

# Larry's Corner

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Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

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If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters

## Comments from Barb Johnson

Spring is here finally, everything is turning green, flowers are coming up, trees are in bloom, and the bugs etc. are back, as you can see, but spring is my favorite season. When you work all week and Saturday rolls around, what do you do? Catch up on your sleep, clean, do some gardening, maybe some yard work, or what? Saturday night lets go dancing at TGIS, and have some real fun and its great exercise. Char who runs TGIS, and may I say, does a great job, has a live Rock And Roll band every Saturday night. At these singles dances, there's many choices of dancing. Freestyle of course, Foxtrot, Rumba, Merangue, East and West Coast Swing, Cha cha, Waltz, Nightclub 2 step, and also Country 2 step. Larry Ablin taught Foxtrot at the April Dance classes using Rock

and Roll music to show that you can dance Foxtrot to Rock and Roll, also that it is not just for Ballroom music, and it was fun. Larry does not do Rock and Roll dancing otherwise called freestyle dancing. He only partner dances, and believe me, he doesn't sit out many. Larry made several CD's for Char to play during intermission with a variety of music, lots of fun, good dancing and the Line dancers even get on the floor. What a great way to meet new people, and mingle with your friends, and learn some new dance steps. Everyweek TGIS is at a different location call 763-503-5444 for location, and the best part! It's smoke free!! Ladies, we are doing our best to get the men in our Saturday night dance lesson, so they can do some partner dancing, don't give up! They are trying. Gentlemen, remember in partner dancing there are at least Three women for every man. Starting in may there is a free lesson before each Saturday TGIS dance at 730 pm. It's called social dancing, put your dance shoes on and join us. See all of you at the next dance.

## Weight Changes

What is a full weight change? Does the non-weighted foot have to come off the ground?

1 Not necessarily. If there's so little weight on it that I could lift it, or move it, without any problem. If my other foot is providing all of the support for all intents and purposes, that's a "full



weight change" even though the non-weighted foot isn't off the ground.

Many beginners haven't learned to sense whether or not they've really made a full weight change. Sometimes it's helpful to make them pick up the non-weighted foot to force them to transfer all their weight, or fall over. Better dancers slide their feet horizontal to the floor with essentially no weight, or a controlled amount of weight, depending on the dance.

In some absolute sense, contact implies some weight. However, at dance speeds, the less than 1% of a person's weight remaining on the moving foot is essentially insignificant with respect to the overall forces moving them about. And I would call the moving foot non-weighted if there isn't enough pressure on it to move the dancer a noticeable amount. Maybe just enough floor pressure to keep a dollar bill under the moving foot from getting left behind.

We are really incorrect to think of this in static terms -- the weight transfers to the other foot and then back again.

There is a brief period in there where it is possible to lift the foot

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off the ground with no additional "weight transfer". The point is to not "slur" it -- there should be a definite transfer of almost all weight, or none (as in a touch or point), but not in between.

Whenever working on "grounding" if you don't do a full weight change (or none) you are part-way over one foot and part-way over the other -- which is never where you want to be. Now pay attention: One of the things we are very big on in teaching our WCS is that "&" steps are never steps where static balance is achieved. In other words, you don't really stop and rest your Center of Gravity over an "&" step. The "&" step is simply a transition to get you from the foot you are on back to the same foot.

You can put ALL your weight on one foot for a short period of time without having your Center of Gravity directly over that foot.

Try it.

1. Stand completely on your left foot.
2. Put the ball of your right foot on the floor about 6 inches back without weight.
3. Press into your right foot hard enough to pick your left foot completely off the floor and slip forward about an inch without bobbing your head or body up and down.

Congratulations. You have just done a "ball change" with complete weight change, or you wouldn't have been able to pick up your left foot without bobbing up and down, but without your weight being over your foot because your right foot was behind you and you moved forward. The only limitation is

that the time your weight can be on the ball of your right foot is limited by knee and ankle flex, since your body will accelerate away from it. But if the music is fast enough, then the "ball change" will happen within the time of a comfortable amount of knee and ankle flex and body motion. This is why certain dances only feel comfortable at certain tempos.

And this is a problem with teaching dance. Where your weight is and where your center of mass is can be different when changing your direction of motion (accelerating). Try to explain that to a dance beginner. Let's take for Example: the leader's footwork on a whip: side-together-side, L-R-L.

When the man puts his weight fully centered over the left foot, then shifts weight to his right foot, in order to move his center over his right foot, he has to stop and reverse the direction he is traveling in. Try it. Stand in front of a mirror. Stand on your left foot. Then shift your weight to the right foot. Your center moves slightly to the right, doesn't it?

