



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:



Lindy Hop: 6) Things to practice on your own

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Once you have mastered the basics of Lindy Hop (the material in the first 5 sets of these notes), you can lay great foundations for more advanced Lindy Hop, and finding your own style, by practicing one your own. The main point is to teach your body particular patterns so that they are natural, and you can drop them into Lindy Hop moves easily.

My suggestion is that you try these first to silence, and then to as many different types of music as possible, trying to make what you do 'fit'.

Single time and triple time

This is a simple exercise in altering the jockey. In terms of the overall effect of which leg you end up standing on, a triple step ("triple time") is equivalent to a step-pause ("single time"). You can therefore practice doing the basic rhythm on your own, replacing some triples with step-hold. For example;

rock-step, triple-step, step-step, triple-step
rock-step, step-hold, step-step, triple-step
rock-step, triple-step, step-step, step-hold
etc etc

When you have practiced this (a lot!), you will probably work out that step-hold is equivalent to hold-step. Try it. If you kick your free leg during the hold of the hold-step, you will recognize the Charleston feel, and hopefully your brain will start to accept the 'two' foundation rhythms of Lindy as being one, at a deeper level.

Stomps

A 'stomp' is a bang on the floor with the flat of your foot, without any commitment of weight (a stamp, on the other hand, involves changing weight to the foot that has stamped – this is standard tap nomenclature). In terms of the overall effect of which leg you end up standing on, a stomp is the same as a step-step (both leave you where you started). So, for that matter, is a double-stomp. So you can replace the step step, and even the rock-step, with stomps. For example;

rock-step, triple-step, stomp-hold, triple-step
rock-step, triple-step, kick-stomp, triple-step
stomp-stomp, triple-step, stomp-stomp, triple-step (a good one for practicing balance)
rock-step, step-hold, stomp-hold, step-hold (*this is the 'proper' jockey, by the way*).
Rock-step, kick-down, stomp-stomp, kick-down.

Kick-hold

A kick-hold involves kicking a leg out and then bringing it in *without* transferring weight to it. It is a really useful trick for Lindy variations. Practice first kicking your L foot back on 1 and holding on 2, before bringing the same foot forward on 3 for a triple-step;

kick-hold, triple-step, step-step, triple-step

Practice this until you can do it without it messing up your balance, because for a lot of Lindy Hop variations you will need to do it without messing up your partner's swingout.

Then play with other ideas;

kick-hold, step-hold, stomp-stomp, kick-down

rock-step, kick-down, stomp-hold, kick-down,

rock-step, kick-down, kick-hold, kick-down (*this is the Lindy Charleston, of course*)

kick-hold, kick-down, kick-hold, kick-down (*'long-legged' Charleston*)

etc, etc.

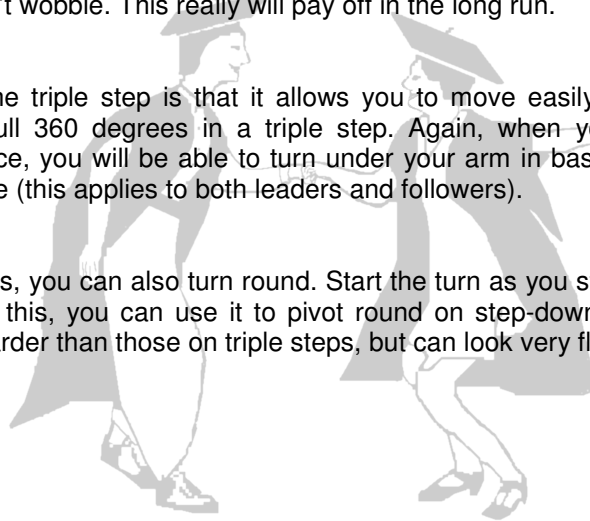
Play with all of the above to real music, at a variety of speeds, and practice keeping your weight centred so that you don't wobble. This really will pay off in the long run.

Turning in the triple

One of the points of the triple step is that it allows you to move easily. You can exploit it by sometimes turning a full 360 degrees in a triple step. Again, when you can do this without messing up your balance, you will be able to turn under your arm in basic Lindy moves, adding hugely to your repertoire (this applies to both leaders and followers).

Pivots

On any of the step-holds, you can also turn round. Start the turn as you start to step, to help you. When you get used to this, you can use it to pivot round on step-downs. These turns need a smooth floor and are harder than those on triple steps, but can look very flashy.



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