

Summary: 4 Key Elements

1. MAINTAIN GOOD DANCE POSITION
 - A. CLOSED POSITION
for smooth dances (e.g.,
Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango.)
 - B. SEMI-CLOSED POSITION
(Promenade Pos.) also for
smooth dances.
 - C. BUTTERFLY POSITION
(Open Facing Pos.) for
Latin dances (e.g., Cha Cha
& Rumba.)
2. FIRM TOPLINE FOR MEN
3. FIRM RESISTANCE FOR WOMEN
4. EXECUTION
 - A. Amalgamations for Free
Style Dancing.
 - B. Choreographed Dances.
 - C. "Seamless" Blending.

Note: Each of these Key Elements is expanded in more detail in this brochure.

ALEX MOORE *
ON LEADING AND
FOLLOWING :

"... the responsibility of leading from one figure to another rests *entirely* with the man. The lady's part is to follow, whether the man is dancing a figure correctly or not."

"Here are a few hints for men:

- Don't hold your partner in a vise-like grip.
- Don't hold your partner so loose that she cannot feel your lead. A constant and even pressure is required.
- Adjust your stride to the normal length of your partner's.
- Don't try intricate steps in a crowded ballroom."

** Ballroom Dancing by Alex Moore, A & C Black, London, 1986, pg. 28-30.*

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An Introduction To Leading & Following In Ballroom & Round Dancing



Carter & Ruby Ackerman

CENTRE ROUNDS

Key Elements of LEADING & FOLLOWING

1. MAINTAIN GOOD DANCE POSITION

By maintaining good dance position, the woman can more easily detect the man's movements as he leads each figure.

A. CLOSED POSITION

- Five Points of Contact:

1. M's L and W's R hand joined at about shoulder height, M's palm forward
2. M's R wrist in contact with W's L armpit
3. M's R hand against W's back just below W's L shoulder blade
4. W's L hand on M's R upper arm
5. M's & W's bodies touching lightly at the hips for foxtrot, waltz & tango and about 6 in. apart for Latin dances

- M's & W's bodies offset about 6-8 inches to the left

- Slight left poise and upper body separation, both looking forward and left through a "window" over their partner's right shoulder.

- Stand tall, but do not raise shoulders.

B. SEMI-CLOSED POSITION

- From Closed Position, using slight right-face upper body rotation, man turns/leads woman to look over joined lead hands while maintaining parallel shoulder lines.

C. BUTTERFLY POSITION

- Both arms up at shoulder height & out to the sides with palms together & elbows bent.

- Shoulders parallel to partner's shoulders.

- Minimize body movement above the waist line in Latin dances.

- Man uses both hand and body movements to lead in Butterfly position.

2. FIRM TOPLINE FOR MEN

- "TOPLINE" refers to the position of the body above the waist.

- The man's topline should turn as a unit when initiated by a forward/backward movement or rotation at the waist.

- The woman can then detect the man's movements and respond by "following" his actions.

- The man should never push or pull.

- Turns are initiated by turning the body, not by moving only the arms. That is, the topline moves as a unit when initiated by a rotation of the man's waist.

3. FIRM RESISTANCE FOR WOMEN

- By maintaining a constant resistance (or firmness or tension) in her body, the woman is immediately able to detect the man's movements and respond.

- Likewise the woman's resistance makes it easier for the man to lead effectively.

- In closed position, the man maintains constant contact with his right hand on the woman's back and she moves in a direction to maintain a constant pressure.

4. EXECUTION

A. Amalgamations for Free Style Dancing

- The man's responsibility is to create (and lead) a sequence of dance movements "on the fly" as the couple is dancing.

- An effective way to accomplish this is for the man to think in terms of combinations (or amalgamations) of basic figures that dance smoothly. Usually these amalgamations are 2, 4 or 8 measures long.

- With a little experience, a man can accumulate a series of these short amalgamations for each rhythm and store them in his mind.

- Round Dances are good sources of amalgamations. The Introductory Basics Brochures also list some amalgamations in each rhythm.

B. Choreographed Dances

- In sequenced ballroom and round dancing, each dance has already been created by the "choreographer" and all the dancers do the same dance simultaneously, moving around the floor in unison.

- The dancers can either memorize the dance or dance in response to a "cuer".

- In either case, the man should "lead" each figure and the woman should "follow" the man's lead.

C. "Seamless" Blending

- By anticipating the next figure, the man can initiate a lead for that figure on the last beat of the previous figure.

- This type of smooth blending helps make the dancing follow continuously from one figure to the next.