

Leader

Parallel shoulders in Cha Cha

On the chasses steps in Cha Cha in the basic and between New Yorks or Hand to Hands, make sure you are facing your partner and your shoulders are parallel to your partner's shoulders.

Hand signal to lead a Hand to Hand in Cha Cha

When you are leading a hand to hand (either from double hand hold, or a left to right hand hold, or having just done an underarm turn or a spot turn), you will hold the hand closest to your partner, you may then push away with the other hand to encourage your partner to open out and step backwards. If you are going to do this, it is better to do it with a flat hand (and then push) rather than with a normal hand hold, where you then throw your partner's hand away. If you do it from a normal hand hold, you may pull slightly towards you before throwing away, which may confuse the follower.

Forward ballroom walks

Stand up straight and tall with the legs straight (but the knees are slightly soft and not locked). Bend the standing leg as you swing your leg forward from the hip. Use a heel lead when stepping forward, don't push the toe along the floor. The heel stays in contact with the floor as you move. Take a nice big long stride forward. But do make sure you are leading your partner with your chest, shoulders and frame, rather than just sticking your foot forward - this will help the follower to take a long stride backwards. Remember that striding backwards is harder and stride lengths tend to be shorter for all of us when we go backwards. So be aware of your follower and be considerate - encourage them to take nice big steps, but don't push them over or tread on them.

Backward ballroom walks

Leaders don't often walk backwards, but it does happen, so you want to practice it and feel comfortable doing it. Plus, if you understand what it feels like for you, you'll have a greater understanding of what your partner is going through when they're going backwards. Bend the standing leg and swing the free leg back from the hip. The toe will stay in contact with the floor. Really get your leg back away from you. Release the toe of the front foot from the floor as you drag that foot backwards. The toe release will keep your knee nicely out of your partner's way and will help you keep the speed of the movement (dragging the toe along the floor acts like a brake and really slows you down).

Follower

Parallel shoulders in Cha Cha

On the chasses steps in Cha Cha in the basic and between New Yorks or Hand to Hands, make sure you are facing your partner and your shoulders are parallel to your partner's shoulders. Don't assume that after one New York that there must be a second New York, so don't start to turn your body during the chasses step.

Backward ballroom walks

Bend your standing leg and swing your other leg from the hip, the toe stays in contact with the floor as you swing it backwards. Really stretch it out behind you and take the biggest stride you feel comfortable taking. Release the toe of the front foot from the floor as you drag that foot backwards. The toe release will keep your knee nicely out of your partner's way and will help you keep the speed of the movement (dragging the toe along the floor acts like a brake and really slows you down).

Forward ballroom walks

The follower spends more time going backwards than going forwards, but sometimes you will go forward so it's a good thing to practice. When the leader is walking backwards and you are walking forwards you don't become the leader but you do have to drive the movement in the way that a leader does when they go forward, so don't be hesitant, don't be afraid to drive forward - take big strides and use your frame to create your space. Bend the standing leg as you swing your free leg forward from the hip. Use a heel lead when stepping forward, don't push the toe along the floor. The heel stays in contact with the floor as you move. Take a nice big long stride forward. Do remember that leaders rarely go backwards and some may be really hesitant, so don't drive too much!