

Cambridge Dancers Club - 8 weeks Beginners course - Handout

Here is a summary of the programme for the 8 weeks beginners course. Enjoy!

WEEK 1

- **Warm-up routine:**

The warm-up is the same at the beginning of every class. It has several goals: 1) warm up the body to avoid injuries, 2) develop some core Cuban body movement, 3) work out to develop the muscles involved in the Cuban movement. It starts from the head and works all the way down to the toes: neck, shoulders, spine, hips, knees, ankles, toes. The more you do it, the easier it gets!

- **Basic steps:**

Keeping the salsa beat: salsa has 6 steps in 8 beats, 1-2-3-(pause)-5-6-7-(pause).

Natural steps like walking, but with the funny salsa beat.

Please keep knees slightly flexed (“demi pli ”).

Men always start with the left foot (L).

Ladies always start with the right foot (R).

1. **Son step:** Men=forward-step-step, back-step-step; L-R-L, R-L-R.

Ladies=back-step-step, forward-step-step; R-L-R, L-R-L.

2. **Side step** (a.k.a **Cucaracha**): side-step-step, side-step-step.

3. **Salsa step:** open-step-step, open-step-step. Whole body turns 90 degrees like opening a door.

- **Partner position:**

Man’s right hand at the **center** of the Lady’s back. Man please lift right elbow to provide support.

Lady’s left arm rests on Man’s right arm, left hand rests on Man’s shoulder.

Man’s left hand palm-to-palm with Lady’s right hand. Please keep a bit of tension but not too much, like looking for something in the dark. **Drill:** 3 basic steps in partner position.

- **Dile que No** (DQN): This is a **half turn**. It starts like Son step: Man forward, Lady backwards.

Partners are swapping position in the course of that move. Man “opens the door” and “unrolls the red carpet”, Lady walks past the Man.

Men: inside-and-open, pull-and-go with the flow. (1-2-3, 5-6-7.)

Ladies: back-and-back again (lift left leg), forward-forward-pivot. (1-2-3, 5-6-7.)

- **Dame:** when everyone is dancing in a circle, this is a way to change partner. On the 8, “5-6-7-y”, face the next partner, who was standing behind you, then follow directly with Dile que No.

WEEK 2

- Basic steps:

4. **Casino step:** Ladies same steps as Son step, Men invert: back with left, forward with right. Instead of going in the same direction, partners go away from each other, then close again. “Open-step-step, Close-step-step”. Touch hands on the way back.

5. **Guapea step:** like Casino step but looking inside the circle on 1-2-3, “open close” like a book.

Man left hand holds Lady’s right hand. 1-2-3: look inside the circle; 5-6-7: look at your partner.

- **Enchufla:** This is another **half turn**. Partners swap position. Steps: back-rock-quarter turn, back-rock-forward. On the 4, the Man is behind the Lady, both look in the same direction. “1-2-3-CHECK, 5-6-7-finish facing each other”.

- **First routines:** Enchufla immediately followed by Dile que No. Then Dame followed by Dile que No. Then start again Enchufla-DQN with new partner.

WEEK 3

3 moves for the price of one: same footwork, 3 different arm variants.

- **Vuelta (a.k.a. Hecho, or pimienta):** half turn, swapping positions in 8 beats. Man keeps focus on the Lady throughout the 8 beats. Lady turns clockwise. Lady loses sight of the Man but looks back at him. Lady walks under Man’s left arm. Lady’s trajectory stays inside the circle, Man stays outside. Lady’s trajectory follows the shape of a giant pretzel.

- **Sombrero** (“the hat”): same footwork and same trajectory, but different arm work. Partners start hands crossed, Man’s right hand holds Lady’s right hand. Right hands on top, lefts hands below. Everything else same as Vuelta. Man please mind your elbows: pointing at the ceiling to avoid accidents and so that Lady can walk under your arched arms.

