

Line of Dance and Dancer Alignment Directions

Every ballroom dance can be categorized as either a "Spot" Dance or a "Progressive" Dance. Spot dances are characterized by dance movements performed in one general area of the floor throughout the dance. Progressive dances are characterized by dance movements that cause dancers to travel continuously. The Line of Dance only applies to Progressive dances.

Most Smooth or Standard ballroom dances are classified as progressive dances, while most Rhythm or Latin dances are classified as spot dances with the notable exceptions of the Samba and the Paso Doble.

SPOT DANCES (no line of dance)

- Cha Cha
- Rumba
- Bolero
- Swing/Jive
- Mambo/Salsa
- Merengue

PROGRESSIVE DANCES (traveling around line of dance)

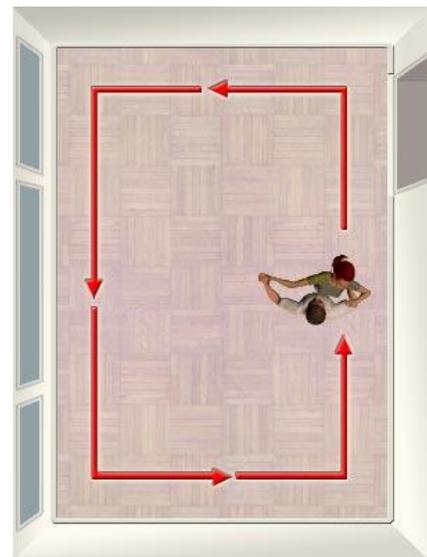
- Waltz
- Tango
- Viennese Waltz
- Foxtrot
- Quickstep
- Samba*
- Paso Doble*

To help facilitate and avoid collisions while dancing around a ballroom dance floor for progressive dances, each couple follows the "Line of Dance". The Line of Dance (LOD) is an imaginary line which represents the counterclockwise flow of traffic around the dance floor. All dance couples will move in the same general counterclockwise direction.

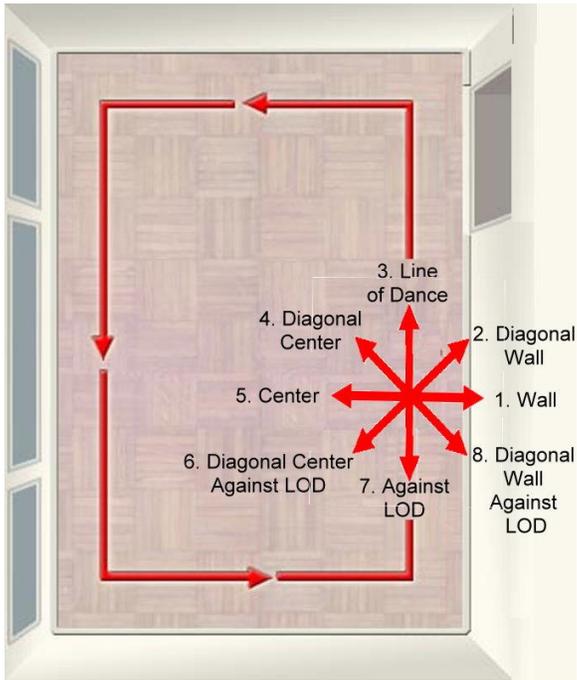
The line of dance is more of a rectangle than a circle as most ballroom dance floors are rectangular. This divides the line of dance into two distinct areas: Sides and Corners. When dancing at the side of the room, you will travel along the line of dance toward the corner.

When the corner is reached, you turn the corner and begin moving down the "new" line of dance. It is best to use the sides of the room to travel. The corners give you move flexibility to turn and change direction.

Stationary figures, lines, and poses should be reserved for the center of the room, where the flow of traffic is less pronounced.



Not all movements of progressive dances will travel exactly along the Line of Dance. Some movements can travel across it diagonally by weaving in and out or move against it for a short period of time. Dance patterns and step layouts will refer to LOD alignment directions, which is given as from the leader's perspective. Alignment directions may refer to Facing (Body Position) or Pointing (Foot Direction).



Stand facing a Wall and then turning left 45 degrees one step at a time you can get a feel of a dancer going through the following alignment directions.

1. Facing Wall (FW)
2. Facing Diagonal Wall (DW or FDW) (next step is forward)
3. Facing Line Of Dance (LOD or FLOD) (next step is forward)
4. Facing Diagonal Center (DC or FDC) (next step is forward)
5. Facing Center (Center, FC)
6. Backing Diagonal Center (BDC) (next step is back)
7. Backing Line Of Dance (BLOD) (next step is back)
8. Backing Diagonal Wall (BDW) (next step is back)
9. Facing Wall (FW) (Return to Start)

Sometimes a pattern will give an alignment of "pointing" rather than "facing" some alignment. This means that the foot being placed points in that direction, but the body does not (yet). For example, PDW (pointing diagonal wall) versus FDW (facing diagonal wall).

Staten Island Ballroom Dancers, Inc.

Email: info@siballroom.org