

Freestyle Social Tango

(Argentina, modified in France, England and United States)

Today's informal social tango is very similar in style and form to early Buenos Aires tango. Since Tangomania swept the world in 1912, the dance has evolved greatly in its home country, both in style and steps. Social tango has changed less in the rest of the world, but those changes were made in different directions from Argentina, so the two genres barely resemble each other today.

Informal social tango and Tango Argentino have both retained much of the original folk process, evolving through grass-roots regional variations independent from the control of professional dance organizations. Oppositely, British ("International Style") competition ballroom tango has become an entirely different dance from either of these two traditions, carefully standardized and regulated by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.

Today each dancer and studio has their own interpretation of social tango. The following steps are among the more well-known steps, to enable you to dance with partners coming from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Music: Any tango music.

RHYTHM: Slow 2/4 time.
Tempo: Between 60 and 70 beats/minute.

Formation: Cpls in Ballroom pos. and Closed Promenade pos.

Steps and: Highly individualistic, but can include elegant, passionate, melancholy, dramatic and campy.
Styling: Ftwk described for M; W use opp ftwk.

Promenade Fan (Turning Corté): In Closed Promenade pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); walk fwd on R (ct 2); M takes a short step fwd on L as W rotates one quarter CCW to enter Ballroom pos while stepping side/rear R (ct 3); cpl rotates one quarter CCW as M steps side on R (ct &); close L to R without wt (ct 4). Timing: S-S-QQ-S.

Fan, Woman Backing: In Ballroom pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); walk fwd on R (ct 2); walk fwd on L (ct 3); cpl rotates one quarter CCW as M steps side on R (ct &); close L to R without wt (ct 4). Timing: S-S-QQ-S.

Reverse Promenade Fan: In Closed Promenade pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); walk fwd on R (ct 2); W takes a short step fwd on R as M rotates one quarter CW to enter Ballroom pos while stepping side/rear L (ct 3); cpl rotates one quarter CW as M steps side on R (ct &); close L to R without wt (ct 4). Timing: S-S-QQ-S.

Tango Chassez: In Closed Promenade pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); walk fwd on R (ct 2); face ptr in Ballroom pos and take a side step L (ct 3); close R to L with wt (ct 3). Open into Closed Promenade pos to repeat. Timing: S-S-QQ.

Tango Run, Changing Handhold: In Closed Promenade pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); walk fwd on R (ct 2); run fwd 2 quick steps L, R (ct 3); walk fwd on L while changing to Reverse Promenade pos (literally a mirror-image of Closed Promenade pos) (ct 4). Repeat all in opp direction with opp ftwk.

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Tango Run to Dip: In Closed Promenade pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); walk fwd on R (ct 2); run fwd 2 quick steps L, R (ct 3); fstep fwd L and dip by bending R knee until it almost touches the floor (ct 4). Body and head are still erect, not collapsed.

False-Step Corté: In Closed Promenade pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); rock back to place on R, closing L to R without wt (ct 2).

Short Turning Corté: In Ballroom pos, M takes a short step fwd on L as W rotates one quarter CCW while stepping side/rear on R (ct 1); cpl rotates one quarter CCW as M steps side on R (ct &); close L to R without wt (ct 2). Timing: QQ-S.

Ocho (Cruzado): In Ballroom pos with extra distance between cpl, step on R across over L (ct 1); side step on L (ct 1); close R to L with wt (ct &). W dances opp. Repeat opposite ftwk. Timing: S-QQ.

Woman's Solo Ocho: Same as above except M stops on ct 1 cross step and leads W into Ocho and its repeat.

Salida (Exit): In Ballroom pos with extra distance between cpl, step on R across over L (ct 1); M takes a short step fwd on L as W rotates one quarter CCW to enter Ballroom pos while stepping side/rear on R (ct 2); cpl rotates one quarter CCW as M steps side R (ct &); close L to R without wt (ct 3). Timing: S-QQ-S.

Molinete: In Ballroom pos, walk fwd on L (ct 1); rock back on R (ct 2). Repeat while slowly rotating CCW.

MeasPatternFIGURE

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| 1-4 | Tango Run, Changing Handhold, toward ctr and then back to starting place. |
| 5-6 | Fan, Woman Backing, traveling in LOD. |
| 7-8 | Reverse Promenade Fan, traveling RLOD. |
| 9-11 | 2 Tango Chassez traveling LOD. |
| 12 | False-Step. |
| 13-14 | Tango Run to Dip, toward LOD. |
| 15 | Slowly rise by pushing backward from the leading ft. |
| 16 | Short Turning Corté, turning CCW one quarter to face the ctr. |

FREESTYLE CONCEPT 1: LEGOS

Simply combine the above steps in any order. Think of it as laying down LEGO blocks end-to-end, doing short (2-knob) blocks like False-Step and Short Turning Corté, followed by medium (4-knob) blocks like the Promenade Fan, then occasionally following this with a long (8-knob) block like the Tango Chassé. Please combine them musically, pairing two short steps with one medium step, or two mediums with one long.

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FREESTYLE CONCEPT 2: CROSS-STEPS AS LINKS

Observe that the second step of a promenade is a cross-step; the first step of an Ocho is the same cross-step; and that the first step of the Salida is the same. Rather than laying down steps end-to-end like LEGOs, one tango step smoothly morphs into another as the cross-step of one becomes the cross-step of another.

FREESTYLE CONCEPT 3: WALK AND PARK IT

Travel from one point on the floor to another with any traveling tango step, which can also include simple walking (usually with W walking backwards) or a simple closed promenade. Then do a step which stays in one place, like an Ocho or Molinete. Repeat the same concept with different traveling and stationary steps. In Buenos Aires and many social dance settings, dancers prefer that the traveling generally meanders toward LOD.

Presented by Richard Powers

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