



Shall We Take A Walk?

by Harold & Meredith Sears

Walking -- It's just one foot in front of the other, right? It takes us from here to there. Dancing is walking set to music. And it is walking spiced up in a variety of other ways, too.

Progressive Walks is a standard rumba figure: 3 forward steps (QQS), or back steps "progressing" backwards, danced on two tracks, that is, with feet side-by-side. **Kiki Walks** are the same 3 forward steps danced on one track, as on a rail, each step in front of the previous step. Do you suppose there was a lady named Kiki in Cuba who's "look" was immortalized in this way?

Jive Walks begin with a rock, recover (QQ), and then the walks themselves are simply two forward triples down our line of progression (Q&Q, Q&Q). We might Jive Walk down line of dance or to reverse. We often progress along one of the four diagonals. We could even Jive Walk toward center or toward wall, but then we'd better be ready for some kind of Check or Switch and then a quick return to our comfortable round-dance circle.

These walks are simply forward/fwd, fwd for both, often in semi-closed position (SCP). If you want to add that little bit of spice, incorporate a little up-down motion into these walks. As you triple with your lead feet, rise and turn toward your partner. As you triple with the trail feet, lower again and turn a little away -- triple up and face, triple down toward line.

Swivel Walks are usually done in SCP, too. We step forward on the lead foot and lead the lady to swivel just a little left-face (LF), fwd on the trail feet and the lady swivels RF (SS). Or we can Swivel Walk 4 Quicks (QQQQ). With each step, she turns her knee in a little and steps one step in front of the other. With your frame, you are



rotating her just a little: left, right, left, right. Both could swivel: in, out, in, out. You can do this figure in a more solo way in open position.

As with Jive Walks, up-down motion is a jivey sort of addition. The man steps down line, rising, and leading strongly with the left shoulder. She steps, rises, and turns sharply toward him. Then with the trail foot, he crosses in front and lowers or relaxes a little. She steps forward, lowers, and turns toward LOD. Repeat. The man is almost doing a Limp. The lady is doing the Swivel Walks. In the Lillefields' *Got a Brand New Bag*, part B begins with two triples down line; and then the cue is "up down swivel 4." The Lillefields specifically ask for the up-down styling, but it can be used any time "the music tells you" to do it.



Boogie-woogie is a style of blues piano playing characterized by an up-tempo rhythm, and **Boogie Walks** are up and kinda cool. We might be in open position with same footwork. Draw the R foot to L rise on the L pushing the body forward as the R moves fwd & circles 1/8 clockwise to end diagonally forward on the ball of the foot, then the whole foot lowering into the knee, draw L to R rise on R foot pushing body fwd as the L foot moves fwd & circles 1/8 counter-clockwise to end diagonally fwd on the ball of the foot, then whole foot lowering into the knee, and do it again (SSSS).

And then we come to whole flocks and herds of animal stylings. **Chicken Walks** often begin in open facing position, line of dance, lead hands joined. The man walks backward four steps, and he leads the lady to walk forward, gently pulling her and causing her to swivel a bit with each step (QQQQ). Or we can Chicken Walk 2 slow (SS) or even QQS. She swivels RF on her left foot, steps with her right, and turns the foot a bit right-face, turning the toes out or turning the heel in, then swivels LF, steps left, and turns the L toes out, and so on. And of course, really, it's a hip thing. She turns her hips to the right and then to the left -- swivel hips -- no chicken was ever that alluring.

He leads her to make these little swiveling turns by turning her lead hand left and then right. He turns the hand in the direction that he

wants her to swivel. I think most men dance this figure with soft knees and maybe a kind of "coaxing" attitude: "Come on, baby." and the lady leans back away from him with something of a resisting attitude: "No, I'm not giving in easily." She might be a little haughty. You have to play around with that sort of styling, but do try for some kind of "attitude." Don't *just* walk.

If there are Chicken Walks, then there must be **Rooster Walks**, but these do not involve the man being pulled reluctantly forward. Roosters are not reluctant. Again, in left open facing position, stand tall, puff out the chest, and strut forward L, fwd R, fwd L, fwd R (QQQQ). Think dominant "cocky" thoughts. Do not swivel your hips. The manly chest substitutes for the swivel hips. Now, the lady is not really cowed by all this posturing. She lowers and moves backward coyly. She may certainly swivel. This is playful. If you want to go for conspicuous giggles, the man can take his free hand and place it at the back of his head, fingers splayed, like a rooster's comb.



In our **Turkey Walks**, we turn down the emotional intensity a little. In a left shadow position, man to lady's right, both facing the wall, and no hands joined, hands down and slightly out from the body, palms forward and fingers splayed, shake or slightly rotate the hands back and forth in a "jazz hands" sort of way, and step side L toward LOD passing behind the lady (W sd R to RLOD passing in front of the man), close R, side L, close R (QQQQ). Of course, the hand styling may vary. Another common style is to put the right hand on your hip and "jazz" only the left hand (W mirrors M).

