

The BOSTON

The Boston was the name of a group of dances done to waltz tunes during the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the twentieth. More accurately, it was first described around 1878 and lasted until around 1914, when it was replaced by the Hesitation Waltz. Essentially, the Boston was a "simplified" waltz, whose chief characteristics were linear movement (instead of rotational), and slow, lilted walking steps. The most common form, sometimes called the "Walking Boston" or the "Long Boston" consisted of just one step per (waltz) measure, taken in any direction, in open or closed position.

More technically, the Walking Boston step could be described as:

ct 1: step forward on the left foot

ct 2: raise up on the left toe, bringing the heel off the floor, while bringing the right foot forward, toe pointed, about three inches off the ground

ct 2: lower the left heel to the floor, keeping the right foot forward

some teachers (eg, Sheafe) said to touch the floor with the free foot.

The body weight was kept directly over the supporting foot.

The step could then be repeated with the right foot. It could be done backwards, in which case the free foot would swing backwards instead of forwards.

It could be done in closed position (in which case one partner would go forwards and the other backwards), open position, promenade position, or skaters position.

Generally, the partners were on opposite feet. It is a good idea to have the men always start on the left foot and the women on the right. (This practice was not consistently done at the time the Boston was danced.)

Turning in place could be accomplished by just doing the basic step forwards and backwards while rotating slowly in place. It generally takes about 4 pairs of Boston steps to rotate once around. If you start the rocking forward (for the man), the turn should be counter-clockwise. If you start by stepping back, the turn should be clockwise.

Some variations include:

Skip Boston: Make the lift on count 2 of each measure into a hop or skip.

Boston Dip: Dip (bend the knee of the stepping foot) on the first count.

Other names of Bostons:

Short Boston, Boston Glide, Original Boston, New York Boston, Boston Spanish, Herring Bone Boston, English boston, Five-step Boston, Seven-step Boston, Double Boston, Triple Boston, and many more.