

# **GLOSSARY OF DANCE TERMINOLOGY**

## **ACROSS**

Movement across the Line of Dance or Movement of one leg in front of the other

## **ALIGNMENT**

The position of the body with relation to the Line of Dance

## **PARTNER ALIGNMENT**

The symmetric alignment of a couple

## **AMALGAMATIONS aka CLUSTERS or COMBINATIONS**

A group or sequence of dance figures or patterns

## **AND (&) Step**

1 Half of a Quick count (& 1 or 1 &) 2 A Call such as "ready and" 3 Indicates simultaneous action Note: In my step descriptions, the word "and" notes simultaneous actions while the figure "&" indicates movement on a half beat of music

## **APART**

1 Movement away from partner or one foot away from the other 2 Placement of feet apart from each other (2nd position)

## **BALANCE STEP**

A step in any direction, followed by a Close (no weight) and a Hold

## **BEHIND**

A step with the free foot crossing behind the weighted foot

## **BODY MOVEMENTS GESTURE**

Any movement not connected with supporting the body weight

## **STEP**

The transfer of weight from one foot to another

## **LOCOMOTION**

Movement of the body from one place to another

## **JUMPING**

Movement without a point of support

## **TURNING**

Changing position in a circular fashion

## **BOOGIE**

The free hip lifts and moves in a circular motion in the direction of the weighted foot

## **BOOGIE ROLL**

1. Similar to Cuban Motion, using a forward and backward movement of the pelvis 2. A circular movement starting in the pelvis region, moving through the diaphragm, chest and shoulders

## **BOOGIE WALK**

To move the free leg by lifting the hip and stepping forward

## **BREAK**

1 A change or reverse of direction 2 See Rhythm Break

## **BRUSH aka SCUFF**

To brush, sweep or scuff the foot against the floor

## **BUMP**

Dancers bump hips to the side or the buttocks of their partners

## **CENTER**

Individual Balance point of the body mass - located near the diaphragm

Couples: Center point between partners

## **CHARLESTON aka Black Bottom aka Montana Kick**

A 4 count pattern of steps and kicks (Kelly Gillette (and thus, NTA) advocates that a Charleston

MUST start with a left step) Step forward left Kick forward right Step back right Point the left toe back

She may be right, but what would we call it when it starts on the right foot. I personally

call it a Charleston emphasizing which feet are doing what.

## **CHAINÉ**

A 360 degree turn, feet together in first position, changing weight

## **CHASE**

A figure where one partner pursues the other

## **CLOSE**

To bring the feet together without a change of weight

## **COUNT**

A call used to count the rhythm of foot movements and weight changes, or to count the beats of music

## **CONTRA BODY MOVEMENT (CBM)**

A movement of the body into or from 3rd or 5th foot position which turns the opposite hip and shoulder toward the direction of the moving leg

## **CUBAN MOTION**

Hip motion initiated by using the inside edge and ball of the foot during weight transfer

## **CUP AND PIN**

The man holds his left hand with the palm facing inward, thumb over the lady's fingertips. The lady curls her right fingertips over the man's left fingers. The hands are held approximately at the lady's waist level. There is resistance needed for many changes of positions and turns.

## **DIAGONAL**

45 degrees out from the center of the Line of Dance (direction)

## **DIG**

To touch the ball or heel of the free foot to the floor with a strong emphasis

## **DRAW aka DRAG aka SLIDE**

To bring the free foot slowly together to the weighted foot

## **EXTENSION**

To stretch or extend parts of the body

## **FAN**

Circular motion of the free foot

## **TOE FAN**

Toe swings outward, pivoting on heel, and back

### **HEEL FAN**

Heel swings outward, pivoting on ball of foot, and back

### **FAN KICK**

High, straight leg kick where the extended leg makes a circular sweep

### **FLEX**

To bend slightly or relax a portion of the body Example the flex of the knee

### **FLICK**

Sharp, quick kick backwards with a pointed toe and a flexed knee

### **FOOTWORK**

The use of the five positions of the feet in dancing

### **FIRST POSITION**

Feet together, toes forward and slightly turned out CALLS Home, Center, Together

### **SECOND POSITION**

Feet parallel, shoulder width apart

### **THIRD POSITION**

Heel to instep, or ball to heel Used in rock steps, shuffles, polkas, triple steps, and basic swing

### **EXTENDED**

Feet apart, heel pointing to instep

### **FOURTH POSITION**

Walking step, forward or back, and rock steps

## **FIFTH POSITION**

Heel to toe Often used in a rock-step

## **FOOT PARTS**

Toe Inside edge of toe Outside edge of toe Ball Inside edge of the ball  
Outside edge of the ball Heel Inside edge of heel Outside edge of heel  
Flat Inside edge of the flat foot Outside edge of the flat foot

