

Basic Line Dance Terminology

Most dances fall into one of four categories

- One step
- Two step
- Cha cha
- Waltz.

The first three are counted in groups of 8 beats of music, whilst the waltz is counted in groups of 6 beats of music.

The steps of the first three are counted individually e.g. 1,2,3,4 or in double time e.g. 1&2, 3&4. With a waltz, the count is 123,456.

Single beat steps:

TERM	COUNTS	DESCRIPTION
Step	1	place foot on floor and take weight onto it
Touch/tap	1	touch toe or heel to ground but don't put any weight on it
Stomp	1	make a 'stamping' action (don't stamp hard to hurt your foot) <i>can take weight onto stomping foot/or not</i>
Brush	1	brush ball of foot forward and upwards past the foot you are standing on
Scuff	1	brush heel of foot forward and upwards past the foot you are standing on
Hitch	1	to raise the knee up
Hop	1	spring into the air taking off and landing with same foot
Hook	1	lift foot cross shin of supporting leg
Jump	1	jump forward or backward taking off and landing with both feet at the same time. <i>Syncopated: left or right lead (example forward right) (&) step forward on right (1) step left next to right</i>
Rock	1	transfer of weight from one foot to the other
Slide	1	to draw one foot next to the supporting foot
Heel fan	1	move the heel out while keeping ball of the same foot in contact with floor
Toe fan	1	move the toe out while keeping heel of the same foot in contact with the floor
hip bumps		bump hips to the right, left, backwards or forwards in time to the music
Heel splits	2	keep weight on balls of feet (1) move both heel out at the same time (2) bring both heels back to the center at the same time
Heel strut	2	(1) place heel forward on floor (2) drop toe onto floor taking weight onto foot
Toe strut	2	(1) place toe forward /or backwards on floor (2) drop heel onto floor taking weight onto foot
Right ½ pivot	2	(1) step forward on left foot, (2) pivot ½ (180°) to your right taking weight onto right foot (end up facing the wall that was behind you) <i>Can also be a ¼ (90°) or ¾ (270°) turn</i>
Left ½ pivot	2	(1) step forward on right foot, (2) pivot ½ (180°) to your left taking weight onto left foot (end up facing the wall that was behind you) <i>Can also be done as a ¼ (90°) or ¾ (270°) turn</i>

Right vine	4	(1) step right foot to side, (2) step left foot behind right, (3) step right foot to side, (4) varies, could be a touch, hitch, scuff, brush, or others)
Left vine	4	(1) step left foot to side, (2) step right foot behind left, (3) step left foot to side, (4) varies, could be a touch, hitch, scuff, brush, or others)
weave right	4	(1) step left foot across in front of right, (2) step right to right side, (3) step left foot back behind right, (4) step right foot to right side
weave left	4	(1) step right foot across in front of left, (2) step left foot to left side, (3) step right foot back behind left, (4) step left foot to left side
jazz box	4	step right foot across in front of left, step left foot back, step right foot to right side, step left foot next to left. Also done leading with left foot i.e. start by crossing left in front of right
½ Monterey turn <i>Can also be a ¼ (90°) or ¾ (270°) turn</i>	4	(1) touch right toe to right side, (2) on ball of left foot make ½ (180°) turn to your right (as you bring right foot together next to left) transfer weight onto right, (3) touch left toe out to the side, (4) step left foot next to right. <i>Although not as common Monterey can also done turning to the left i.e. start by touching left toe to left side</i>

Syncopated steps: (the "AND" count) 3 steps undertaken over 2 beats of music. (to the count of "1 & 2")

The following instructions are all leading with the right foot, but are also danced leading with the left foot (just the replace steps to read; 1-left / &-right / 2-left)

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Cha cha or triple step	(1) step right (on the spot) (&) step left (on the spot) (2)step right (on the spot)
Forward shuffle	(1) step forward on right foot, (&) step left foot to side of right heel, (2) step forward on right foot
Backward shuffle	(1) step back on right foot, (&) step left foot back to side of right toe, (2) step back on right foot
Chasse	(1) step right foot to right side, (&) step left foot next to right foot, (2) step right foot to right side
Coaster step	(1) step right foot back, (&) step left foot back next to right, (2) step forward on right foot <i>Although not as common Coaster step can also be done moving forward, then back</i>
Kick ball change	(1) kick right foot forward, (&) step onto ball of right foot (next to left foot) lifting left foot slightly off the floor, 2. (on the same spot) replace weight onto left foot
Mambo step	(1) step forward on right foot, (&) raise left foot slightly put it back in place (2) step right foot back next to left <i>can be done to move backwards or sideways</i>

Sailor step	step right foot behind left foot, step left foot to left side, step right foot parallel to left (feet end up slightly apart)
Samba step (bota foga)	step right foot across in front of left foot, step left foot to left side, step right foot parallel to left (feet end up slightly apart)

Just a few more!

