



TANGO FOUR STEP / FIVE STEP

by Harold & Meredith Sears

I know -- we never manage to talk about one figure only, but these are practically the same figure. They begin in closed position, pass through banjo position on step 3, end in semi-closed position, and both figures use four weight changes in all.

The **Four Step** begins in CP, and let's suppose we are facing LOD. We step forward L (W bk R), sd & bk R, bk L under the body (woman fwd R outside partner) to banjo, small sd & bk R taking the right hip away from the lady (W sm sd & bk L turning RF) to semi-closed position (QQQQ). The last step of this figure is much like the last step of a Progressive Link. It takes the man's right side away from the lady and so turns her to SCP.

Let's also begin the **Five Step** in CP LOD. Step forward L (W bk R), sd & bk R, bk L under the body (W fwd R outside partner) to banjo, small sd & bk R to closed position M facing wall; sharply turn to semi-closed position with no weight change (QQQQ; S).

So, what was the difference? The steps are the same. Even the actions of stepping small back on the trail feet on that fourth step and snapping to SCP are the same. But in the Four Step we do those two things at the same time on beat 4, and in the Five Step we separate those two things. We take the step on beat 4, and we snap to semi on the "slow" of the next measure.

Actually, we prefer the alternate timing for the Five Step: QQS&S. In other words, we hold the third step in banjo position, and then in a "close/tap" or a "change/point"-like way, we step and turn to semi on the "&S." Now we are dancing the Five Step exactly like the Four Step, with the simple insertion of an almost two-beat pause between steps 3 and 4.

Let's take a quick look at the **Turning Five Step**, a Five Step that turns us 3/8 LF. In CP DLC, step forward L (W bk R) turning LF, sd & bk R turning, bk L (W fwd R outside partner) to banjo RLOD (QQS). Finally, step small sd & bk R to CP COH and sharply turn to SCP RLOD with no weight change and lead feet tapped (&S). We can turn this figure an additional 3/8 by taking the third step more under the body and dancing the "close/tap" to SCP DLW.



Now we can mention the **Four By Five Step**, which is a Four Step that turns at least a little LF and then RF to sidecar position, often facing DRW. Then we immediately dance a Turning Five Step that usually takes us somewhere about LOD, although starting positions and amounts of turn vary greatly. We might be in CP DLW. We step forward L turning a little LF (W bk R), sd & bk R, bk L to banjo, swivel RF to sidecar position DRW and close R to L (W cl L to R). This "swivel and close is really a Heel

Pull, which turns us rather forcefully and ends with our feet a little apart, not a true "close." Now step fwd L (W bk R) turning LF, sd & bk R turning, bk L to banjo LOD, small

bk R to CP, and turn sharply to SCP and tap (QQQQ; QQS&S). Note that I am still using the alternate timing for the Five-Step part. It feels a little like a Zig Zag, but step 4 (the heel pull) is sharper and with less progression than in a Zig Zag. Use contra action at each step outside partner. Keep heads left—the hips go through a zigzag pattern, but the shoulders should move much less.

If the beginning facing direction is significantly different from the ending direction, the figure would probably be called a **Turning Four By Five Step**. We might begin in CP DRW. Here, the Four-Step part would begin with a bigger LF turn, to DLW on the first two steps, and then a big turn back to sidecar DRW, as usual. The Five-Step part can then turn as usual, too. If we started DLC, we might turn 3/8 LF and 3/8 RF in the Four Step and then 3/4 LF in the Five Step. The choreographer has lots of freedom.