

Directions from Folk Dance House, New York City  
Recommended records: Folk Dancer MH 2003, 2002, 2004.

165-55  
Hambo

The Swedish Hambo is one of the more difficult dances, yet it is the one dance most folk dancers want to learn. It requires special teaching techniques and it is not feasible to teach it in a large group as are other dances. Since the step for the man and the lady are completely different one cannot teach the dance as a couple but must take the men separately and the ladies separately. After each have learned their steps, then they can attempt the dance together. However it is suggested that those who know the Hambo help beginners for it is almost impossible for two beginners to do it well the first time. Here is the Hambo and how it should be both taught and learned.

**THE DANCE:** Inside hand position. Free hands on hip. Take two step-swings with the man starting on his left, lady on her Right foot and moving forward on each step. Then take 3 walking steps. Man does LRL. Lady does RLR. Then both turn towards partner and assume shoulder-waist position and do 5 Hambo steps turning around the ring.

**MAN'S STEP:** After the two step swings and the 3 walking steps:

Step forward on Right foot. Step forward on Left foot.  
Bring Right foot down beside Left foot and balance on balls of both feet.  
Step forward again on Right foot, etc.  
Note that Right foot touches floor twice in succession,

When the above is comfortable, then add the following:  
Step forward on Right foot and bend knee in a semi-crouch (count 1)  
Step forward on Left foot with bent knee in a semi-crouch position at the beginning of count 2, but rise up on toe of Left foot by the end of count 2...it is important to straighten up here. Bring Right foot down near Left foot and put weight on the balls of both feet and do a slight crouch with flexed knees for count 3.

There is an up and down feeling with relaxed knees. The principle is that you step towards the girl on count 1 with bent right knee in preparation for the turn. On count 2, you begin to turn and slightly lift her so you rise up on Left toe. On count 3...you are up in air on left toe, so you come down with both feet on the floor with flexed knees, weight forward on balls of both feet.

Man must be sure to place his Right foot on count 1 between the lady's feet. Also he must NOT cling towards her but actually have a pull-away with straightened out arms. Make sure all his fingers are behind lady's back in shoulder-waist position. Sometimes men put their thumbs in front and this results in a painful pinching of the lady's waist.. she's too polite to tell him it hurts and he may well wonder what the painful expression on her face is all about.

The third count is the vital spot in the dance. Both feet must be on the floor on this count. With proper flex of knees here it should be easy to go into the Right foot forward step again. There is no hop, no leap or jump for men in the Hambo. Small steps are in order. Once the step is mastered then the man may attempt the turn:  
Step forward on Right foot, toeing out.  
Step forward on Left TOE and pivot on it count 2(clockwise.)  
Bring feet together on count 3.

A complete turn comes with practice so don't expect to get it right off.



From:  
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THE HAMBO: Lady's step:

Lady starts off to learn the step like this:

Step forward on Left foot (count 1)  
Touch Right toe solidly down on floor slightly behind Left foot (count 2)  
Leap forward on Right foot. (Count 3)

On Count 2, the lady should be balanced on balls of both feet and knees bent in a dip or semi crouch.

When the lady gets to actually do the Hambo step with the man, then she will find that on count 1, as she steps on the Left foot, she will be pivoting on it. Therefore she should not put her whole foot down on count 1, but merely step on the toe.

Girls must be sure to put the Right toe down behind Left foot on count 2...quite often girls put their toe down too far forward making it impossible to do a leap...then they jump which is awkward and furthermore is not the Hambo. Placing the toe too far back is also bad as it makes it hard to leap forward.

Like the men, the lady should take small steps, keeping knees together. Flailing feet are the mark of a bad dancer, although the good Lord knows how hard it is not to flail if a big lug of a man gets hold of you in a Hambo and doesn't know his step!

The lady must not cling to the man, she too must lean and pull away from her partner. Remember centrifugal force is what makes this dance work.

In teaching Hambo, have the girls do the first part of the 2 step-swings and 3 walking steps...then follow through with the girls using the Hambo steps making one big loop turning a little with 5 Hambo steps, rather than teaching a complete turn...just as we did in class.

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You may as well become familiar with similar steps in Sonderhoning from Denmark and Snurrebocken in Sweden:

**SNURREBOCKEN:** Man's step: Step Left and pivot on it. Bring Right up to Left, Step forward on Right. (3 counts)

Lady's step: Jump on both feet, take two running steps, R,L.

**SONDERHONING:** Man's step: Same as in Snurrebocken, step forward on Left and pivot on it, bring Right to Left, step forward on Right.

Lady's step: Take a quick two-step (RLR) Step-together step, then leap on Left foot. Continue in this manner.

The latter two dances are advanced dances, fun to do with experienced dancers but make sure that they get step correctly otherwise the dance is not only awkward but also dangerous.

