

Kicking Up Your Choreography:

An Introduction to Basic Lifts and Partner Work

Resources:

Choreography

<http://www.artsalive.ca/en/dan/make/toolbox/chttoolbox.asp>
http://hsc.csu.edu.au/dance/core/composition/2437/time_elements.html
http://hsc.csu.edu.au/dance/core/composition/2437/space_elements.html
http://hsc.csu.edu.au/dance/core/composition/2437/dynamics_elements.html

Salsa

http://www.salsaisgood.com/dictionary/Salsa_dictionary.htm
<http://www.heritageinstitute.com/danceinfo/descriptions/salsa.htm>
<http://www.jsmoothsalsa.com/FAQs/dance-terminology.html>
<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/learn-salsa-dance-steps.html>
<http://www.salsa-dancing-addict.com/basic-salsa-dance-moves.html>

Swing

<http://www.dancetv.com/tutorial/swing/sintro.html> (Links lead to other info)
<http://www.dsds.org/ECS>
<http://www.ballroomdancers.com/dances/syllabus.asp?Dance=ECS>

Lifts

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELgcuxVPIW4>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVTTTACXX04>
<http://swing-dancing.wonderhowto.com/how-to/perform-standstill-backflip-swing-lift-0135421/>
http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Swing_Dancing/Aerials#Lifts_.28Retitle.29

Vocabulary:

http://www.ballroomdancers.com/Learning_Center/Glossary/Default.asp?Letter=A

Contact Information:

Basha High School Faculty webpage for Shira Schwartz
<http://www.mychandlerschools.org//Domain/624>
Schwartz.Shira@cusd80.com

Swing:

Basic: Man steps to the Left, transfers weight back to the Right

Underarm Turn: An action where one partner turns while passing under joined hands.

Tuck In Turn: a turn which is led by the man causing the lady to wind up, or "tuck-in", then leading her to spin in the opposite direction.

Wagon Wheel: A continuous turn where the partners hold Right hands throughout. Left hand touches the shoulder of partner in a rotating sequence.

Charleston: Based on the 1920's dance fad. There are a variety of moves that fall under this label.

Salsa:

Basic: Man steps forward with Left, transfers weight back to center of body, steps back with Right, transfers weight back to the center of the body; Woman steps back with Right, transfers back to center of body, steps forward with Left, transfers weight back to the center of body.

Underarm Turn: An action where one partner turns while passing under joined hands.

Outside Underarm Turn: An underarm turn in which the lady turns to the left under the left hand, or to the right under the right hand.

Spot Turn: In American Rhythm, a step in closed position in which one partner walks forward in a tight circle, while the other partner moves back out of the way by hooking one foot behind the other, and stepping side alternately. (Known in International Latin as a Natural Top.)

Dip: The weight of the partner #1 is supported by partner #2. Partner #1 bends backward and returns to an upright position.

The most important part of a lift is that it is weight sharing. It will be easier for the lifter if the liftee learns to take their own weight. This is done by engaging your muscles, especially your center, or your abs. You also want to push down on the lifter if possible. This actually makes it easier, because it actually makes you lighter to the person lifting you. Remember, dead weight is harder to lift.

Standstill Backflip:

Lady Stands on the Right Hand Side of the man with her Left Foot forward and her Right Foot back. She places her hands on his shoulders. The Man has his legs shoulder width apart with his Left Foot in front of his Right

The man leans forward and to his Right. He places his Left Hand behind her Left knee and his Right arm behind her back. The man should be leaning back on his Right leg ready to lift the Lady.

The Lady kicks her Right leg forward and the man lifts her using mainly his Right arm. The lady completes a full circle over his shoulder. It is important for the lady to keep a strong grip until she is just over half the way around. When she is just over half way through the flip she needs to let go. The man needs to keep the lady as tight to his shoulder as he can.

The landing is Important. The Man needs to lean back and to his Right to place the girl down gently. The Lady needs to try and keep her feet together and bend to create a clean finish.

The Shoulder Sit

The shoulder sit is one of the grandest and most regal lifts in ballet. Its name is blissfully self-explanatory, as the ballerina is lifted to a sitting position on her partner's shoulder

Transitions

Most often, shoulder sits are performed with the ballerina ending up on her partner's right shoulder, for both ease of movement and balanced aesthetic. However, it can be altered if the male prefers his left side.

The best and most common preparation for a shoulder sit is when girl bends her knees in preparation for a small jump with her partner's hands on her waist, and, in one smooth lift is placed onto the shoulder. She must make sure to keep a tight core and not to lean forward, as this will tip her off balance and make her more difficult to control on the way up.

The male should focus on centering his partner during the preparation to make the lifting easier.

A shoulder sit can be exited in many ways, but the easiest way is for the male to simply lower his partner off his shoulder and back to the starting position, directly in front of him.

(Mental Edge: Shoulder sits never feel comfortable, as sitting on a guy's shoulder is nothing like sitting on a more stable surface. But instead of comparing the lift to sitting on a wobbly chair, think of it as what it is: A princess riding on a lifted caravan!)

Getting Past the Hard Part:

For girls, shoulder sits can be terrifying due to the lack of solid support beneath you. The key is to—really—stick your butt out as your partner places you on his shoulder. This ensures that you're really sitting solidly, while the extended pelvis makes it easier for him to place you. Tucking your pelvis under will cause you to lurch off center and make it almost impossible for you to maintain a stable position.

Men performing shoulder sits have to have a good sense of direction and stay aware of the ballerina's alignment at all times. Upon entry, it's best to duck under your partner's bottom as she reaches the height of the lift so that you can place her right where you need her to be. To exit the lift, slide her down against you. She may feel like her weight is tipped back, but this is fine—if she falls backward, she'll simply lean against you, whereas if she fell forward, you would have to race to catch her.)