- **Vuelta Vacilala** (“turn and admire her”): same footwork and same trajectory, but Lady turns without Man leading her, Lady “goes free”. Man throws the Lady’s hand on 1 to start the move. It is important to look back at each other, “leading with the eyes”.

WEEK 4

- Hecho + DQN **lead with right hand**.
- **Evelyn**: 1-2-3: Man walks left of the Lady into Lady's extended right arm; 5-6-7: Man does a **hook turn**. Then Man brings Lady back with right-hand-lead DQN.
- **Enchufla Ronde**: enchufla followed by Man's hook turn. 3 options for hand position during the hook turn: high, low, crossed.

WEEK 5

- **Paseala al Frente** ("promenade in front"): Man leads Lady laterally inside-outside of the circle. Lady walks forward in a figure of 8. Ladies please don't anticipate, let the Man lead you. Ladies change of direction: please use your hips to pivot, like kicking someone with your hip. It is essential to keep the knees flexed for this to work.
- **Sacala**: starts like Paseala al Frente. Throw the Lady inside the circle, Lady turn clockwise then comes back. "Yo-yo" effect.
- **Exhibela**: same as Sacala, but lead with right hand.
- **Routine**: Enchufla, Sacala, DQN; then Enchufla (change hands), Exhibela (change again), DQN.

WEEK 6

- **Enchufla complicado**: 2-bars move. This is a full turn, swapping positions twice. 1-2-3: swap positions like Enchufla but in 3 beats only. 5-6-7: like Enchufla steps (back-rock-turn), but Man brings Lady behind him with hand in "holding tray" position. Man walks under his own right arm. Then: 123,567: normal Enchufla in 8 beats.
- **Setenta**: 3-bars move. Starts parallel hands (not crossed). 1-2-3, 5-6-7: Man looks at Lady and turns her clockwise in 8 beats without swapping positions, Man's right hand down, left hand up. Lady walks under Man's left arm. Ends in "arm lock" position: Lady's left arm is locked behind her back. Then: 1-2-3, 5-6-7: like Enchufla Complicado. Then: 1-2-3, 5-6-7: DQN.

WEEK 7

- **Coca-Cola**: enchufla-DQN including an anti-clockwise turn for the Lady.
- **Balsero**: start like a sombrero, but the Lady walks one more turn around the Man. Man keeps both hands up.
- **Reverencia**: like balsero, but the Man keeps his right hand down and ducks under the Lady's right arm.

WEEK 8

- **Programme review** and Q&A.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- Always step in the beat, like walking with the funny 1-2-3-pause, 5-6-7-pause.
- Use the circle as a reference to understand the spatial organization of the moves: inside, outside, left, right = North, South, East, West.
- Always keep your knees flexed and your body relaxed. Think "shock absorbers".
- Step toes first, then rest of the foot on the floor. That makes the floor feel softer.
- Keep your steps short, one shoe-size maximum.
- Width of space between feet = width of your shoulders.
- Dance close to each other. "Hug circle": Man always keeps the Lady in the space defined by his arms held in a circle shape, that's where the lead is most effective.
- **AND MOST OF ALL: HAVE FUN! :-)**

OTHER CUBAN SALSA CLASSES AND PARTIES IN CAMBRIDGE

- **The Sunday Salsa Lounge**: class+social every Sunday at the Man on the Moon, 2 Norfolk St., Cambridge CB1 2LF. Class 19:30-20:30, then social dance until 23:30.
- **The Thursday Salsa Social Club**: every Thursday at the Cambridge Working Men's Club, 125 East Road, Cambridge CB1 1DB (opposite the Crown Court). CWMC parking is freely available for club members. Fantastic venue, low cost drinks. Class 1, 19:30-20:30, is a new theme every week for all levels; class 2, 20:30-21:30, is salsa on 3 levels. Then 21:30-23:45 free salsa party!

Thanks and see you soon! :-)

-- DJ Sacha

<http://www.CambridgeCubanSalsa.co.uk> - Facebook group "Cambridge Cuban Salsa" - 079 03 828 017