

MOUSH HALAY
(Armenia)

There are many different Halays/Govanda/Kotcharis, from various areas of Armenia. Aside from these traditional versions, there are numerous modern ones created by Armenian-Americans. Originally a men's dance adopted from Kurdish mountaineers, many of the present dances are still restricted to men. MOUSH HALAY is a traditional men's dance from the Moush/Van area in Western Armenia.

Pronunciation:

Source: Seto and Armen Javian, Jack Arabian, Berzig Parsekian, Perouz Janjigian.

Music: Barbashi Tape #1 Armenian Folk Dances Side A/4
The Armenian (John Vartan) Side B "Zurna Halay"
To the First Golden Generation with Love (Richard Berberian) Side 2 - Kochare (Daroni Halay)

Style: This men's dance is characterized by a continuous flex of the knees, the dzoongodrel (knee breaks). Feet are shoulder-width apart, with the outside of the legs pressing against the legs of the next dancer. The line moves as a single cohesive unit. Despite the flexed knees, carriage remains erect.

Formation: Line of men in "Arabic hold" (dancers very close, interlocking fingers with arms down at sides).

<u>Meas</u>	<u>Cts</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
		<u>INTRODUCTION</u>
		During the taxim (long improvisational introduction) sway to the R, L, R, L.
1-2	1-4	Flex knees four times at beginning of dance itself (cts 1-4) to begin.
		<u>I. WALK</u>
1-14	1-28	Walk to the R with small sliding steps, keeping torso erect and knees flexed: Step on R to R (ct 1); step on L beside R (ct 2). Repeat 13 times (cts 3-28). <u>Note:</u> These cts refer to dancing to the record listed above. In actuality, the line only changes when the leader decides.
		<u>II. BREAK</u>
1-3	1-6	Step on R to R as "break knees" to the R (ct 1); break/flex to R (ct 2); break/flex to L (ct 3); repeat break to L (ct 4); step on R to R (ct 5); step on L beside R (ct 6).
4-?	7-?	Repeat Fig II until leader changes.

MOUSH HALAY (Continued)III. LEAN

- 1-3 1-6 Break twice to R (cts 1,2); break twice to L (cts 3,4); step on R to R while leaning bkwd slightly, with L toe remaining on the floor (ct 5); step on L beside R as straighten carriage (ct 6).
- 4-? 7-? Repeat Fig III until leader changes the step as tempo increases.

Note: When executed properly, the lean on cts 5,6 will "ripple" the line subtly.

IV. KICK

- 1-4 1-8 Step on R to R (ct 1); step on L beside R (ct 2); kick/lift R slightly in front of L (ct 3); step on R to R (ct &); step on L beside R (ct 4); flex/break knees to R twice (cts 5,6); flex/break knees to L twice (cts 7,8).
- 5-? 9-? Continue until end of music.

The steps notated above (Fig I-IV) is the original dance. In the 1940s a new figure was developed in the Boston area to make the dance more exuberant. This Fig V is suitable for stage presentation, or for exhibition.

V. SPIN

When the tempo accelerates into a fast 6/8 rhythm, spread the line out into a closed circle and grasp shldrs. Keep carriage erect and lean back to maintain tension.

- 1-2 1-4 Step/stamp onto R as L kicks fwd slightly (ct 1); leap onto L across R (ct 2); lift/twist R knee to L side at waist level (ct 3); leap onto R to R (ct &); leap onto L beside R (ct 4).
- 3-4 5-8 Close R beside L on balls of ft with legs straight, and flex knees (ct 5); "bounce" on balls of ft with legs straight twice (ct 6,&); flex knees again (ct 7); "bounce" twice again (cts 8.&).
- 5-? 9-? Continue until music ends, or until tempo slows down. If tempo slows, return to Fig II until the music ends.

Note: The closed circle should "spin" CCW on cts 1-4. If the group is ambitious, the leader can increase the spin by calling out a number for the circle to repeat cts 3,&4 in the step. (e.g. "three" = "1,2,3,&4,3,&4,3,&4, 5,6,&7,*,&).

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