**TECHNIQUE WORKSHOP - QUICKSTEP**

**POISE**

* Dancing is a language without words, good posture is crucial to communicating with your partner.
* You have to train your body to get your posture right – think about it every time you start to dance.
* Get your blocks in a straight line – your head, shoulders and hips in line with your feet.
* Stand with your weight over the mid-point/front of your feet and don’t lock your knees – forward poise but brace at the waist with torso straight, followers lean back a little but do not exaggerate.
* Lift and support your ribcage, remembering to breathe through your diaphragm.
* Relax your shoulders so they are back and down, and open up your chest.
* Make your neck long - don't tilt your chin up, stretch up through the centre of your head.
* Don’t look at the dance floor – when you drop your head it throws both of you off balance.

**DANCE HOLD - BALLROOM**

* Your arms and hands should have tone – just a slight resistance - to connect to your partner.
* Ballroom hold has 5 points of contact when done correctly – try and put them into practice.
* Never interlink your fingers with your partner – it can be dangerous on turns and if you slip.
* In ballroom hold make sure that you are positioned to your partner’s right side so your feet and bodies are offset – this allows room for feet and facilitates moving together.
* Don’t raise your shoulders when you move into ballroom hold.
* Leaders should look through the window that their left arm creates, i.e. look over your partner’s right shoulder.
* Followers should look over their partner’s right shoulder, turn your head an eighth to the left and lift your eyeline just above the horizon.
* Keep your heads left so your shoulders remain parallel to your partner to make lead/follow easier.
* Make sure you connect with each other through your joined palms – just slight resistance – and close the fingers around your partner’s hand but don’t squeeze!
* Make sure your joined hands are on an invisible line central to both of you – it helps your balance – and that the joined hands are at Follower’s nose/ear height.
* The Leader’s left wrist is straight and the Follower’s right slightly bent to receive the lead.
* Leaders shouldn’t push and pull with their left hand – it throws your Follower off balance.
* The Leader’s right hand cups the bottom of the Follower’s left shoulder blade so the lead can be felt – don’t dig and don’t make “banana” hands on your partner’s back – group fingers neatly.
* The Leader’s right hand/fingers shouldn’t cross the spine of the Follower – it’s uncomfortable for the Follower.
* Leaders’ elbows should be equidistant from their spine, with elbows level for better balance.
* Make sure that the Follower’s left tricep makes contact with the Leader’s right lower arm.
* Followers shouldn’t grab at Leaders with their left hand or form a “claw” on the shoulder – just group fingers neatly together on the Leader’s bicep – you connect better and it looks good.
* Followers mustn’t rest their arms on the Leader – they are not a coat hanger and arms are heavy.
* “Floppy is no good” for the ballroom hold – make sure you have a frame to work with.
* Don’t be afraid to make body contact in ballroom hold – most of the lead comes from there.
* Don’t press your Follower tightly to your chest with your right hand – allow room to breathe!

**TIMING – MUSIC – RISE & FALL**

* Count 4 beats to a bar i.e. 1234 - the tempo (or speed) is c50 bars or 200 beats per minute!
* The musical accent or down beat is on beats 1 (stronger) and 3.
* For the very basic figures (Quarter Turn to Right, Progressive Chasse, Forward Lock Step) we dance the same rhythm: Slow Quick Quick Slow (quick = 1 beat, slow = 2 beats). Quicks come in pairs.
* For the very basic figures, start to rise end of step 1, continue through steps 2&3 by stretching through the knees and body, raising your heels from the floor, then lower end of step 4.
* When you lower, the foot lowers from toe to heel then the knee flexes as you take the next step.

**MOVEMENT & FOOTWORK**

* Control is the essence - don’t slap your feet into place. Ballroom walks glide!
* Move your legs from the hip, not just from the knee - naturally and smoothly.
* Move your feet as close to the floor as possible without dragging them on the floor.
* Slows use a heel lead if a) stepping forward before a Quick or b) stepping forward after a Slow.
* Slows use a toe lead if a) stepping forward after a Quick\*\* or b) stepping sideways.
* \*\*Notable exceptions are when the Follower dances step 4 of a Natural Turn or is stepping out of a heel turn (there are c3 other exceptions).
* Quicks are danced on the toe or ball of the foot (the Running Finish is one of the rare exceptions).
* As the Follower dances a Backward Lock Step, the heel is drawn back in contact with the floor between steps 1 and 3 – this helps balance.

**TURNING – STEPPING OUTSIDE PARTNER**

* In close hold, if you’re turning left then left foot goes forward and right foot goes back.
* In close hold, if you’re turning right then right foot goes forward and left foot goes back.
* Leaders use their body to turn their partner – arms stay the same relative to the body.
* Use CBM (Contrary Body Movement) to initiate a turn – the opposite side of the body moves towards the stepping foot – stepping forward toe turns out & back it turns in.
* Quarter Turn to the Right: to maintain body contact when stepping outside partner (OP) with right foot, Leaders use CBM.
* Forward Lock Step: to maintain body contact when stepping OP with right foot on step 1, Leaders use CBMP (Contrary Body Movement Position) – stepping foot moves across the line of the other foot but the body doesn’t turn – followed by a left shoulder lead.
* Use Sway to assist turning and balance on the Quarter Turn to the Right on steps 2&3 - incline the body from the ankles upwards towards the Leader’s right.
* Get the alignments correct - understand which way you should be facing on each step and how that affects your partner and managing your movement around the floor.

**FLOORCRAFT**

* Progressive dances (like the quickstep), go anti-clockwise around the floor – that’s the Line of Dance and never cross the Centre Line - it'll upset the flow of dancers
* On corners, imagine a diagonal line out of the corner, dance in one side and dance out the other.
* Usually faster couples dance on the outside and slower couples to the middle of the floor.
* Be aware of other couples and how much space your couple also takes up – allow enough room.
* Turns travel along the floor – allow enough room especially at corners.
* Be flexible about your hold when you have to – if you’re going to elbow another couple then drop your arms a bit.