



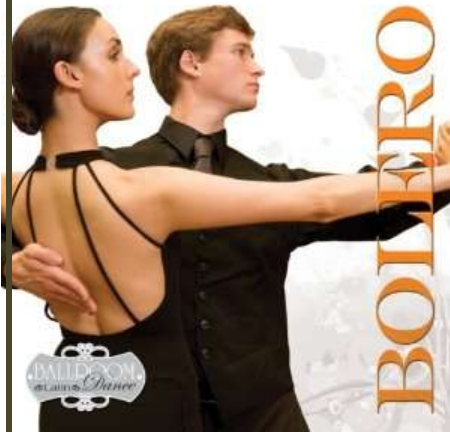
What is a Switch?

by Harold & Meredith Sears

In round dancing, we do not create a different name or cue for every different step or figure. Some of our cues can refer to several different actions, depending on the rhythm, our position, which foot is free, or on the creativity of the choreographer. We might throw up our hands and rail against this ambiguity: "If you cue a certain figure, then it ought to always mean the *same figure*." On the other hand, we might regard these multiple meanings as part of the richness of round dancing -- In one context, a cue means this, and in another context, it means something else. For instance, what is a Switch?

Latin --

Switch -- maybe the figure that we think of first is the three-step rumba or bolero figure that turns us from a V-back-to-back position to facing. The rumba Switch or Switch Cross might begin in an Aida position facing reverse with lead hands joined and lead feet free. We turn to face partner and step side, checking. This first step can also feel like a sharp back step, turning. Then we recover on the trail feet, and finally we both cross the lead foot in front of the trail foot progressing toward reverse. Of course, we can also do the Switch Cross with trail feet from an Aida position facing line of dance.



The Switch Rock is only a slight modification in which we do not cross in front on the third step, but we step to the side. Steps two and three then feel like a rock two, facing partner.

In bolero, the Switch Cross and Switch Rock are performed the same, except the timing is bolero slow-quick-quick instead of rumba quick-quick-slow.

However, even in rumba and bolero, a Switch is often only a single, turning step. Sometimes, we hear a cue like, "switch, recover, and step forward" or even simply, "slow switch," meaning take one step and turn in some way. In the classic bolero *Sleeping Beauty* by Brent & Mickey Moore, we have an Aida to reverse; Aida Line & Switch Lunge [SS]; Spot Turn to line. The "switch" is

one slow step. In *My Heart Will Go On*, a bolero by Deb & Tim Vogt, there is an Aida toward line; Aida Line Switch & Recover to left open position facing reverse [SQQ]; Bolero Walks. Here, the "switch" is one quick step. In *Don't Know Why*, a rumba by Richard Lamberty, the dance starts in Aida position facing reverse with lead feet free. We do a Slow Switch to face, Recover [SS]; Cucaracha Cross. In these three examples, the "switch" is only the first step of the standard three-step "Switch," the turn to face and step side. In *Sleeping Beauty*, we are facing line, so the man turns right and the lady left. In *My Heart Will Go On* and in *Don't Know Why*, we are facing reverse, so the man turns left and the lady right.



In *La Distancia*, a bolero by Brent & Judy Moore, we are in left half open position facing line with lead feet free (man on the outside of the circle), and we Bolero Walk toward line; Switch and Walk [SQQ] in half open to reverse; Switch and Walk in left half open to line; Contra Check, man facing center. The first "switch" in this sequence is one slow step and turn 1/2 -- left for the man and right for the lady.

In *Because I'm Accustomed To You*, a bolero by Bill & Carol Goss, the dance starts in a right/right handshake facing diagonal reverse and wall with trail feet free. We begin with a Forward Break; Neck Wrap Transition and Walk In [left, right for both] toward line and center; Switch and Cross Walk Out. In this sequence, the "switch" is a single step side on the left foot turning right-face for both. Later in the same dance, we are facing wall. We do a Turning Basic One-Half to face center; Aida toward line; Aida Line and Switch [SQQ]; Swivel and Wrap to sidecar position facing about reverse and center [SQQ]; Cross Body to face wall. In this sequence, the "switch" refers to the turn and side step on the trail feet and a recover step toward reverse, so this switch really refers not to three steps or one step, but two steps.

Smooth --

In foxtrot, the one standardized Switch we have is a part of the Contra Check and Switch. We begin closed position maybe facing the wall. We lower into the supporting trail knee, we begin to rotate the upper body left-face, and then the man steps forward on his left foot [S]. The woman steps back in a strong contra-body position. On the first "quick" the man recovers right beginning to turn right-face, and then slips back left continuing to turn about 1/4. So, how many steps make up this particular "switch"? The Contra Check is one step. The recover is implied and perhaps covered by the word "and" in the head cue, and then we do a quick, one-step, turning Switch -- right-face for both.

In *Where Or When*, a foxtrot by Curt & Tammy Worlock, we have a good example of a different kind of one-step Switch. Part A begins with a Promenade Weave 5 with a check back on the trail foot and a Slow Switch;; Natural Weave. In this dance, the "switch" is a slow forward left for the man (back for the lady) turning 1/2 right-face to face line of dance for a standard Natural Weave.



And Slow Two Step --

As a last example, let's look at the Switch in Slow Two Step. In this context, a Switch is three steps, but it is different from all the others. It does involve turn, but we don't end up facing partner, as in the other three-step Switches. It begins in half open position. The man steps side and forward left turning sharply to left half open position and then forward right, forward left (W fwd RLR) [SQQ]. It is essentially an open in and out run begun with the lead foot. The amount of body turn is then about 3/4 right-face.

So, faced with the cue Switch, we might take one, two, or three steps; we might step forward, side, or back; we might turn left or right; we might turn 1/4, 3/8, 1/2, 3/4 . . . A Switch might turn us from a non-facing position to facing partner, it might turn us from one non-facing position to another, or it might not change our position relative to partner at all. That's quite a bit of variability within one cue, and of course it is only one example of an ambiguous cue. You can probably think of lots of others. Are ambiguous cues pet peeves for you, or are they simply terms with multiple definitions, like so many words in our Webster's dictionary -- examples of the richness of our hobby?

