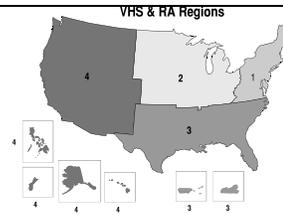


Denver Two Step

Country Western Dance

Level 2



Denver Two Step, Level Two by
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I. More Theory.

1. Men's Rules.

a) Get Back in Step. If you lose your step, smile and start over. One of you should practice getting back in step. If you both attempt to get back in step on the fly, you will remain out of step. On the three step you can get back in step with a walk, walk. On the two step look for the first slow or the first quick to regain your step.

b) Always Assume that You are Doing It Right. Confidence builds good dancers. Lack of confidence is a self-imposed roadblock. If you always assume that you are doing right, you may be doing right and that is wonderful. You might have the right basic idea and need practice to smooth it out. If you are doing it wrong, a confident attitude does you no harm. Confidence promotes self esteem which puts you into a receptive learning state.

Assuming that you are doing it wrong, does you no good. Generally you have the right basic idea. It feels awkward at first because you are trying a new step. If you assume that you are doing it wrong because it feels awkward, you are on the road to ruin.

c) Still Standing Rule. Whenever you are trying to learn a new turn it probably will feel awkward at first. As long as both of you are still standing at the end, consider this to be successful. Congratulate your partner and tell yourself that you are getting this. It may take three or four weeks of practice to make it look and feel smooth.

d) Everybody Gets Better. If your hearing and physical coordination are within normal limits, you will get better. You will get better each week. Trust me, I'm an attorney.

e) Division of Labor Rule. The Man's duty is to make the woman look good. The woman's duty is to listen, respond and wait (following).

2. Women's Rules. Careful attention to the basics is well rewarded. Inquiring minds want to know, "Does she or doesn't she?"

a. Rule of Continuation. If you start in a direction, keep going in that direction until stopped. Find the flow. Go with the flow.

b. Open Hand Rule. Look for the open hand. Grab the open hand.

c. Billowed Sail Concept: When the man's right hand is over your left shoulder, press back against it. This will help keep you in step and tuned into his signals.

d. Waiting Rule. Each step contains three parts: action, reaction, and wait. Action is the lead or cue. Reaction is the response (following). If you are pinwheeling backwards, then the

waiting step is to continue rotating backwards. If you are twirling, then the waiting step is to continue twirling.

e. Err on the side of holding on. The man can make you let go of his hand. If in doubt, err on the side of holding onto his hand. Hold onto your posture and position.

3. Match the Music to the Step and the Step to the Music. Each dance has its own personality. The Two Step is a smooth sliding strut. It is spunky and sassy. The Three Step is a flowing circular step dance. The signature turn is the 360. The waltz is a romantic swaying dance. Its signature turn is the z.

The faster the music, the closer you want to be. This reduces travel time. Bend elbows and knees more. Take smaller steps.

4. Terminology. We generally assign each turn a name for shorthand reference. As turns become more complex, describing each movement becomes unwieldy. Some turn names give credit to their founder like the Juan. Most are designed to prompt recall. For example, somebody named Kelly might have developed the banana split, however if you think of two scoops of ice cream in a banana split, it might help you recall the turn.

Renaming turns to your liking is recommended. Personalizing turns to your style is what makes us individuals. Choosing not to dance to fast numbers and weeding out moves which don't turn you on, is an important part of dancing.

Twirling moves include the outside twirl, whips and spins. The essence of a twirling move is graceful flowing rotation.

Posing moves include the window, the arch and the look back. The essence of a posing move is grace, posture and eye contact.

Traveling moves include the figure 8s, duck outs, lariats, tunnels and lassos. The essence of a traveling move is precision.

Same hand moves begin with the man's left hand in the woman's right hand. Man's right hand in the woman's left hand. Same hand positions include basic, look back and the basket.

Cross hand moves begin with the man's left hand in the woman's left hand. Man's right hand in the Woman's left hand. Cross hand positions include the horseshoe, window and high wrap.

A **combination** is a series of turns. A basket to breakaway and then into the look back. My dance classes concentrate on steps and turns. Combinations are generally left to the dancers.

A **switch** changes sides. A right basket to a left basket.

An **exchange** changes sex. A woman's basket into a man's basket.

II. Class Structure. Class is designed to introduce ideas, to demonstrate steps and turns. Taking notes is a good idea.

Class needs to go fast enough so as not to bore the quick learners. Class cannot go slow enough to perfect any particular turn. It takes around fifty trial runs before a turn will begin to look good. I teach steps and turns in class. Practice is necessary for perfection and polish.

