

5.5.1 Strathspey travelling step

This step is the equivalent of skip change of step in reel and jig time. One strathspey travelling step takes one bar of music.

1. Bend the left knee and, with the right leg fully extended, step forward onto the right foot in fourth in front of third position.
2. Close the left foot into third position behind the right foot.
3. Without bending the left knee, step forward again with the right foot into fourth in front of third position, leaving the left foot extended in fourth rear position.
4. Hop gently on the right foot as the left foot is pulled through slowly from fourth rear, ready to lead into the next step.

Rhythmic words: **Step, close, step, through** (or similar rhythmic variations).

Although the step has four parts in explanation, it can be seen that, in dancing it, all four parts are blended into one continuous movement.

The physical character of the strathspey travelling step is strong and dignified. Without being unnaturally stiff, the carriage of the body needs to be upright or the necessary balance will not be maintained. Although strong muscular control is required to dance the step well, the impression should be one of ease and smooth, flowing elegance.

Points to observe

1. The length of the first step is extended by a bend of the supporting knee and a flexible ankle. The foot just reaches fourth position as the weight is about to be transferred onto it.
2. When the feet are closed in third position, the body itself is at full height and the knees must be straight.
3. Without ending the supporting knee, the second step forward with the right foot must be of sufficient length to leave the left leg fully extended in fourth rear position.
4. With the leg turned out from the hip, but not exaggerated, the rear foot is pulled slowly through, past the supporting foot, with the toe just off the floor and the knee relaxed. There is a gentle but definite low hop on the supporting foot, just as the rear foot passes the front foot.

Strathspey travelling step is also used to travel backwards, as in advance and retire. The movement is 'back, close, back, through'. In this instance the close is in third position in front.