

Lesson 3: Useful Components: Twirl and Rock Step

By Kaye West and Larry Caves

The first two lessons introduced five Social Foxtrot patterns, each using SSQQ timing with four changes of weight (Leads start with left foot; Follows start with right foot). Patterns are interchangeable on the social dance floor by adjusting *direction of movement* (Leads starting facing LOD or the Wall) and *dance position* (CP or Semi). Below these patterns are abbreviated for the Leads (Follows do the natural opposite):

Pattern	Starting Position	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	CP-LOD	Walk (forward)		Walk (forward)		Run (fwd))	Run (fwd)
2	CP-LOD	Walk (forward)		Walk (forward)		Side	Close
3	CP-Wall	Forward		Forward		Side	Close
		Back		Back		Side	Close
4	CP-Wall	(Diag) Forward		Forward		(Square) Side	Close
		(Diag) Back		Back		(Square) Side	Close
5	Semi-LOD	Forward		Face [fwd & face ptr in CP]		Side	Close

This lesson introduces the *components Twirl and Rock Step* which are used in many dance rhythms, though there are differences in *how the bodies move* to portray the characteristics (the **character**) of those rhythms. **Components** are *interchangeable parts within a pattern or figure* used in dancing. Four new Social Foxtrot patterns in this lesson use one of these components. While patterns continue to have four changes of weight with SSQQ rhythm, they contain other critical body action, with much of it occurring **between weight changes**. Except for the first pattern, *all* the patterns contain **Side-Close** (another useful component!) on Counts 5 & 6.

The Twirl

Twirl is a term common in round dancing to readily describe that the Lead invites the Follow to turn around right-face (RF) under their joined *hands* while continuing to progress (e.g., forward toward LOD) and matching the same number of weight changes as the Lead, then rejoining partner. (The term *Underarm Turn* is used when the Follow makes a turn (RF or LF) under joined *hands without* progressive movement.)

In the new patterns, a **Twirl** is substituted for two slow walking steps (when the Follow is moving forward).

While the illusion in dancing is that the Lead “stirs” the Follow around *forcing* her to **Twirl**, in true partnership dancing each has responsibilities for controlling their *own* bodies so that they move as a single unit. Therefore, he provides a signal for her: he *invites*; and when she understands the signal, it arrives on time, and she chooses to do so (some Follows prefer not to **Twirl**), she responds positively.

The Lead’s signal occurs *after taking weight on the previous step and turning to Semi to begin the new pattern* (in other words, *between counts 6 and 1*): With fingers straightened, Lead moves his left (lead) hand *outward and up* in a **CW** (clockwise) arc so that his palm is somewhat vertical (fingers pointing upward) and drops contact with his right arm. The Follow must keep her hand next to the Lead’s, so her right (lead) hand flattens and, from her perspective, moves **CCW outward and up** so it ends somewhat vertical and approximately in front of her face. Their feet are poised to take weight but haven’t yet.

The Follow’s response: dropping contact with her left hand, as she takes weight on count 1 she elevates the joined hands and her body *moves under her hand* (so that it is directly over her head). Her palm is upward, the Lead’s palm (facing down) is *above* her hand. Her fingers **swivel** against his palm as she moves. Then in the

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space between the first walking step and the next one (so on count 2) her body has moved forward so that the joined hands are on the right side of her head, beginning to move down. On count 3 hands continue moving down and forward as dancers progress. At the end of count 4 the hands (and bodies) are in normal dance position. Her foot **swivels** (rotates) on the ball of the foot after her weight is over that foot on each step.

Promenade (Semi) with Twirl (beginning in Semi Facing LOD)							
	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lead	Close R then turn to Semi & signal Twirl	Forward L hands above Follow's head	Hands begin to lower	Forward R hands keep lowering	Turn to face Wall on R regaining CP	Side L	Close R
Follow	Close L then turn to Semi (receive signal)	Forward R under joined hands	Swivel RF (3/8 turn) on R (hands end at R side of head)	Side or Back L w/hands moving down	Swivel RF (3/8 turn) on L to face partner in CP (facing Center)	Side R	Close L

- Note that while this pattern begins on Count 1, the *signal to Twirl begins at the end of the previous pattern.*
- The Lead's footwork is identical to that in the pattern without the Twirl (Pattern 5 above). Weight changes in these new pattern descriptions are in bold text.
- The Follow's steps on counts 1 and 3 are on the same spots on the floor where they would be in the pattern without the twirl (so steps progress in the same direction and match the Lead's feet).
- The amount of Twirl the Follow makes is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a turn with approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ of a turn (half of the total amount) on each of the two "walking" steps *after full weight* is over that foot (so turns are on Counts 2 and 4).
- Because the Follow moves under the joined hands on Count 1, the hands momentarily do not progress down LOD.
- The path the hands make can be thought of as a loop having a tail at each end and with the highest part of the loop occurring when above Follow's head. The tail paths are created because their bodies move forward.