## **FOLLOW THROUGH**

The non-support foot passes by the weighted foot before changing directions

## **FRAME**

Dance posture for the purpose of maintaining balance and appearance

## **FREEZE**

A stop no movement

## **GRAPEVINE aka VINE**

A continuous traveling step pattern to the side with crosses behind and/or in front

## **HEEL SPLIT aka WING SCISSORS PIGEON-TOE BUTTERFLIES ETC ETC ETC**

Feet together with weight on balls of both feet. Move heels apart on count 1, and together on count 2

## **FAST HEEL SPLIT**

takes one beat of music and is counted as "& 1"

## **KNEE POPS aka HEEL STOMPS**

Lift both heels off the floor by bending the knees Return the heels to the floor Takes one beat of music and counted as "& 1"

## **HOLD**

A count to describe a designated time before taking another step

## **HOME**

Original starting place

## **HOP**

A spring into the air from one foot and landing on the same foot

## **HOOK aka CROSS**

The free foot moves as a pendulum in front of or in back of the weighted foot and is kept off the floor The toes pointing downward

## **HOOK COMBINATION**

A 4 count move using (1) heel (2) hook (3) heel and (4) together

## **ISOLATION**

Movement of one part of the body independently of the rest

## **JAZZ BOX aka JAZZ SQUARE**

Well there's plenty of fight over this one, but I call a jazz box several ways (then explain which one I'm using either in class or in my step description) it may not be right, but it works for me. a couple of examples

Step forward left Step right across left Step back left Side step right

or:

Step right over left Step back left Side step right Step forward left

JUMP Spring into the air off both feet and land on both feet

## **LEAD**

A non-verbal communication that initiates and continues movement

## **LEAP**

A transfer of weight from one foot to the other. Push off with a spring and land on the ball of the other foot, letting the heel come down Bend knee to absorb the shock

## **LEFT**

Refers to the left foot, hand, hip or a direction

## **LINDY**

Line dance move (though you'll see some differences of opinion this is widely accepted)

8-count series of side shuffles and rock steps

EXAMPLE:

- 1&2 Side step right & step left beside right, side step right
- 3-4 Rock step left slightly behind right, recover weight to right
- 5&6 Side step left & step right beside left, side step left
- 7-8 Rock step right slightly behind left, recover weight to left

## **LINDY CHARLESTON**

Couples swing move:

COUNT	MAN	LADY
1.	Rock back with LF	Rock back with RF
2.	Change weight forward on RF	Change weight forward on LF
3.	Kick forward with LF	Kick forward with RF
4.	Land LF forward	Land RF forward
5.	Kick forward with RF	Kick forward with LF
6.	Swing RF back without landing	Swing LF back without landing
7.	Kick back with RF	Kick back with LF
8.	Bring RF to LF, landing	Bring LF to RF, landing

## **LOCK**

A tight cross of the feet in 1st or 2nd position

## **LOD - LINE OF DANCE**

Counterclockwise around the dance floor

## **LOOP TURN**

An underarm turn to the left for the lady and to the right for the man

## **LUNGE**

A weight transfer to a bent leg with the other leg extended

## **PIGEON TOED**

A pattern traveling sideways bringing the toes together leaving the heels apart, then bringing the heels together leaving the toes apart

## **PIVOT**

A traveling turn executed with thighs locked and feet apart in extended fifth position

## **PREP**

A lead-in move or step a set up used as a preparation for a turn or a change of dance position

## **QUICK**

A step or weight change that takes one beat of music

## **RESISTANCE**

A balanced force and counter force between two bodies

## **MUSIC**

Flow of recurrent heavy and light accents

## **DANCE**

Recurrent flow of foot and body movements

## **RHYTHM BREAK**

To leave the natural rhythm of the pattern

## **RIGHT**

Refers to the right foot, hand, hip or a direction

## **RISE AND FALL**

Coming up on the toes by bracing the ankles and stretching the spine then lowering to the heels

## **BODY RISE**

The body rises by bracing the leg muscles and stretching the spine then relaxes to a natural stance

## **ROLL**

The indicated body part circles right or left

## **ROUND DANCE**

All types of social dances were once called round dances. Today round dance refers to couples or groups of three or more, doing routine patterns dancing counterclockwise or clockwise around the dance floor

## **RUNNING MAN**

A series of steps and scoots (usually back) that resemble a running action  
EXAMPLE: 1 Step slightly forward LEFT & Hitch right and scoot back on LEFT  
2 Step slightly forward RIGHT & Hitch left and scoot back on RIGHT  
Repeat as many times as the count indicates

