

# Stand On Your Own Two Feet, Not Your Partner's

By Chris & Terri Cantrell

*(The information below is based on information we have gleaned from a variety of sources. Your experience may differ.)*

Taking off from where we left off last month.....

**Other Balance Exercises:** An important component of balance is muscle strength. For some quick and easy balance & strengthening exercises for those of all ages check out the first two sites, the others are for those wishing more of a workout:

- Guide from the National Institute of Aging: [http://weboflife.ksc.nasa.gov/exerciseandaging/chapter4\\_balance.html](http://weboflife.ksc.nasa.gov/exerciseandaging/chapter4_balance.html)
- NW Memorial Hospital: [http://health\\_info.nmh.org/Library/HealthGuide/IllnessConditions/topic.asp?hwid=ug1176](http://health_info.nmh.org/Library/HealthGuide/IllnessConditions/topic.asp?hwid=ug1176)
- Pilates classes: [http://www.allaboutpilates.com/pilates\\_workout/pilates\\_keypoints.htm](http://www.allaboutpilates.com/pilates_workout/pilates_keypoints.htm)
- Yoga: <http://www.justplainyoga.com/descriptionofclasses.htm>
- Tai Chi: <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Philosophy/Taichi/forms.html>
- Other classes: Aquatic exercise classes (great for arthritis & fibromyalgia also), Belly Dancing, Hula, Jazz...

## **And Even More Exercises:**

- **Mini trampolines** are wonderful for working small muscle groups in your hips, knees, ankles, and feet. Sample exercises: Stand with both feet on the tramp, bend and straighten your knees while keeping your feet on tramp, regain your balance & repeat. Progress to doing this with only one foot at a time; Stand with your heels off the edge of the tramp & balance without tipping the tramp over (a person spotting would be a good idea for this one); Gently hop up vertically or laterally momentarily up off the tramp with both feet and land, regain your balance, progress to hopping using one foot at a time. Check out this site for other ideas and benefits of exercise with a trampoline: <http://www.healingdaily.com/exercise/rebounding-for-detoxification-and-health.htm>
- **Anywhere-Anytime exercises:**
  - Practice figures (hitch, fishtail, sailor shuffle, flea hops...) and balancing (transfer weight back & forth between feet and the different areas of the foot) while brushing your teeth (okay, maybe not the flea hops while brushing your teeth), in an elevator, waiting in line, watching television....
  - Stand in heel-toe position: Right foot in front of your left foot, L toes touching R heel. Slowly, lift the L foot up and place it directly in front of your R foot. Continue by moving the R foot in front of the L.
  - Stand on one foot while waiting in line, for an elevator, or at the bus stop. Alternate feet.
  - Stand up and sit down without using your hands
  - While sitting at your desk, in a meeting, or the meal table, flex & point your feet & toes/heels, circle feet five times one way & then the other. Also practice squeezing your shoulders to your ears and releasing them and gently dropping your ear to your shoulder to stretch the neck.

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The information in this section mainly pertains mainly to the **Smooth or Standard styles** of dancing that include but are not limited to waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, and to some extent International Tango.

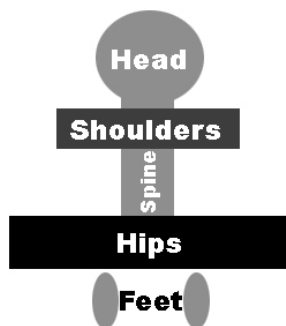
The main benefit of each person being balanced in their own bodies while dancing together is that figure execution, especially rotating figures, becomes much easier and takes less energy.

**Moving As A Couple:** The same rules in the last article (<http://www.ctkr.com/articles/balance-part1.pdf>) apply when walking forward and backward as a couple with a few slight adjustments.

**First the feet:** Face each other toe to toe. Women, move slightly to the man's right side so her shoulder seam is approximately in front of the buttons down the middle of his shirt (no shoulder seam, no buttons, use your imagination). Now the woman is looking out over the man's right



shoulder and he is looking out over her right shoulder. Also note that the feet are now interspersed, from his right side to his left side – her left foot, his right foot, her right foot, and finally his left foot as in the picture.



Now that you have each other's feet & toes out of danger from being stepped on by your partner, let us finish getting into dance position and try some movement. Ladies, please take two steps back away from the man. Both stand upright with your building blocks in line (head over spine over hips over feet – last month) each person holding their own body weight and balanced. Men, lift your arms to her shoulder level with your elbows & hands held at a wider distance than your partner's width. Ladies, walk into the man's hold slightly on his right side with your feet offset as described above. Place your right hand into his left hand. Men, gently place the side of your right wrist (palm facing towards the woman) under her left upper arm and gently fold your fingers around her back, while keeping wrist-underarm contact. Ladies, take a gentle hold with your left

hand on the man's right bicep. Keep the arms and hands up and as wide as possible. They act to counter balance the weight of the couple, especially on turns and sways/stretches. This technique uses the first four of the five points of contact. We will discuss the fifth point later. A more detailed description of the hold can be found in back issues of DIXIE or on the web at [http://www.ctr.com/articles/smooth\\_technique.pdf](http://www.ctr.com/articles/smooth_technique.pdf).



Make sure you are both still standing upright and are in balance. Keep your chins up and at a slight upward angle so that in addition to looking over your partner's right shoulder you are both looking up slightly as if you were checking out a stone carving at the top of a one story building. You each have your own space slightly to your left side (to the right of your partner) where the other one should not venture into.

Now try the walking exercises listed in the last article (<http://www.ctr.com/articles/balance-part1.pdf>) walk slowly forward five steps, women walking backwards, and then reverse the action and have the man walk backwards and the woman forwards. Re-center your weight over your supporting leg/foot with each weighted foot/leg change and make sure you still have your head & shoulders upright.

**Symptoms:** Your partner feels like they are hanging onto you, making you support some of their weight, or has become a vulture hovering over you. These are caused by either you holding your partner too tight and close to your body, not giving her or him their own space, or by your partner leaning into and possibly over your dance space.

For those brave of heart, try video taping your practice and/or dancing a routine or two. It is amazing what the camera sees. It also ends a lot of arguments about who is doing what to who.

**Advanced Poise Variation:** As you become more comfortable with carrying your own weight, remaining upright, and dancing with your partner you may wish to add the fifth contact point to your hold. This point adds a gentle connection between the right side of the lower rib cages of each partner. In order to achieve this connection point, the woman adds a slight curve from her mid-spine to her left and slightly back, shown in the picture. This position uses the basic physics of counterbalance to give the partnership more momentum, stretch, and freedom of movement. Men, please stay upright; for some reason when the men try this, they end up either sticking their bellies out into the woman's dance space or end up with a really strange looking "C" shaped body with their left hip sticking out sideways past their balance point.



Well, it looks like we are out of room again. Next month we will concentrate on balance in turning figures and eventually, in some future article, we finally get into balance in the Latin-American/Rhythm dances.