

## BASIC DANCE STEPS & HOW TO DO THEM

### Courtesy of Paula Messier

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE:** Below please find some definitions of basic line dance terms. These are terms that are used frequently in our beginner line dances. These step descriptions are compiled from various sources. There is “no one set” of line dance “official” terms. And I am certainly, not even remotely, trying to do that. But what I would like to do is give the beginners, where I teach, some of the terms I will be using as cues for our dances and how I use them. We want you to have fun and learn as quickly as possible and understanding certain basic steps is a big part of learning.

BASIC STEPS	DESCRIPTIONS
<b>And</b>	<u>Example:</u> & 1 or 1& Half of a quick count. Used to denote a ½ beat of music.
<b>Ball change</b>	Quick change of wt. from the ball of one ft. to the opposite
<b>BPM</b>	Beats Per Minute
<b>Bridge (tag)</b>	An extra set of steps not part of the main dance that are inserted into one or more parts of the dance to make it fit the music.
<b>Brush</b>	the ball of the designated foot lightly "brushes" the floor as it swings either forward or back (no wt. change).
<b>Chasse' (pronounced shah-say)</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	A 3 step pattern. Step to the side on first beat, bring other foot over to meet that one (together step/w/wt. change), then step side again on next count. Side, together, side. Can be right or left. aka <u>side shuffle</u> . <u>Example:</u> step side right w/R ft, step together w/L, step side R w/R again. Usually counted as 1 & 2.
<b>Coaster (back)</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> right back coaster – back w/R ft, together with L, forward w/R. Three steps, usually syncopated, stepping back, together, forward. Usual counts are 1&2
<b>Coaster (forward)</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> left forward coaster – forward with/L ft., together with R, back w/L. Three steps, usually syncopated, stepping forward, together, forward. Usual counts are 1&2
<b>Count</b>	<u>Example:</u> 32 ct. dance. A dance will state it has a number of counts in it. This is the number of beats of music it will take to complete one repetition or sequence of the dance. <i>Important: Remember the number of steps may not be equal to the number of beats.</i>
<b>Crossing shuffle</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> R crossing shuffle: cross R over L, small R side step, cross R over L. Usual counts are 1&2 If it is a R crossing shuffle your body will be facing slightly diagonal left. R crossing shuffles move to L. L crossing shuffles move to R. Crossing one foot in front of the other on 1st count, then taking a small side step w/the other (keep this one slightly back) on the & count, then cross once again in front on ct. 2. Body will be at a slight diagonal during this.
<b>Foot positions</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	There are 5. (1) Feet together (2) Feet parallel, hip width apart (3) Heel to instep. Can be extended. (4) Forward or back (in the tracks) (5) Toe to heel. Can be extended.

<p><b>Grapevine (aka vine)</b></p> <p><a href="#">Video for Vine</a></p> <p><a href="#">Video for Rolling Vine</a></p>	<p><u>Example:</u> R vine – step side R, then cross L behind, then step side R.</p> <p>A continuous traveling step pattern to the side with crosses behind or in front. Vines can also have a turn variation in them, usually turning <math>\frac{1}{4}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> or even <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> on the 3rd count. We also have “<i>rolling vines</i>” where the 3 steps will equal a full 360 degrees (or some portion thereof). <u>Example:</u> R rolling vine – turn <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> over R shoulder step fwd. w/R ft, continue over R shoulder turning <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> &amp; stepping back w/L, then finish by turning <math>\frac{1}{4}</math> more over R shoulder to face original wall and step side R.</p>
<p><b>Hitch</b></p>	<p>Lift knee up w/wt. on opposite leg.</p>
<p><b>Hold</b></p>	<p>To do no movement for a set number of beats.</p>
<p><b>Jazz box (aka jazz square)</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p><u>Example:</u> (a.) step fwd w/R, cross L over R, step back w/R, step side L. (b) cross R over L, step back w/L, step side R, step fwd. w/L.</p> <p>A dance pattern consisting of 4 weight changes. It may start with a forward step or a cross step. When the 4th step is a together step it should correctly be called a jazz triangle, BUT you will very seldom see that done. It is usually still called and written as a jazz square or box.</p>
<p><b>Kick ball change</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p><u>Example:</u> R kick ball change is done by kicking fwd. w/R ft, bring ball of R ft back to center, then change weight immediately to L ft.</p> <p>Counted 1 &amp; 2, 3 steps to 2 beats of music) Can be either R or L</p>
<p><b>Kick ball cross</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p>Kick your lead ft. fwd (sometimes will be angled, check step sheets), return lead ft. to center &amp; <i>slightly</i> back, cross other ft. in front of your lead ft. Usually syncopated.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Kick R ft. fwd. on count 1, bring back to center (slightly back of center) on "&amp;" count, then cross L in front of R (wt. ends on L).</p>
<p><b>Lock</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p>A tight cross of the feet</p>
<p><b>Lunge</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p>Transferring of wt. to a bent leg w/ free leg extended. Can be fwd, diagonal or side.</p>
<p><b>Monterey turn</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p>May have a variety of degree of turn (<math>\frac{1}{2}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{4}</math>, <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> or even full 360). Touch toe out to side on count 1, turn whatever amount on the ball of the weighted foot bringing the "side touch toe" in to center &amp; changing weight to it on count 2, touch other toe to side on count 3, then step the touching foot at center next to the weighted foot on count 4.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> Right monterey turn (<math>\frac{1}{2}</math>) - Touch R toe to R side on count 1, turn <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> turn over R shoulder bringing R ft. next to left on count 2, touch L toe to L side on count 3 and bring L ft. in to center and step on it on count 4 (wt ends on L).</p>
<p><b>Pivot (turn)</b> <a href="#">Video</a></p>	<p><u>Example:</u> a <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> pivot turn is a step fwd w/R, turn <math>\frac{1}{2}</math> or 180degrees over L shoulder, and change weight to L foot. Turns can be various amounts such as <math>\frac{1}{8}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{4}</math>, <math>\frac{1}{2}</math>, etc.</p> <p><i>A term that causes much debate.</i> A true pivot turn is a traveling turn executed with the thighs locked &amp; the feet apart in 5th position. This type of turn is used in “couple dancing” particularly common in two step. BUT in <u>line dancing</u> it is a term used when you step forward w/one ft., turning (amt. of turn may vary), and then changing wt. to the other ft If you were to step fwd w/L you would be turning</p>

