

Basic Ballroom Dance Information

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Dance Posture

A proper and correct body alignment and carriage is important to any form of dancing. An erect, balanced, yet relaxed body carriage improves one's projection on the dance floor. Such a posture will radiate a feeling of confidence and security.

Leader's hold and posture:

Leading will become difficult without the proper hold and posture for a given dance. With an improper hold, not only will he present an awkward sight, but it will hinder his dancing style.

The R arm should be gracefully curved from the shoulder and away from the body. The leader's R hand is placed at the follower's back just below her L shoulder blade. The fingers are kept together.

The L arm is raised and held away from the body, too. The L hand holds the follower's R hand at about shoulder level. The leader looks over the follower's R shoulder.

Follower's Position:

The lady stands in front of the leader with feet together. The L arm rests lightly on the leader's right upper arm. The L hand rests lightly just below the leader's R shoulder. She should look straight ahead over the leader's R shoulder. The R arm is held away from the body, with the R hand resting lightly in the leader's L hand.

Posture Hints:

1. Always stand tall.
2. Keep feet together with knees relaxed.
3. Keep the chest high with hips tucked in
4. Keep head up and eyes off floor and feet.
5. Look over your partner's R shoulder.

Footwork Hints:

1. The leader starts with the L foot, lady, R.
2. Reach from the hips when moving fwd or backward.
3. Carry the weight more on the balls of the feet.
4. Move in a narrow base, glide, don't drag the feet.
5. Take short steps when music is fast, longer ones when music is slow.
6. Keep your feet parallel to partner's feet in a closed position.

Leading/Following:

Dancing is a partnership endeavor. Both partners have specific responsibilities in contributing to a successful dance experience.

The leader is the leader on the dance floor. He selects the pace, steps used, direction and positions to assume. This is called leading. To make the lead effective, the lady must be sensitive to the leader's signals for direction changes, rhythm, step variations, and position changes. She must react quickly and smoothly to the changes.

The leader's R hand serves as the "steering wheel" in guiding the follower around the dance floor. In a closed position, the lead to a fwd, backward or turning direction is given with the leader's chest, R shoulder, upper R arm and elbow. through his R hand (heel, fingers and palm) which is placed at the follower's back and indicates the direction to be taken. In the backward lead, the leader pulls the lady fwd toward him with his R palm, just before his backward step is taken. For a sideward lead, the leader uses pressure on the lady's back with his R hand. For a turning lead, the leader uses the chest lead with a slight dip in the shoulders either L or R depending the direction of the turn. A visual lead is used on the chase in the cha cha.

Hints for leading:

1. Know the steps well.
2. Start with L foot.
3. Give the lead cue just before the step is taken.
4. Hold your partner steadily to give security and support.
5. Listen to the music before starting to dance.
6. Think ahead to decide what step variation will follow the present step.

Hints on Following:

1. Know the steps well.
2. Carry and support your own weight.
3. Follow the leader's rhythm
4. Be alert but don't anticipate the leader's leads.
5. Provide pressure/resistance rather than spaghetti arms.
6. Start with the R foot, moving from the hip.

Dance Etiquette:

Dance etiquette is the practice of good manners and conduct on the dance floor. An evening of enjoyment can be ruined due to a lack of simple courtesy and consideration for others. Here are some helpful Do's and Don'ts to remember.

Do's:

1. Dress appropriately for the occasion, with danceable shoes.
2. Know how to ask a lady to dance. Expressions used are, "May I have this dance?", "May I have the pleasure of this dance?", or simply "Shall we dance?", " Would you care to dance?" The follower's reply could be, "I'd be delighted", "Certainly", or even a nod and smile and following the

leader out onto the dance floor.

3. Thank the follower after dancing with her.
4. Always offer an apology after accidentally bumping into someone on the dance floor.
5. Thank the host or hostess before leaving.
6. It is appropriate to escort the lady back to her seat or group of friends rather than leave her on the dance floor.
7. Introduce friends, presenting a younger person to the older person, a follower to a leader. "Sue this is Bob."
8. When there is a follower not dancing, rather than standing on the sidelines, it is mannerly to dance with her.
9. It is considered good manners to dance with the hostess, her daughters, and a variety of ladies regardless of their ages.

Don'ts

1. Don't chew gum on the dance floor.
2. Don't cross the dance floor during a dance.
3. Don't monopolize a partner the entire evening. He/she should be allowed to circulate during the evening.
4. When the dance floor is very crowded, avoid difficult dance steps that take up a lot of room.
5. A follower should never accept the same dance with one leader after refusing another.

To become a good dancer, practice the steps alone first. Practice and more Practice is the key to becoming an accomplished dancer.