

Pittsburgh West Coast Swing class descriptions

Welcome to West Coast Swing in Pittsburgh! Every Tuesday, we offer four classes. Our *Basics* class is for everybody who is new to West Coast Swing, even if you already have experience in another dance form. Our *Technique* class provides more in-depth instruction on how to make your West Coast Swing dancing feel great. Our *Patterns* class teaches more intricate lead and follow concepts and techniques. Everybody who has gotten comfortable with the material in the Basics class is welcome to take Technique and Patterns. We encourage all but our newest dancers to attend two lessons every Tuesday. We also teach an *Invitational* class designed for our dancers who also compete. If you would like to try out for this class, please let an instructor know.

All our classes are taught in a drop-in format. The material is grouped around a theme, but it does not build directly on the previous week. This means that although it certainly helps if you come every week, don't worry about missing a class - you can just pick up the following week and you'll be fine.

We rotate instructors every month. Stick with one class level for a while to get a whole range of ideas, concepts, and philosophies from our instructor staff.

Basics (8:15-9:00, in the small room)

This level focuses on the basic patterns and movements in West Coast Swing.

Techniques and Skills

Footwork basics

Anchor basics

Frame basics

6-count and 8-count rhythm

Compression and Extension

Slot

Patterns

Left Side Pass (week 1)

Right Side Pass (week 1)

Sugar Push (week 2)

Whip (week 3)

Starter Step (week 4)

Once you are comfortable with these patterns and concepts, it is time to also start taking the Technique class

Technique (7:30 - 8:15, main ballroom)

This level teaches the fundamental techniques for West Coast Swing movement, connection, and musicality. We also cover some basic pattern variations.

Techniques and Skills

Footwork foundations (rolling the feet, smooth weight transitions)

Posture (pitch and lines)

Body leading

Preparation steps

Anchor transition (“boing”, and smoothly connecting patterns)

Nuances of extension, compression, and frame

Spins and Turns

Rhythm and Timing

Patterns

Closed Position - *dancing in closed, getting in and out of closed position*

Side Pass variations - *inside roll, outside turn*

Compression patterns - *sugar tuck, passing tuck*

Whip - *continuous whip, same-side whip, whip with outside turns*

Patterns (8:15 - 9pm, main ballroom)

This class covers the techniques needed to lead and follow intricate patterns. Through this class you will learn to innovate and create on your own.

Techniques and Skills

Elasticity

Core muscles

Musicality

Body flight

Posting

Patterns

Unique amalgamations, and patterns that require intricate partnering, for example:

Slingshots

Scrolls, Telemarks, and Spins

Wraps and Locks

For most dancers, level 3 will offer the new concepts, pattern variety, and level of difficulty to sustain all your dance growth.

Invitational

This is our competition-track class. It is designed to teach the skills that will enable experienced dancers to succeed in competitions. Most people in this class have many years experience in West Coast Swing.

If you want to be considered for this class, please ask an instructor. We will dance with you, then either invite you to the class, or provide you with some specific feedback.