

Contra Body Movement

By Richard Fiore

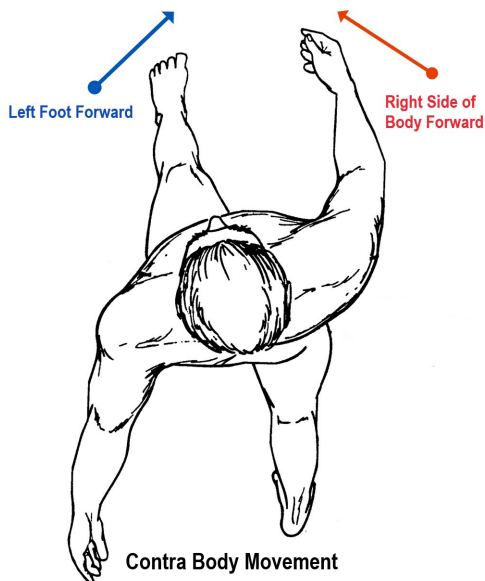
(Licentiate, (LAB, LAR, T) US Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing)



Contra Body Movement (CBM) is an essential element in ballroom dance. It is a rotational movement of the body that is used on forward and backward steps for initiating a turn. This technique can

also be applied in other dance movements such as forward progressive steps in waltz and foxtrot, for example. When CBM is properly implemented, it makes an enormous difference in achieving a more effortless turn.

Here is how it works. When commencing to turn, the upper body is rotated opposite or contra to the moving foot while stepping forward or backward. This movement is coordinated throughout the turn. In essence, it is analogous to winding a spring to create a twist or torque action in the body and then releasing the spring to unwind as a means of initiating the turn. In this manner CBM greatly assists in achieving a more effortless turn. It also adds an attractive body styling. CBM takes time to develop, as it requires the discipline of coordinating movements of the upper and lower body. In point of fact CBM is always present in normal everyday walking; however, it goes largely unnoticed. The body's natural CBM movement is coordinated with each step. As you move forward or backward with one foot the opposite side of the body correspondingly moves in a balanced and synchronized manner opposite to the moving foot. Here are the four basic CBM scenarios.



CBM Scenarios for Forward & Backward steps:

- As the left foot moves forward, the torso rotates to the left as the right side of the body moves forward.
- As the right foot moves forward, the torso rotates to the right as the left side of the body moves forward.
- As the left foot moves backward, the torso rotates to the right as the right side of the body moves backward.
- As the right foot moves backward, the torso rotates to the left as the left side of the body moves backward.

This technique is essential for nearly all turns including those taken on one foot such as pivots and swivels. Turns that are initiated without proper CBM are awkward, unattractive and can be very difficult to follow. When CBM is correctly implemented, the follower will have a clearer lead signal that a turn is being initiated. CBM is not limited to the leader. Both partners need to be able to use this technique correctly and simultaneously.

Application: The CBM technique applies to many different types of turns such as pivots, swivels, rock turns and others. A good example of CBM implementation can be illustrated in the Left Rock Turn used in Foxtrot. This turn consists of four steps and is typically used at the end of a promenade walk to turn from the wall room alignment back to the line of dance. The amount of turn in this figure is typically ¼ turn to the left. The breakdown for this turn from the leader's perspective is as follows:

- 1ST Step: left foot forward as right foot closes toward left foot without weight
- 2ND Step: right foot back - CBM is applied
- 3RD Step: left foot to the side
- 4TH Step: right foot closes to left foot

Contra body movement occurs on step 2 and the ¼ turn to the left occurs between steps 2 and 3. We can clearly see that the turn commences on step 2 and is completed on step 3. Therefore, CBM on step 2 serves to initiate the ¼ turn to the left. In this example, CBM was initiated with the man's right foot moving back. Therefore, his torso rotated left as the left side of the body moves backward to accommodate the commencement of the turn.

CBM is an essential technique for dancing turns more effectively. It always gives dancers a more attractive body styling. Refining this technique adds greatly to the overall appearance of the dance. You will achieve greater efficiency and a more elegant style as you dance with contra body movement.

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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