If the man does this on the L-R-L triple, he teeter-totters from side to side and ends up looking robotic. What he needs to do is continue moving his center to the left, in which case his "&" step on the right foot will not quite reach his center. On the other hand, for followers doing the run-run-run on a side pass, of course, the center is over the "&" step. The rule is not that the center does or doesn't stay over the foot. The rule is, your center is what travels the smooth path. You don't stop and reverse the direction of travel of your center just to get it over the foot.

There are plenty of examples of

where it is appropriate for an "&" to be not directly under your center. There are also plenty of examples where it WILL be under your center. If you can audibly hear the anchor-in-place in WCS that you are being too severe in the weight changes.

### Force Level

The best dancers, regardless of style, use LIGHTER leads! The leads for Lindy are incredibly light; it's an illusion that the dancers are flinging each other around! "Don't Pull or Jerk!" Get Maximum results with minimum effort." When I took private WCS lessons from Fred Astaire studios, they encouraged me and my partner toward lightness in leading, and following. There is a whole exercise in which partners purposely attempt to be alternatively heavy or light, that teaches them the possible range and how to find what's comfortable.

Many dancers have delicate / sensitive shoulders. Followers are perfectly capable of following most leads on their own, but dancing with a jerk will cause them to ache for several days afterward (or, in the worst case, actually dislocate someone's shoulder, this HAS happened). Guys, if you wonder what women talk about in the ladies room and other all-females environments, they frequently talk about leads that are unnecessarily strong. Women consider a roomful of brutish leaders to be sheer hell.

"Do not yank and crank, just Indicate when leading. Minimum force is needed to indicate to a follower which direction to go or which figure to execute. This makes dancing MUCH more pleasurable, and also if a follower

does not respond to a figure, picking another one is simple because the follower is not forced into an irreversible position." The follower is your partner in a mutually enjoyable activity, not a rag doll being tossed around. "Also the follower can be active and do whatever syncopations / variations she feels like doing without being constrained by an aggressive leader who does not compensate and will not let the follower do her thing. Be forgiving leaders, if the follower is not responsive to the lead for a particular figure, just do a different figure and show her the figure she missed after the dance. Do not force the follower into the figure. A poor leader will force her through the figure. A good leader will compensate."

It is very irritating to watch a couple dance where it looks like the man is pushing the lady around like a piece of furniture. Men, stop trying so hard! If the lady doesn't do what you want her to she probably doesn't know how.

Pushing her through it makes her feel uncomfortable and awkward and will end up giving you a case of stiffness.

Remember men, if you were pushed what would your response be. Let me guess... PUSH BACK - right? Just think about that when your leading a lady next time. You don't look bad on the dance floor if you have a good lead and your partner doesn't follow - you do look bad if you're throwing her around the dance floor in an attempt to "get her to do her part. Guide them there by using your body/frame and not your arms and they generally will respond much better.

It is surprising, with everything the man has to do in couple

dancing. Lead the lady, think of the next steps, avoid collisions, adjust to different partners, do his own steps, keep his frame, etc.) that he so often wants to do the lady's part for her as well by pushing her through it! Men, let the lady do her own dancing. Your job is to "open the door" for her, and have fun. Some men, in response to this say, "Yeah, but what if she's not doing her part?" These men need to ask themselves "Is she going to learn her part if you do it for her?"

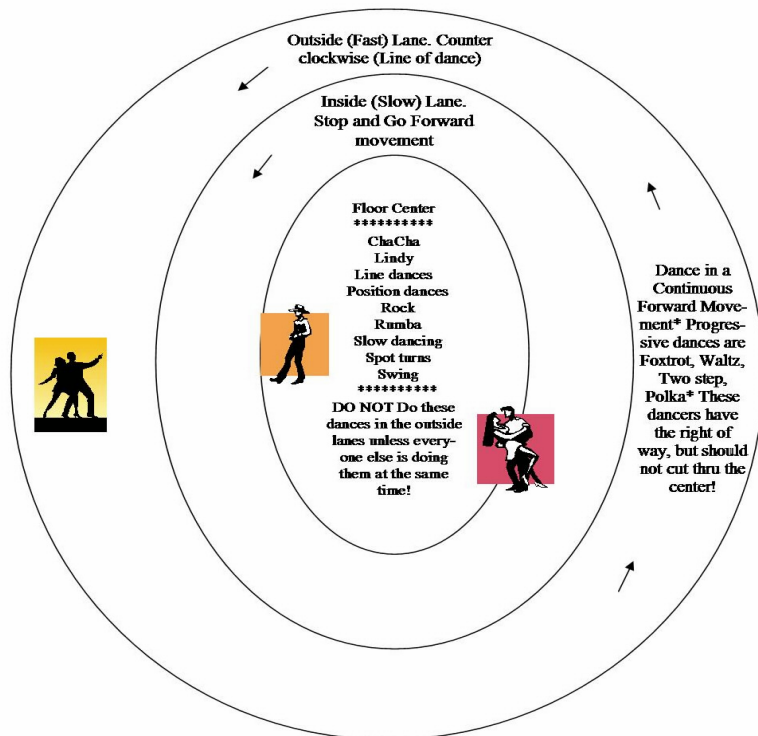
Use a firm, definite initial lead to establish momentum followed by a feather touch to "follow through". There are exceptions, of course, depending on the move, like when the lady's arm is behind her back (she might get injured).

