

Resolution

Watch this demonstrated on the DVD

The resolution is a four-count pattern that may be initiated from the home, outside right, or cruzada positions. It includes a change of direction from left to right and ends at the home position. Review la base and identify base 3 and base 4 as the first two steps of the resolution. Review la salida and understand that base 3 and base 4 (or the resolution) can be initiated from salida 4, the cruzada position. These are examples of the thinking process involved in improvising from a solid technical base and a sound understanding of the structure of the dance.

Since the resolution will likely be started right after a salida, assume the cruzada position. Remember also that at the end of la salida, the woman has been moving on a diagonal to her right quadrant, intersecting the trajectory of the man at salida 4.

Resolution 1. This is almost identical to base 3 except that the woman is standing with her legs crossed; she has her axis on the left foot. The man exerts pressure with his right arm into the left side of her body to mark the woman a back opening to his left along the same diagonal she was moving on during the salida. She responds to the mark by resuming the second back step with the right leg, which is always a diagonal. At the same time, the man advances straight forward with his left leg. He places his left foot in line in front of the tip of his right foot and right behind the heel of her left foot, forming a triangle with his left foot and her two feet. As the man transfers his weight forward to his left axis and closes with his right leg, he uses his right arm to bring the woman up on her right axis, assuming the salida position. The compound effect of the man advancing forward and the woman moving across him in a diagonal to his left creates the illusion that the man has turned to his right and is now on her left side. He is on her left side, but he accomplished that by moving her to his left.

Resolution 2. This is very much the same as base 4. The man continues his forward motion while turning to his left to convert the forward opening of his right leg into a lateral opening to his right side. The woman, with her axis firmly on her right leg, responds to the mark by allowing her upper body to go with the embrace of the man. She lets her left leg open “long” in the direction her body is being taken—that is, to the man’s right shoulder. The man keeps his right arm tucked to his side and matches her “long” left step, altering the rule of opening “short” to the right. As he transfers his weight to his right leg, his body stops moving. Without any further motion to his right side, the man closes his upper thighs and elongates, allowing his trailing leg to come together with the right leg, but weightless. He scoops the woman under her shoulder blade with his right arm, bringing her to his right side. They end at the home position.

Resolution 3. From the end of resolution 2 at the home position, the man marks the woman a change of axis in place, releasing the pressure of his right hand on the right side of her back. The woman responds to the mark by dropping her right foot to the floor without opening her thighs and changing axis in place. He also changes axis in place, converting their position to a *salida* position. Experienced dancers who dance with the music will match resolution 3 with the last beat of the tango they are dancing. That is why resolution 3 is sometimes called a tango close, in reference to the way the feet are closed in this position.

Resolution 4. If the music continues, the man opens his right leg diagonally back into his right quadrant to intersect the forward step of the woman. He changes axis to return to the home position in preparation for the beginning of another *salida* and to match the four-beat tempo of the music. He marks the woman a forward step into him. She responds by opening forward with her left leg with her shoe pointing toward the right shoulder of the man. The resolution ends at the home position.

To advance gradually in a counterclockwise direction around the dance floor, veering in and out to avoid falling into the center of the floor, the man must keep in mind three very important concepts. First, make the woman dance around him; second, change the direction in which she dances around him; and third, alternate the use of trajectories into his left and right quadrant. The resolution consists of one step into the man's left quadrant and three steps into his right quadrant. You should be aware that the resolution can be overused and sometimes abused, when "lead and follow" dancers tuck it right after *la salida* as part of a memorized eight-count basic pattern. Its main purpose is to reach the end of the dance with a tango close, or to complete a sequence. Although it is the most basic way to continue after the completion of a *salida* (see figure 5.5), parts of or a complete resolution are used during sequences where the dancers trade places around each other.

When a *salida* is combined with a resolution, you can properly phrase the eight beats of the tango. Every four steps there is a pause (*salida* 4 and resolution 4). Be aware of men who use resolution 4 to start to dance. They use the last step of the resolution as the first step of a memorized count of eight that does not keep time with the music. That is not a problem unless you hear things such as "Do this on five" or other equally mystifying instructions such as "One, two, three, four . . ." to have learners back blindly into the line of dance on their very first step. Drilling men and women to memorize patterns so the man can "lead" them and the women can "follow" them produces dancers who are likely to become a liability on a crowded dance floor. The eight-count basic is obsolete for learning to dance the Argentine tango.

