# WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF **MODERN SQUARE & ROUND DANCING**

We are delighted that you have decided to join with us to explore the world of Modern Square and Round Dancing. As you increase your dance vocabulary and meet the dancers in the club you will occasionally hear references to dance terms, dance etiquette, styling and organizations. This document is designed to help you understand those references and better comprehend the way the Square and Round Dance World functions.

# **DANCE RELATED INFORMATION** FOR NEW DANCERS

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(Compiled by Dottie Welch, Updated February 2014)

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# THE GROUND RULES OF SQUARE AND ROUND DANCING

1) Be a Good Listener and Conscientious Learner

Concentrate and pay attention.

Be quiet both while dancing and when on the sidelines.

Don't anticipate the next call, wait for the caller to ensure success.

Make an effort to learn the correct move definitions.

#### 2) Be Cooperative

Square dancing success depends on team work in the square.

Likewise, a strong square dance activity needs support and cooperation from all the dancers.

#### 3) Be receptive to learning opportunities

Laugh at your mistakes and remember that this is a recreation not a competition.

Accept help, fill the hole and try to keep dancing.

Ask questions when you don't understand how to do a move or sequence.

### 4) Be On Time

The first tip is the warm-up for the evening.

Leaving early may leave 3 couples sitting.

## 5) Square Up Quickly

Finish your conversation and square up quickly when you hear the music begin. Raise your hand to indicate where couples are needed.

Don't dance when you haven't learned the program being called.

### 6) Be Courteous

Ask your partner to dance.

Fill the first available square.

Don't walk through a square.

Don't leave a square except in an emergency.

Thank your partner, the other dancers in your square and the caller or cuer.

### 7) Be Thoughtful

Be polite and gentle.

Be neat and clean – bath well and wear clean clothes.

Avoid eating onions, garlic or strong spices before a dance.

Don't cloud your wits with alcoholic beverages before or during a dance.

Don't attend when you are contagiously sick.

If you must be absent, let someone know especially if the group is small.

# 8) Be Friendly

Wear your badge and a smile.

Get acquainted with other club members.

Welcome visitors, introduce yourself.

Avoid stacking squares or forming cliques.

Ask singles to dance including the leader's partner.

#### 9) Take it easy

Pace yourself. Sit when you need to.

### 10) Enjoy yourself

Smile and expect to have a good time.

Clap enthusiastically for the music, the leader, the square and yourself.

# STYLING CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD DANCER

1) Move with a Smooth Shuffle

Wear shoes that allow your feet to slide smoothly across the floor.

2) Be Musically Aware

Step in time to the beat of the music.

- 3) Dance using the Correct Timing for each move
   Learn the timing for each move along with the definition.
   Practice taking the correct number of steps and strive to dance that way if possible.
- 4) Move with Good Posture

Stand erect and keep your head raised to look ahead and make eye contact.

5) Maintain your own Balance

Keep your weight over the balls of your feet, with your nose over your toes.

6) Use Proper Hand and Arm Holds

Know how and when to use each type of dancer connection by learning the move definitions. Hands-up position, Forearm turns, Hand holds,

Stars, Pack Saddles, Courtesy Turn action, Box the Gnat action

Hold gently and offer gentle resistance as you turn.

Let go as your shoulder passes by the other dancer.

7) Counter-dance

In moves with active and inactive dancers, the inactive dancers should adjust to give space to the actives, and to anticipate their own entry into the action.

8) Adjust the Size of the Square as needed

Establish a comfortable space at the start (about 6 feet across).

Gents control the square size during the Promenade and they should keep it cozy.

Readjust (Breath in) after a move that spreads the square out.

9) Know the Traffic Pattern Rules

When meeting someone pass by right shoulders.

When crossing paths with someone facing the same way you are, the dancer on the right has the right-of-way regardless of sex.

10) Make the Formations

After every move touch hands to clearly establish the new formation.

11) Dance Precisely and Clearly Establish Facing Direction after each move

Nearly always dancers should be facing one of the four walls when stationary.

12) Swing and Twirl Smoothly

A good swing is a special joy, so make an effort to learn how to Swing properly. Know where twirls are appropriate and how to dance them comfortably.

