

What's On2?

Eddie Torres - Salsa On2 - Mambo - New York Salsa

The lead steps slightly back on the left foot on 1, and then takes a break step backwards on the right foot on 2. On 3 the left foot steps in-place and over 3 and 4 the weight is transferred to the left foot. On 5 the leader steps slightly forward on the right foot, and breaks forward with the left foot on 6. On 7 the leader steps in place with the right foot and over 7 and 8 the weight is transferred onto the right foot, ready to repeat on 1.

Eddie Torres Style is so called because it was widely formalized and popularized by Eddie Torres whose clear teaching style and production of instructional videos opened up access to Salsa for many New Yorkers. It is not claimed that he invented the style. In those videos, Eddie Torres himself calls this "Night Club Style".

On2 Steps Analyzed

Also note that most "Torres" On 2 dancers slightly rush the one and the five count. This means that they are stepping a moment before the one and the five are played by the music. It can be clearly seen when they dance and heard when they count. While this might seem strange at first it really makes sense if you analyze the steps. The counted "one" falls between the musical eight and the musical one, while the counted "five" falls between the musical four and the musical five. This means that the distance between the (early) one and the two is the same as the one between the three and the (early) five, and it is a dotted quarter note. Because of this the quick-quick-slow "On 1" pattern becomes a slow-quick-slow one for "On 2" dancers, and the reduced difference between the quicks (one quarter note) and the slows (one and half quarter note) gives the "On 2" dance its typical flowing quality.

If we turn our attention to the steps we see how, in the basic step pattern, every step that requires a foot movement will fall on a "slow" count, while a simple weight transfer will be on a "quick", making this "On 2" feeling more natural and comfortable.

Dancing On1 and On2 compared

While in closed frame, two partnered dancers can not be simultaneously dancing On1 and On2 respectively without causing injury to one another since the break steps are taken at different times.

Dancing On2 means that the break step synchronizes with the accented slap of the tumbao, the pattern played on the conga drum(s), while the On1 break step synchronizes with the first beat of the measure. For this reason it is said On2 is more rhythmically oriented, whereas On1 is more melodically oriented.

Note that commonly On2 starts the basic pattern with the lead moving back and the follow moving forward, while On1 the lead starts the basic step forward and follow steps back.

Common Turns: The following turns are used in almost all salsa dancing regardless of the basic used or style employed.

- Spot Turn – either, or often both, partners turn 360° remaining in the same spot
- Extension – partners break in opposing directions to build arm tension between them. Often leads into a spot turn or an in-and-out. In-and-Out (Copa) - From a cross-hand hold (left over right), leader creates an extension, then pulls the woman in with the right hand while leading the left hand over her head to the other side of her, causing her to turn 180° to her left. The follower is then pushed back out, and will do at least another half left turn to return her to facing the lead.
- Cross Body Lead – follower is led to opposite side of lead, causing them to swap positions in a counter-clockwise fashion. Exists in other Latin dances such as Cha-cha-cha.
- Reverse Cross Body Lead – same as Cross Body Lead, but couple exchanges positions in a clockwise fashion.
- Basket – A type of extension where the leader is behind the follower and holds the follower's arms wrapped around her shoulders while she breaks forward and the leader breaks backward.

New York Style

New York style emphasizes efficiency of movement, elegance, and body isolation's. By focusing on control, timing, and precision of technique, dancers aim for smooth execution of tightly woven complex patterns. In New York City this style is danced strictly On 2, although dancers around the world often integrate elements and repertoire from New York into their dancing On 1.

On 2 timing emphasizes the conga drum's tumbao pattern, and encourages the dancer to listen to percussive elements of the music. Advocate of New York Style consider this to more accurately reflect the Afro-Caribbean ancestry of the music.

Many also refer to this style as "Mambo" since it breaks on beat 2 of the measure, though there are other dance forms with a more legitimate claim to that name.

The etiquette of New York style is strict about remaining in the "slot" and avoiding traveling.

New York style tends to place a greater emphasis on performing "shines" where dancers separate and dance solo for a time. New York style dancers are typically very serious about the musicality and timing of their dancing. To satisfy their tastes, "socials" are often held that cater to almost exclusively playing "salsa dura" (lit. "Hard Salsa") This is mid-to-up-tempo salsa with an emphasis on percussion and band orchestration rather than the vocals.

The longest-running social in New York is the Jimmy Anton social, which is held every first, third and fifth (if there is a fifth) Sunday of the month.

While the New York style is the predominant style found in the eastern United States, the style finds favor with professional salsa dancers and salsa teachers the world over. Thus, it can be seen at salsa congresses all around the world.