



Flight the Sequence by Harold & Meredith Sears

One of the features of round dancing that we have continuously drummed into our heads is that a dance is composed of a sequence of figures. “Apart, Point; Pickup, Touch; Open Telemark; and away we go. It’s not a conscious lesson, that we should dance the dance in pieces, but that’s how we’re taught — here’s how to do the first figure, here’s the second, and so on. But, should we actually dance one figure

and then the next — figure 1, pause; figure 2, pause; figure 3, pause ... No. We want unbroken movement, especially during a turning figure or a series of figures that turn the same direction. Don’t stop at the end of one figure and get moving again for the next. Instead, keep your body in continuous, smooth movement — “flight” the sequence; keep it moving.

Open Natural Turn; Outside Spin; Right Turning Lock; —

This is a right-turning sequence, and once it starts turning, it should never stop. The shoulders and elbows should maintain a steady rotation. There is no pause at the end of measure 1, at the end of 2. Flight the lock — keep the upper body turning.

The Open Natural Turn might begin in closed position. The man steps forward on his right foot turning to the right, and the woman steps back left. He steps side left across the line of dance and continues to turn. Finally, he steps back right with strong right-side back facing reverse. Notice that the side lead during the third step does two things. It puts us into a nicely angled position so that our fourth step can be back left (woman forward right) in a tight banjo position. But a second thing that the side lead does is to continue the body rotation.

The Outside Spin is essentially a Spin Turn begun outside partner. The first thing the man must do is initiate upper body rotation to the right

and incidentally place his left foot at the instep of his right. This leads the woman's relatively large step forward right outside the man turning maybe $3/8$ and rising to her toes for the spin. But he doesn't really "initiate" his upper body rotation at the start of this figure — he simply continues the rotation that ended the previous Open Natural Turn. The one flows unbroken into the next.

If we are going to continue with a Right Turning Lock, then the Outside Spin needs to make a full turn. Now, we are in closed position, facing reverse, with trail feet free, and we must begin with a back/lock (woman forward/lock) that turns to the right. But again, we mustn't allow ourselves to be still or static at the beginning of the figure. Let the Outside Spin flow into the Right Turning Lock so that the man's first steps are not really back/lock, back, but almost side/lock, forward, turning all the while.



Mini Telespin;; —

Or consider the reverse-turning sequences in the Telespin figures. These are another group in which we might be tempted to lose some of our flight. Each gets going something like an Open Telemark, but the man delays taking weight on his third step in preparation for the spin. There is a temptation to delay or to pause not just the foot but the whole body. But, again, upper-body rotation should continue smoothly through the whole sequence.

For instance, we begin the Mini Telespin in closed position, usually facing line and center, and we use two measures to spin left 1 and $1/4$, usually to face reverse and center. The first two steps are very Telemark-like. The man steps forward on his left foot turning to the left, with left sway, and the woman steps back right. He steps forward and side right turning, and the woman draws her left to her right in preparation for her Heel Turn. Now the man steps side and back left with only partial weight in preparation for the woman's syncopated toe spin in the second measure. This restraint in delaying his step could result in an overall pause in the figure, but although he is pausing before committing to his third weight-change, he need not pause in the flow of the figure. He can maintain smooth upper-body rotation over the whole two measures and

so keep the woman moving smoothly. He can dance, not two half-figures, but one flowing figure.

Round dance figures are taught in isolation. We learn the first step, the second, the third ... We learn the beginning, the middle, and the end. But in a dance, the figures do not end. Each ending is the beginning of the next — continuous, easy flight.

