

ANCHORS in West Coast Swing

Skippy Blair © 5-20-05 - Update: 2-07, 4-08, 4-09, 7-09, 10-10, 8-12, 7-14

Recent Dance EXCELLeration Intensives, plus discussions with judges, contestants, and even social dancers, proves that clarification is needed in the real **“Art of Anchoring.”**

During a Session in Seattle in 2005, someone was concerned about an out-of-state competition where they had recently judged. (This particular person had judged one couple very LOW, because of a **lack of anchoring**. The judge’s statement was: **“I never saw an anchor in the whole routine.”** Not having observed that competition, I could not state an opinion. However, someone else asked: **“What did you see that convinced you they were not anchoring?”** The reply was **“There were no triples on the end of any of their patterns.”**

By 2010, most swing dancers had become aware that **“Triples” were no longer mandatory to create Anchors**. Triples should be present in West Coast Swing, but are certainly **not REQUIRED to define whether or not an Anchor** has been accomplished.

Educational Note: An anchor is **neither a Foot Position nor a Dance Rhythm. An ANCHOR is a BODY ACTION**. It is possible for dancers to do Triples in 3rd foot position, and yet NOT achieve the **“connection” that qualifies the move as an Anchor**. An ANCHOR is an **“away” connection from one partner’s center (CPB) to the other partner’s center**. It can be a very subtle body connection that simply allows one partner to communicate to the other that they are moving into something new. An easy to achieve **Anchor Connection**, for both partners is to place their **Center Point of Balance (CPB) BEHIND** the heel of their own forward foot. This strengthens the *partner connection* at the point where that action takes place. This also alerts each partner that they have completed what they intended to complete.

TEACHING an **“ANCHOR Triple, in 3rd foot position”** IS certainly a good **BASIC** teaching technique. The next stage is to create more freedom, but still do an Anchor.

An **Anchor Connection** can be done using various rhythms: A **“Point Back - Close in 3rd”** makes a very good anchor. A follower can also step back on the Right foot on **“4”** and drag the Left foot back through **“&a 5&a”** and close the Left foot behind the Right foot on **“6.”** The point is that **an ANCHOR is an ACTION - not a specific Rhythm - not a Foot Position**.

Recent trends reveal that many of the younger dancers are leaving out the Anchor and are just keeping a **continuous “back check”** - more like the movement ESSENCE in Hustle. They achieve wonderful performances that somehow lack the excitement and sensitivity of real **West Coast Swing**. Somewhere the ability to cause **“goose bumps”** is getting lost. However, there are still those who maintain the contrast of the Anchor, setting themselves apart as aficionados in the world of West Coast Swing.

<p>Another Educational Hand-out from the <i>World Swing Dance Council</i> Skippy Blair, Educational Coordinator Email: Skippy@Skippyblair.com</p>

Please see **“Anchor”** in the 2014 Dance Dictionary -