

Turning to Promenade

By **Richard Fiore**

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The promenade dance position can be described as a V shaped dance position with the lady's left hip in contact with and positioned slightly behind the man's right hip. Partners' heads face straight ahead as they travel forward in the direction of dance and toward the open part of the V. The man's head is turned to the left while the lady's head is turned to the right.

There are several important aspects to consider for achieving an attractive promenade dance position. The techniques for turning to promenade will be discussed in the context of social ballroom dancing. For the purpose of this discussion I will highlight the Simple Twinkle used in American style foxtrot and waltz.

This figure is commonly used to get partners from closed to promenade to closed dance positions. It consists of three steps to get into promenade and three steps to

return back to the closed dance position. We will look at the first three steps that get us into promenade.

1st Step - man steps forward while lady steps back

2nd Step - man steps side and slightly forward; while the lady steps diagonally back turning 1/4 turn to her right

3rd Step - both partners' feet close as they end in promenade position

A key element in leading the follower to promenade is called shaping. Promenade is achieved directly after the 2nd step as the man applies a shaping action to initiate the transition from closed to promenade. A proper shaping action is essential for signaling the follower to turn to promenade. The man turns his head to the left as he pulls the right side of his upper body back using a rotational stretching action. Both partners' shoulders are almost parallel and their heads are facing straight ahead. The man's feet are maintained to the right from the direction of dance while the lady's feet are turned to left from the direction of dance. The hips turn slightly to follow the feet. The upper body can be arched backward with a slight head tilt as partners achieve promenade. This adds an attractive body styling line. Highly skilled dancers' align their shoulders more parallel making the V shape very narrow when in promenade dance position. This is an advanced technique that is generally seen in international ballroom competition dancing.

There are several variations of this dance position that share common factors in body and feet positioning, V shape and amount of turn. If the handhold is opened, the dance position is Open Promenade. Fall-away position is the same as promenade with partners traveling backward. Another variation is when the man's left hip is in contact with the lady's right hip with all other factors being the same. This is the Counter-Promenade dance position. If the handhold is opened in this dance position it is an Open Counter-Promenade dance position.

Here are some valuable lead and follow technique suggestions for achieving a more attractive promenade position.



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- Follower should be positioned to the right of the leader with body contact in the closed dance position. This will make getting in and out of promenade easier.
- When the man leads the lady to promenade there should be a hinge action in which the lady rolls off the man's right hip. Dancing in body contact makes this possible.
- Expand the dance frame by stretching diagonally forward. This will give a larger and more attractive body line appearance.
- Maintain balance throughout each step. Do not rely on your partner to hold you up in any dance position.
- Keep your feet turned to promenade. There is a tendency to point the feet straight down the line of dance while traveling in promenade. This is a common problem.
- Look straight ahead toward the outside of your hand in promenade
- Know your dance floor spatial environment whenever transitioning into various dance positions
- Leader's head should face left while followers head faces right as far as possible without looking or feeling unnatural

Turning to promenade or any dance position requires a clear understanding of how to lead and follow into the various dance positions. Using good technique will always go a long way to give you an attractive appearance on the dance floor. Enjoy dancing figures that turn to promenade.