hands on the leader's shoulders, and the leader's hands on the follower's waist. Leader face walls, followers face the center. Body leans slightly in the direction of the moving foot. Progress in LOD (line of direction) which is CCW (Counter Clockwise), while turns are made CW (Clockwise).

1. **Plain Polka (Two--Step):** Use open or promenade position. Leader steps fwd on L ft, close with R, step fwd L. Then step fwd with R, close with L and step fwd with R. Follower does the reverse. Lean to leading side, change on 2nd 2-step to back-to-back position or lean back.

2. **Plain Polka (2-Step) with a Turn:** Use Shoulder/Waist position, Step side leader L, follower R, close leader R, follower L, pivot turning 1/2 to L (CW) with leader's L, follower's R. Dance close together, to facilitate turning. Count is 1 & 2, ah 1 & 2 ah, with the pivot on Ah.

3. **Hop Polka:** Same as plain polka, but begin each step with a hop. Hop R for leader on ah, hop L for follower. Count is Ah 1 & 2. Hop Step Close Step.

4. **Hop Turning Polka:** Leader hops on the R, follower hops L to start. The hops are done on the up-beat. Leader step L to side, close with R, and step L to side before hopping on the L foot turning 1/2 turn clockwise. The follower steps R to side, closes with L and steps R again to the side. She then hops on the R foot turning 1/2 to clockwise and repeats leading with the other foot. For every complete pattern (hop-step-close-step; hop-step-close-step) the couple has made one 360-degree clockwise turn. Couples move counter clockwise around the dance floor, though all turns are done clockwise.

Momentum: Couples face standing close together pulling shoulders away from each other. A firm grip is essential since the couple will be spinning as one unit. The farther the upper body is pulled away from the partner, the faster the couple can spin. Most polka music is fast, so small steps not only look best, but become a necessity. The smaller the steps taken, the more control the couple has and the tighter and faster the turns.

Spotting: The purpose of spotting is to avoid getting dizzy when turning. This is accomplished by focussing on a single object, and whipping the head around as you turn in order to stay focussed on the object. The room can't spin around to make you dizzy if you have kept your eyes on one spot. Stationary turns are spotted forward. Chaine turns are spotted in the direction of movement. The clockwise polka turn can progress with such speed that the dancer should spot his/her partner's eyes.

Break: The most common polka break is the heel & toe Polka with slide and 1/2 turn step. The leader hops on the R foot bringing his L heel out to the side. He hops again on the R foot as his L toe is pointed down and brought into the instep of the R foot. Repeat. This is called "heel toe" or more accurately, "hop heel, hop toe". The follower does the same steps but with the opposite feet. Next the leader slides starting stepping L to his L side, the follower uses her R foot to her R side. The free foot closes to the standing foot and the slide is repeated, ending with one more step side and a held count. Think "heel toe heel toe, slide slide slide rest"; or more precisely, "hop heel hop

toe, hop heel hop toe; step close step close step hold." The whole pattern is then repeated starting with the free foot in the opposite direction. The count is 1&, 2, 3 & 4, 1, &, 2, &, 3, &, 4, &. Then repeat 8 counts with other foot. If partners use Skaters hold, both leader and follower use same foot. The break is done either twice (R and L) or 4 times (R, L, R, L). Breaks are designed to allow the couple a chance to catch their breath (polkas are aerobic) and clear their heads.

An easier version of the Polka Break is: Leader's L heel diag. fwd, L toe hooked over R ft. Hop on R, raise L knee slightly, step L close with R step with L. The count is 1&, 2, ah, 1, &, 2, 1&, 2, ah, 1 & 2. Can use skater's hold or Varsouvienne hold.

Another variation is to do the easier version of the polka break above and add another hop after the 2 step. Turn 1/2 around on the hop to face reverse direction. The count is identical except an extra ah is inserted for the hop turn after the 2nd 2.

Heel Toe Polka with a slide

Heel toe Polka with slide and turn. 1 break listed.

Follower turns CW in front of umbrella hand held by leader.

These 2 have same counts.