



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:

Simple Air Steps:



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Important: Air steps are not part of normal social dance on crowded dance floors, because they are alarming for other people and can be dangerous to everyone. Even if you think that you have the skills to do an aerial safely on a social dance floor, dancers around you, who will be at all sorts of stages of learning, may move in ways that are unpredictable. Please *save them for jam circles and performances*. Also, always communicate with your partner so that you both know which air-step is coming. Please note that you use these notes at your own risk. They are intended only to jog the memories of people who have been to our classes. If you want to learn from scratch, I strongly recommend that you go to a workshop.

1) Jig walk frog jump

This is a variation of the six-beat jig walk. The basic jig walk (with no aerial component) starts in the normal side-by-side position. The rock-step (1,2) is standard, with a connected hand. Then the leader turns 90 degrees to his right and leads his follower to turn 90 degrees to her left to face him. At this point he has his left (connected) hand high and he kicks (3) his L leg outside her legs, while she kicks (R) between his legs. Both put the kicking foot down on 4, then he kicks (R) between her legs and she (L) outside his on 5, and they put their legs down on beat 6.

In the aerial variation, beat 1-3 are exactly the same, but on beat 4, the man leads a downwards preparation ('bounce into floor', bent knees), bringing his left hand down to give the lady a good palm-to-palm hold and giving a strong R arm (still round her back, but with the elbow horizontal giving a really firm frame). On 5, she jumps straight up, taking her knees out to the side and tucking her feet under (sort of like swimming the breaststroke, or a frog just before it jumps). As well as jumping, she presses down with both of her arms to increase lift. The key to a really high-looking lift is *not* head height but tucking the feet up really high.

The leader must keep a good hold and look after the lady until she has landed and got good balance: this usually extends to move to an 8-beat one.

Once this move works smoothly, it can be made more spectacular by the man kicking through with his right leg. This is a full, straight-leg kick (not the usual Lindy flick) and should take the leg to horizontal (if the lady does not rise enough for this, it is better not to kick at all because the droop of the leg only emphasizes that she is not very high). Obviously, it is important for the leader to make sure that his leg does not make contact with his partner, and this includes getting the leg back down before she descends on to it. He therefore needs to *power* his leg down, not just let it fall, for maximum safety.

Froggy throwout (flashy alternative to swingout).

This uses the same kind of follower's jump as the jig walk frog jump. Start side-by-side with the 'spare' hands connected. The man's footwork is just step step step step, the last going into a solid two-feet-on-floor position, and he drives a rotation of the whole couple clockwise (moving forwards and round rather than rock-stepping; he faces the follower from about 2). The lady's footwork is rock-step, step-and-down (R on 4). On 5, she goes up into her froggy jump, her momentum taking her out still and the man opening his R arm and using both hands to guide her flight away: he *keeps hold with his L hand* and makes sure she has her balance on landing.

Hip hop carry round.

This starts facing with an R-R hold. Leaders, rock step, and on 3 bring her into your R side, with her hand going round to be on your L shoulder (not the usual nearer one). Have your R hand on her waist (not hip). Lead both down on 4. She jumps up on 5, tucking her knees up and he moves his R hip to the R to clamp her firmly into his R side (so that her hips fit into the hollow of his waist – leaders whose waist is convex may not find this move so easy!). The lady coming in should have given you, as a couple, some clockwise rotation and you keep this in the lift, carrying her round (backwards, from her point of view). You stop rotating and she lowers her legs to exit.

Hip tap jump



The final position for this has the lady off the ground to the man's right side. For the sake of description, let's say the leader faces North. The lady has her *left* leg up vertically, and her right leg slightly flexed, right knee pointing West and the right calf crossing her left leg – the precise position of her right leg is a way that lets her adjust her balance. Her body is drooping a little below horizontal, with her head back looking North to the audience (seeing them upside-down). Her right arm is straightish out to the West, connected to his left arm. Her left arm holds on to his right arm and holds on! (pic: FOTOGRAM).

You get in from a normal facing position (I call this move the hip tap because, when I used to dance lots of aerals when I performed with Sue & Ria, I used to use a hip tap in the exit of a Lindy Turn to cue this aerial in improvised sequences). The man's step is rock step plant (3), the plant having the legs reasonably apart and the right hip above the right foot, L foot a little forwards and leg straight for effect. Get the left hand to a palm-to-palm. The lady's steps are rock(1, on R)-hop(2, on R)-L bounce down(3), kick up (R4). Note it is the R foot that is the first up, even though the L leg ends up higher. As the lady comes up, the man leans forward (but keeps head up to look at audience). To exit, the man straightens up and she lowers her feet as she swings back down.

Squat

The final position for this is the man squatting (knees bent and feet apart and leaning forwards), the lady lying horizontally across his front, her hips over his right knee/thigh (not in the middle) and her legs pointing vertically up.

Starts from sbs (connected hands) but the lady needs to get her left arm around to the man's left shoulder (not the nearer one). His footwork is rock-step-squat. Hers is rock(1-R)-hop(&)-step(2-L)-up, the L leg leading upwards. The man keeps his L arm hold (*do not let go and catch her under her legs! – that's a different move*) and uses it to hold her close to his body. To get out, the man gets up and lets her legs swing back to the ground.

You can peck in the squat :-)

Butt roll to squat

The squat part is exactly the same as above; only the entrance changes. Again, start side by side but on the 1,2 the man steps a fraction forwards on his L on 1 and moves to the right across the lady's front on 2. his hips over to the R side. On 3 (or the & after 2) he bends to shove his behind backwards, pushing against the front of the lady's hips. She, plank-like, is lifted off the ground by this. On 4, he leans fwd and sweeps her round into the squat. *She has to bend her knees clear of the ground as he does this.*

Squat to hip-tap lift

The final position is the same as for the hip tap, and the start position is the squat. The leader needs to get up from the squat, but the follower keeps her legs off the ground and he sweeps her round into the hip tap position.

Contact: jamie@swingdoctors.org.uk

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