

26 Jan 20 13:30 - CDC - Spring 2020 - B&L Leading and Following

Leader

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.

Latin posture

Stand upright (pretend you are 6 inches taller than you are). Keep your heels together and turn your toes out so there is an angle of about 45 degrees between your feet. Lean slightly forward, your weight should be over the balls of your feet. It should be possible to slide a single sheet of A4 paper underneath your heels.

Ballroom frame

Stand up nice and straight, shoulders back and down, lift your arms as if you're holding the world's biggest beach ball - there'll be a nice slope from your shoulders down to your elbows. You can now bend your arms at your elbows to take hold. If you're dancing with someone much shorter than you, don't bend forward or let your frame sag.

Heel Turns for the follower

Your first step as a leader will initiate the turn, make sure you're getting enough turn between steps one and two. On step two, think about rotating your partner and not letting them move backwards or sideways. There is a very small amount of rotation on step three, but don't think about that, think about stepping straight backwards allowing your partner to step between your feet. If you keep turning then your back step is likely to be more like inline with the front foot which means your partner will be pulled off balance or will trip over your foot.

Follower

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).

Latin posture

Stand upright (pretend you are 6 inches taller than you are). Keep your heels together and turn your toes out so there is an angle of about 45 degrees between your feet. Lean slightly forward, your weight should be over the balls of your feet. It should be possible to slide a single sheet of A4 paper underneath your heels.

Ballroom frame

Stand up nice and straight, shoulders back and down, lift your arms as if you're holding the world's biggest beach ball - there'll be a nice slope from your shoulders down to your elbows. You can now bend your arms at your elbows to take hold. Make sure your right elbow doesn't get pushed back behind your rib cage. Keep some tension in your right arm to keep the frame.

Heel Turns for the follower

The first step is a step backwards, on the second step, you'll feel that the leader doesn't want you to step backwards or sideways, they want you to turn, so close your feet and do your heel turn. The turn is made on the heel of the standing foot, the toe of the standing foot isn't raised off the floor, but there is no weight on it, allowing it to move. The heel of the free leg also has no weight on it. The toe of the free leg will have very slight pressure allowing you to keep your heels together and to let you turn without bending your knees or at the waist. You'll rise at the end of step two and step forward with your toe into step three - this will be between your partner's feet.