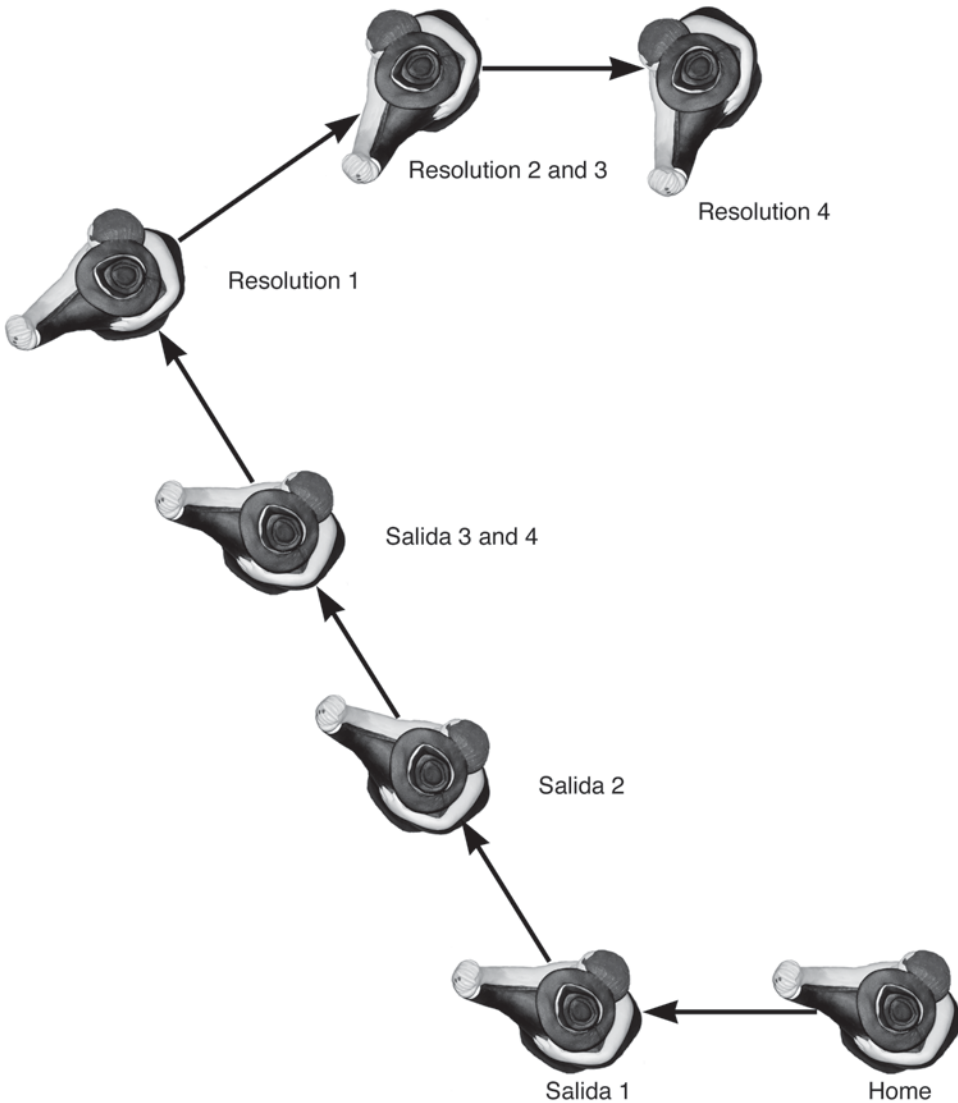


Figure 5.5 The trajectory of the salida and resolution.

Cambio de Frente

Watch this
demonstrated
on the DVD

Unbeknownst to the man (until now) is that his resolution 1 and resolution 2 steps (base 3 and base 4 if you are a quick learner) are also two steps of the code of the tango. Primarily the woman executes the code as she dances with the intention of going around the man. But it is the man's responsibility to mark every step of the code in order to place the woman's body exactly where his intended pattern requires it. So it makes sense for the man to learn what he is doing. Let's analyze resolution 1 and resolution 2 in terms of the root steps covered in chapter 3.

Resolution 1 is an inside cross to the left as far the other dancer is concerned. As the man's left leg moves forward, his upper body turns to acknowledge the presence of the woman on his left. From her perspective, the man's left leg is crossed in front of his right leg, inside their bodies. Although we are addressing the man's use of the steps of the code as part of the resolution and *cambio de frente* (change of front), the learning process is applicable to both genders because in chapter 6 the woman will be called to use the code in cambios de frente for *giros* (turns). Resolution 2 is a forward step of the outside leg, which converts into a lateral opening as the man turns to his left, with the intention to dance around the woman's right axis.

A change of front occurs when resolution 3 is replaced with an outside back cross, completing the third step of the code. As a result, from the woman's vantage point, the man's left leg appears crossed behind his right leg, outside the space shared by both dancers.

