

Line Dancing Steps and Variations

Borrowing from many different dance traditions, line dance steps vary from simple walking to intricate turns and syncopated rhythms. Fortunately there are many line dances for beginners; these dances are all made up of very basic steps. For more advanced dancers, variations can be added (for example substituting a three step turn for a grapevine) to keep it interesting while ensuring that all levels of dancers can share the dance floor for the same songs.

Heel Dig

As simple as digging one heel into the ground, this can be performed with an accent by bending the supporting leg. A further accent/variation is to hop out of the step instead of simply stepping back onto your foot.

Double Heel Dig

For faster dances, sometimes a double heel dig is called for, where you, with your weight firmly planted on your left leg, quickly dig your right heel into the ground twice, usually to the front and slightly to the side

Grapevine (or Vine)

Traveling to the right or the left side, this step is performed (to the right), as follows:

1. Right foot steps to the right
2. Left foot crosses behind the right one
3. Right foot steps to the right
4. Left foot closes to the left side of the right foot

Grapevine Variations: As you become more advanced, vary the fourth step of the grapevine by replacing it with a heel dig or by scuffing the bottom of your boot against the floor and bringing your left foot back up into the air.

Weave

Combining the grapevine with a cross in front as well as a cross behind, this move will let the dancer travel in zigzag on the floor. One complete cycle looks like this:

1. Step your right foot to the right
2. Cross your left foot *behind* your right foot
3. Step your right foot to the right
4. Cross your left foot *in front of* your right foot
5. Repeat steps 1-4 as many times as you want. When you want to end the weave, do steps 3 and 4 of the grapevine step to complete the weave.

Jazz Square or Jazz Box

You may know this step from jazz class. It can be performed to the right or the left; it's often performed twice in a row in the same direction:

1. Step your right foot across your left foot
2. Step your left foot back and to the side
3. Step to the right side with your right foot
4. Close your left foot to the left side of your right foot

Triple Step

This is three steps in a musical triplet during two beats of music traveling in any direction. Similar to a Step-Ball-Change in tap dancing, this step involves the following three steps (or opposite if starting with the left foot instead of the right):

1. Step onto your right foot
2. Step onto the ball of your left foot, placing your weight on the foot

3. Step quickly onto the right foot without having lingered on the left. The weight transfer to your left foot should only have been deep enough to free you to pick up your right foot and step onto it.

Charleston

While it's not always called the Charleston, this step is frequently used in country line dancing (it probably will be called 'step-tap, step-tap' by the caller):

1. Step forward onto your right foot
2. Step your left foot forward, in front of your right foot, but don't put your weight on it
3. Step backwards onto your left foot
4. Tap your right foot behind your left one, then repeat

Pivot Turn

A simple turn, a pivot is a half turn. Dances often use two pivot turns in a row in order to complete a full 360 degree rotation:

1. Step forward onto your right foot, but keep the weight centered on the ball of your foot.
2. With your weight evenly distributed between both feet, turn your body a half turn to the left, ending up with your left foot in front

Kick-Ball-Change

A favorite in cowboy boots, this step is easy to perform but looks difficult because it is executed quickly:

1. With your weight firmly on your left foot, kick your right foot in front of you, leading with the heel
2. Step your right foot behind you, but only put your weight on the ball of your foot in order to quickly again transfer your weight in step three

3. Step, hard (loudly) onto your left foot