

Dancing Friendly with USADance-Houston

Line of Dance guidelines, diagramed on the other side of this page, were designed to enable the maximum number of dancers to enjoy the widest variety of styles with minimum interference. No matter what size the floor, these guidelines will help make the dance more enjoyable. The notes below will provide more information about the guidelines and will include some recommendations for beginners in hopes of helping them quickly adapt to the joys of social ballroom dance.

The Dance Floor. Always progress counterclockwise. Conversations should not be held on the dance floor. Every dance floor should be perceived as having at least two regions, the periphery for progressive dancing and the center for non-progressive dancing. Larger dance floors can accommodate more variety in rates of progression; smaller floors require more compromise.

Fast Progressive. Though a song might establish the same tempo for all dancers, differences in style and length of step result in different rates of progression. Always pass on the right, and do not weave in and out among other dancers.

Slow Progressive. Dancers taking smaller steps or using a slower cadence should move to an inside lane. If dancers pass on your left, move to your left, toward the center of the floor.

Static Figures. Variations that momentarily halt progression should be done in an area between the slow progressive and non-progressive dancers. This is especially important for movement counter to the direction of dance. Static figures are primarily for exhibition and competition; please be considerate of others when you implement a static figure at a social dance.

Spots and Slots. Dance styles that keep the couple in a fixed area should be limited to the center of the floor, or as near the center as possible. Couples should respect their spot/slot as well as that of other dancers, neither straying from their region nor intruding on the region of others.

Center. The center of the floor serves to protect progressive and non-progressive couples from collision. It is also a safe place to work on new variations and for dancers with injuries or physical limitations to avoid collision. Please help keep the center of the dance floor safe for all dancers.

Beginner Fundamentals

The first requisites for a successful beginning social ballroom dancer are to understand the importance of the following hierarchy and include the associated conventions and competencies into the practice of social ballroom dance. Discomfort or miscommunication on the dance floor can usually be traced to neglect of one or more of the following.

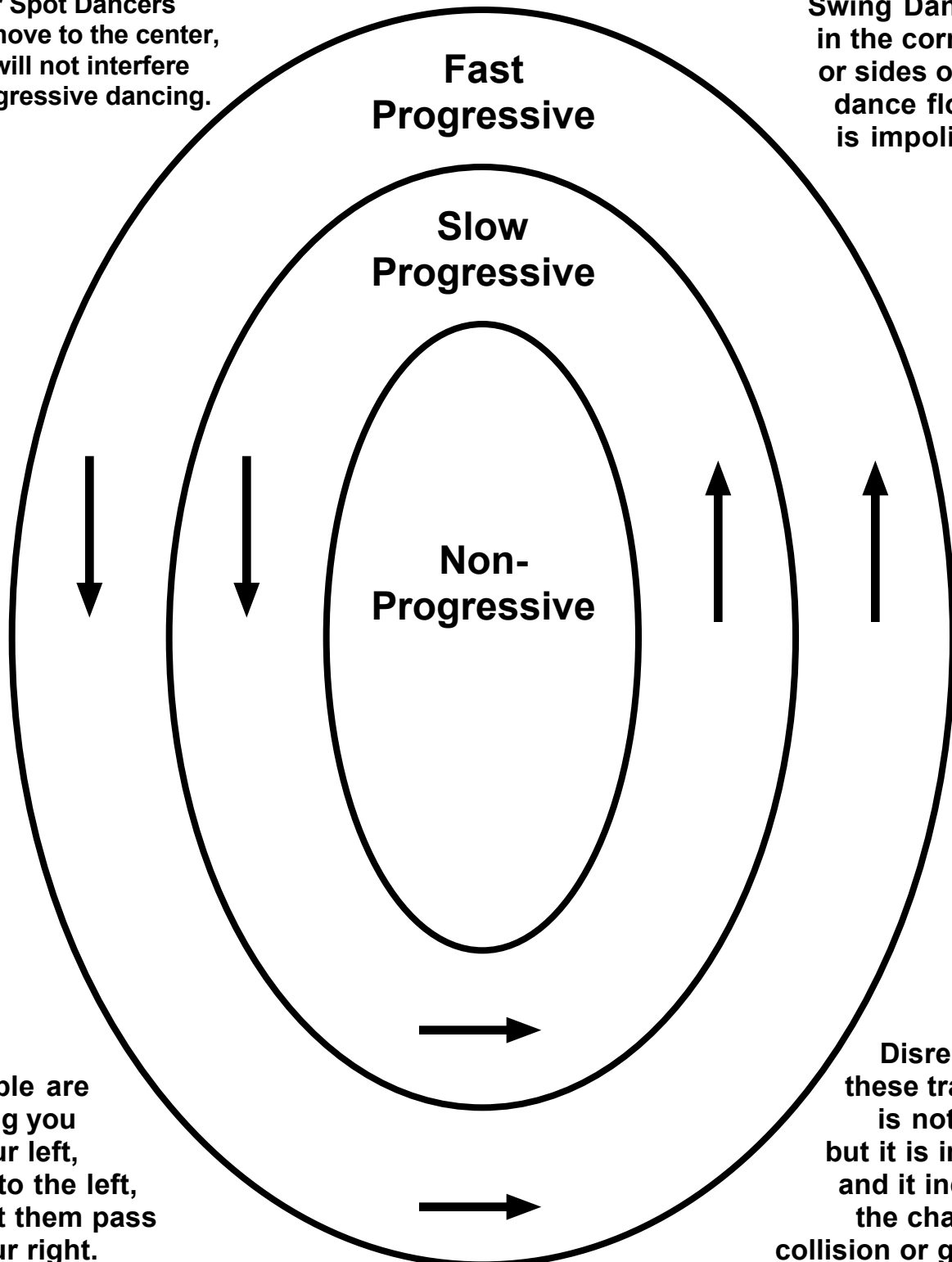
- 1. Line of Dance.** Follow Line of Dance guidelines.
- 2. How to Step.** Step normally: forward, backward, or to the side, just as you do when you walk.
- 3. When to Step.** The music and cadence are the primary influences for *when* to step. Begin on the down beat, stay in cadence, and you and your partner will know when each will step.
- 4. Where to Step** is communicated through the dance frame, the visual connection between partners, and Line of Dance protocol. A flexibly firm frame is critical to effective lead and follow.
- 5. Orientation.** Parallel and symmetric positioning complement the dance frame and help maintain appropriate positioning in open frame and when physically separated. Whether in closed or open position, before and after turns or spins, keep your dance frame's spatial orientation parallel or symmetric to your partner's.

Dance Friendly

Line of Dance, like "rules of the road," enables traffic to flow with minimal interference.

Swing or Spot Dancers should move to the center, so they will not interfere with progressive dancing.

Swing Dancing in the corners or sides of the dance floor is impolite.



If people are passing you on your left, move to the left, and let them pass on your right.

Disregarding these traditions is not illegal, but it is impolite, and it increases the chances of collision or gridlock.