



Edinburgh University Swing Dance
Society notes on:



Collegiate Shag:

2) Step variations

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One of the simplest ways to expand your repertoire of collegiate shag is to vary the footwork. Practicing these variations (and the ones that will come up again in a later class) while in a simple hold will help you get them 'into your feet' before you become distracted with fancy body moves.

Generally, you don't both have to do the same variation.

Knees-up

A man's variation, mainly (because it looks undignified in a skirt!): instead of flicking your 'spare' leg behind you, rotate your hip so that you can lift your knee up, diagonally, well outside the lady. This is the sort of thing you would only use for a couple of basics, and then go back to normal. You need enough forward lean for this to create space.

Circling

Instead of flicking your 'spare' foot out behind you on 1 and 3, slide it in a circle outwards, backwards, then back in to take the weight when you need to step on it. The feeling of this variation is smoother than the basic, and you can make it very smooth if you want to.

Sailor's step

This is another variation for which you need space. Do the knees-up, very wide, and then circle your lower leg while it is still in the air. It has a very loose and goofy look. It is important to get your foot down underneath you again when you need it, and not to rock. This is a variation that looks best if you both do it.

Tapping behind

This marks the off-beats. On 1, step as usual (man on L, lady on R), on 2, tap your spare foot behind you (with the front of your shoe); on 3 step on that foot under you, on 4 tap your spare foot behind you as before, then do the step step as usual. The rhythm is therefore step-tap-step-tap-step-step.

Kicking forwards

Practice this without a partner first. Like the tapping, you are now moving your two feet on different beats. On 1, step as usual (man L, lady R), on 2, kick your other foot a little forwards; on 3 step on that foot, on 4 kick the other foot, then do the step step as usual. Obviously, you have to be careful with this in close hold, especially if you both decide to do it! If you are not wanting to travel, use your forward lean to make space and on no account kick across into your partner's space.

You can use this step to travel. To travel forwards (the easiest to learn), the man should lean a little more backwards than usual and communicate this to the lady, who will lean more forwards than usual. Then he should start to advance, so that she has to go backwards, at first still keeping the kicks very small; once you are sure the lady has understood what is happening, and she is flicking her feet well back to give him space, he can then make larger (though still careful) kicks.

Double kicks

Like kicking forwards, but this time kick the 'spare' foot on both beats, so while you step on your first foot (man's L), you kick your other foot (man's R) forward, bring it back, then kick it forwards again on beat 2. Keep the kicks small – they have the look of loose kicks.

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