

Jitterbug Under Arm Turns

By Louis & Betty Whistler

Pre-requisite

You must know basic jitterbug
(These are beginning patterns)

Two Basic Versions

There are two basic versions of under arm turns in jitterbug – inside turns and outside turns. Since a turn is generally led with the gentleman's left hand, an inside turn is led across the body toward the gentleman's right shoulder and the outside turn is led to the gentleman's left.

Concept of the under arm turn

The concept of the underarm turn is that it is a shared pattern. Although it is possible for the gentleman to stand in place and have the lady spin in front of him, the more common method is a partial exchange of places so the lady is not doing all the work.

In this pattern, the lady is the one who passes under the arched arms.

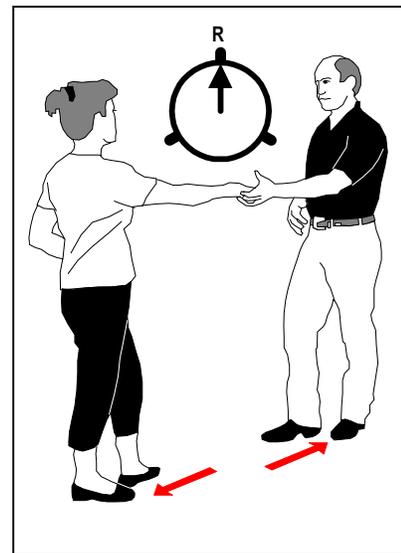
Inside Underarm Turn

With an **inside turn**, the gentleman moves clockwise one step diagonally to his left, guides the lady to turn counter-clockwise, turns to his right to face the lady, and prepares to rock back. The lady completes one step toward the gentleman's right shoulder, turns to her left under the arched hands (between the counts), faces the gentleman, and prepares to rock back.

Starting Point Rock -Step

The starting point for ALL jitterbug patterns is the rock step. After a basic of a left set and a right set, the gentleman uses the resistance in the connection between the partners to push the lady directly away and release his right hand. She gives him equal resistance and steps back on her right as he steps back on his left.

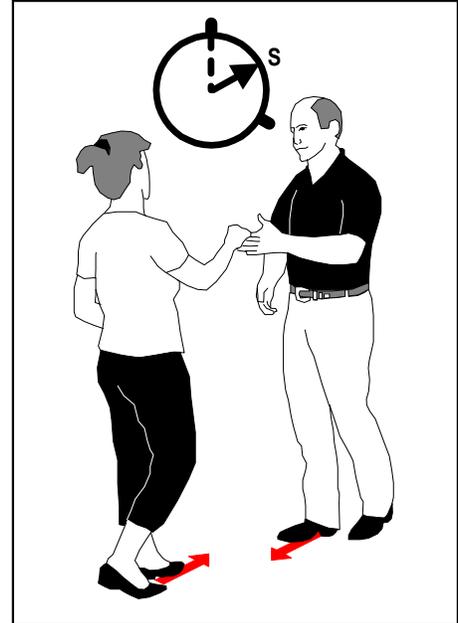
The gentleman's left hand is palm up and the lady's is palm down.



Rock-Step

In the second step of the rock set, the gentleman uses the connection between the partners to pull the lady forward. At the same time, he guides her across his body toward his right side. The arms of the two retract slightly, and the lady shifts her weight to her left foot while the gentleman shifts his weight to his right foot.

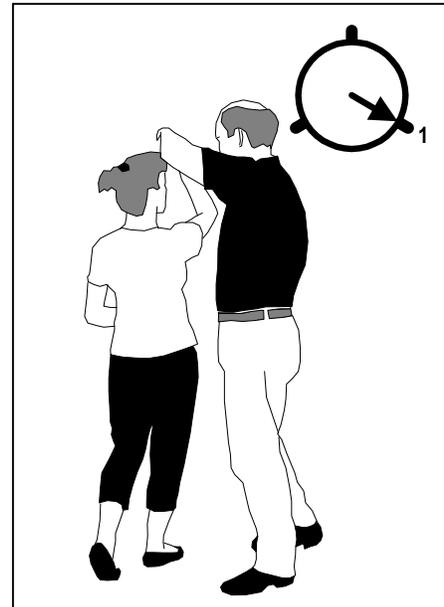
Although many holds are possible at this point, I like to turn my hand so the lady's hand is resting on two of my fingers – the index finger and the middle finger.



Left set

The gentleman continues to lead the lady one step to his right as he steps diagonal to his left and turns to follow her movement. The lady steps straight forward with her right foot as the arms arch over her head. She bends her right knee and her weight is over the ball of her right foot.

A key development in this step is that the gentleman flips his hand over so that his palm is facing her palm, but his palm is now pointing down. This is so that he can lead the lady to turn in between the counts and end with his palm facing up.

