

Couple Dance Tip Sheet

~ General Tips ~

Get a feel for the rhythm of the music before executing the basic footwork of the dance. Feel the rhythm throughout your body—move to the rhythm. Don't just perform the steps by rote without having a feel for how they go with the rhythm.

Maintain the frame with your partner. A good frame maintains the spacing between you and partner. A bad frame typically collapses inward.

Small steps work best. Small, short steps enable you to keep up with the music, especially when the tempo is fast. Small steps conserve energy and they help keep your feet underneath your weight, thus better maintaining balance.

~ Waltz ~

Waltz is the beautiful dance that never goes out of style. It's a graceful dance, light on the feet.

Try starting by standing in place and **sway to the rhythm** before you start moving your feet.

Waltz music has 3 beats per measure with a step on every beat. You can also take one step per measure—take a step on the 1st beat and hold for beats 2 & 3 before taking a step on the 1st beat of the next measure. This is sometimes called a hesitation step and is a handy rest during fast tempos.

The **closed position frame** for the waltz is gent's left hand, lady's right hand are palm to palm at about shoulder height, with the man's right arm reaching around his partner's back; lady's left hand on top of man's right shoulder. Ladies, you should feel yourself pushing back (but not leaning back) into the hand that is on your back. The joined hands should be relaxed with a little pressure against your partner's palm (but don't clamp down like an "alligator clip") The frame works best when bodies are parallel (rather than a V formation), and offset (nose to right shoulder, rather than nose to nose).

(waltz, cont'd)

Think of the music in groups of two measures (six beats). The gent starts onto left foot. So its *Left, R, L (1,2,3); R, L, R (4,5,6)*. The first measure (and each odd measure) starts on the gent's left; the second measure (and each even measure) starts on the gent's right. The opposite is true for the lady.

When waltzing in line-of-direction without turning: it works best for the feet to go straight ahead rather than side-to-side with each measure. (Imagine you're on railroad tracks that go around the room.) Step styling: think *long, short, short, (1,2,3)* or *step, toe, step*.

~ Schottische ~

The schottische is a light-hearted relatively easy dance that makes for a nice change of pace.

Part 1 is danced in promenade position (8 counts):
Step, step, step, hop, step, step, step, hop

Part 2 in closed position and rotating (8 counts):
Step, hop, step, hop, step, hop, step, hop

Stay close to the ground on the hops. You'll tire quickly if you don't.

~ Zwiefacher ~

The zwiefacher (pronounced *tswee' fa khur*) is a traditional couple dance associated mainly with Bavaria and Austria. Zwiefacher tunes have frequent rhythm changes, alternating between a series of 3-beat (waltz) measures and 2 or 4-beat measures. Pivoting steps are danced on the non-waltz measures. Each zwiefacher tune has its own pattern of waltz and pivot steps, corresponding to the music. Some have patterns that are simple and predictable; others are complicated and challenging.

On each pivot step, the couple rotates halfway around their common vertical axis. It helps to be wearing shoes that can swivel on the floor surface rather than grip the surface.



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