



Edinburgh University Swing Dance  
Society notes on:

## Our Balboa Syllabus (lasting 1 academic year)



Please see <http://www.swingdoctors.org.uk> for updates.

This is a list of roughly what we set out to cover each academic year: we will not stick to it rigidly, either in contents or order, because we are guided very much by the class and how best to build on their developing strengths, but we generally end up covering most of this stuff some time. *Jamie & Katie.*

Balboa basic (for us, the 'basic' has hold-down on 3,4 and 7,8)

Keeping the basic small.

Starting on either phase (a useful skill, taught very early because it underlines how critical it is for the follower to follow and not be on autopilot).

The idea of "parachuting in" extra step-steps to the basic (this topic will come up again and again in intermediate classes: again it appears now to underline that the follower must hold only because she is led to, not because of any autopilot action of her own).

Ways from Lindy to Bal and Bal to Lindy (so that people can practice Bal without having to devote a whole song to it!).

The concept of *fast track of the week!!*

The break time basic (for us, this is the one that has down-hold on 3,4 and 7,8)

The idea of constructing your own variations on the basic by using either hold-down or down-hold in either place.

Footwork (style, including the 'slippy' look).

Shuffles (our term for shuffling to the side, either to R after hold-down on 3,4 or to L after a hold-down on 7,8 – some people call these paddles. Stress the importance of positioning of weight). Emphasize the way that shuffles are 'parachuted in' to the basic timing, so finish the basic you interrupted to come out.

Sylvia Sykes' Golden Rule Of Following: "step on the foot currently free, and put it down underneath you". (Emphasize that this is usually a rule of leading too, the *body* leading where the underneath will be!).

Shuffles that hold and then start going the other way.

Paddles (first anticlockwise from a hold-down on 3,4, 'parachuted in' so exiting with the normal 5-8 of a basic; then clockwise from a hold-down on 7,8. Then clockwise from 3,4 and anti from 7,8 – done less often but good as a practice for leading and following. Then the idea of introducing holds and switching legs, either to switch direction or, more commonly, to keep it going.

The Serpentine (ie paddles and holds that take you progressively across the floor in a series of arcs).

Crab walks (with or without actual sideways movement)

Hangman

The closed come-around (with much emphasis on the man *not* stepping 'out' on 3).

The closed reverse come-around

Transition step (non-rotating) to crosses.

Crosses: emphasize the out-out-in(hold) pattern and how this is different from what you'd do in Lindy etc. Exit with a come-around.

Using the out-out-in to lead other patterns than the usual crossing – eg moving together.

Starting the come-around exit and then going out to crosses on the other phase from 5: again, experiment with different patterns.

The idea of coming out with a reverse come-around if this is easier.

The spike-out (directly from a come-around with no transition step, which is our usual way of dancing it); using a come-around to get back in. Much emphasis on the natural 'boing' caused by the body positions/ weight. The 'magic button' on the lady's back that, when touched, gets her to raise her left arm to accept the man's shoulder. Men – 'let the ladies come to you'. The fact that there is plenty of time to get close again.

Adding elbow catches between the spikeout and the come-around.

The rotating transition step as a prelude to Bal-swing, taught with a spikeout (not our favourite way of dancing Bal, but critical for people who will be attending dance camps etc, where some teachers will insist on this being the only 'legitimate' way into Bal swing).

The pop turn to a normal come-around.

The pop-turn to sending the lady across the man's front to a reverse come-around.

Come-around to Lollie kicks (with potted biog of who LW was).

Exit from Lollie kicks by pushing out into a spikeout

The idea of making Lollie kicks travel as an alternative to the man orbiting the lady

Alternative exit from Lollie kicks – the swoop (importance of leading with the hip).

Parachuting in lady step-step turns into the Lolly pattern from the compression phase (she turns c/w) then from the tension phase (she turns a/c). Man turning too.

Come-around with outside turn

Inside turns from a spikeout

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Dan and Christie's comedy move)

Techniques from bringing breaks into Balboa

Multiple turns from a spikeout (connect with the idea of 'parachuting in' step steps, which is what you are doing).

Texas Tommy direct from come-around to get R-R 'spikeout position' (and then to normal come-around for now)

Texas Tommy from inside turn.

Getting side by side on the 7,8 of a basic, leading lady to face on 3 (compression) and free turn to be caught and hold in a R-R 'spikeout' position.

Back to the basic: practice removing step steps (so going hold-down-hold-down).

Now go to the R-R spikeout and practice following the 7-8 hold with an immediate block of the lady's rotation back to a come-around, to create another hold on 1-2 followed by a rotation in the other direction (with or without more blocks). Connect this to the idea of removing step steps. The importance of the right timing and feel of the block.

Easy ways to get back to the normal beat numbers when you have done stuff like that.

Using the leader's right knee to provide the block.

Transition from R-R to the 'hip Lindy' hold.

Shrugging out of the 'Hip Lindy' hold back to the R-R spikeout position

Lollie style kicks in the Hip Lindy hold

Reversals of direction and side-by-side orientation in the Lollie kicks in the Hip Lindy hold.

Extending the come-around by parachuting in step-steps (emphasize the importance of body position to keep everything stable; let the hips move out in fast rotations, not the shoulders)

The cross-handed spikeout (leader's R follower's L): emphasize the followers' need to have frame in that hand.

The cuddle (double handed from a spikeout; exit by unwrapping her to the right which ends up in another spike-out)

The come-around with a kick-down on 3-4 (useful when the man has to travel to wrap up a follower he has left somewhere).

Fall off the log

Hank Nagle's basic (kick L fwd as you drop on to R on 7 and kick again on 8)

8-count shag from balboa basic

Double time basic

Leg circles from basic

Swivels

Come-around with leader's lock-leg

Inside turn to twist away

Hirschey bar

Syncopations of the basic

Bringing syncopations into other moves

The sit dip

The side dip

The calf dip

The leg dip (ie the one in which the leader's R leg moves out on the 2 of a come-around led across him, and dips her across his leg).

Improvisation and the creation of new Balboa moves: the idea of seeing the dance as *movements* rather than 'moves', and the idea of allowing rhythms to change.