

Telemark, Feather, and Three Step
Second of a Three Part Series
By Jim and Barbara German

Last month we looked at the Telemark figure for this combination. Your efforts in understanding and practice will provide rewards. We are already hearing how the feel of the Telemark has improved. That is really great, as this is such a popular figure.

We left our dance couple in semi (promenade) position "toward" diagonal wall. The man had transferred his weight to his left foot. His weighted left foot was pointing diagonal wall with his hips and shoulders toward the lady or facing slightly more toward DRW. On step 3, the man would normally end with "body completes turn" but as an entry to the Feather, the man needs to retain contra position.

Now let's look at the Feather. Our Feather is really a Feather Ending figure where the man is moving forward as in the normal Feather but the lady is changing her position from semi (promenade) to contra position. In other words,, the lady starts out moving forward but ends backing up. (Note this is different from the Feather Finish. In the Feather Finish, both the man and lady are turning. The man normally initiates the Feather Finish with a back step and ends the figure with a forward step along the direction of movement.) Round Dancing does not use the Feather Ending notation since the man's foot action is the same as the Feather. Our couple is ready, so let's get started. The man is in semi (promenade) position with his left shoulder (really left side) leading, body turned less. Body turned less means the man's hips and shoulders are not aligned in the direction of his pointing foot, but more toward the lady. The shoulder leading position is very important to the Feather step. On step 1, the man will bring his right foot through the partnership with a step forward heel to toe. The man's forward step should be toward the direction his left foot is pointing. Although this action will turn his body slightly to his left, his movement still does not achieve diagonal wall. The lady's left leg will follow the man's right leg and body movement, keeping her left leg in contact with the man's right leg. As the lady feels the man's right leg move toward his left, she will take her step forward and slightly left (left toe pointing line of dance) to maintain her hip toward the man. The lady's desire is to return to closed dance position. The man's forward and "leftward" movement aids the lady to start toward closed dance position with her right foot and body action. This is an important feel for the lady, as her movement will take her more across her line of dance and toward the man. The lady's step 2 will continue her movement from semi (promenade) to her desired closed dance position. She will bring her right foot forward following the man's forward movement. In attempting to achieve her dance position, the lady will turn or swivel on the ball of her left foot as right foot is moving forward. The lady will end step 2 backing DW, with her right foot back, having achieved contra position - not quite closed dance position because the man has retained his left shoulder lead which prevents the lady from achieving closed position. The lady is aligning her hips to the man's and is taking a slightly longer step because of the man's slight turn to the left. If the man takes a long step or does not keep his hips toward the lady, he will leave the lady behind his hips and she will not be able to complete her action and achieve contra dance position. (There is a lot of action occurring on this quarter note!)

Step 3 for the man will be right foot forward toward DW (finally made DW) while keeping his left side lead. With the left side lead, the man's right foot will arrive outside of the lady and the couple will be in contra position. For the lady, step 3 is "easier". This is a normal back step for the lady and she should release the toe of her right foot as she takes weight on her left foot. Our couple will finish step 3 of the Feather by collecting their free foot (left for man and right for lady) under their hips. The lady should also release her right leg in preparation for the next step. The man is facing DW and the couple is in contra position.

There is a lot of action going on during each step of the Feather. There is a lot of body awareness between the couple to maintain good hip alignments. It really is necessary for the Telemark-To-Semi to end with a good entry position to the Feather.

This figure combination started with the Telemark facing DC. The ending position for the Telemark was man pointing DW with less body turn. Now the Feather step has moved our couple from semi to end in

contra position with the man facing DW. Our couple has completed $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ of the left face turn. In the next article we will look at the Three Step and the final $\frac{1}{8}$ left face turn to end LOD. Hang in there. Remember this combination is not easy and each piece of improvement is an asset to your dancing. Just being aware and understanding the many things which occur during one dance step is an improvement.