**TECHNIQUE WORKSHOP - TANGO**

**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.
* Slip right foot back so it sits into instep of left foot and turn feet and body c. 1/8th to left.
* Stand with your weight over the mid-point/front of your feet and lower until knees slightly flexed.
* Forward poise but torso straight; do not stick your bottom out – it’s like sitting on a shooting stick.
* 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 - TANGO**

* Your arms and hands should have tone – just a slight resistance - to connect to your partner.
* Tango hold is more compact than in the other ballroom dances.
* Never interlink your fingers with your partner – it can be dangerous if you slip.
* In tango hold make sure that you are positioned even more to your partner’s right side, almost right thigh to right thigh to facilitate moving together.
* Don’t raise your shoulders when you move into tango hold.
* Leaders should look through the window that their left arm creates.
* Followers should look over their partner’s right shoulder, turn your head a little over 1/8th to the left (looking over the left wrist and not past the elbow) and keep the head picked up.
* 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 forearm is more acutely angled than in the other dances and the left hand slightly closer to the body, making the elbow very slightly higher.
* 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 arm is further around the Follower, forearm parallel to the floor, and the Leader’s fingers may cross slightly the spine of the Follower.
* The Leader mustn’t dig and or make “banana” hands on the Follower’s back – group fingers neatly.
* From the Follower’s left elbow to the Leader’s spine and from the Leader’s left elbow to the Leader’s spine should be equidistant, with elbows level for better balance.
* Make sure that the Follower’s left tricep makes contact with the Leader’s right lower arm.
* Follower’s left hand is placed on Leader’s back just under the right armpit – palm of the hand can be parallel to the floor or slightly angled in but definitely not showing – fingers grouped together.
* Follower’s must NOT stick thumb in Leader’s armpit – it’s uncomfortable – tuck it out of the way.
* Leader’s right elbow sits in the crook of Follower’s left elbow.
* “Floppy is no good” for the tango hold – make sure you have a frame to work with.
* Don’t be afraid to make body contact – 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 2 beats to a bar i.e. 12 - the tempo (or speed) is c32 bars per minute.
* The musical accent is equal on each beat and almost like a march.
* For the very basic figures (Walk on Left Foot + Natural Rock Turn / Walks on Left & Right Foot + Progressive Link + Closed Promenade) we dance the same rhythm: SS QQS QQS (quick = ½ beat, slow = 1 beat). Quicks come in pairs.
* There is no Rise & Fall in tango – keep the dance “flat” by flexing the knee of the supporting leg.

**MOVEMENT & FOOTWORK**

* Control is the essence - don’t slap your feet into place.
* Move like a panther stalking prey – extend walks and delay the next movement for as long as the music allows.
* Move your legs from the hip, not just from the knee.
* Move your feet as close to the floor as possible without dragging them on the floor.
* Forward walks use a heel lead.
* Side steps use an inside edge before rolling to a flat foot as the other foot closes.
* Closing foot uses whole foot.
* Don’t pop up or unflex the knees at the end of a figure – it helps keep balance.

**WALKING FORWARDS & BACKWARDS – NATURAL ROCK TURN**

* Leaders use their body to move their partner – arms stay the same relative to the body.
* For walks forward with Left Foot, use CBMP (Contrary Body Movement Position) – stepping foot moves across the line of the other foot, thighs cross, but the body doesn’t turn – pressure is felt outside edge of foot.
* For walks forward with Right Foot, right shoulder leads and thighs are open – pressure is felt inside edge of foot.
* For walks backward with Right Foot, use CBMP (Contrary Body Movement Position) – stepping foot moves across the line of the other foot, thighs cross, but the body doesn’t turn – pressure is felt outside edge of foot.
* For walks backward with Left Foot, left shoulder leads and thighs are open – pressure is felt inside edge of foot.
* You should feel tension in calves & thighs when walking in Tango.
* On Natural Rock Turn, Leader anchors front toe and Follower anchors front heel
* Use CBM (Contrary Body Movement) to initiate the left turn used as the resolution to many figures – the opposite side of the body moves towards the stepping foot – stepping forward toe turns out & back it turns in.
* 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.
* 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.

**PROGRESSIVE LINK – CLOSED PROMENADE**

* To lead the Progressive Link, the Leader uses a slight but strong body turn to the right.
* To make the ¼ turn on the Progressive Link, the Follower swivels on ball of right foot before stepping onto left foot.
* Feet do NOT close on the Progressive Link.
* Ensure that the body offset is maintained in Promenade Position – if you end up hip to hip then you cannot walk comfortably.
* At the end of the Progressive Link, poised in Promenade Position, Leader’s right and Follower’s Left toe point towards each other with knee flexed and the other foot points diagonally forward on the inside edge of the ball. i.e. keep knee pointing towards partner.
* When walking in Promenade Position, do NOT point feet along the line of dance, move along LOD while keep feet on diagonal.
* Ensure right foot closes back of left foot at the end of the Closed Promenade.

**FLOORCRAFT**

* Progressive dances (like the tango), 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.