

DEFINITIONS OF TECHNICAL TERMS AND FUNDAMENTALS

INTRODUCTION

Even if you are not required, during your Amateur Dancesport Instructor Examination, to verbalize the exact foot position, alignment and footwork on each step, the solo demonstration of figures should be accurate in all aspects both as leader and follower. The figures must be danced as described in the Technique Books **and in their entirety**.

You will find below, in a brief and clear manner, definitions for the technical terms used in your Technique Books (chart headings). Your **Mentor** will be able to explain and complete, if necessary, these definitions. -Should a question be asked during your examination concerning the following fundamentals **remember at this level a simple answer is required**. Bear in mind that <showing it> is always stronger than words alone. If you forget, for example the description of CBMP, go on and show a figure, or move, using CBMP. Understanding the fundamentals will strengthen and develop the knowledge and required skills you need as a dance instructor.

BALLROOM (STANDARD) I.S.T.D. The Ballroom Technique

FEET POSITIONS: - The direction (or position) of one foot in relation to the other **at the end of a step** (for example; the leg swings forward to end to a side position).

CBMP: - (Contrary Body Movement Position) The position attained when either foot is placed **on** or **across** the line of the supporting foot, either in front or behind to maintain body line (**It is therefore a foot position**). CBMP is used on outside partner steps, in line with partner and in promenade position. The term <forward and across in CBMP> applies when the foot is placed more across the line of the other foot and is used on steps in Promenade Position only.

ALIGNMENT: -The direction of the foot in relation to the room. The foot may be **facing**, **backing** or **< pointing>** when the foot has turned more than the body (on the inside of turns and on some forward steps in Promenade Position).

DIRECTION: - Mostly used in Tango where it is added to the <Alignment Column> Forward and backward steps are using directional terms in Tango. Due to the body position (body and feet are facing in a different alignment) we refer to the direction the foot travels in the room. In <Promenade Position> both Alignment and Directional terms are given (this latter applies to all the dances).

AMOUNT OF TURN: - The turn made between the feet (not the body).

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RISE AND FALL: - The elevation and lowering developed through the feet, legs and body. With the addition of **NFR** (no foot rise) **a) from a down position**: when stepping back no rise occurs in the supporting foot **b) from an up position**: (refers to the front foot)— when a step back is followed by another step back - **or** when NFR follows a side step - the heel of the side step will lower (not the body) as the next step is taken back ex: As lady: the 3rd step of a Feather Finish in Foxtrot will be <up NFR> lower e/o 3.
Fall: the lowering should be controlled and smooth.

FOOTWORK: - The part of the foot in contact with the floor.

CBM: - (Contrary Body Movement) – The action of turning the opposite side of the body towards the direction of the moving leg (it is used to commence all turning movements). CBM does not alter the direction of a step. There is a different type of CBM in Tango as there are no Rise and Fall, Sway and Body Flight to help to commence all turning movements.

SIDE LEAD: - The same side of the body, either forward or backward, moving with the stepping foot. Normally it is in preparation to stepping outside partner. (It is also used when stepping forward in promenade position).

SWAY: - The inclination of the body towards the center of the turn. The line of sway is seen from the leg through the body to the head. It prevents the dancer from over-balancing or overturning. In other words:

- It assists the turn
- It assists the balance of the figure
- It is mainly for good effect

TIMING: - (also called the Count) – Each dance has its own specific timing that allows the dancer to keep on time to the music. The timing given to each dance helps define its character and mood.

TIME SIGNATURE: - The number of beats in a bar of music: - Slow Waltz & Viennese Waltz = 3/4 - Foxtrot & Quickstep = 4/4 – Tango = 2/4 (a **bar** is the vertical line that separates one measure from the next on a sheet of music).

TEMPO: - The number of bars in one minute of music.

COUNTING IN BEATS AND BARS: A useful method of keeping track of the number of bars (or measures) used in each figure, amalgamation or choreography.

