

SWING THRU - SPIN THE TOP - Both of these movements do exactly the same thing when you break them down to see what TWO of them will do. Of course, just ONE of each would not give you the very same thing, but TWO of them will. What I mean is that TWO of either of them is equivalent to a Right & Left Thru. I am sure that you already know that if you do TWO Swing Thru's you can Cross-Trail Thru to a Left Allemande. The same thing applies if you use TWO Spin the Top's. Two of them is equivalent to a Right & Left Thru. You can then do a Cross-Trail Thru to a Left Allemande. NOW, the next question is this? DID YOU KNOW THAT WHEN YOU USE ONE SWING THRU - ONE SPIN THE TOP - ANOTHER SWING THRU - ANOTHER SPIN THE TOP - YOU HAVE THE EXACT SAME THING? That's right, you certainly do. They are all together equivalent to a Right & Left Thru and you are ready to Cross-Trail to a Left Allemande. AND, this applies whether you are in a Static position, or whether you are in Lines of Four. You would use the same call, like so:

Heads to the right and circle four  
Head gents break to a Line of Four  
Go forward eight and back with you  
Then you Do-Sa-Do across from you  
Make an Ocean Wave - rock it a few  
Then Swing Thru and - Spin the Top  
Now Swing Thru just one more time  
Spin the Top - you're doing fine  
Then Cross-Trail across the land  
There's the corner, Left Allemande.

This call is not only good practice for you, but it is good practice for your dancers. Give them all of this and teach them how to Spin the Top. I find that so many dancers cannot Spin the Top when you add a Swing Thru to the call. The reason? We teach them that they start a Spin the Top by turning the opposite lady by the right and that they are looking for this very same lady to balance with. This is right, BUT, when you put a Swing Thru in the middle of the call this changes the lady they started the Spin the Top with. They tend to forget this. When you do a Swing Thru, then add a Spin the Top, they start the Spin the Top with their original partner instead of the opposite lady. This throws them sometimes. Use the above call a lot and let them get used to it. I would suggest that you start by having the Heads do the above, then have the sides do it, and eventually they will all do it with ease.

Someone suggested that you can add hand movements to a Swing Thru or a Spin the Top by saying, "Swing Thru Three Hands," or "Spin the Top Three Hands." In other words, they would turn by the right, then turn by the left, and now they would turn by the right again. I tried this and it seemed to just confuse the dancers. I thought the idea was alright, so I changed the call to "Swing Thru and when you do, turn by the right and balance there." This seemed to clear it up somewhat. I used the same thing with Spin the Top. You can call it directionally, like this, "Spin the Top and when you do you turn by the right and balance too." I am of the opinion that you should call anything directionally that you can. I know there are a lot of things that are a combination of several different calls, and these are good for gimmicks once in awhile, but a full evening of this type of thing would be too much. The dancers would soon tire of it. Keep calls directional when you can.

I think I am the culprit that originated the "TRIPLE SPIN THE TOP." At least, I never heard any other Caller use it. I just sort of hatched the idea, and started using it and found that dancers had trouble with it. They have a tendency to forget, after a couple of turns, and they would grab the wrong lady, or the lady would grab the wrong man, so I thought about it awhile and then came up with the idea of calling it directionally; like this:

Heads go forward, back with you  
Spin the Top across from you  
Spin it again, we're still not thru  
Now, Spin it again and when you do  
Swing Thru and - balance there -  
Pull by. Left Allemande

It is a nice movement and the dancers seem to like it, but I have found that you have plenty of time to call it directionally, and you can call as many Spin the Tops as you want to, if you separate them and call it directionally. The above movement is good practice for your dancers, so give it to them once in awhile. Sometimes when you are calling it, change that last line. The call says, "PULL BY, LEFT ALLEMANDE - Instead, say RIGHT & LEFT THRU WITH A FULL TURN - . You will find that the end result is the same, but