



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:



Collegiate Shag: 4) Shag breaks

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This move can be done facing, side-by-side and back-to-back. It is a 'break' in the sense that the 'bounce' of shag disappears and the rhythm becomes truly "slow-slow-quick quick".

Side-by-side

This is the safer one to practice first.

- On 1, step on your outer foot and slide your inner foot forwards, with a straight leg and the sole of your foot flat on the floor, your body coming down gently in a 'sitting' action.
- Hold through beat 2
- On 3, swap the positions of your feet, trying not to come up as you do (we are trying to eliminate bounce, remember)
- Hold through beat 4
- On 5 and 6, swap your feet twice more – you will not have time to move the idle foot far forwards – it is much better to let these movements be small and have your body still, than to bounce.

Leading: You need to communicate the gentle sit down to the lady – good contact at the side of your hip helps. Rob and Diane describe the feeling as a 'sigh' (to contrast it with a rapid drop). To come out, straighten during your last step, to get the lady back up out of this.

In close hold:

The problem here is that you must communicate the 'sigh' sit-down feel to the lady well or you will kick her. The man's steps are exactly as above. The lady, though, leans forwards in response to the man's sit (he keeps his body upright) and moved her foot backwards, not forwards; I think it looks better if her foot is off the floor rather than on, but some people do it the other way. His leg moves forward under her body on each of the foot slides.

Unless you are dancing this with a lady you practice with lots, I would strongly suggest that you refrain from sliding your foot forwards very far until you *know* she is doing the breaks.

DO NOT OVER-USE BREAKS – they are for occasional decoration and for contrast.

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