All examples leading with right foot but are also done leading with left foot

TERM	COUNTS	DESCRIPTION
Applejacks (an extreme art!!)	2	(1) with weight on right toe and left heel, turn right heel into the left and left toe out to the left (&) return both feet to centre ready to change weight, (2) with weight on right heel and left toe, turn right toe into the right and left heel out to the right, (&) return both feet to centre ready to change weight <i>Good Luck! Try one foot at a time and then join them both together. Once mastered, never forgotten!! enjoy</i>
Charleston steps	4	(1) touch right toe forward, (2) step right foot next to left, (3) touch left toe back, (4) step left foot next to right
Cross unwind	2	(1) cross right toe in front of left foot, (2) unwind to left n balls of feet to take weight onto right foot or (1) cross right toe behind of left foot, (2) unwind to right on balls of feet to take weight onto right foot <i>Can be a ¼ (90°), ½ (180), ¾ (270°) or full (360°) turn</i>
Heel grinds	2	(1) step right heel forward with toe pointing towards left (left foot raises slightly so more weight is on right heel) (2) grind right heel into floor, fanning toes to right and taking weight (weight returns to left foot)
Heel switches	2	(1) touch right heel forward (&) step right foot next to left (2) touch left heel forward (&) step left foot next to right
Heel swivets	4	(1) with weight on right heel and left toe, fan right toe to right at same time fan left heel to left (2) return feet to center change weight to left heel and right toe, (3) fan left toe to left and right heel to right, (4) return feet to center
Knee pops (Elvis knees)	2	(1) with weight on left bend right knee in towards left leg, (2) straighten right knee and bend left knee in towards right leg
Lock steps back	4	(1) step back on right foot, (2) step left foot in front of right toe, (3) step back on right foot (4) varies, could be a touch, hitch, scuff, brush, or others)
Lock steps forward	4	(1) step forward on right foot, (2) step left foot behind right heel, (3) step forward on right foot (4) varies, could be a touch, hitch, scuff, brush, or others)
Rhonde turn	3	(1,2) sweep right toe in front of left as you make ½ turn left on ball of left foot (3) touch right toe next to left

Rolling vine	4	(1) make ¼ turn right, stepping right foot forward, (2) ¼ turn right on the ball of right foot stepping left to left side, (3) pivot ½ turn right on ball of left foot stepping right foot to right side (4) varies, could be a touch, hitch, scuff, brush, or others)
Rumba box	8	(1) step forward on right foot, (2) hold for 1 count, (or touch left toe next to right) (3) step left to left side, (4) step right next to left, (5) step back on left foot, (6) hold for 1 count, (or touch right toe next to left) (7) step right to right side, (8) step left foot next to right <i>can be varied to start backwards or sideways</i>
Running man	2	(1) step forward right foot, (&) hitch right knee and scoot left foot back (at same time) (2) step forward left foot (&) hitch left knee and scoot right foot back (at same time)
Scissor step	4	(1) step right foot to right side, (2) slide left foot to right bringing left toe inline with instep of right, but feet should be slightly apart allowing for the next step to be done (3) cross step right foot in front of left, (4) hold for one beat (can also be syncopated – count is 1&2&)
Toe switches (side switches)	2	(1) touch right toe to right side, (&) step right foot next to left (2) touch left toe to left side, (&) step left foot next to right
Twinkle (waltz timing)	3	(1) step right foot across in front of left, (2) step left foot to left side (slightly back), (3) step right foot next to left
Vorderville	4	(1) cross right foot over left (&) step left to left side (2) tap right heel diagonally forward to the right (&) step right foot next to left, feet slightly apart (3) cross left foot over right (&) step right to right side (4) tap left heel diagonally forward to the left (&) step left foot next to right, feet slightly apart

Smile, have fun, make new friends, enjoy.

**And remember the line-dancers motto:
We don't make mistakes in linedancing... we make variations!!!**

Please keep in mind that other instructor's terminology may be different, they may even have different names for some of the steps. Because of these slight differences between instructors in different counties, interpreting the step sheets for the dance routines can sometimes be a little confusing. But we will continue to do the best we can, interpreting the dances to the best of our ability. This list hopefully though, will help give you a better understanding on how to do some of the basic steps, and help you get through my classes. If you have any questions, please feel free to come and ask me. And as this is line dancing we are talking about –there are lots of variations to the basic steps! Just as you thought you'd cracked it!!!

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