



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:



Lindy Hop:

2) The swingout

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These notes assume that you are already confident with the basic rhythm and with the triple-time jockey (see notes page 1).

The swingout from side-by-side

The first type of swingout we will cover begins from the side-by-side position of the triple-time jockey. Towards the end of the last jockey they do, leaders should offer their left hand across the front of their body; the lady will take it lightly with her right hand (when you are more confident, you can offer this hand much later, but for now, do it early so that you have one fewer thing to worry about later into the move!).

1,2 Rock step as usual

3&4 – the leader triples forward and round so that, by 3, he is facing his follower and looking just past her right side. His right hand moves to her left shoulder blade as he triples round. The lady stays put because the leader has not asked her to do anything else

5 – leader crosses his right foot behind his left to get out of the lady's way. Because he maintains his frame with his right hand, this action draws the lady forward and starts to turn her so that she continues to face the man (see note 1).

6 - the leader continues to turn around clockwise by stepping on his left foot; the lady continues to travel and to face the man as she does. The leader releases his right hand about now (see note 2)

7&8 – triple step away from each other, facing each other.

Note 1; a common alternative style has the lady walking forwards rather than facing the man all the time – we will cover this later. Both are 'correct', for different styles.

Note 2; despite the phrases on some T-shirts, there is no hard and fast rule about when the leader should let go. Letting go on 5 gives the lady lots of space for variations, but holding on a little longer gives the man more control over exactly where she goes. Ladies, let the man lead please.

Common problems

- The lady has to go on a huge detour round the man: this is caused by the man not getting out of the way.
- The lady never separates from the man: this is caused by the man never letting go with his right hand.
- The lady and man end up far too far apart at the end: this is caused by one or both of them allowing their arms to be stretched out too far. Do not allow your elbows to extend more than about 120 degrees – ladies, this means that as your elbow reaches this, you stop going back. Let your arm help to stop you – this will develop a small tension in the arm, which is useful at the end.
- The man ends up orbiting the lady, who stays put: this is caused by the man not being assertive enough about drawing the lady past him on the step step.

- The lady never moves: usually caused by the man letting go with his R arm way too early.

The swingout from facing

This is a similar move, and can follow the swingout from side-by-side directly. It is a difficult move, but central to Lindy Hop. Practice, and come and ask us for advice if you need to.

1,2 rock-step in place (ladies, we will change this later – see note sheet 3)

3&4 triple: the tension in your connected hand encourages the lady to come in towards the leader (leaders - don't pull her!) and as she does she aims to place her left arm on his right shoulder. The leader comes in a little to meet her, and he also reaches his right hand up to connect with the back of her left shoulder. As all of this is going on (!), he uses his triple step to turn 180 degrees clockwise. Because of the man's right arm lead, and because of the frame in the lady's left arm following the man's shoulder, and because of the mild compression that develops in the connected hands as the distance closes up, the lady is induced to turn also. Therefore the partners change places (approximately).

5,6 – the man crosses his R foot behind as in the swingout described on side 1 of these notes, and then steps out on his L foot. This encourages the lady to keep turning, still facing the man. If she thinks about her feet, she will probably feel she is stepping “open, cross” but really it is better she does not think of them, and just puts them down underneath her in the usual rhythm. The man needs to let go with his right hand during these steps.

7&8 triple away from each other again.

Common problems

- The partners end up offset and in contact rather than facing each other and separated (Rhona Mackay, of Edinburgh Swing Dance Society, calls this “the boob mash” owing to its painful consequence to the lady). This is one of the very few problems that tends to be caused by the follower: ladies, resist you partner! Use your left arm to maintain distance from the leader. Also, if you look at each other when you do the swingout, you are much less likely to end up offset.
- The connected arms end up pushing or high: leaders, relax the left arm and leave it at hip height. It is not used in the ‘rotating’ core of this move.

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