Zig Zag with Twirl (beginning in CP facing the Diagonal between LOD and Wall)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lead	(On diagonal) Forward L		Forward R (outside partner's feet) then turn slightly to face Wall		Side L	Close R turning slightly to face opposite diagonal & signal Twirl
	Back L		Back R turning slightly to face Wall regaining CP		Side L	Close R
Follow	(On diagonal) Back R		Back L turning slightly to face Center		Side R	Close L turning slightly to face opposite diagonal (receive signal to Twirl)
	Forward R under joined hands then swivel on R to turn RF (about 3/8)		Side or Back L swiveling on L to face partner and Center ending in CP		Side R	Close L

- Lead's footwork is identical to that in the pattern without the Twirl (Pattern 4); weight changes are in bold.
- A slight turn to diagonal must be made at the end of the *previous pattern* (after taking weight on Count 6).
- The Twirl is like that in the **Promenade with Twirl** except the Lead is moving **Back** instead of Forward.
- Follow's steps match Lead's weight changes, and she makes half of the turn on each "walking" step.

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The Rock Step

This component (“**Rock Step**” or “**Rock**”) is *always* composed of two weight changes: (1) a step with the intent to change direction (2) a **Recover** or **Replace** to return to the previous position. The first might have only a partial weight change with the head moving only as far as between the feet, and the head never exceeds the standing foot. Therefore, the action is more like a glider than a rocking chair. In one style of **Rock** the toe of the opposite foot remains on the floor to **Recover** weight where it was (or near that spot); in the second style the free foot **Brushes** (*moves next to the stepping foot without taking weight*) and then that foot is **Replaced** to its previous position. When the **Rock** is accompanied by a change of direction, the Lead often modifies his foot placement when he **replaces** (moving it slightly back) to facilitate movement for the Follow.

Both Rock styles are represented in new Social Foxtrot patterns of SSQQ timing with 4 changes of weight:

Dip or Corte’ or Right Rock Turn (beginning in CP facing any direction – ending same direction)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lead	Rock Back L leaving R toe in place	L shoulder moves back slightly	Recover R	Turn right on R foot (foot swivels)	Side L	Close R
Follow	Rock Forward R leaving L toe in place	R shoulder moves forward slightly	Recover L	Turn right on L foot (foot swivels)	Side R	Close L

- When Lead steps back L while not moving the right foot on Count 1, the energy from the movement encourages his left shoulder to continue to move so the body ends on a slant on this step.
- On Count 4 natural inertia propels the body to turn to the right.

Left Rock Turn (beginning in CP facing any direction and ending ¼ to left)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lead	Rock Forward L	<i>Brush R</i> (next to L w/o weight)	Replace (back) R to previous position	Turn left-face ¼ on R	Side L	Close R
Follow	Rock Back R	<i>Brush L</i> (next to R w/o weight)	Replace (forward) L to previous position	Turn LF ¼ on ball of L (foot swivels)	Side R	Close L

- Lead’s R foot is replaced diagonally (on Count 3) so that as full weight is taken (on Count 4) his body turn is effortless. He may need to adjust the placement of this step to facilitate the Follow’s movement.
- Remain in CP throughout.
- For each person, all of the steps in this pattern are approximately on one straight path.
- This pattern is useful to change direction on the floor.

Practice each pattern repeatedly to master it and use it randomly when social dancing. Teach what you have learned to someone else!

These lessons originated from the **Walk In, Dance Out** classes Larry and Kaye taught. Your feedback sent to kaye.west@csulb.edu is greatly appreciated. Kindly use the word **FEEDBACK** in the subject and be sure to indicate the location (e.g., Lesson 3) as well as what specific information needs further explanation.