

Learning A Basic Two-Step

The fundamental two-step cadence, a building block for all social partner dances, can be described verbally; you don't have to see it demonstrated to understand it and master it. This was confirmed while teaching social ballroom dance to the visually impaired, who could not see a demonstration; they had to be taught verbally. In addition to confirming the effectiveness of the verbal description, the visually impaired students also demonstrated that the verbal method was as effective as the visual demonstration method, perhaps even more so.

The following describe the most versatile, basic two-step building block, using only one special definition plus a few common words and a simple observation: when we walk, as when we dance, there is always a stationary foot and a moving foot. When dancing, step normally, just as you do when you walk.

Step. With one foot stationary and supporting your weight, place your moving foot somewhere and shift your weight to it so that it becomes the stationary foot coincident to the "other" foot becoming the moving foot (a.k.a. free foot). Each time this happens, you have taken a step.

Stationary Foot. The foot that holds your total weight while the other is free to move.

Moving Foot. The foot that holds no weight and is free to take a step.

Close. Bring the moving foot adjacent to the stationary foot, but do not shift weight.

Forward Step. Moving foot moves forward and becomes stationary.

Backward Step. Moving foot moves backward and becomes stationary.

Side Step. Moving foot moves sideward and becomes stationary.

Using only these terms, one can describe a basic two-step cadence, in 2/4 or 4/4 time, following a repeating 4-beat cycle. The following describes a forward, two-step cycle of three steps in four beats. Learn to do it almost without thinking to popular music, and you will easily master any, beginning social ballroom dance lesson within minutes rather than weeks or months.

Beat 1 - Forward Step

Beat 2 - Close

Beat 3 - Side Step (Note. The moving foot from 1 is the closing foot on 2 and the moving foot for the side step on 3.)

Beat 4 - Close and Step (Note. The stationary foot from 1 is now the moving foot.) Social dancers repeat this sequence throughout an evening of dance, generally changing only the direction of the step on the first beat of the three-step, four-beat sequence. Learn it, and you will be dancing. Try it mirroring your partner, and you will be partner dancing, whether you are connected to each other in a traditional dance hold or simply facing each other and remaining parallel.

Continue this cadence using the resulting moving foot for the first beat of the next cycle. When you can do this for slow, medium, and medium fast music, sign up for a dance lesson, and you will learn new dance styles quickly and easily.