

## The First Element – "Dancing Inside Swivels"

Turns and spins are fun to do! However, they require some specific skills. You must first become aware of the different types of turns and the most common problems you might encounter. Then you are ready to start your adventure in turns.

### Types of Turns

Very simply, there are only two directions in which you can rotate on a standing foot: towards the outside of the foot or towards the inside of the foot. For example, if you are standing on the left foot and rotate left, you would be turning towards the outside of the supporting foot. If you rotate right, you would be turning towards the inside of the supporting foot.

From these two directions, you can execute five types of turns or rotations:

- 1) Inside Swivels
- 2) Outside Swivels
- 3) Spiral Turns
- 4) Pivot turns
- 5) Spin Turns

By learning these 5 types of rotating actions you will be on your way to mastering any type of turn or rotation in any pattern.

### Skills Required for Turns

There are four main factors that can influence your ability to turn:

- \*Your ability to maintain your balance on the supporting leg-column
- \*Your ability to swivel the supporting foot enough to complete the turn
- \*Your ability to create power for the turn
- \*Your ability to absorb the power in the turn

You were introduced to the first factor in our previous issue – the ability to maintain balance on the supporting leg/column.

In this issue we will be concentrating on the second factor – the ability to swivel on the supporting foot.

### TURN EXERCISE 1 – INSIDE SWIVELS

*(Print this page so you can try this exercise as you read it)*

This exercise will allow you to practice swiveling on the supporting foot, as well as developing a habit of bringing the free leg to the supporting leg before you turn.

Stand with your right side next to a table or kitchen counter. Put your right hand on the counter. Stand with your feet together and your weight towards the ball of your right foot.

Take a long step forward with your left foot – by pushing from your supporting or right foot. As your left foot becomes the supporting foot, relax the knee and bring your right knee to the left knee. On the ball of your left foot, swivel 1/2 turn to your right (towards the inside of the left foot). Put your left hand on the counter.

Now you are standing with the counter on your left side – feet together and the weight towards the ball of the left foot.

Take a long step forward with your right foot by pushing from your supporting or left foot. As your right foot becomes the supporting foot, relax the knee and bring your left knee to the right knee. On the ball of your right foot, swivel 1/2 turn to your left (towards the inside of the right foot). Put your right hand on the counter.

Now you are (as you were on the beginning of this exercise) standing with the counter on your right side – feet together and the weight towards the ball of your right foot.

Repeat the same swivel exercise several times. As you become more proficient with this action, try performing the same swivel action with your supporting leg straight as you arrive and swivel, and relaxing it as you are ready to move on to the next leg at the end of the swivel.

This swivel action is used as a step in dances like Swing, Rumba or Cha-Cha. It is also the turning action used in walk around turns and walk around underarm turns.

Any half turn that turns towards the inside of the foot and moves back to the same direction it came from is actually an Inside Swivel.

Many dancers are surprised to discover this inside swivel action in many of the patterns they currently dance. Inside Swivels are also the foundation of the third type of turn in our list – Spiral Turns.

Happy Dancing,

Blanche & Emilio