

Nite Club Basics

Pre-requisite

None

(These are basic patterns)

Introduction

Nite Club two step (commonly called “Nite Club” to distinguish it from the C&W two step) is a triple-step dance that combines a little bit of several dances and adds some twists of its own. It was invented by Buddy Schwimmer, a well-known Swing instructor in California. It became popular there and made its way across the country. Nite Club has been a fixture in Western dance competitions since 1996.

Latin dancers say Nite Club is taken from Salsa, Western dancers claim it is a slow Polka, and Ballroom dancers see resemblance to Samba and Bolero. Nite Club gives people an excellent dance to use for slow, romantic music.

In this segment, we are going to discuss:

- The music – how to step to the beat and how determine if it is a Nite Club.
- Contact – how to hold your partner.
- The basic foot work.

The Music

Nite Club music is slow and flowing. It is made up of two light, quick beats followed by an exceptionally heavy, slow beat. Then, there are two more lighter quick beats followed by a final heavy, sixth slow beat to complete a phrase.

Although we teach Nite Club predominantly as a Western dance, it should be clear that the dance is versatile enough to be danced to any 72-90 beat per minute romantic song that you wish to use. Nite club songs span an enormous range of music from an In Sync love ballad to a Gloria Estafan Latin torch song to a Platters hit from the 50s to Bill Withers’ 70s hit “Ain’t No Sunshine When She’s Gone”.

The Count

There are six counts in Nite Club – three for either side. These are counted as 1&2 (that is three beats with the “&” counting as a beat), pause, 3&4. The two count and the four count are very heavy and drawn out, while the 1, &, as well as the 3, & counts are quicker and more light. To assist visually, the “&” immediately following the 1 count is labeled as “1&”. Likewise, the “&” count following the 3 count is labeled as “3&”. This is to distinguish between the two “&” counts, which are different.

The way Buddy Schwimmer first designed the Nite Club footwork, dancers started on the quick steps which were lighter and more difficult for beginners to hear and start on. Many dance instructors have chosen to make the beginning easier by starting on the heavy, slow 2 count like a starting step. We at 2 Step2 Dance Studio have chosen likewise and teach bypassing the 1& for the beginning and starting on the slow, heavy 2 count. (This allows starting on a slow step but conforms to Buddy Schwimmer original footwork.)

The two count is where the gentleman (in closed position) steps diagonally to his left and the lady steps diagonally to her right. Although the first step is taken quickly, **it is held for a full slow count to accentuate the count.**

The gentleman continues to move to his left by crossing his right foot behind his left foot on the three count. The lady crosses her left foot behind her right foot. The placement of the foot on the floor on this count is important. It must be placed as near to the adjacent foot as possible to allow for a change in direction.

On the “&” count (the quick step following the three), the gentleman leads a change in direction and steps to his right, and the lady steps likewise. Since the feet are crossed, this calls for a separation or an opening of the scissors. This footwork can only occur if the placement of the foot on the three step was correct.

On the four count, the gentleman leads a step to his right with his right foot **and holds for the full count.** The lady steps likewise to her left.

On the one count, the gentleman crosses his left foot behind his right and places the foot adjacent to the other foot with the lady stepping likewise with her right foot. He leads a change of direction on the “&” count so that the two are now traveling to his left. As in the 3& count, the 1& count “opens the scissors”.

This completes the basic count and brings the dancers back to the starting point.

What is a beat? A beat in music is a heavy guitar strum, a drumbeat, or some other heavy sound in the music. It is the **natural** place you would snap your fingers or clap your hands if you were keeping time to the music.

The important thing to remember here is that in dance, you put your foot on the floor on the beat as opposed to picking it up. To practice, you can snap your fingers and stamp your feet as you listen to the music (guys use the left foot and ladies use the right.)

Is it a Nite Club? Listen to the music. Listen for the heavy downbeats to begin counting. If you can comfortably say, "TWO, three, and, FOUR, one, and, TWO" (where the TWO and the FOUR are heavy, drawn out beats) and stay in beat with the music, this is probably music to which you can dance a Nite Club.

Note that in some instances, even when the count fits, the music is too fast for Nite Club and the dance is rushed.

An alternative is to watch what other dancers are doing before you go out onto the floor. If they are dancing side to side in a slow step followed by two quick steps, it is probably a Nite Club.

If you still cannot determine what it is, ask someone nearby. Most dancers are friendly and they will be glad to tell you.

Contact

Face each other. Since this is a more or less stationary dance, it might be best to position yourselves in the center of the floor to allow other dancers to dance around the outside of the dance floor.



