

Crossover Breaks Part 1 - The Basics

By Richard Fiore

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



Another popular figure in the collection of all-time favorites is the Crossover Break. This figure is perhaps most recognized in cha cha; however, it is also commonly danced in rumba, bolero, mambo and other rhythm dances. It is most distinguished by its single handholds and side-by-side dance positions. While it is a basic figure, it has a stylish appearance as partners open the hold to move between left and right side-by-side dance positions. It can also be augmented with various add on movements and arm styling.

Crossover Breaks consist of a series of forward rock breaks in side-by-side dance positions alternating from one side to the other. In cha cha for example, this figure commences with the 1st half of a cha cha side basic to the count 1, 2, 3, 4 &. For the purpose of this example a preparation step is taken to the side on count 1. The man releases his right hand during the side chasse. Over counts 1 and 2 of the next measure, he steps forward to turn a total of ¼ to his right while leading the lady to step forward to turn a total of ¼ to her left to end in a left side-by-side dance position, i.e., lady is to the man's left side. This is followed by a back rock on count 3 and then to another side chasse in the opposite direction. The man then releases his left hand to lady's right handhold to establish a right to left handhold. The same action is then taken with a forward step turning in the opposite direction, to end in a right side-by-side dance position, i.e., with the lady to the man's right side. One of the most attractive features of this figure is its mirror image symmetry. Both partners' movements are the mirror image of each other throughout the figure.

Crossover breaks in rumba are initiated from half a box step, i.e., three steps (QOS), followed by a side chasse (QOS). As with cha cha, the man releases his right hand during the chasse and then leads a Crossover Break in similar fashion. In rumba there are no further chasses needed to continue with additional Crossovers. Three Crossover Breaks are typically danced. A common follow to this figure is a lady's right underarm turn. The man may also lead the lady to dance an open solo switch turn as he does the same. The solo switch turn can be repeated on the other side for an added element of style. There are many other endings that can also be used to enhance the attractiveness of this figure.



A degree of arm tone needs to be maintained throughout Crossover Breaks, especially since there is a

one hand hold connection through much of this figure. This will make the lead more readable to the follower. The joined hands should be maintained at about hip level as this provides added stability throughout the figure. Partners' free hands can be styled in any number of ways as physical space allows. It looks more attractive when both partners use similar arm styling. For example, a good one to use on a crowded dance floor is arms extended outward and angled upward in a wing position. Good arm styling will always enhance Crossovers as well as other open hold figures.

Foot turn out is another element to be particularly aware of while dancing Crossover Breaks. It is so common to see the back foot turned in as partners step forward into side-by-side positions. A degree of foot turn out, i.e., toes turned out should always be maintained especially for the back foot while entering into a Crossover Break. As partners step forward to enter into a Crossover Break, their back foot needs to be simultaneously turned out. If the back foot is not turned out it will have an unattractive turned in and sickled appearance. Therefore, it is always good practice to synchronously turn the back foot outwards while stepping forward into a Crossover Break. The correct foot positioning resembles the ballet 3rd foot position to some extent in which one foot is placed in front of the other so that the heel of the front foot is in line with the arch of the back foot.

All of these techniques help to make dancing Crossovers easier while enhancing their overall appearance. There are a lot of fine details to consider even with the most basic figures. Fortunately, many of these techniques are universal and directly apply to a variety of other dance styles. Quality dance movements always rely heavily on good techniques.

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

Instructor: Richard Fiore — Dual Licentiate, 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. Call Noreen DeNicola at (516) 877-4260 or email ndenicola@adelphi.edu