In order of priority, you will learn the most about dance from the following:

- a) Practice
- b) Talking with your partner
- c) Asking other couples
- d) Class Notes
- e) Dance teachers

1. Breakdown and Integration. A turn consists of:

- 1) movement and position
- 2) stepping in time to the music, and
- 3) smooth flow

Break down is the process of teaching one small step at a time. Look at the movement, then the footwork, and then the beat. Learn the turn first. Work on smoothness later.

Integration is the process of putting it all together. Match the movement, flow and rhythm to the turn. Dancing is done by feel. A turn is done right if it feels smooth. A turn is done wrong if it feels jerky or awkward. Don't expect that a turn will feel smooth at first. As long as you are still standing, assume that you are doing it right.

2. Presentational Method. Most dance teachers use the presentational method. A turn is demonstrated. The teacher does the turn over and over. The teacher instructs the students to raise all the left hands over the head on count one and all of the women twirl on count two.

I do not favor the presentational method. I believe that it is an impediment to leading and following. It emphasizes lecture. The person who does the turn the most times (the teacher) already knows how to do the turn. The presentational method is generally accompanied by the dance teacher's zonk.

3. Dance Teacher's Zonk: A couple does a turn three times correctly. They make one wrong turn and the teacher corrects them. They have no firm indication that the first three were right. They have a strong indication that they did wrong. There must be a better way. You don't teach a child to walk by letting him take three steps and then criticizing when he falls down. This problem is much worse in bigger classes. This problem is not solved by saying looking good or other positive words of encouragement. Praise is good but not sufficient.

This cycle of despair is a contributing factor to wimpy dancers. A couple becomes acutely aware of the sheer number of things they are doing wrong. They are less confident after the fourth lesson than they were after the first lesson. Many students are afraid of attempting new turns.

4. Interactive Method. I have developed a different method, an interactive method. My way:

- a) Demonstrate the turn
- b) Explain the Turn
- c) Break down the Turn
- d) You practice the turn
- e) I follow each individual couple and let them know that they are doing right.

I emphasize practice and individual feedback. My method encourages you to learn from your neighbors and to build confidence based on the still standing rule. You have time to practice each turn at least five times during each song. My emphasis is on your working out the bugs yourself.

5. Turn Groups. Most of my lessons are based on turn groups. I think that it is easier to teach the basket, basket pinwheel and basket crossover. Each turn builds on the one before it. My hope is that the turn group makes sense as a unit. Most of my turn groups include an easy, intermediate and more complex turn.

I believe that it is harder to teach, and much harder to remember, the pretzel followed by the basket, followed by the neck wrap. If I teach the basket, the basket pinwheel and then the basket crossover, each turn builds on that night's theme, the basket.

My goal is to give you enough basic skills to enjoy dancing. To dance with confidence. If you already enjoy dancing, I want to give you enough skills so that through diligence, dedication and upper level dance classes, you can practice and get good. I hope that most students are confident after level one. I hope that all students are confident after level two.

IV. Possible Lessons. This is your class. If you want to learn different turns or steps let me know. If you want to move faster or slower let me know. Each class generally starts with a review from night one.

1. Horseshoe Night.

Horseshoe
Horseshoe pinwheel
Rocking horse

Hand Changes (Intersections from same hand to cross hand)
simple hand change
eye level twirl

banana split	
2. 360s 180s clockwise 360 counterclockwise 360	
3. Cowboy Cha-Cha	
4. Swing Night Basic Man's Under Lady's Under (figure 8s) Backpass (backpass exchange) 6 count swing 8 count swing	
5. Window Night. Window Window switch Window pump	
6. Other Possible Lessons.	
Look Back	Swinging Doors
Pretzel	High Wrap
Arch	Cotton Eyed Joe
Schottische	Slow Dancing
Double Two Step	
3. Cowboy Cha Cha a) Forward-Back (Cha Cha Step) (Rock step forward) Step forward on your right foot Step back on your left foot one, two, three back (the cha cha step) Step back on your left foot Step forward on your right foot	

(rock step back)

b) **Turn-Turn. (Cha Cha turns).**

turn, two, three forward
(180 degree clockwise turn)
Rock Step forward on right foot

turn, two, three back
(180 degree counterclockwise turn)
Rock Step back on left foot

c) **Quarter turn** (followed by two military turns).

quarter turn, two, three (clockwise)
Step forward on right foot
Right foot plants and

pivot 180 degrees on both feet
left hand over man's head
one, two, three
(1st military turn)

left foot plants,
pivot 180 degrees on both feet
left hand over man's head
(2nd military turn)

d) **Grind.**

sway forward
sway back
sway forward
sway back
one, two, three
repeat (begin again).