

# *Ladies, Developing your double turn technique*

*By Leon Raper*

All good dance instructors teach their students the important points relative to developing good turn technique. Some students are able to adapt quickly to these techniques, but most will not be able to adapt without quite a struggle and a lot of hard work. The technique I describe here will allow ladies to quickly improve their double turn technique. First, I will review the basics of good turn techniques such as: stand erect, keep eyes level, pick some point to spot, keep your feet close together, and press up into the turn allowing the weighted foot to pivot in the direction of the turn - do not do a walking turn. Students will say "I can't remember all that stuff at the same time." OK, lets get into the technique that will work for most people. Of all elements of turn technique I just mentioned, concentrate on one thing only. That is, "keep your feet close together (almost touching)" as you execute the turns.

Before going further lets talk about some natural human reactions. When you turn quickly your mind tells you to stick your foot out to the side to keep your body in balance, but when you do so you find yourself off balance. You would think your mind would know we must do some exercises to convince the mind that you have a much better chance of staying balanced with your feet close together. So, we will explore one technique to accomplish that task. The technique is as follows:

First, the woman must concentrate on one thing only and that is keeping her feet close together.

Second, the man must make her feel completely secure by keeping his left hand in one spot, directly over her head while she is turning.

Thirdly, comes the practice technique to develop a good double turn. I have found that using a modified tuck double turn throw out from closed position yeilds the quickest results. When I say a modified tuck double turn throw out, what I mean is a tuck double turn which leaves the lady right in front of the man - not having her travel

down the slot as would a normal tuck double turn throw out. This allows her to execute a double turn without any travel whatsoever.

During the execution of this turn the man is to keep his hand very solid directly over the ladies head - not moving his hand at all until she has completed her turns. This will make the lady feel very secure. You can try any of the other tuck turns, but I have found the lady feels the most secure with the one from closed position - as I described.

The lady will probably be quite surprised the first time she tries this technique how well she keeps her balance. By just concentrating on keeping the feet close together we automatically accomplish all the other things we talked about in the beginning. For instance, you will automatically stand erect, keep your eyes level, and press up into the turn. If you don't, you won't be able to stay balanced and keep your feet close together. With the new found success most ladies will say, "I keep reverting back to my old ways." They probably will revert to their old ways. So, we have to develop a learning technique, though which repetition will finally solve the problem.

Now that the ladies know what to do, they can not expect to execute the turn correctly every time the man leads her into a double turn. The lady still needs more help. Ladies, when you find yourself reverting to your old unsuccessful turn technique, stop right now. Tell whoever you are dancing with that you want to work on improving your double turn technique. Tell him how to lead you, and tell him when you want him to repeat the lead. He won't mind at all. in fact, he will be flattered and feel good knowing he was able to help someone improve their swing dance technique.

Experienced swing dancers take their dancing very seriously. They know swing is a very difficult dance to learn. They are very proud of

*(Continued on page 18)*

# Cross Unwind

A Cross Unwind is a turning movement executed on the ball of the BACK foot, and the heel of the FORWARD foot.

A Cross Unwind, sometimes referred to as a Corkscrew or a Twist Turn, is a turning movement by the gentleman in Closed Dance position, which enables the lady to run or walk around him in a tight circle, while he remains in one place.

This movement is also performed by the man and lady in apart or Open position, as a solo step in Swing or Cha Cha, or in Line dances.

## TECHNIQUES:

### I. CROSS UNWIND BACKWARD RIGHT

1. Cross the right foot BEHIND the left foot in 5th position, placing weight on the ball of the right foot.
2. Pivot (unwind) to the RIGHT on the BALL of the right foot and the HEEL of the left foot. Weight on both feet.

### II. CROSS UNWIND BACKWARD LEFT

1. Cross the left foot BEHIND the right foot in 5th position, placing weight on the ball of the left foot.

2. Pivot (unwind) to the LEFT on the BALL of the left foot and the HEEL of the right foot. Weight on both feet.

### III. CROSS UNWIND FORWARD LEFT

1. Cross the RIGHT foot OVER the LEFT foot.
2. Pivot (unwind) to the LEFT on the HEEL of the right foot and the BALL of the left foot. Weight on both feet.

### IV. CROSS UNWIND FORWARD RIGHT

1. Cross the LEFT foot OVER the RIGHT foot.
2. Pivot (unwind) to the RIGHT on the HEEL of the left foot and the BALL of the right foot. Weight on both feet.

## NOTE

The cross steps are executed in 5th or Lock Dance Position. If Lock position is used the feet must be in a Second position Lock position.

Keep the cross step small. DO leave enough space to allow for the feet to unwind comfortably. The dancer must be able to hold his or her balance. If dancing as a couple the partner should not pull the other off balance.

*(Continued from page 15)*

their accomplishments and most are very happy to help other less experienced dancers improve their dance technique. They know someone helped them to learn and are quite willing to help others in return.

Please note, this double turn technique applies to men as well as women. However, the practice methods will differ.

## Teaching Hints

You will teach better lessons if you remember your student has sacrificed something to be there. You may be the only bring spot in that persons drab day.

Students love to hear little compliments.

Many new teachers have the mistaken idea that they know everything, and even say so.