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ACCENTED BEATS: - Waltz & Viennese Waltz = one / Foxtrot & Quickstep = one and three (one stronger) Tango = equal on each beat

Following are descriptions of some of the fundamentals of Ballroom

HEEL TURN: - The inside part of an open turn. The turn commences on the ball of the foot and is completed on the heel of foot, **with foot flat**, whilst the other foot closes **flat** with weight (the closing foot being kept parallel throughout). **Foot rise will not occur until the projection of the body weight forwards onto the following step.** To rise before stepping forward would make the rise too abrupt and retard the forward movement.

HEEL PULL: - A turn to the right made on the heel of the supporting foot, with foot flat, whilst the other foot is pulled back with the feet parallel to end (and not move) to the side of the supporting foot (feet **slightly** apart).

HEEL PIVOT: - A turn to the left made on the heel of the supporting foot, with foot flat, the L.F. closing first towards R.F. (drawing the heel) ending with the L.F. closing to R.F. slightly forward **without weight**.

HESITATION: - A figure, or part of a figure, in which progression is temporarily suspended and the weight is retained on one foot for more than one count.

SYNCOPATION: - More than one (1) step to a beat.

PIVOT: - A turn on the ball of the supporting foot – the free leg being kept in front or behind in CBMP.

PIVOTING ACTION: - (counterpart of a natural pivot) A turn on the ball of the supporting foot holding the other foot behind – but not in CBMP.

TOE PIVOT: - A turn made on the toe of the supporting foot. Please note that in the Double Reverse Spin the man dances a Toe Pivot on R.F. to side – toes turned out – one of the few figures where the feet are not parallel <reason: the rotation> on step 2 the body weight is between the feet – man must accelerate the closing to assist the girl.

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LATIN AMERICAN – I.S.T.D. Latin American Technique Books

Please refer to the definitions given in the Ballroom (Standard) section, for the following, as they also apply to Latin American: **Feet Positions / Alignment / Amount of Turn / Footwork / Tempo / Counting in Beats and Bars/ Side Lead & Pivot (Paso Doble)** .

BODY POSITIONS AND HOLDS (known as well as Dance Positions): - The lady's position in relation to the man. You will find in your ISTD Latin Technique Books detailed descriptions of the numerous Body Positions used in the Latin American Dances. Alternative holds are added to a few of these positions. Be careful as it does not necessarily mean that when a figure starts, for example, in Closed Position, you are automatically allowed to use all the alternative holds. The holds allowed are listed with each figure in your Technique Books.

BODY MOVEMENTS

Cha Cha & Rumba: - Hip Movements (the correct bending and straightening of the knees to create hip action). Here is the simple definition given in the ISTD Cha Cha Cha Technique Book <Every step commences to move with a slightly flexed knee. On steps taking a full beat of music the knee straightens just before it reaches its position. As weight is taken fully onto the step the hips move naturally in the direction of the leg receiving the weight.> Please consult your Technique Books for a more detailed description of Forward and Backward Walks, Forward and Backward Checks, Pressed Forward and Backward Walks and Extended Forward Walks.

In American Style the Cuban Motion technique consists of stepping with a flexed knee and delaying the straightening of the leg.

Samba: - A bounce Action (slight flexion & straightening of the knees). For example, rise on the ball of the supporting foot, straightening the knee, and push forward (not up) for step 1, the knee will flex as the weight is taken onto that step (the bounce should emphasize the downward movement) repeat the action for steps 2 and 3. There are two (2) complete< bounce actions> to each bar. Normal Bounce Action is used on all figures having the count 1a 2 in the Student Teacher Syllabus **except** on all the Samba Walks where the bounce is <very slight> due to the pelvic action (hips forward and back). The Bounce is <Minimal> on all Basic Movements when Single Timing (1 - 2) is used.

Jive: - Basic Action on Chassés: - As a preparation to move, use a slight raising and lowering of the supporting heel, accompanied by a sympathetic body rise and Fall. Each step is taken on the ball of foot with the knee flexed, the heel may lower with light

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contact with the floor (or towards the floor without making contact). A slight bounce action is used on all chassés with freedom of the hips. A lateral hip swing, known as well as <contra hip motion> is used on chassés. An important thing to remember is to feel the basic rhythm of the 5hasse in the knees and the body.

