

## Dancing With a Hat

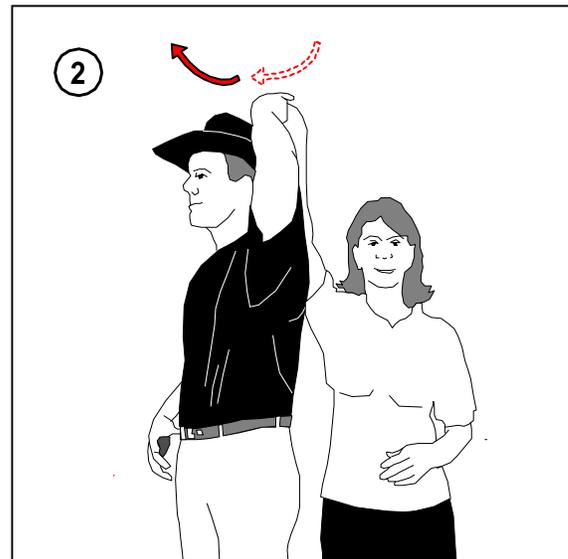
<b>Pre-requisite</b>	You must know how to complete a walk through-square off (an intermediate pattern) and how to spin a lady.
<b>Dancing With a Hat</b>	This segment is NOT about having a hat as a partner, although some dancers might consider that. It is about wearing a hat while dancing.
What is Problem?	<p>To the casual viewer and to the dancers that never do anything more than closed dancing, there is no problem – just wear your hat. There never is a hazard or threat.</p> <p>However, to those of us who like to do more advanced patterns that include spinning a lady (who may be wearing a hat also), walk through, ducks, etc., wearing a hat can pose a serious problem. In these patterns, every time the gentleman's arm goes over his head, he is knocking his hat off. Every time the lady spins, he is brushing her hat or knocking it off.</p>
<b>Two Simple Solutions</b>	There are two simple solutions to the problem – the dip and knowing where the hat brim is.
The Dip	<p>The dip is a technique completed entirely with the gentleman's head and is primarily an issue of timing. The concept is simple – dip the front brim of your hat down just before moving the connected arms over the head, and dipping the back brim down just before bringing the connected arms down. This takes the front brim under your arm and lowers the back brim out of the way of the descending arms.</p> <p>The dip is actually completed in a kind of roller coaster movement where the front brim dips first low and then high with the back brim doing just the opposite. It is accomplished by touching your chin to your neck to dip it forward and extending your chin to dip it back. It does take practice, but with practice, it will become almost second nature.</p>

Let us look at an example. In a walk through-square off, the gentleman completes a side together and leads the lady down the line of dance. He executes a "waiter's palm" at the same time and goes under his extended arm. To complete the dip, the gentleman must lower his chin to his throat so that the front brim of the hat dips under the arm.



Once his arm clears the front brim, the gentleman immediately raises his chin, extending his neck so that the back brim of the hat dips down.

After practice, this motion will become almost automatic. However, when learning new patterns, you must make a conscious effort to do the dip until it becomes automatic. Once it becomes automatic, the dip occurs so quickly that viewers are not aware of it.

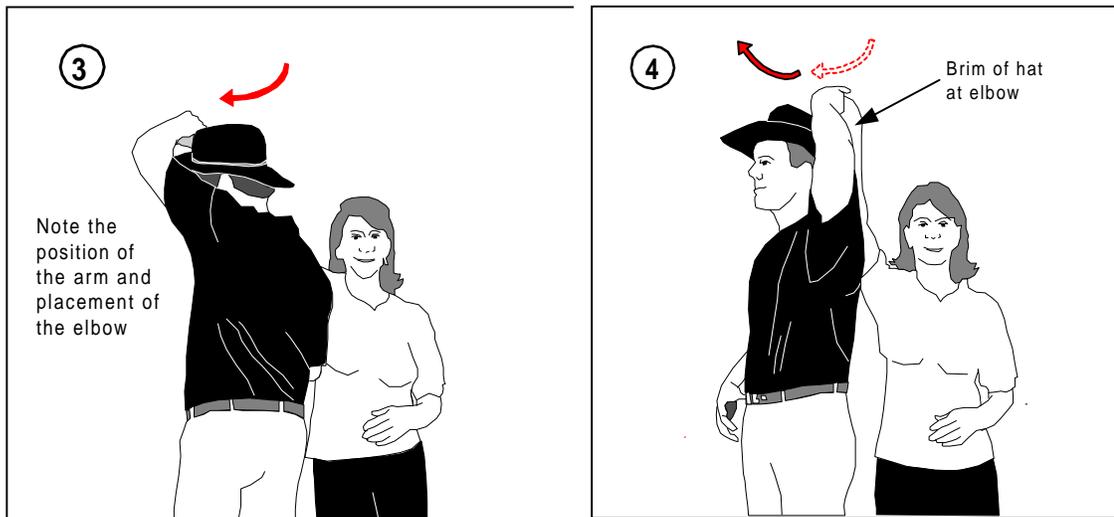


Knowing Where the Hat Brim is

The second solution of knowing the location of the hat brim is even less obvious to the casual viewer. However, this rule applies to both the gentleman and the lady.

Let's go back and look at the walk through-square off. A common thing that occurs, even when doing the dip properly, is that the gentleman's forearm brushes the left brim of the hat, sometimes knocking it off. The trick is to train yourself so that the side edge of the hat brim rests immediately at the crook of the elbow. (Refer to figure 3 and 4.)

This requires changing the position of the gentleman's left arm. Rather than holding the arm at a 45° angle, the arm must be held with the elbow pointing out to the side and such that the edge of the brim rests exactly at the crook of the elbow. This allows the hat to pass through without touching the forearm.



What about when the lady wears a hat?

Following the same rule, when the female is wearing a hat, the ideal would be for the lady to put the brim of the hat in the crook of her elbow as well. However, since the man is leading this, you must realize that the gentleman cannot always count on that.

Therefore, he must compensate at least until the lady has proved her ability to dance with a hat.

When the lady spins, the gentleman must reach a little further across so that the angle of the joined hands falls at the brim of the lady's hat and his arm arches over the top so he does not brush her hat off.

### Conclusion

The keys to dancing with a hat are location-location-location. The gentleman must be conscious of the location of the brim of the hat at all times. He must accommodate a lady's hat and he must roll his head so that the brim of his hat is missed by the connected arms.

This concludes the segment on dancing with a hat.