Followers, be responsive and quick; don't hesitate or the leader will be forced to crank to get through the figure and stay on time or he will have to abort it. Usually, only a slight force is necessary unless the movement is very fast.

However, it usually takes a lot of practice to get to the proper arm-body connection with a light force. You need to pass momentum back and forth between partners. Passing that momentum is usually going to take more than a few ounces of connection. (When you dance with "air", it's hard to do a Powerwhip!) At the same time, you don't want your partner putting several pounds of pressure on you when you are doing something flashy.

## DANCE FLOOR ETIQUETTE

**DANCERS! ENJOY DANCING TO THE FULLEST!**  
 Let's All Practice Dance Floor Etiquette!  
**MANY DANCERS AND MANY STYLES OF DANCING CAN BE ACCOMODATED ON THE FLOOR AT THE SAME TIME, IF TRADITIONAL DANCE FLOOR ETIQUETTE IS FOLLOWED. LETS ALWAYS BE COURTEOUS, AND WE'LL ALL HAVE A GREAT TIME DANCING!**



## Swing Clubs

East Meets West; 952-949-3016; 1st and 3rd Friday Dance at Dancesport in Hopkins 816 1/2 Main St.

Minnesota West Coast Swing; 651-731-9768; 2nd and 4th Friday Dance at B-Dale Club South of the Dale and Cty. B in St. Paul.

TC Rebels Swing club; Hotline number 952-941-0906; Dances are at Everett McClay VFW on frontage road of 494 by Mall of America.

When dancing West Coast Swing be sure to line your slot with the boards on the floor. If no boards then line up with length of room

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Medina Ballroom is having Country dance night every Thursday from 7-1030 pm Live Band

Singles all Together has Ballroom lessons on Monday night 8 pm at the Lenox Center in St Louis Park.

Singles all Together West Coast Swing on Tuesday night 8 pm at Medina Ballroom.

# THANK GOD I'M SINGLE DANCE LESSON

*Where:*

**Thank God I'm Single dances**

**Call the hotline 763-503-5444 for location or <http://www.tgisdances.com> web page**

*When:*

**Free dance lesson with paid admission Every saturday 1 hour Before Dance usually 730 pm starting in May**

- ♦ **1st and 3rd Saturday will be East Coast Swing**
- ♦ **2nd and 4th Saturday will be Nightclub 2 step**
  
- ♦ **If there are more than 4 Saturdays in a month we will teach other dances**

Larry L Ablin  
Help's at Singles All Together dance class on Monday night, at Lenox center on Minnetonka Blvd in St Louis Park.

## Dance Etiquette

Line of Dance is counter clockwise around the room for dances that move, like Foxtrot, and Waltz.

People who aren't moving like Rock and roll, Rumba, or Swing Dance in the middle of the room.

If you bump into someone, say sorry.

If you step on partner, say your sorry, then forget it. (Don't rag on it.)

Finish the song you started dancing to, before excusing yourself.

Don't do a step that requires kicking, on a crowded floor.

## Dance etiquette offenders

**Bulldog:** One who does step or kick, no matter who is in the way.

**Chatter box:** One who is always talking. (Social talk ok but not constantly)

**Crooner:** One who sings or hums with music.

**Debater:** One who talks politics or religion while dancing.

**Iceberg:** One with no smile ( At least look like your having fun.)

**Jolly Extrovert:** One who is cheerful with surrounding people, but forgets his own partner.

**Lead foot:** One who can't seem to lift one's feet from the floor.

**Octopus:** One who holds the partner everywhere but the correct dance position.

**Quitter:** Suddenly tired 1/2 way through song. (Finish Song)

**Sherman tank:** The Leader leads her, but she isn't moving.

**Truck driver:** One who steers the partner like he drives.

**Wrong way charlie:** Clockwise traveler. (Against line of dance)