**Ballroom
Closed
Position**

There are two standard starting positions for Nite Club – the Ballroom Closed Position and the East Coast Swing Position.

In the Ballroom closed position:

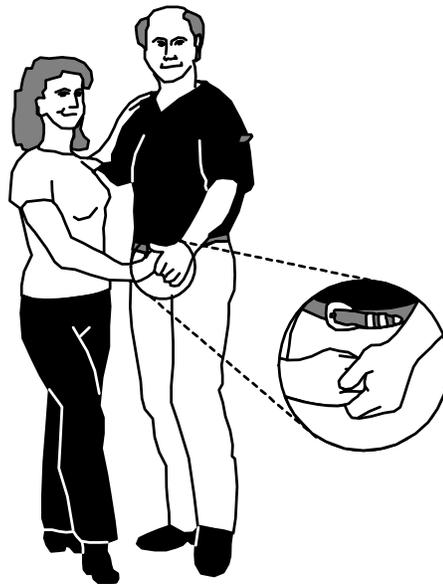
Gentlemen – Put your right hand under the lady's left arm and place it gently on her left shoulder blade. Keep your fingers together and turn the tip of your hand down so that it raises your right elbow to create a shelf for the lady to rest her arm. Hold your left hand out to the side about level with her chin but below her eyes. Hold your palm forward and fingers pointing to the outside to create a fence for her right hand.

Ladies – Rest your left elbow on the gentleman's arm and cup your left hand on the ball of his right shoulder. Gently rest your right hand on top of the gentleman's left hand. Lady's arms should look parallel from the back.

**East Coast
Swing Position**

The East Coast Swing position naturally comes from influence of the East Coast Swing dance. It also has four contact points like the Ballroom Closed Position, but the clasped, combined hands are different. In this case, the lady's right hand is held palm down and the gentleman's left hand is palm down likewise but resting across her fingers.

This opens the dancers up to the gentleman's left and makes a more easy and elegant movement from side to side. This stance is a favorite at 2 Step 2 Studio.



We do three things to prevent stepping on each other's toes:

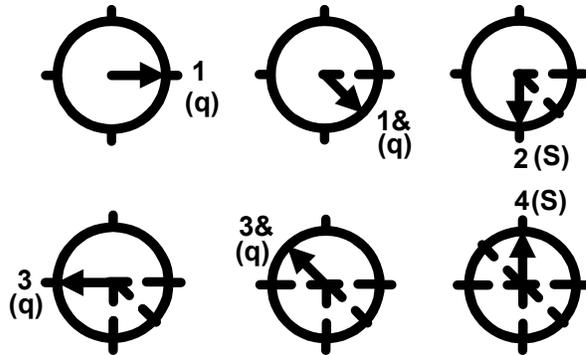
1. Ladies and gentlemen dance with opposite footwork – guys start with the left foot and ladies start with the right foot. Provided they are facing each other, as the gentleman steps to his left, the lady steps to her right almost like a mirror image.
2. As the lady and gentleman are dancing sideways, there is always a place for their foot. On occasion during complex and tight patterns, the gentleman opens distance between the two to prevent her from being too confined.
3. Any pattern in which either the lady or the gentleman changes track, the pattern is lead so that the change occurs after the slow 2 or the slow 4 count so that the partner's feet are separated providing space for moving toward the partner and stepping between the feet.

Connection and Frame

The connection and frame are created by keeping a slight tension in your elbows. This allows both the lady and the gentleman to feel movement of the partner before a step occurs so they can step likewise..

Try it out. If you would like to learn more of connection and frame, refer to the on-line segment entitled "connection and frame."

The Nite Club dance clock



Unlike the regular clock, the Nite Club dance clock is divided into six segments to correspond to the beats of the basic Nite Club music. Clocks for other dances will be different. The spaces between the markers along the outside of the clock represent full beats of music, and the arrow points to the beat representing the step being taken.

Steps number 2 and 4 are slow steps. You will note that the spaces following them are large – in fact they occupy 1/4 the face of the clock. The combined steps 1, 1& and 2, as well as steps 3, 3&, 4 take up 1/4 the face each.

