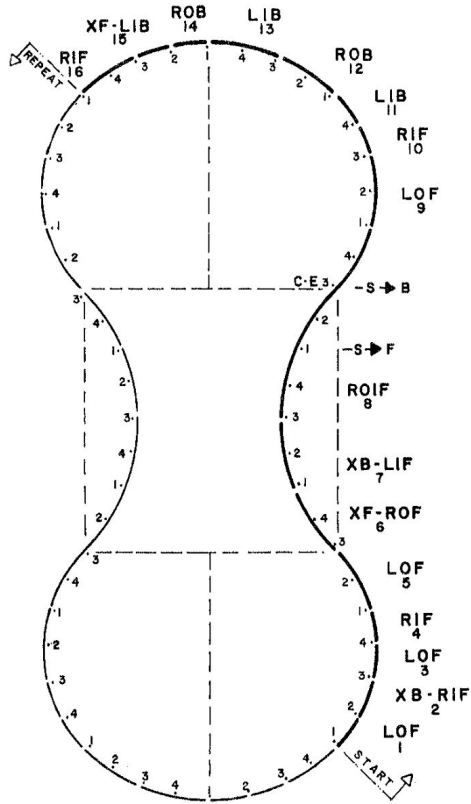


Learning a New Dance

A Step-by-Step Guide by Marisa Kahn

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SIESTA TANGO



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When introduced to a new dance, it is easier to learn if you know what exactly you're getting into. First, print out your dance pattern and analyze the dance.

Okay, so what does analyzing a dance really mean?

Before you even try it on skates (or even stocking feet), try to understand as much as you can about the dance as possible, even if you don't end up memorizing the exact step order and how long to hold each step.

Levels of Analyzation – Ask yourself...

Is the dance only forward steps, or are there some backwards steps? What is the shape of the dance?

1.

What types of footwork are there? (ex. XF, XB, swings, DC, single-step edge changes, etc.)

2.

Can you compare any footwork patterns to dances you already know? (B level and up)

3.

For example... (Siesta Tango)

1. Is the dance only forward steps, or are there some backwards steps? What is the shape of the dance? The Siesta Tango is peanut-shaped (two center lobes), like most beginner dances, and has backwards end steps.
2. What types of footwork are there? (ex. XF, XB, swings, DC, single-step edge changes, etc.) This dance consists of a six-beat swing with an edge change, XF's, XB's, and mohawk turns.
3. Can you compare any footwork patterns to dances you already know/dances you've seen others do? (B level and up) The XF-XB pattern is similar to that of Skaters' March or Denver Shuffle. The backwards end steps are similar to those on the Southland Swing.

Why is this important?

- Gives you an understanding of what is in the dance
- If there is more challenging footwork, you can practice it before tackling the entire dance

Example (Siesta Tango):

- Because of the XF-XB similarity between Siesta Tango and Denver Shuffle/Skaters' March, I know that my form in those C level dances carries over to this B level dance.
- Because I know there are mohawks in Siesta Tango, I should practice getting comfortable doing mohawk turns so that when I use it in the dance, my form will be correct.
- Because the end steps of the Siesta Tango share some similar steps with the Southland Swing, practicing the end steps of the Siesta Tango will help me improve on both dances.

More specifically... for step 1 of analyzation:

- Knowing the shape of the dance helps understand the amount of edge work required. More lobes = more edge work and/or deeper edges.
- If there are backwards steps, you can expect some sort of footwork to turn from backwards to forwards (and back again).

More specifically... for step 2 of analyzation:

- Understand what the footwork is/what the abbreviations mean. (XF = cross in front; XB = cross behind; DC = drop chasse/slice; RC = raised chasse; S = swing). Ask yourself: Do I know how to do these and apply it to the dance?
- If there is an edge change on a step, can I transition edges smoothly without wobble? (Think Figures 1a/b, 2a/b, 5a/b, 130a/b)

More specifically... for step 3 of analyzation:

- See how much of the new dance you already know from previous dances you've learned. This means answering the following:
 - What can be carried over from dances I already know?
 - Can anything in this new dance be carried over to another new dance you need to learn?
- Finding recognizable footwork makes a new dance less overwhelming and much easier.

**You know what
to expect in
your dance...
so what now?**

Practice the Mechanics

- Practice the mechanics, and only the mechanics! Do not worry about timing. Work to get the steps themselves right
- Start with the first five steps. Then, add five additional steps (perform the first 10 steps). Continue for all the steps in the dance until you memorize the step order and how to do the steps.

Work the Timing

- Once you have gotten used to the mechanics of the dance, it's time to work on timing the steps to the music
- On the pattern, the dashed lines that create the shape of the dance represent how many beats to hold each step.
- Like practicing the mechanics, work the timing for the first five steps, then the first ten, and continue for the entire dance.