

DANCE TECHNIQUE LEAD & FOLLOW-THROUGH      Condensed

by Leon Raper, President of the Flagstaff Swing Dance Club.

When most dance instructors refer to lead, they are really referring to Lead and Follow-Through. If you were studying with professional instructors of any sport or physical activity, Follow-Through would be discussed and emphasized adnauseum. The Lead signals the action to be taken, but proper Follow-Through is what guides a complete step pattern and is the main element that separates amateurs from the professionals.

Example, the golf swing. Anyone can swing a club and hit a ball. However, if you want it to go where you intended then your Follow-Through must be perfected. Leading dance patterns requires the same development of Lead & Follow-Through.

Follow-Through is accomplished by the Leader smoothly following with his hand(s) through to the end of the step pattern. The Right Wrap to Left Wrap and back again in Two Step is an excellent example of a step pattern that looks great if executed properly, but looks lousy if not. When going from a Right Wrap to a Left Wrap and back again, both of the man's hands must Follow-Through in a smooth fluid motion to the end of the pattern without using force. Most men new to dancing will jerk the left hand up to get the pattern started then jerk the right hand up, cranking the woman, throwing the woman off balance in the process.

The same thing occurs with new dancers in West Coast Swing trying to execute a Tuck-Turn Throwout from Closed Basic. The man will jerk the lady into a Tuck with his left hand then jerk the lady into the Outside Turn. This is not the way it is done. The Lead and Follow-Through for the Tuck is a smooth fluid motion by the man's left hand while his right hand, on the lady's left shoulder blade, moves slightly back, allowing her to do a slight turn Counter-Clockwise; then the turn is executed with a smooth fluid motion with the man's right hand pulling toward him starting her turn as his left hand smoothly rises over her head allowing her to turn Clockwise; his left hand follows over her head down the Slot to her final position in the pattern; after which his left hand then returns down to the normal Open position stance. No force or cranking is used.

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