

The Underarm Switch Turn

By Richard Fiore

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The Switch Turn is one of the most commonly danced underarm turns on the dance floor. While the actual steps appear easy, special attention to technique is necessary in order to more properly dance an attractive Switch Turn. Using

good technique will always make this turn look and feel spectacular.

Here is an outline of the basic sequence of actions for leading and following an Underarm Switch Turn. Using Rumba as an example, the man leads the lady to dance the first half of a Rumba Box to the timing quick quick slow, followed by a chasse, stepping side, together, side to the timing quick quick slow. The closed dance hold is released over the chasse as both partners end in an Open Facing dance position with the man's left hand holding the lady's right hand. The man then leads the lady to an Open Break where both partners' rock back and then replace their weight forward toward each other. The man raises the lady's right arm as he steps to the side to initiate the turn. She places her right foot to the side and slightly forward turning 1/8 to her right to enter the turn. As the man continues to lead the lady into the turn under the raised arms, he rocks back while she steps forward with her left foot placing it in line with her right foot turning 1/8 to her right followed by an additional 1/2 turn. She finishes by transferring her weight to her right foot, and then closes left foot to right foot without weight continuing to turn 1/4 right to face her partner. The man re-establishes the closed dance hold as he leads the lady to dance the 2ND half of the Rumba Box to finish the turn. Here are some useful lead and follow tips for dancing a more attractive Switch Turn.

Both Partners:

- Don't rush and maintain good timing with the music. Rushing will confuse your partner, resulting in loss of continuity in the figure.
- Keep your posture straight and slightly forward with weight over the balls of the feet.
- The footwork in rhythm dances is predominantly ball flat. Therefore, steps need to be taken on the inside edge of the ball of the foot and then lowed to the flat part of the foot.



- Always maintain a degree arm tone while avoiding arm tension.
- The handhold needs to be maintained midway between partners. The ability to lead and follow will greatly diminish if one partner pulls or pushes the joined hands toward or away from the common center.
- Be careful not to clasp the joined hands too tightly. The handhold should be maintained in a more open non-resistive manner during the turn.
- Advanced dancers move in a more staccato fashion. For example, the lady may slightly delay entering the turn and then turn sharply to catch up with the rhythm. This adds an attractive styling to the turn.

Leader:

- The lead has to be clear over each of the steps. Remember that you are expecting the lady to follow your intention to guide her through the turn and therefore, she needs clear direction.
- Do not use a forceful lead but rather lightly raise the arms just above her head and gently guide her through the turn.
- Do not rush the lead, as this will always create confusion for the follower.
- Be decisive and know the figures that you plan to lead well in advance; always have several follow figures in mind.

Follower:

- Wait for the man's lead; do not lead yourself into the turn. Turning before the lead is initiated will desynchronize the action making it difficult to regroup.
- Allow the man to lead you through the turn. Do not oppose the lead with 'noisy arms' that push or pull. This will diminish his ability to lead you properly.
- Align both feet in the same track while dancing a Switch Turn. If the feet are misaligned and outside of the track, the legs will get crossed, making it difficult to take the next step.
- To complete the turn the lady needs to close her left foot to her right foot without weight while turning 1/4 to her right to face her partner in this example. This will ensure proper body alignment with the man as he re-establishes a normal closed dance hold.

These techniques will serve to improve the look and feel of a Switch Turn. Superb dancing involves the non-verbal language of lead and follow that develop over time through practice. Get the most enjoyment out of every step as you dance in style. Enjoy dancing a polished Underarm Switch Turn.

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All students are required to wear masks. Partner rotation will not be allowed. Enrollment with a partner is recommended.

Please wear comfortable clothes and leather bottom shoes or dance shoes. Sneakers or rubber bottom shoes are not recommended.

Schedule:

Classes meet Fridays 7pm-8:30pm with an option to stay until 9pm for practice.

1/29/21	Foxtrot & Rumba
2/5/21	Foxtrot & Rumba
2/12/21	Foxtrot & Rumba
2/26/21	Waltz & Cha Cha
3/5/21	Waltz & Cha Cha
3/12/21	Waltz & Cha Cha
3/19/21	Swing & Salsa
3/26/21	Swing & Salsa
4/2/21	Swing & Bachata
4/9/21	Bachata & Tango
4/16/21	Tango & Meringue

Instructor:

Richard Fiore - Dual Licentiate, US Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing. For more information call Richard at (516) 398-6145 or email RF1111@yahoo.com

Location:

Adelphi University
One South Avenue
Garden City, NY 11530
Woodruff Hall Dance Studio

To Register:

\$125/person for general admission.
Call Noreen DeNicola at (516) 877-4260 or email ndenicola@adelphi.edu