USE OF ARMS: - The arms should be a complement to the body movement and held in a natural way as a mean to express the music, the character and the mood of each dance.

FOOTWORK: - The part of the foot in contact with the floor. Here is a résumé of the footwork used in each dance:

- **Rumba:** - Normal footwork = **ball flat** on each step.
- **Cha Cha:** -Normal footwork = **ball flat** on each step for Walks, Chassés (side, in place, fwd and bwd chassés that may be used to replace the lock steps for lower grades) Forward & Backward runs.
Forward Lock Step = **ball flat/toe/ball flat**.
Backward Lock Step = **toe/ball flat/ball flat**.
- **Samba:** -all the Basic movements (1a 2) = **ball flat/ball(pressure)/ball flat**.
When single timing is used (1 2 / S. S.) = **ball flat/ball flat**.
Whisk = **ball flat/toe(pressure)/ball flat**.
Samba Walks = **ball flat/i.e. of toe(pressure)/flat(pressure on ball of foot)**.
Volta = **ball flat/pressure on i.e. of toe/bal flat(pressure on ball of foot)**.
Bota Fogos = **ball flat/i.e. of toe(pressure)/ ball flat**.
- **Paso Doble:** - Appel = **whole foot**. Slip Appel = **ball flat** –(if turning more than 1/8 continue to turn on **ball of foot with foot flat**.)
Sur Place & Basic Movement = **ball of foot, heel just off the floor, or lightly in contact with the floor**.
Chassés = **ball** or **ball flat**.
Forward steps & most steps in PP = **heel flat**.
When closing feet at the end of a promenade: Man = **ball flat** or **balls of both feet** / Lady = **balls of both feet**
All of the above could be danced with **Elevation** = high on **toes** with legs straight.
- **Jive:** - Steps 1 – 2 of link (Rock Action) = **ball flat** on both step(on step 1 even if given as ball flat the heel may lower towards the floor or even make light contact with the floor – on step 2 the heel could lower towards the floor without making contact (for faster tempos).
Side Chassé = **ball, part weight** (weight centralised between the two feet), **ball flat / ball flat**. At all times the weight is over the balls of the feet.

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RHYTHM: - Defined musically as the regular recurrence of accents in each bar.

BEAT VALUE: - The rhythm is given in the description of each figure throughout the syllabus. A regular number count is one (1) beat. Whenever a number count is followed by <&> or <a> these latter will belong to the preceding number (ex: 1a 2 = $\frac{3}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ 1)

The following beat value applies to <Ballroom (Standard) and Latin American>

<&> equals a beat value of half ($\frac{1}{2}$) beat

<a> equals a beat value of one quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) beat

- Chacha - 1 2 3 4 & = 1 1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ -/ Guapacha = 2(hold)= $\frac{3}{4}$ / a= $\frac{1}{4}$ / 3 = 1
- Samba 1a 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ 1
- Jive 3a 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ 1

	<u>TIME SIGNATURE</u>	<u>TEMPO</u>	<u>MUSICAL ACCENTS</u>
• Cha Cha	4/4	30 bars per min.	1 st beat / perc. acc. on 4 th
• Rumba	4/4	27 bars per min.	1 st beat / perc. acc. on 4 th
• Samba	2/4	50 bars per min.	1 st beat / perc. acc. on 2 nd
• Paso Doble	2/4	62 bars per min.	1 st beat
• Jive	4/4	44 bars per min.	1 st beat / perc. acc. on 2 nd & 4 th

➤ perc. acc. = percussive accent

Please note that the above are the ISTD tempos for examinations only and not necessarily for competitions.

TO SUMMARIZE: - The above descriptions are meant to help you understand the terminology of Ballroom technique. **Do not learn the descriptions by heart.** You are not expected to be word perfect, express them in your own way. Remember these are the tools you need as a dancer and an Amateur Dancesport Instructor.

CANADIAN DANCESPORT FEDERATION

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