13) Ladies use Skirt Work when appropriate, Gents show Gallantry on the traditional moves.
Ladies who wear a full skirt have the option to add another dimension to their dancing.
Watch how the experienced dancers use their skirt to enhance the beauty and fun of the dance.
Gentlemen should guide and assist the lady as she does the traditional extra turns and twirls designed to please the eye of the spectator.

14) Smile and show Enjoyment while Dancing

Square Dancing is a recreation designed to meet and share music, movement, and merriment.

# SQUARE DANCE VOCABULARY:

HEADS – In a squared up set Heads have their back to the caller or are facing the caller. SIDES – In a squared up set Sides are standing with their sides towards the caller.

PARTNER – In general your partner is the dancer beside you in your quadrant of the square. In a squared-up set or normal couples the Gent's partner is on his right, the Lady's is on her left. In a circle with alternating sexes look in the same direction as above to find your partner. When in lines, divide the line in the centre and look for the person beside you in your half. When in couples or columns, your partner is beside you.

ORIGINAL PARTNER is the person who was your partner when you squared up. NORMAL COUPLE is a Couple with the Gent on the left side and the Lady on the right side.

CORNER – In a squared-up set or circle, the dancer on the other side from your partner is your corner. To find your corner in other formations, think about connecting the dancers in a circular string. When asked to Allemande Left or Swing the corner, the caller will usually have you facing your corner or standing beside them if you are facing out. For facing lines mentally make a Circle of 8 to find your corner and apply the "Gents look to their left, Ladies look to their right" rule.

OPPOSITE – Refers to someone you are facing directly or sometimes on a diagonal. In a squared-up set, your opposite is the dancer of the opposite sex who is facing you directly across the square.

We also talk about symmetrical opposites. In the squared-up set, your symmetrical opposite is the person of the same sex in the couple facing you. In symmetric choreography that dancer should always be opposite you along a line through the flagpole centre of the set.

COUPLE NUMBERS – In a squared-up set Couple #1 has their back to the caller, Couple #2 is to their right and has their left sides to the caller, Couple #3 is facing the caller, and Couple #4 is the remaining couple and has their right sides to the caller. Count around the square in a counter-clockwise direction.

PROMENADE – Couples moving as pairs around a circle in the counter-clockwise direction. Unless otherwise directed stop and face in at the Gentleman's home position.

Facing Lines	Right-Hand Two-Faced Lines	Right-Hand Waves
4 dancers facing 4 dancers	Couple holding right hands with another couple	4 dancers facing alternately, end & centre hold right hands
Eight Chain Thru	Double Pass Thru	Right-Hand Columns
Couples facing in two boxes which are adjacent back-to-back	One couple behind another facing a similar pair of couples. The Couples are in Tandem. There are Leaders and Trailers.	4 dancers in single file holding right hands with 4 dancers in single file facing the other way.

### SOME COMMON FORMATIONS

# SQUARE DANCE PROGRAMS

Callerlab has designated lists of moves that dancers in certain programs are expected to be able to do.

Basic- 50 moves (often the level of a 1-year dancer)Mainstream- the 50 moves above plus an additional 20 movesPlus- an additional 30 moves (many clubs in the USA)Advanced (A1 & A2)- an additional 40 moves for A1 and 40 more for A2Challenge (C1, C2, C3 & C4)- an additional 100 moves or more for each program

Remember that at a Mainstream dance, the most desirable dancer to meet in the square is the one who knows the Mainstream moves well, dances in time to the music, and is having fun. Knowing more moves does not automatically make one a better dancer.

# **VOCABULARY FOR ROUNDS AND MIXERS:**

LINE OF DANCE – Facing towards line-of-dance means couples or individuals are facing around the hall like spokes of a wheel in counter-clockwise direction. FACING TOWARDS REVERSE – Couples or individuals are facing clockwise around the circle.

TACING TO WARDS REVERSE Couples of individuals are facing clockwise around the circle.

In orienting couples, Round dancers imagine a circular room with a centre point. Place that centre point in the middle of the available dance area.

BACK TO THE CENTRE means standing with your back to that centre point.

GENTS FACING THE WALL means the gents have their back to the centre point.

