

Basic 15th- and 16th-Century Italian Dance Steps

Most steps in Italian Medieval/Renaissance dance were small, about a handbreadth.

Piva (pl. Pive) – Similar to a “step-ball-change” in modern dance

- Step forwards on the left foot
- Step quickly forwards on the right foot, bringing the right foot near the left foot.
- Step forwards again on the left foot.

Note that the above three actions are done in two beats. The second action is done quickly on the second beat, and the third step forwards happens just after the beat. The count is “ONE and TWO, ONE and TWO”, etc.

Saltarello (pl. Saltarelli) – Basically a Step-Step-Step-Hop.

- Some texts describe the Saltarello more like a Piva with a hop at the end, but in the SCA it is most commonly done as three regular steps followed by a hop

Movimento (pl. Movimenti) – Translated as “a movement,” little is known about this step. It is usually done as a small rising motion, but it could be elaborated or improvised upon if desired.

Riverenza – Not a bow, but a specific step done toward your partner, usually in four beats

- Push the left foot forwards, somewhat ahead of the right, and pause slightly.
- Bring the left foot backwards, to somewhere behind where it started.
- Bend both knees, keeping the body straight up and down, keeping the head upright and facing forwards.
- Return to the upright position with the feet back where they started, straightening both knees and rising back into place.

Ripresa – A “single” step, rising up onto your toes, bringing one foot to the other one, then lowering both heels.

Continenza - Step to the side, bringing the heel of the other foot to touch the first one. Lower your body a little while taking the step, then rise up as you bring both heels together, swaying a little in the direction you are moving.

Seguito Ordinario - Two steps up on your toes, followed by a flat step and a pause. In $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the first step is two beats, the second is one beat, and the third is three beats.

Trabuchetto (“Trab”) - A small sideways jump, landing on the toes of the leading foot. Bring the heel of the trailing foot to touch the leading foot (but don’t put weight on it).