

# Floor craft

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Floor craft is the ability to navigate round the dance floor without hitting other couples. This applies mainly to the moving dances like Waltz, Tango, Quickstep, Slow foxtrot, Viennese Waltz, Samba and Paso Doble. A pre-requisite for good floor craft is good lead and follow. Floor craft is essential because we need to:

- Avoid hitting other couple, preventing possible injuries.
- Continue dancing, even if blocked.

Floor craft is easy to execute, once you know the various ways in which floor craft can be done. So rather than let our students find out the hard way themselves, we've going to list the various ways in which floor craft can be done. Listed below are some:

- **Same variation, same direction, different length.** Shorten your steps to avoid collision. However, this is likely to affect the quality of your movement if used too often.
- **Same variation, slightly different direction.** Adjust the angle of the same variation slightly. However, you can't have too drastic a change in direction using the same variation.
- **Different variation, greater different direction.** If you need a greater change of angle, it's best to use a different variation. Get familiar with what are the different variations you can do at each point and how to continue from there. Learn how to get from closed position to promenade position and vice versa.
- **Basic steps in place.** Use simple closed changes up and down and/or around till the coast is clear.
- **Walking, slow chasses.** While not in the syllabus, you can use walking steps or slow chasses according to the music to ease out of the crowd.
- **Checking actions.** There are various checking actions that can be used, such as chair, contra check, rolling contract check, hover etc. This enables you to either change direction quickly or stay on the spot gracefully.
- **Lines and spins.** At the more advanced levels, you can use various lines (e.g. throwaway oversway, same foot lunge, right lunge etc) or stationary spins (e.g. standing spins) to kill time, until the coast is clear for you to continue your routine.
- **Wait.** If you really really have no choice, then just wait there till the path is clear.

Some things that the leader has to be aware of:

- **Starting point.** If the floor is not that crowded, the best way to avoid clashing with other couples is to choose a starting point where there is nobody there. If you start where everyone else starts, clashes are almost certain to occur.
- **Situational awareness.** Be aware of the whole floor and where all the dancers are. Some variations are also fairly standard, and if another couple does something, you can be sure some else will follow making him move in a certain direction. E.g. if you see a couple doing a whisk to promenade, chances are that he will do a chasse down that line. So avoid going into the line, even though they are not there yet.
- **Staying calm.** Stay calm at all times and execute floor craft with composure and steadiness. This will give confidence to the follower.
- **Reading signals.** If you are moving backwards and cannot see what is behind, be on the look out for signals from the follower, as she can see what you cannot.

Some things that the follower has to be aware of:

- **Leading.** The follower ABSOLUTELY CANNOT ATTEMPT TO LEAD, even if she saw potential trouble ahead that the leader did not see.
- **Giving signals.** When you are moving forwards, you can give signals to the leader by lightly squeezing his shoulder.
- **Reactive.** Be ready to change movements at a whim, as the situation on the floor is very unpredictable.

Once you know how it can be done and with some practice, floor craft will become second nature in no time. You will then be whizzing through the crowd and still be dancing, rather than end up being neutralized on the dance floor due to crowds.