Assume the *cruzada* position since a *cambio de frente* is a second option often used right after a *salida*. Remember that at the end of the *salida*, the woman has been moving on a diagonal, intersecting the trajectory of the man at *salida* 4.

Step 1. Technically this step is resolution 1, which is the same as base 3. The man starts from his right axis while the woman is on her left axis, both assuming the *cruzada* position. The strategy used by the man is to hold the woman in place as he walks around, changing his front around her. Therefore he must mark the step to the woman so she moves laterally to his left without backing off in order to open a clear path for him to move forward.

Step 2. Technically this step is resolution 2, which is the same as base 4. The man keeps his right arm straight and tucked in to mark an opening to the woman's left in place. She responds by letting her body rotate on her right axis and her leg open "long" in the direction her body is turned by the man. While turning to his left, the man opens forward "short" with his right leg. The effect is a lateral opening in the forward direction. When the man changes his weight to his right leg, the woman responds by changing her weight to her left axis.

Step 3. To complete the change of front (*cambio de frente*), the man will continue advancing in the same direction, stepping back with his left leg. At the same time, he marks the woman an inside cross to his right side, assuming the outside right position. She responds to the mark with a forward step with her right leg, her right foot turned to point to the man and her upper body turned to face the man. From the man's perspective, her right leg is crossed inside in front of her left leg. From her perspective, his left leg is crossed outside behind his right leg. To reinforce the equal partnership afforded by the tango, we'd like to point out to the woman that the positions of their bodies at this point are identical to base 2 except that the woman is going forward and the man is backing up. This should also encourage dancers to hone their technique regardless of gender.

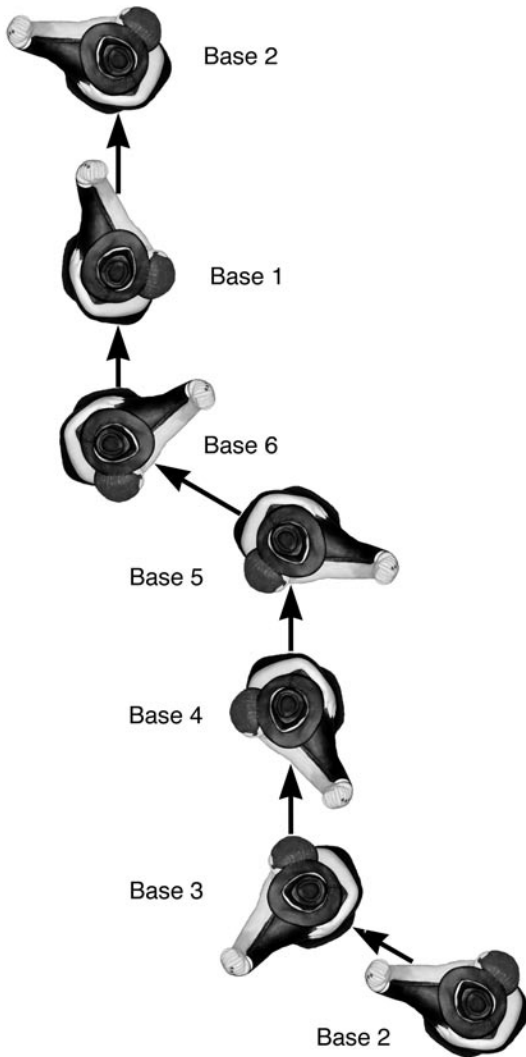


Figure 5.6 The trajectory of consecutive changes of front to the left.

and turn her upper body on her left axis to assume the cruzada position. The woman should respond to the mark by letting her upper body be turned on her left axis into the man. She should assume the cruzada position by crossing her free leg through the back door. Since she is already standing on her left leg, she needs to cross her right leg behind the left leg, keeping the toes pointing outward so the feet form an inverted V. Of course, it is important for the woman to remember to end with her knees bent and her heels down. A logical continuation from here would be another cambio de frente, a resolution, or even resumption of la base.

3. If the last step (outside cross) of the cambio de frente is taken across the grain of the line of dance, once the man changes his weight to his left leg,

The cambio de frente is not a pattern with an end but a link into another pattern. From this position, the man has several options in how to continue:

1. Mark the woman an identical cambio de frente (see figure 5.6), ending at base 2 at the outside right position. In other words, complementary cambios de frente return to the same position where they started. La base, la salida, and the resolution are logical ways to continue from this point. Put the book down and try them all. Visualize and improvise.

2. Bring your right foot together with your left while keeping your axis on your left leg. Mark the woman an inside cross to your left by turning her upper body to point to your left shoulder. The woman should respond to this new mark simply by letting her upper body turn on her right axis and stepping forward with her left leg and reaching for the man's left shoulder. As soon as her left foot lands on the floor, change your weight to your right axis