

Dance Frame Closed Dance Frame - Part 1

By Richard Fiore

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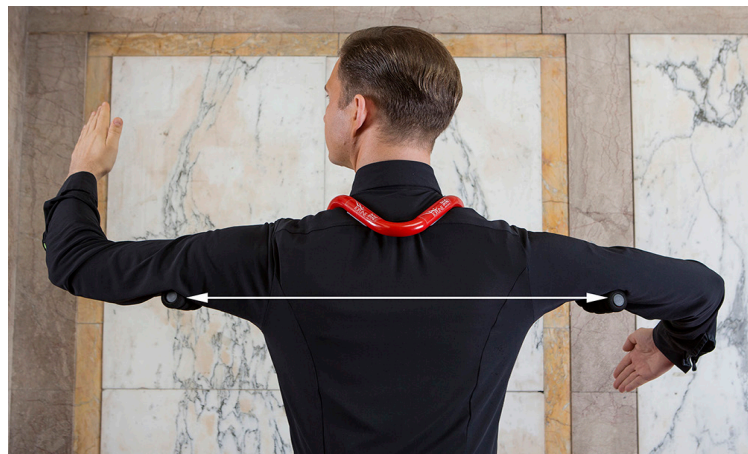
Dance frame defines the structural shape of the upper body in relation to the rest of the body that is sustained during partner dancing. It is formed by the shoulders arms and hands. The frame is one of the most essential aspects of partner dancing as it allows the leader to convey the lead and the follower to receive the lead through a toned connection. The silent language of lead and follow

is made possible by the use of physical cues through a properly held and maintained dance frame.

There are essentially two dance frame categories, i.e., closed and open. The most common one in partner dancing is the closed frame in which partners dance in the standard closed dance hold. A closed frame offers an extra measure of connection simply because there are more points of contact between partners. In contrast, an open frame utilizes either a single or double handhold.

Maintaining a proper closed dance frame relies largely on good posture, a toned upper body, muscle tone and a solid connection with the floor. These are key factors that help partners to establish and maintain connection on the dance floor. Frame is the single most important element that makes lead and follow possible. A proper dance frame is established by holding the arms at shoulder height with shoulders relaxed and down. A straight horizontal line is formed along the arms and shoulders from elbow to elbow. This is an ideal upper body line for ballroom dancing. The arms may be more relaxed and held slightly lower for rhythm and Latin dance styles. In either case a toned connection between partners through the frame as well as good posture needs to be maintained throughout the dance. In this manner, partners are more able to move together as one unit. The handhold should be lightly clasped with adequate contact. A tightly clasped handhold is a common error that is sometimes mistakenly used in an attempt to achieve connection. This practice greatly hinders one's ability to establish a proper connection through the frame.

Good connection through the frame enhances stability between partners as well as to provide an essential dynamic feedback mechanism for both. It enables the man to better convey the lead while providing the lady with



a greater ability to follow the lead as intended. The frame doesn't lead but rather reacts to movement initiated by the lower body. Economy of motion through a proper frame enables partners to make dancing more effortless. A good frame helps to ensure that even subtle leads can be easily conveyed by the leader and interpreted by the follower. It has the added benefit of providing a degree of spatial volume and circularity to the topline of the body. This adds a considerable degree of elegance to all dance styles.

A good analogy for a closed frame is a simple electrical circuit consisting of a pair of energized wires connected to a light bulb. The bulb lights when both wires are connected. Similarly, for lead and follow to be properly managed between partners, they have to be fully connected through a toned dance frame. This toned connection makes lead and follow more efficient. Conversely, if for example one or both partners has a weak arm connection, they will not be able to lead and follow in an efficient and smooth manner. As with the light bulb analogy, if one of the wires is disconnected, energy will not flow through the bulb and it will not light. A toned and connected frame is what makes the lead and follow process possible.

The closed dance frame forms the foundation for partner dancing. It is the structural form of the upper body that enables partners to achieve accurate lead and follow. Dancing is a skillful art that uses physical implementations to communicate lead and follow. When these dynamics are properly applied, the frame becomes soft and quiet through a toned connection. As a result, the ability to move smoothly along the dance floor becomes greatly enhanced and will provide a more enjoyable dance experience.

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Enrollment with a partner is recommended; however, singles are welcome. Participants should wear comfortable clothes and leather bottom shoes or dance shoes. Sneakers or rubber bottom shoes are not recommended.

Candidate Dances: Foxtrot, Rumba, Waltz, Cha Cha, Swing, Salsa/Mambo, Bachata, Tango & Meringue

Class Dates (Fall 2021): Fridays - 9/16, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 11/11, 11/18 and 12/2

Instructor: Richard Fiore – Dual Licentiate, US Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing

Location: Adelphi University, One South Ave., Garden City, NY 11530 – Woodruff Hall Dance Studio

To Register: \$125/person for general admission. **Registration with a partner is recommended.** Call Noreen DeNicola at (516) 877-4260 or email ndenicola@adelphi.edu