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Dealing With Different Partners in Ballroom Dance

In a group ballroom dancing class, the instructor will ask dancers to change partners on a fairly regular basis. Although some students may find this practice of trading partners intimidating or objectionable (perhaps for good reason), it is an excellent teaching technique and an important part of learning to dance.

Benefits of Exchanging Dance Partners

Ballroom dance studios and instructors are aware of the many benefits to switching partners, which is why it is such a common instructional technique. Some studios even insist on a policy of switching partners during group lessons; their experience has shown that couples who remain together tend to fall behind in a group situation.

When you change partners in your ballroom dance class, you are likely to find that you will learn to dance faster. This is because there is usually a range in the ability level of the dancers in class. Some will be raw beginners who can barely figure out which foot to move when, but others will be more experienced and can help you figure out each step more quickly. If you stick with only your partner and you are both struggling, it will be much harder to progress. However, change partners and you are likely to each understand the pattern better, and when you get back together, your practice will be much more productive.

A beginner or weaker dancer struggling with a pattern or concept will benefit from dancing with a stronger partner on an occasional basis.

Changing partners can help break developing bad habits.

Couples who always dance together develop "shortcuts", leading to subtler and often incorrect or inadequate leads, or to the woman leading the man.

Women improve their ability to follow by adapting to the different styles of movement and lead from a variety of partners.

Men develop better lead skills by recognizing that some women require more precise timing, clearer signals, a firmer or gentler lead than others.