Count Timing

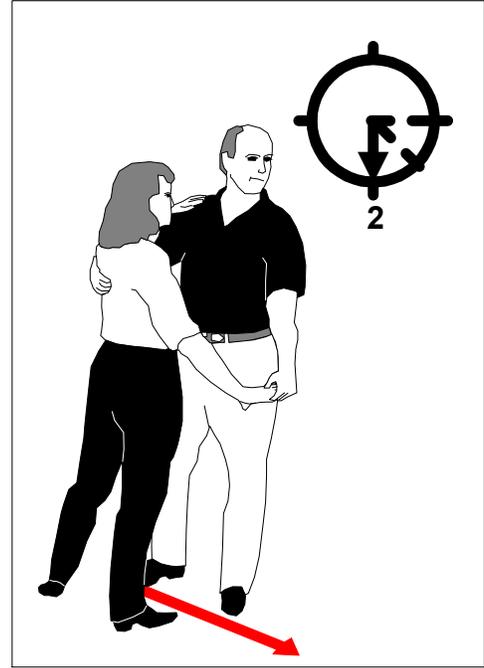
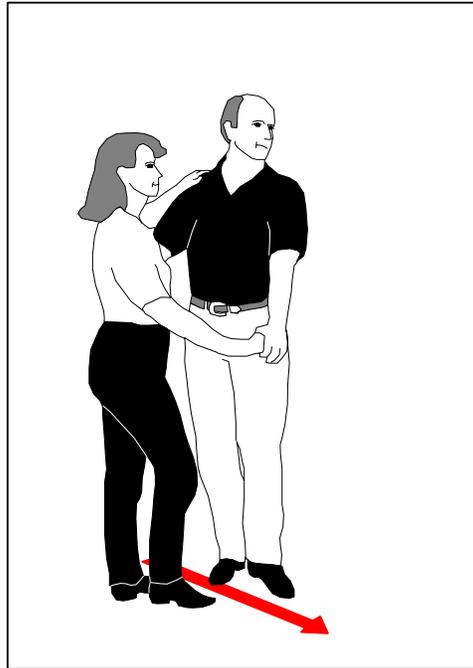
An important point to note is that the timing occurs after the step, not before it. Therefore, the timing for the first step occurs after the step of count 1.

Basic Steps

The First Half

Partners take the starting stance. This can be either the East Coast Swing position we at 2 Step 2 Studio prefer or the Ballroom Closed Position.

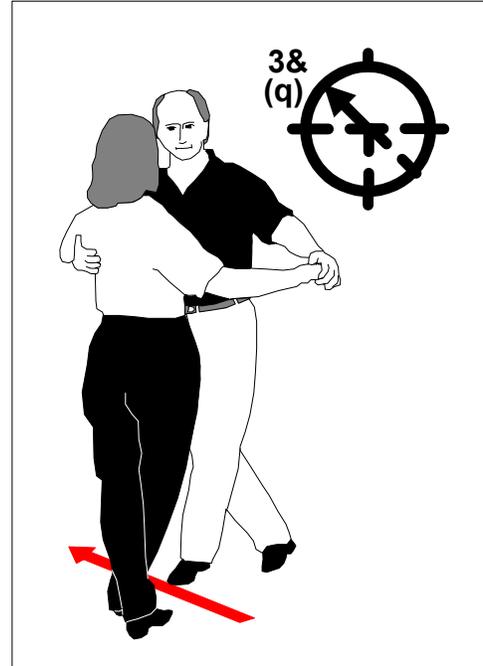
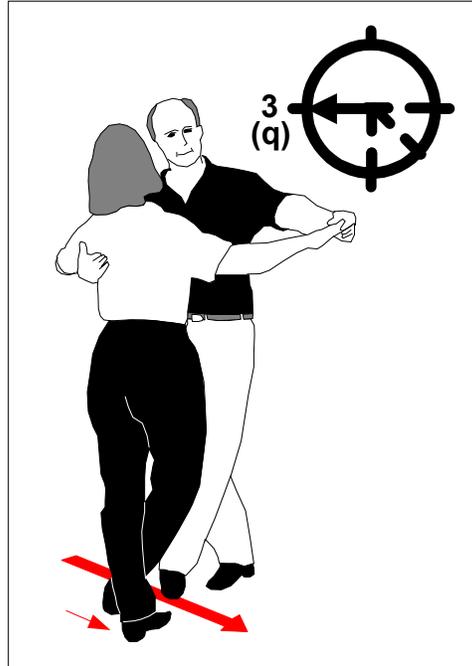
Gentleman's weight is on his right foot and lady's weight is on her left foot.



Dancers may start on the count of 1& by stepping to the gentleman's right on the quick steps. However, it is often difficult to hear the light beats for a start, and we choose to pass up the first two counts and start to the gentleman's left on the 2 count.

In this case, he steps to his left and holds there for the full count that follows. This accentuates the slow step.