LADIES FACING THE CENTRE means they are facing towards the centre point but usually they are also facing their partner directly in front of them.

# **ROUND DANCE PHASES**

Round dancing is divided into phases with progressively more moves in increasing phase numbers. Phase II is typically danced at Mainstream square dances and includes the Two-Step and Waltz rhythms. Other phases include more rhythms such as the Foxtrot, Rumba, Cha Cha, Tango, and Jive.

# CONTRAS AND LINE DANCING

Contras are closely related to Squares using many of the same calls but they are usually danced in two long facing lines (Contra Lines) or in a circle of facing couples (Sicilian Circle). Line Dancing is a form of synchronized solo dancing done to cues until the sequence is memorized.

# MEDICAL PROBLEMS

1) Tell your caller if you have known medical problems that have the potential to cause a problem while you are dancing. Leaders should know about emergency medication and contact information.

2) The following is the universal signal for help and procedure if a dancer collapses while in a square:

- a) One dancer should attend to the dancer in trouble.
- b) Remaining couples join hands and take a step backward to provide room and air.
- c) Raise joined hands as high as possible in the form of an arched circle.
- d) On seeing this signal the caller or hall monitor will immediately Call for Medical Aid.

3) If you have Emergency Medical Skills please inform the club leaders of your knowledge.

# LIABILITY INSURANCE

Carrying Liability insurance has become necessary as we are all individually and collectively liable for damages caused by our group. The Canadian Square and Round Dance Society carries a policy that covers its members and member organizations while they are engaged in square dance activities. Liability insurance is intended to deal only with damages caused to another and pursued by the other through court action. The five-million dollar coverage is applicable anywhere in the world, but the lawsuit must be laid in Canada.

The cost is included in the membership dues paid annually by each club. Each individual is responsible to see that they are covered through at least one club (dancers in multiple clubs only need one membership). Coverage normally is from January through December, but can be obtained for a partial year at the full year price. Proof of attendance is by means of a sign-in book for both members and visitors.

# **RECOVERY SKILLS**

1) If the square has not totally disintegrated, look for the hand signal of someone trying to help you.

2) When you square up note who your diagonal opposite is (same sex on the opposite side of the square). At all times that dancer should be symmetrically opposite to you in the square. Use that knowledge to key on their position and **fill the spot in your half of the square that corresponds to where they are standing in their half of the square.** The only exception to this is when the caller is using asymmetric choreography, which is quite rare and should be obvious.

3) If help and symmetry fail then wait for the dust to settle, **look for the hole and fill it fast**. Even if the empty spot turns out to be the position of someone of the opposite sex, hang in there as long as you can. Suddenly having to dance the part of the other sex can be fun if you don't fight it. Take corrective action if the caller gives you clues such as "all men are in the centre".

4) If all is chaos, square up quickly without a lot a talking that will bother the squares around you. Unless the caller appears to be close to a resolution, the number one man and his partner should initiate action to **create normal facing lines**. Usually the head ladies join hands with their corner and the head couples back out to form normal lines at the sides of the square. Watch the other squares for a normal facing line situation and join in when you see one. Callers will try to help you by saying "Normal lines go forward and back". If an Allemande Left or Promenade occurs first, simply adjust back to a squared up set. Remember that a full recovery will probably also require rapid sorting during the Promenade.

5) If the square disintegrates during a **Singing Call** be ready to **Swing** with your corner or nearest opposite sex, **then Promenade and adjust so that all the men end at home**. If dancers are lost during the Promenade then men should head for home while ladies join the closest un-partnered man.

6) **Keep smiling** and laugh at the crazy confusion we can make while pursuing this wonderful recreation. DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY, KEEP DANCING!!!

### **HELPERS RESPONSIBILITIES**

Be inconspicuous, gentle, quiet and courteous. Discreetly point the way or reach out a hand. Be patient and wait for formations to gel before moving. Practice teamwork in action at all times. Dance properly, establish formations clearly. Help only when needed and as little as necessary. Help only when certain you know what should be happening.

Always remember that you were once a beginner. Welcome newcomers and enjoy new friends.

