



HEAD POSITIONS

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For this article, we will present our opinions on head positions while executing some round dance figures. We will assume all dancers know they should not look at their feet or down at the floor because this destroys the attractive body line which we would like to have in dancing. Some basic rules are:

Rule #1: "Nose Over the Toes." This would indicate you should be looking in the direction your toes are pointing. If we as a couple are in closed position, then the lady is slightly to the right side of the man with each dancer looking past his/her partner, or through each one's window. If one partner is sharper than the other, then the shorter partner should look slightly upward, through the window, rather than into the shoulder of the taller partner. This should be only a slight tilting of the head by lifting the chin, not looking up at the ceiling.

Rule #2: "When in doubt keep your head in closed position." This would probably relate more to the lady than to the man. In most cases the man's head will remain to the left side, or in closed position. When the couple turn to semi-closed position, the man turns his head a little more to his left. However, the lady will have her head to the left while in closed position, but as the man leads the lady to semi, she will open her head by turning it to her right so both the man and the woman will be looking out over the lead hands. Let's assume for this discussion the man will be in either closed or semi-closed position, with his head to the left of the lady. In some cases he might want to turn his head to the right such as reverse-semi, or maybe in sidecar, but let's concentrate on the subtle moves by the lady to maintain proper head positions.

One more generality: The man should lead the lady to open and close her head by subtle stretches of his right side to cause the lady to open her head, or his left side to cause the lady to close her head again.

1. Closed position: Head to the left looking through the windows.
2. Semi-closed position: Both looking out over the lead hands.
3. Open Telemark: Lady's head changes from closed position to semi-closed position between the second and third steps.
4. Promenade Weave: With proper right-side body stretch by the man, the lady will maintain an open head until step six (6) of the waltz weave. This would apply to foxtrot, also.
5. Hover to Semi: Man leads woman to open her head between counts two and three.
6. Whisk: Man retains closed head because his toes are toward the lady. The lady will open her head between counts two and three.
7. Chassee: Chassee to Banjo - The lady will retain a closed head throughout. Chassee to Semi - Both man and woman will turn heads on last step on the chassee. Semi Chassee - Both man and woman will do the chassee with open heads - looking out over lead hands. (But remember semi is not a hip-to-hip position.)
8. Closed Telemark: Lady maintains closed head throughout.
9. Wing: Begins in semi-closed position, lady with open head, man has his head to left of lady, man keeps his head to left of lady as she walks three forward steps around the man to sidecar position. The lady will have a strong left body turn between steps two and three. At that time she will turn her head well to the left. The man's head position in sidecar position is optional. In the wing, we will retain the man's head to the left of the lady even in sidecar position, with sidecar position being more of a body position than a head position. In two-step, we would take the man's head to the right in a scissors to sidecar. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 12]

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10. Double Reverse Spin: Lady will maintain closed head throughout.
11. Promenade Sway and Change of Sway: In promenade sway, both will be looking out over the lead hands. In the change of sway, the lady will look well to the left, even past the closed position mark. The man will look at the top of the lady's head. If he looks too far to his right in reverse semi-closed position, his line will take away from the lady's body line for picture figure.
12. Hinge: Lady opens her head as she goes into the hinge, but closes her head as she steps back on her left foot. She continues to rotate her head well to her left while maintaining an upward head poise. Her neck line and head line should stay in the same plane as her back. (In many cases when we sway our body to the left, right, or backward as in hinge, throwaway oversway, or contra check, we have a tendency to try to maintain the head line vertical to the floor. This will destroy the attractive picture figure which can be created by the separation between the partners.)
13. Throwaway Oversway: Enter from Semi-Closed. At the end of the throwaway oversway, the lady's head will be well to her left with her head and upper body in an upward poise.

In our travels, we notice many of the men have a tendency to turn their head to the right when executing right-turning figures. This normally happens when the man is facing reverse line of dance, stepping back on his left foot to turn right face. Common figures would be two right turning waltzes, spin turn, impetus to semi or closed, outside spin, etc. In some cases, the man's head will turn past the lady's head to a "sidcar" head position. This is in conflict with the "nose over the toes" rule. Men, even though the body is turning to the right, try to retain the head in closed position.

There are three things which we would like to emphasize:

1. These are our opinions on head positions and do not represent any organization. We have gained this information from numerous teachers in the round dance field and the ballroom dance field. Again, these are not rules - they are our interpretations of the head positions while dancing.
2. Nose Over the Toes.
3. When in doubt, keep your head closed.