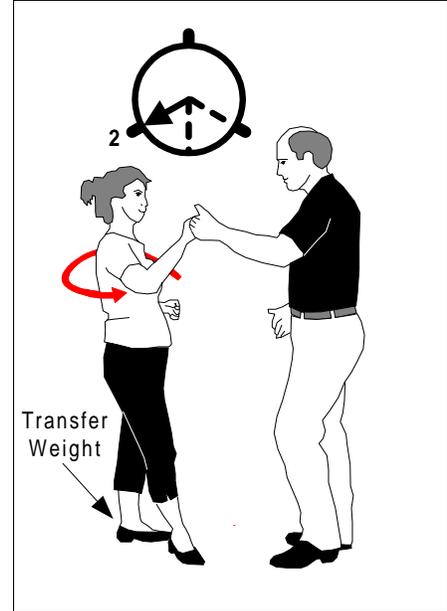


Right set

In between the counts of 1 and 2, the gentleman quickly turns the joined hands over the lady's head and guides her to face him as he steps on his right foot. It is important that he lower the hands at this time to signal the lady the turn is over.

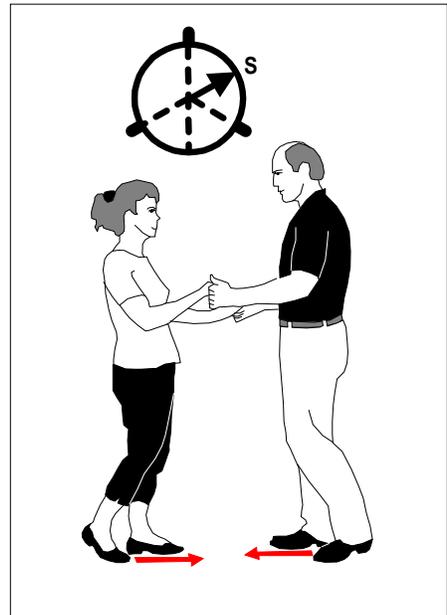
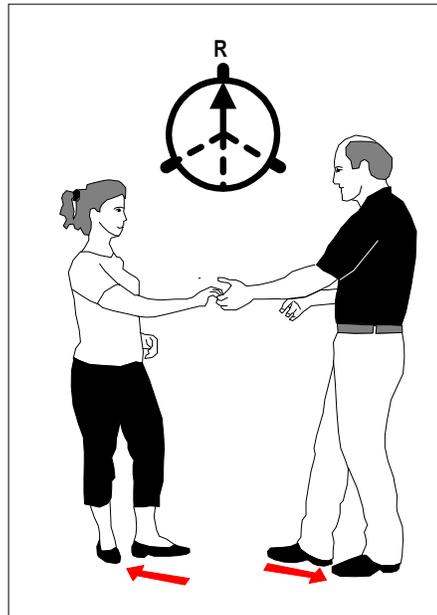
The lady spins on the ball of her right foot to face the gentleman and transfers her weight to the left foot on the count of 2.

Wherever the lady comes out is the new line of dance. The gentleman must gauge this and take his step #2 such that he is in front of the lady on her #2 step.



It is also important that the gentleman place his right foot such that the partners are close enough to end with the elbows at their sides.

Rock Steps



In the rock steps, the timing is such that the two steps are taken each in half the time it takes to complete either of the left set step or the right set step. The rock back should never be so far that there is no curve left in the joined arms. Straight arms leads to a whip lash affect that is not good for the neck and does not look good.

The gentleman can either pick up the lady's free hand or remain in a sugar-push position for the next pattern.

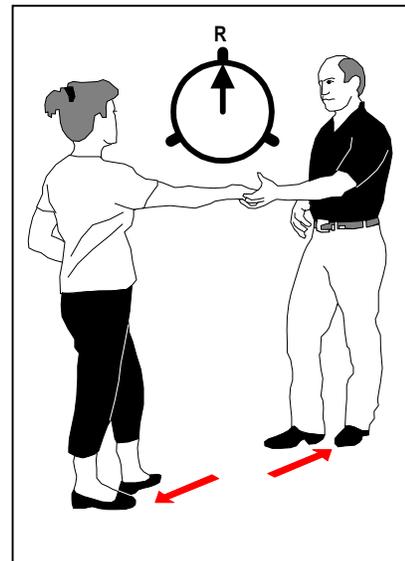
Outside Underarm Turn

With an **outside turn**, the gentleman moves counter-clockwise one step diagonally to his right, guides the lady to turn clockwise, turns to his left to face the lady, and prepares to rock back. The lady completes one step toward her right, turns to her right under the arched hands (between the counts), faces the gentleman, and prepares to rock back.

Starting Point
Rock -Step

The starting point for the outside turn is the rock step. After a basic of a left set and a right set, the gentleman uses the resistance in the connection between the partners to push the lady directly away and release his right hand. She gives him equal resistance and steps back on her right as he steps back on his left.

