



Edinburgh University Swing Dance  
Society notes on:

# Intermediate Balboa: 1) Interrupting the spike



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In the beginners' classes, we taught the conventional version of the spike, which comes from and goes straight back into the come-around. You can add variations to your Bal-swing by inserting variations between these two movements:

## Elbow blocks:

Begin with a standard spike:

- 1 step
- 2 step (setting up c/w rotation)
- 3 down (rotating)
- 4 hold (with rotation)
- 5 step - release right arm (rotation continues)
- 6 step (rotation continues)

**7 at this point, the connected arm has tension and you both hit the spike pose (see notes)**

8 down – coming back in due to the spring effect of the tension in the arm mentioned above.

1 step – lady comes past the man's R side and turns a/c. Man turns a little c/w and prepares to catch her left elbow with his right hand

2 step – lady continues turning a/c; man catches her right elbow; this needs to be a 'springy' catch so that she is stopped on the next beat

3 hold (straightening leg fwd, like the spike): at this point, the man and the lady face at right angles to one another, with the lady looking across the man's front from his right side, and both are doing this 'hold'.

4 down: the spring of the hand starts the lady forward across the man's front and turns her clockwise. Man stays on spot

5 step

6 step: man prepare to catch her right elbow with his left hand

7 hold (straight leg)

8 down: the tension brings the lady forward and rotating again.

You can do this elbow catch thing again, or let the elbow go past and enter a normal come-around.

## Inside turns and 'returns'.

This uses a similar idea, and the lady's feet will be going a very similar pattern on the floor – the main difference is the connection.

Begin with a standard spike:

- 1 step
- 2 step (setting up c/w rotation)
- 3 down (rotating)
- 4 hold (with rotation)
- 5 step - release right arm (rotation continues)
- 6 step - (rotation continues)
- 7 at this point, the connected arm has tension and you both hit the spike pose (see notes)**
- 8 down – coming back in due to the spring effect of the tension in the arm mentioned above.
- 1 step – *do not let go of hand!* Lady comes past the man and turns a/c as in a normal come-around.
- 2 step – lady continues turning a/c; man turns c/w to keep facing her as she crosses his front. He needs to lower the arm ASAP and keep a decent frame with it.
- 3 The spring of the arm causes the lady to ‘hold’ (straightening leg fwd): at this point, the man and the lady face one another, but the man is facing the opposite wall of the room compared with the way he was facing at the end of the spike.
- 4 down: the spring of the hand starts the lady forward across the man’s front, turning back the way she came (c/w) under the man’s arm. Man turns to keep facing her.
- 5 step
- 6 step, arm lowering
- 7 hold back in spike position, with ‘spring’ in the arm
- 8 down: the tension brings the lady forward and rotating again.

You can do this again, or enter a normal come-around.

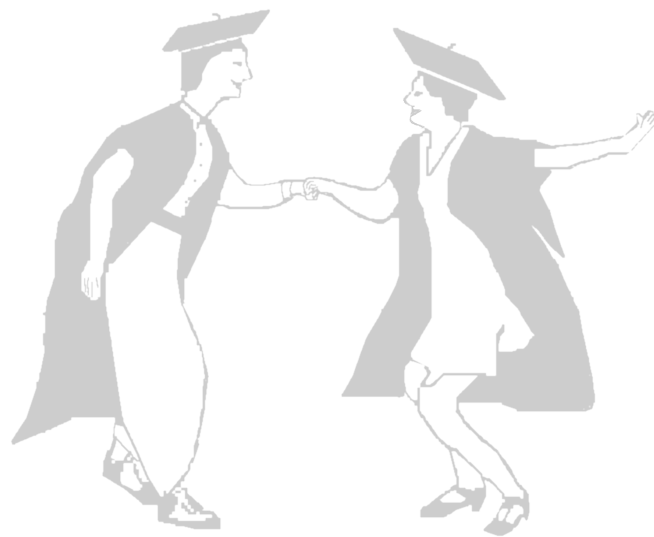
**OR**, you can enter the come-around using the inside turn rather than a free turn. Watch for the lady’s elbow-man’s nose problem.

**Common problems:**

- The main problem (assuming that there are no underlying problems with the plain spike and come-around) is a lack of springiness in the connections. The elbow catches need to be firm and early enough to stop the lady’s rotation, but need not to be brick walls. This depends on both the man and lady having a good frame.
- The man’s position is different in these two variations. In the elbow catches, he is not rotating once he has reached the ‘elbow catch position’ and is simply passing the lady from one side to the other and back. In the inside turn variation, he turns to face her for the ‘holds’.
- If the man’s nose gets walloped in the inside turn variation, something that is more likely when it leads to a come-around, it is *probably* because he is closing up the space too early. It may be because he is holding his hand too low over the lady’s head, forcing her elbow out.

**To make suggestions or to request up-to-date copies, e-mail [Balboa@swingdoctors.org.uk](mailto:Balboa@swingdoctors.org.uk)**

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