	over the R shoulder. It's not necessary to determine what is the way it "should be" only know that's the way "it is in line dancing at this time".
<b>Restart</b>	While in general denotes just to begin the main dance again, it will be noted occasionally on some dances that you will be restarting the dance again after only doing a portion of it. Again used to make the dance fit the music.
<b>Rock steps</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> R fwd rock – step fwd with R, then rock back onto L recovering your weight. Two weight changes in opposite directions using 2 beats of music. <i>Fwd and back rock steps</i> are done in 5th foot position, <i>side rock steps</i> in second position.
<b>Sailor shuffle</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> R sailor shuffle – place R ft behind L, step side L, then step side R recovering your weight. Your cts. would be 1 & 2. Can be either R or L. Cross ft. behind, step side with the other, and side w/original ft. This dance pattern is accomplished by leaning in the opposite direction of the back crossing foot.
<b>Shuffle</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> step side R, together w/L, step side R A triple step. Side shuffles are executed by stepping to the side, bring the other ft. next to it, & stepping to the side again. . Fwd or Back shuffles: Fwd/Back, together (either in 1st or 3rd ft. positions), fwd/back.)
<b>Step</b>	A weight change to that foot
<b>Struts</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<i>Can be toe/heel.</i> <u>Example:</u> Touch toe to floor on count 1, then drop the heel on count 2 taking weight to that foot. <i>Can be heel/toe:</i> Touch heel of foot to floor on 1st ct. then drop toe on 2nd. Can move fwd, back, to the side, diagonal, & crossing.
<b>Switches</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	Touching one ft. out, returning it to center transferring weight, then extending opposite out. Can be toes, heels, forward, side, etc. <u>Example:</u> side switches - touch R toe to R side, bring back to center and change wt. to R, touch L toe to L side, usually bringing L back in to center (but will depend on specific dance. Check your step sheet) Syncopated cts 1 & 2 &.
<b>Tap (aka touch)</b>	The toe or heel of the foot touches or taps the floor w/no weight change.
<b>Together</b>	To bring the one foot next to the other, w/ wt. change
<b>Weave</b> <a href="#">Video</a>	<u>Example:</u> step side R, cross L in frt., step side R, cross L behind Alternating crossing behind and in front. Can start w/side step, or cross in front, or cross behind. You will find them in various numbers, 4, 6, 8, etc.

\* Remember I am not a dictionary, another instructor's beginner terms list may be different, they may use the terms a little differently than I do. This list hopefully though will help those of you in my classes to understand how to do these steps. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me or see me at class. Please do not quote me to your instructors and say "Paula said this was the way to do it". I wish there was a set of official terms too, but until there is, each of us will just continue to do the best we can, interpreting all the step sheets to the best of our ability. This list will help you get through my classes. ~ Paula Messier