

# La Volta

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This dance is basically a galliard variation, although it can contain other steps. The dance is for a single couple or as many couples as will.

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## The Steps

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### VSL -- Volta Step Left

The basic La Volta galliard figure is as follows:

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1.	kl	Kick Left
2.	SL	Step Left
3, 4.	J	Large Leap
5.	Pj	Feet Together
6.		Pause

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A right Volta step (VSR) begins with the right foot.

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### Vt -- The Volta Turn

1	kL	Kick Left
2	SL	Step Left
3 - 6	Leap and spin.	

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## How to do the Leap and Spin

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### Body Position

This is something best shown, not learned from a book, but here are some notes on how I do the leap and spin in the Volta:

Firstly, the man and lady must be standing close together – touching at the hips. The lady will need to be close enough to sit on the man's thigh.

This can be done with the lady on the man's left side (improper position), or the lady on the man's right side (proper position). Whether you do this proper or improper is up to you. Arbeau first describes the turn done improper, and then says it can also be done proper. The iconographic evidence from the period (paintings of couples dancing La Volta) show the dance being done in either stance, although this could be a matter of artistic license as much as anything else.

My recommendation (and this may not work for everyone) is that the turn works best done proper if the man is right-handed, and improper if the man is left-handed.

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**Hand holds**

There are a couple of possible hand-holds. These are as follows:

- Arbeau says that the man holds the lady by the back, and by the busk point at the front of her gown. The lady places one arm across the man's back and holds his shoulder, and uses the other to steady her skirts. Of course this only works if the lady is wearing a gown that has a useful busk point.
- Where the lady is tall enough relative to the man (and the important thing is her body length relative to his, and that her arms are long enough), the lady puts her near-side arm across the man's shoulders, and brings her other arm across in front of the man's shoulders to hold her near side hand. In doing this she will put her weight onto the man's shoulders. The man will put his near side arm around the lady's waist, and places his hand on her hip. The man takes the lady's near side hand (now on his shoulder) in his other hand, and pulls down on it slightly to lock her into place.
- Where the lady is taller than the man (especially if there is a considerable height difference at the hips), then she can extend her left arm past the man's shoulders and take it with her right hand, across the front of his body. This will help her put more of her weight onto the man's shoulders, which makes the lift easier from the man's point of view.
- A shorter lady will need to place her near side hand on the man's near side shoulder, and use this to lift. Her other hand can be used to hold her skirts in place. This keeps the lady more upright but does require more lifting effort on the part of the man (with his leg), so really only works where the center of gravity is closer to the man. The lady should still take care to push down on the man's near side shoulder as she leaps and is lifted by him.
- Where the man is much taller and/or heavier than the lady, he may need to use his far side hand to help with the lift. He can do this by reaching across his body and placing this hand under her skirts as she leaps.

The hand hold that you use will normally be dictated by the height and weight difference between the man and the lady. Experiment with these different holds until you find one that works for you and your partner.

The idea behind the hand hold is to transfer as much weight as possible onto the man's shoulders during the spin. Physiologically, men are much better equipped to carry weight on their shoulders than they are on their hips relative to ladies.

**The knee lift**

The man basically at this point will be lifting the lady by his near side leg. I will describe this from the point of a right-handed man dancing in proper position – reverse “left” and “right” in the section below if you are dancing improper.

The man turns his right knee outwards, and lifts his right leg, so that the lady sits on his right thigh. The man makes sure that his weight is on his left leg after stepping forwards on to it – this then becomes the pivot point for the dancers as they complete the turn.

The lady leaps, and the man uses his arm, leg, and shoulders to lift her, and the couple spins.

The man should then turn through 270° keeping the couple balanced on his left leg while doing so.

**Some points to note about the leap and spin:**

The man should not bring his right leg up too quickly or else he will end up kicking the lady in the backside!. He should bring his leg up slowly underneath her and allow her to sit on it.

The man may need to use his left arm for balance – this is usually the case where the lady is heavier than the man.

All of the above takes a lot of practice – do this dance with a partner you are familiar with!

**Height, weight, and balance**

Depending on the relative height and centers of gravity of the man and lady, the man may need to bend his left leg more to get his right thigh up and under the lady. A tall man will need to bend his left knee quite a lot to get his right leg under a short lady.

## A Basic Volta

**The Sequence**

A basic volta sequence is to do four volta steps forwards, then four volta turns. This is repeated until the end of the music.

## Maeve's Coronation Volta

This volta was choreographed by Maeve ni Ischata for the first Coronation in the Kingdom of Lochac. It is for 2 dancers, starting side by side.

1 – 4	Vt x 4	The man and the lady independently (i.e. Not in the turn position) do four volta turns. The man starts by hopping forwards and making a $\frac{3}{4}$ turn over his left shoulder to end in front of his starting position and facing right. The lady starts by hopping into the man's place and making a $\frac{3}{4}$ turn to face forwards. Then continue this 3 more times to end up back in place.
5	HkL kR HkR jL Cadenza	Galliard sequence: kick swing change swing change. End with a cadenza and taking positions for a volta turn.
6 – 9	Vt x 4	4 volta turns. Dropping back to proper position, the man and lady independently do a volta turn, diagonally outwards away from each other.
10	Vt	
11	Vt	Independently do a volta turn diagonally back in towards each other
12 – 15	Vt x 4	4 volta turns.
16	HkL kR HkR jL Cadenza	Repeat the earlier galliard sequence from bar 5.
17 – 32	Repeat	Repeat the entire dance.