

JUST A SLIP

By: Barbara & Jim German

The "slip" is found in many standard dance figures and has been added to other standard figures to create different endings and to add interest. This implies that our understanding of the slip should be solid to really feel comfortable in executing several of the higher level figures. For most of us, our first exposure to the slip came from the figure Chair and Slip. While our instruction was good, we need to increase our understanding and background of the slip before really feeling comfortable with today's added usage. Let's start our understanding with a definition. Webster defines the slip as "to pass gradually, easily, or imperceptibly." Let's see if we can apply this definition to our dancing.

Our dance couple is facing toward line of dance (LOD) in semi-closed position (SCP) with the trailing foot free (man's right and lady's left) ready to execute the Chair and Slip. Using the timing of quick, quick, slow, our couple will step forward with the trailing feet on the first quick. The second quick will be a recover or a transfer of weight back to the lead feet. (man's left and lady's right) staying close to partner. On the slow, the man will move his right foot easily and imperceptibly pass his left foot. The lady's movement is quite different as she will change her position from SCP to closed dance position (CP) and step forward with her left foot. Our couple started the Chair and Slip in SCP facing approximately LOD and ended in CP facing approximately diagonal line & center (DLC). Yes, the slip action caused a left face rotation. This rotation may be up to a quarter of a turn depending on the following figure. Time for us to take a closer look at the different parts of this very nice and popular figure.

The chair part of the Chair and Slip has an implied checking action on step one, the forward step. Step two, the recover step, changed the direction of step one therefore step one was a checking step. Step three, the slip part of the chair and slip, also has an implied checking action. While step three is backwards for the man, the following step (the first step of the next figure) is forward. Therefore, step three is also a checking step. Two changes of direction in one figure - that is a lot of activity.

The Chair and Slip starts in a good SCP, a "V" shaped dance position with the lady to the right of the man, as she would be in closed dance position. The hip line for both the man and lady is toward their partner - partner aware, not toward LOD. The lady's head is facing toward DLC.

One method for achieving a good SCP is to start in CP with man facing wall and lead feet free for both. From this position, the man can take a small step toward LOD with his left foot. While the movement is toward LOD, his left foot is pointing more toward DW; his body and hips are facing toward his partner - a little less than diagonal wall. The lady will respond with a small movement toward LOD with her right foot. The lady's right foot, body, and head will end facing toward DC.

From this nice "V" shaped position, with the trailing feet free, our couple is ready to execute the Chair and Slip. On step 1 the man will move his right foot forward, between the partnership, toward LOD, and slightly across his left foot or across his line of dance. To allow the man's right foot to move freely from his right side toward his left foot, he will turn or rotate his body and hips slightly left face. The man does not want to turn too much to the left, as it would interfere with the lady's movement. In SCP, the lady's left hip is to the right or slightly behind the man's right hip. She will also have her left thigh or leg in light contact with the man's right leg. As the lady feels the man move his left leg, she will respond by following his leg with her left leg. Since the lady is facing toward DC, the feeling of step 1 for the lady is more like a diagonally forward step with her left foot. At the end of step 1, the man will lower into his right leg; the lady will follow and lower into her left leg. This lowering is the man's lead to indicate a checking action and a change of direction in the figure.

Step 2 is a recover or transfer of weight from the trailing feet to the lead feet with a continuation of rotation. Step 2 is also the set-up step for the slip. Therefore, step 2 will have some left face body and hip rotation for the man. The lady will feel the man's turn and will respond by turning slightly toward the man as she transfers her weight on step 2. As the man recovers on step 2, he will transfer his weight to the toe of his left foot and initiate a body rise as he draws his right foot toward his left. The man's weight transfer to

the toe of his left foot and body rise is very important in the Chair and Slip figure. The lady will feel the man's weight change and body rise and will respond by transferring her weight to the toe of her right foot and turn her body slightly toward the man. The lady's body position is up and a little closer to closed dance position at the end of step 2. Our couple is now set up to execute the slip. (With all the hip rotation for the man on step 2, he must still be partner aware and keep his lady in good dance position.)

On Step 3, the man will continue to move his right foot back. This action, the right foot back for the man, will be a small step because he is already in an up position on the toe of his left foot. The man's right leg will be in contact with the lady's left leg and will actually move the lady's leg back. **(Ladies, this is the neatest thing. The man creates your slip, not you!)** The man will also continue a slight left face turn with his body and hips. The lady will respond to the man's leg action, which is moving her left leg back, by rotating left face on the toe of her right foot (i.e. toward the man). The lady's body position is moving closer to closed dance position. Because of the tight turn, the lady's left foot will be brushing her right foot. The lady's left foot will also move forward to the toe of the left foot, as the man's leg contact is resolved due to left face rotation. The lady rotation has taken her to closed dance position even though she is still up on her toe. On the second half of step 3, the man will lower his weight from toe of right foot to whole foot. He will also continue lowering into his right leg. The lady will respond by lowering from toe of left foot to whole foot and continue lowering into her left leg. The lowering into the leg completes the slip action and indicates a lead by the man that the direction of movement will change from back to forward - the second checking action. Our couple has completed the Chair and Slip. They started the figure in SCP facing LOD with trailing feet free and have completed the figure in closed position facing DC with lead feet free. In our example the figure has turned left face $1/8$ of a turn. It is more common for a figure with a slip action to turn $1/4$. Therefore, we should say the Chair and Slip may turn up to $1/4$ left face.

The Chair and Slip has many components. The body rotation will make the figure "easily" executed; the small step back by the man on step 3 can be considered as a "gradual pass"; and by completing the body rotation to the left before entering step 3, we have "imperceptibly" completed the turning action before the slip. Looks like Webster wrote his definition from our dancing.