Note

Teach this move by starting very slow just stepping in place Then we add hitches and increase the tempo and begin counting 1&2&3&4&

## **SAILOR STEP**

A triple step dance pattern accomplished by leaning in the opposite direction of the crossing foot (weight stays centered over lead foot's original position) EXAMPLE: Leaning toward left (1) Step left behind right (&) Side step right (2) Side step left (to original position)

## **SCOOT aka SKIP**

(NTA) Slide of the weighted foot (or feet) forward, backward or sideways.  
(ME) A hitch with movement of the weighted foot

## **SHUFFLE**

A triple step similar to a Polka step with no lilt (says NTA) EXAMPLE: SHUFFLE FORWARD LEFT 1 Step forward left & Bring the right foot up to the heel of the left foot 2 Step forward left Note: From a technical standpoint, a shuffle would be smooth, a polka would have lilt (bounce), and a cha-cha would have Cuban Motion. This may be of little or no concern to the social dancer especially the beginner.

## **SHIMMY**

Alternating shoulder movements forward and backward

## **SLIDE**

A movement in any direction Step on one foot then draw or slide the other foot up to the weighted foot

## **SLOW**

A step or weight change that takes two beats of music

## **SPIN**

A 360 degree turn on one foot

## **SPLIT**

The feet move apart with the weight evenly distributed over both feet

## **SPOT**

A step in place that does not progress in any direction

## **SPOTTING**

Focusing on a fixed point through a turn

## **SYNCOPATED SPLITS**

Feet move apart separately and are brought back together Counted as "& 1, & 2"

## **STEPS**

WALKING-SLOW Usually takes two beats of music

RUNNING- QUICK(Half of a Slow) takes one beat of music

## **SLIDE**

(left or right) May be taken to a Slow or Quick count

## **PIVOT**

A movement of the feet, turning on the ball or balls of the feet

## **BALANCE**

A step, together, hold

## **STEP**

The transfer of weight from one foot to another

## **STROLL**

A forward diagonal step followed by a cross behind (lock) and another step forward

## **STRUT**

Moving forward, place the heel then the ball of the foot on the floor for counts 1, 2

## **SUGAR FOOT**

Alternating swiveling feet in the direction of the un-weighted foot Taken in place or traveling

## **SWAY**

A tilt of the chest to the side, without lowering the torso Stretching from the side upwards

## **SWING**

The free foot is raised and moved forward, backward, sideways or crosswise

## **SYNCOPATED PATTERN**

Any variation of a defined dance pattern

## **SYNCOPATED RHYTHM**

To step between the down beats Any rhythm pattern which uses accents other than the down beat

## **TYPES OF TURNS: OUTSIDE**

A turn to the right for the lady and left for the man,

## **INSIDE**

A turn to the left for the lady and right for the man

## **FREE TURN**

To turn independently without any body contact

## **CHAINÉ**

A turn with feet together in 1st position with a weight change

## **3 STEP TURN aka CONGA**

A 360° turn in 2nd dance position, taking three weight changes and ending with a touch or point. Often called a turning or rolling vine, because of it's common usage as a variation within a dance

## **PADDLE TURN**

A turn either left or right, using a series of ball changes with 3/4 of the weight staying over the turning foot

## **PIVOT**

A 180 degree turn taking two weight changes to complete Done in extended 3rd or 4th dance position with the thighs locked

## **TRAVELING PIVOTS**

Pivots danced down LOD in extended 5th position

## **PIVOT TURN aka MILITARY TURN aka BREAK TURN**

Transfer weight to the forward foot then turn 180° in the opposite direction of the forward foot Return weight to original foot

## **SPIN**

A 360° turn on one foot

## **TWIRL**

A square dance term for turning the lady

## **VARIATIONS**

Any movement of footwork that is different from the original footwork. Personal note: If you change the count or flow of the dance IMHO it's not a variation. I won't say it's wrong, Oh what the heck, YES I WILL

## **WEIGHT CHANGES**

### **BALL CHANGE**

A change of weight from the ball of one foot to the other foot

### **CROSS**

To move one foot over the other, either in front or behind

### **KICK, BALL, CHANGE**

May also be done as a Heel, Ball, Change. ex: 1 ^ Kick forward right & -  
Step down on ball of right 2 ^ Change weight to left

### **IN PLACE, RECOVER**

Return the weight to the original supporting weighted foot

### **ROCK**

Two weight changes with the feet apart, taken in any direction

### **SWITCH**

Shifting weight from one foot to the other in a rapid sliding movement

### **TOGETHER**

To bring the feet together with a change of weight

### **WEIGHTED LEG/FOOT aka SUPPORT LEG/FOOT**

The foot/leg bearing the weight of the body. The foot you're standing on.