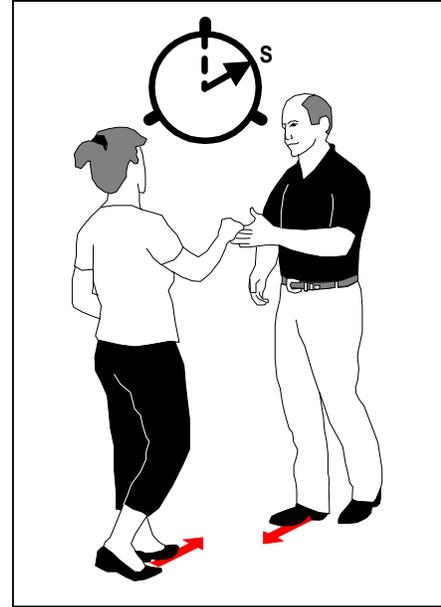
The gentleman's left hand is palm up and the lady's is palm down.



Rock-Step

In the second step of the rock set, the gentleman uses the connection between the partners to pull the lady forward. At the same time, he guides her straight at himself. The arms of the two retract slightly, and the lady shifts her weight to her left foot while the gentleman shifts his weight to his right foot.

The gentleman turns his hand so the lady's hand is resting on two of his fingers – the index finger and the middle finger.

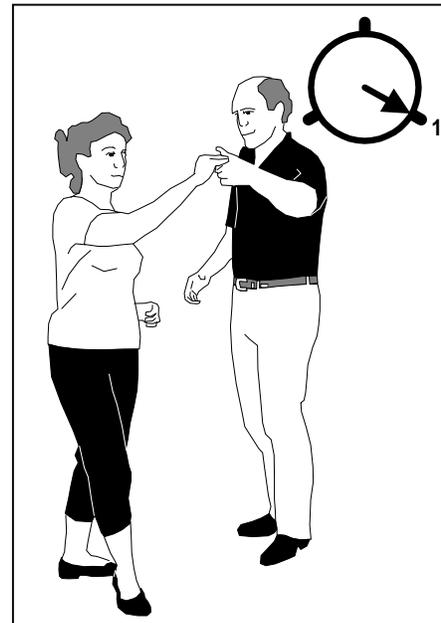


Left set

On the count of 1, the gentleman leads the lady to his left such that she pivots on the ball of her left foot and steps at an angle with her right foot.

The gentleman should gauge the distance between the partners and step as to track with the lady so the distance between them remains small.

The lady should see the back of her hand in front of her face indicating that she is about to step under the arched hands.



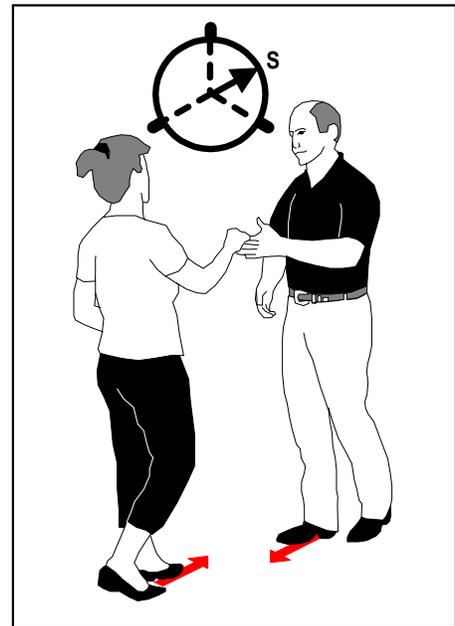
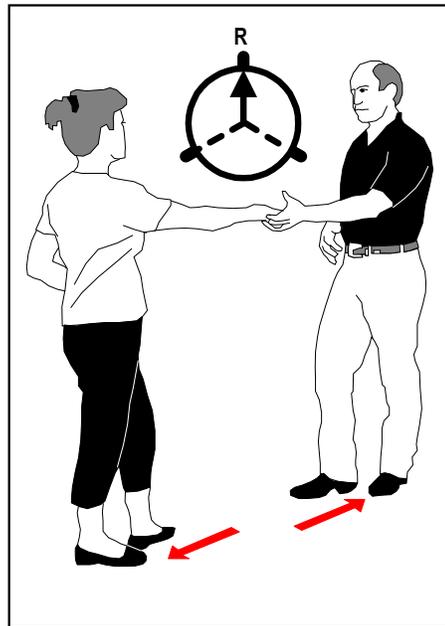
Right set

The gentleman leads the arched hands over the lady's head. She pivots to the right to face the gentleman and prepares to step with her right foot again. The gentleman steps in place with his right foot.

The joined hands are upside down at this time with the gentleman's hand on top palm down and the lady's hand on bottom palm up. He presses his finger tips into her palm during the following rock step, rolls the hand to the outside and returns to the standard hand hold.



Rock-Step



The gentleman uses the resistance in the connection to cause the lady to rock away from him, and then he gently tugs to cause her to rock toward him. Remember to set up prior to the rock step so that there is still spring left in your arms during the greatest extension.

Conclusion

The material presented here is not all-inclusive, but only touches the high points. There are many other tips to help in your jitterbug technique. Some of these tips will be presented in the course of other dance segments, while others may have to be taught in conjunction with an instructor present.

This concludes the segment on jitterbug underarm turns.