I think we've seen **Duck Walks** only once, in *I'm On Your Side*, a west coast swing by Goss. We begin an Underarm Turn (QQQ&Q), and then in left open facing position with the trail feet free, the man swivels RF on the L (W swivel LF on R) and steps forward R toward the wall (W fwd L to wall), draw L to R swiveling LF and step forward L toward COH (W mirror), draw R to L swiveling RF to step fwd R/L, R toward wall (QQQ&Q). Are these Chicken Walks with extreme turnout, without the progression, and without the emotional sensuousness?

Camel Walks seem to lack sensual feeling, too, but we want to remember that each dancer can certainly invest whatever emotion he

or she has at the moment. Sometimes, Camel Walks are a shifting in place with knee action, sort of shifting your toes in the desert sands. In a facing position with hands on the hips, veer the left knee in and then out in a counter-clockwise motion (W mirrors M with right knee in a clock-wise motion), and then take weight, veer the right knee in and then out in a clock-wise motion (W mirrors), and take weight (SS). Also done QQQQ and probably with other timings as well.

We have also seen them done with progression. Here, the emphasis is less on knee rotation and more on knee bend and on side lead to produce a plodding-through-the-desert-sand look. Facing partner and LOD, no hands joined, you can step back L with left-side lead (W mirrors), cross R in front of L (W cross L in back) with strong knee bend lowering, bk L, bk R with right-side lead; cross L in front of R with lowering, bk R, bk L, cl R to L (QQQQ; QQQQ). Or, you can step fwd L with left-side lead (W mirrors), cross R in back of L (W cross L in front) with lowering, fwd L, fwd R with right-side lead; cross L in back of R lowering, fwd R, fwd L, cl R to L.



For **Crab Walks**, we might be in butterfly position, M facing wall, and both cross the trail foot in front of lead foot, step side, cross in front, step side, cross, side (QQS; QQS; in rumba). Or, we could travel to reverse starting with lead feet. In the album *It Must Have Been Something I Said*, the Smothers Brothers once sang, "Crabs walk sideways and lobsters walk straight."

Finally, two figures that aren't seen much. The **Castle Walk** is a one-step figure from Vernon and Irene Castle's *Modern Dancing*, 1914. In a loose closed position, line of dance, just walk. Reach out with the toe, stay up, light and breezy, legs a bit stiff. Sway into the turns -- stretch the opposite side. Dance SSSSSSSS QQS SSSSSSSS QQS. The two-step part (QQS) is a little skip. You might take four steps to banjo (SSSS), four steps back to closed (SSSS), four steps to sidecar (SSSS). The Castles called this the Step Out. They also did the Step Out to banjo (SSSS), then turned 1/2 RF to sidecar with man backing (SSSS), and a turn 1/2 LF back to banjo again (SSSS). You can see Fred Astaire and

Ginger Rogers do the Castle Walk in their 1939 movie, *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*. Get the DVD from your local library and check out this jaunty figure.

And dare we end with the **Moon Walk**? Actually, we *have* seen this figure in one round dance, Brent & Mickey Moore's *Somewhere My Cha* (2000). With the left hand forward, press into the right foot lifting the R heel as the L foot slides back (draw the L hand back and move the R hand forward as if striding forward), take weight on the L and lift the L heel as the R foot slides bk, press into the R foot lifting the R heel as the L foot slides back, take weight on the L and lift the L heel as the R foot slides bk (QQQQ). One could do a "forward" Moon Walk, but the lady, facing the man, might also choose to walk forward with some other styling. In *Somewhere My Cha*, the sequence is Half Basic, man facing wall; Cross Body to 3 chas down LOD, jump close & body wave; man Moon Walk lady Swivel Walk, progressing to RLOD.

You might remember that Michael Jackson did the Moon Walk during a performance of *Billie Jean* in 1983. He wasn't the first to dance the figure. I understand that Cab Calloway did it back in the '30s, and the mime Marcel Marceau did it from the '40s into the '80s, maybe in his "Walking Against the Wind" routine. Anyway, it's also called the Backslide and it can give the illusion of the dancer clearly walking forward but actually progressing backward. Jackson did it really well. If you aspire to master this figure in preparation for the next time you hear the cue, or maybe so you can substitute the Moon Walk for your next Back Walk 4, visit You Tube. We even found some instruction on Videojug. Do your own search or try these two URLs.

<http://www.youtube.com/watchfeature=endscreen&NR=1&v=4PIMdvY9tx>

<http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-moon-walk>

There are many more "walks" in round dancing. We have Side Walks and Cross Walks (each forward step crossing a bit in front). There are Bolero Walks (SQQ; SQQ), Samba Walks (QaQQaQ), merengue Conga Walks (QQQQ with a touch & shoulder gesture on 4), samba Stationary Walks (QaQ in place), and tango Argentine Walks (SSQQSSQQ) and Stalking Walks (a whole measure for each step). We are walking, but of course we are not *just* walking.

