



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:



Charleston: 2) variations

NB – These notes are copyright. You are free to copy and distribute them intact, but please do not remove the EUSDS header or our contact details. Send requests for the newest edition to balboa@swingdoctors.org.uk.
Jamie & Katie.

Body Leans

This uses the rhythm of the basic but works better without the ankleflaps.

- 1 – tap the toes of your R foot in front of you, leaning backwards (so leg and body make a straight line).
- 3 – step on to your right foot behind you, committing your weight and passing your body through the upright position
- 5 – tap the toes of your L foot behind you and lean forwards (touch floor if you want)
- 7 – step on to your left foot a little in front of you passing your body through the upright position again.

Hesitations

This is a simple variation of the basic, and can be done either with the ankle flapping style or with a straight style; if using the straight style, tap forwards with your heel on the ground, make sharp movements, and use your arms in the manner of a fast walker rather than flowingly. It gives the impression of a fast walker filmed, with the film played back forwards then backwards.

- 1 – tap toes (if flapping – heel if walking) of your R foot in front of you
- 3 – tap toes of your R foot behind you
- 5 – tap toes (if flapping – heel if walking) of your R foot in front of you
- 7 – step back on your R foot

You can now continue with the basic. You will have introduced a 4-beat phase shift into the basic now (so that you are tapping behind L on 1 rather than tapping fwd right. This can be very useful when coming in and out of partnered Charleston (see our notes on that).

Kicks

You need to keep a good body bounce going for this – the kicks should be small enough for a 'light' look. Men usually swing arms, ladies often keep hands near hips to emphasize aspects of their figures (at least, they did on 20s cabaret). An alternative is to 'push' forwards with both arms, palms forwards, on each kick.

- 1 – kick R foot forwards and to the left (either kick across you or, more commonly, swing your hips round that way too, but not your upper body – you can see both styles in old movies)
- 2 - down
- 3 – kick L foot fwd right
- 4 – down
- 5 – kick R fwd left
- 6 – bring in but do not put down
- 7 – kick R fwd left
- 8 – down

It is common to follow this with an exact mirror reverse. Anyone who knows the Shim-Sham will recognize this kind of R-L-R-R then L-R-L-L rhythm.

Hands on knees

This is a useful move for 'breaks'

- Start with your feet a little apart, but side-by-side, and legs bent with knees apart with your hands on your knees. Bring your knees together. As they meet, cross your hands. Part your knees, letting your hands go with them. Bring your knees together and as they meet, uncross your hands. Part your knees, taking your hands with them.

This move can be done slowly, quickly, or start fast and then go slow etc. When done well, onlookers have the illusion that the dancer's knees are crossing through each other (which is, of course, impossible).

Tick-tocks

- Start with your feet side-by-side, a little apart, weight on your left heel and right toes. Knees bent and apart. Arms bent at elbow with lower arm held out to side, palms facing forwards. Head up and smiling. This is called the 'open' position.
- Then move to the closed position: bring your knees in, pivoting on your left heel and right toes – this action will move you a little to the right. At the same time, fold your arms in and drop your head so that your right ear is on your right shoulder (*warm up first!*) and let your face relax. Transfer the weight to your left toes and right heel
- Move to the open position again – you will have again moved right.

The move should be done in the manner of an automaton (mechanical toy). The closed position has a collapsed look, like a puppet with nobody pulling its strings, so that you seem to alternate between being 'alive' and 'collapsed'.

If you begin with your weight on your left toes and right heel, you will go to the left. Practice both ways.

To make request up-to-date copies, e-mail Charleston@swingdoctors.org.uk

Date of last revision: 14th December 2004

**Edinburgh University
Swing Dance Society**