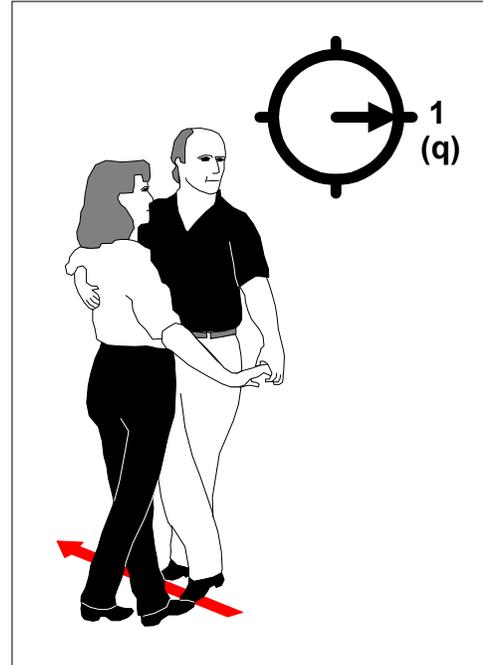
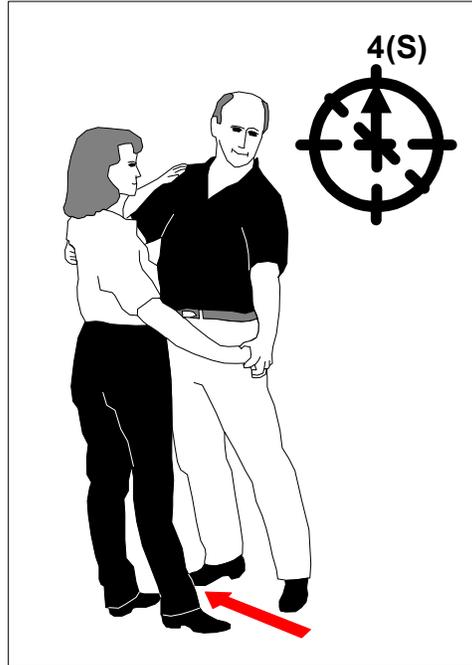
On the count of 3, the dancers are still moving to the gentleman's left. They each cross behind stepping as near to their "anchor" foot as possible to allow change of direction. On the count of 3&, the gentleman leads a change of direction to his right causing the dancers to open the scissors of their legs.



The Second Half

The gentleman leads a slow step on the 4 count to his right and holds it for a full slow count.

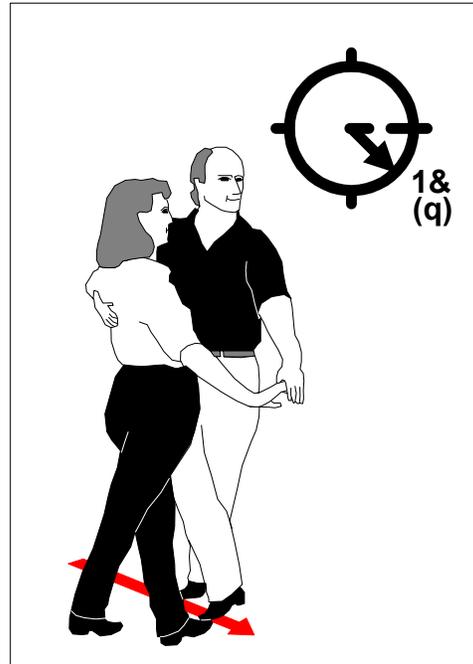
On the count of 1, he continues to move to his right so that the dancers step cross behind.



Place the traveling foot is as near the "anchor" foot as possible to allow change of direction in the next step.

On the 1& count, the gentleman leads a quick step change of direction back to his right. This opens the scissors of their legs.

The basic is completed by a slow step to his left held for the full slow count of 2 that is the same as the dancers started.



Don't be Afraid

Every dancer out there has “paid their dues”. They have struggled just like you. However, they are concentrating on their own efforts and not upon you. They do not care if you make a mistake, so go ahead and make them. You have just as much right to be on the dance floor as they do, so get out there and dance. It may be a struggle, but that is ok. Dance as if no one is watching you.

Protect your Lady

As you are dancing, check often around you to be aware of the traffic that is happening nearby. Do not compel your lady to collide with another dancer and do not allow them to collide with her. Take smaller steps or maneuver her as necessary into an open spot. Although the Nite Club is considered a stationary dance, you can maneuver on the floor if you pay attention. Avoid collisions with other dancers.

Take the Blame

If a collision does occur, remember that it does no one any good to get upset – this is just recreation. The best policy is to apologize regardless if it is your fault or not.

And last, but not least – if you do bump into someone and knock over their drink, offer to replace it, and try to be more careful.

Conclusion

The material presented here is not all-inclusive, but only touches the high points. There are many other tips to help in your Nite Club 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 basic Nite Club. Come take a class or private with us soon!