# **SQUARE & ROUND DANCE ATTIRE**

Dancers are expected to wear traditional square dance attire at most special evening dances in Nova Scotia. Some clubs, afternoon workshops and campout dances are proper or casual but you should confirm the dress with the leader ahead of time. Traditional attire is always appropriate, so if in doubt, opt for a prairie skirt and blouse for the lady and a simple western shirt and dress slacks for the gent.

**Traditional Square Dance Attire** (As currently recognized by the Association of Nova Scotia Square and Round Dance Teachers and by the Square and Round Dance Federation of Nova Scotia)

LADIES should wear a full-skirted dress or skirt and blouse. Knee length full circle skirts should be worn with a crinoline and pettipants. Mid-calf length prairie skirts should be full enough to use in skirt work. Underneath you will need an equal length petticoat or perhaps a crinoline. Usually pettipants are not necessary unless the skirt is very full (test by twirling in front of a mirror).

GENTLEMEN should wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt accompanied by a neck decoration. Western style is preferred but blue jeans are sometimes frowned upon. Towels are useful in hot halls but are not required.

SHOES should be comfortable and offer reasonable support. Consider the dance surface and choose soles that will be slippery enough to shuffle and swing but not slick enough to cause a fall. Also avoid dark soles that could cause black marks on polished gym floors.

JEWELRY should be able to withstand the rigors of close body contact and vigorous swings. Avoid charm bracelets, fancy rings, delicate necklaces and belt buckles that might catch on or stab another dancer.

**Proper Attire** is a new dress category added by Callerlab in 2000. This includes dress slacks and dress jeans for men and women and short sleeved dress shirts for men. Remember, at "Proper Attire" events, Traditional Attire is also acceptable.

**Casual Attire** is intended for events where traveling, weather and other conditions would discourage dancers from following either traditional or proper dress codes. When events are advertised as "Casual Attire", dancers are expected to use good taste in choosing their outfits. Traditional and Proper attire are always appropriate.

### MARITIME SHOPS SELLING SQUARE DANCE ATTIRE

**Dancer's Duds and Frills --** Retailers for dance apparel supplies & western wear. Angie & Charles MacDonald, 732 Glasgow Road, Rte 224, Charlottetown, P.E.I., C1E 1Z4 902-964-2379, Website: </www.dancersduds.com>, Email: info@dancersduds.com

Artistic Sole Dance & Active Wear -- Shoes appropriate for Square, Round and Contra dancing. Hubley Plaza, 3650 Hammonds Plains Road, Upper Tantallon, NS B3Z 4R3 Hubley Plaza is at Exit 5 off Hwy 103, <www.artisticsole.ca>, 902-820-3220, info@artisticsole.ca Co-owners: Andrea Whittier and Madelyn Kundzins

# SEWING YOUR OWN OUTFIT

If you are interested creating your own outfit, ask your club leaders for sewing directions. It is not difficult to make a prairie skirt or a circular skirt and matching necktie.

# SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Local:	Square Dance Clubs and Round Dance Clubs
Regional:	Metro Square and Round Dance Association (Metro)
Provincial:	Square and Round Dance Federation of Nova Scotia (SRDFNS)
National:	Canadian Square and Round Dance Society (CSRDS)

Provincial Leaders: Association of Nova Scotia Square and Round Dance Teachers (ANSSRDT) Maritime Leaders: Maritime Callers and Cuers Association (MCCA) Canadian Leaders: Canadian Western Dance Instructors Association (CWDIA) International Leaders: CALLERLAB and ROUNDALAB and CONTRALAB Cultural Federation for all dance forms in Nova Scotia: Dance Nova Scotia (DANS):

### Metro Square and Round Dance Association (Metro)

- Coordinator of events within the Central Region (Halifax County) since 1968.
- Organizes Summer Dancing and some demonstration dances for marketing
- Heart Fund Dance, New Year's Eve Dinner and Dance

Other Regions of Nova Scotia: South Shore, Valley, Fundy, Highland, Cape Breton

### Square and Round Dance Federation of Nova Scotia (SRDFNS)

- Provincial organizer since 1968 and partly funded by National Convention profits.
- Maintains website at www.squaredance.ns.ca
- Publishes the Calendar of Events. The Phantom is available on the website.
- Liaison with the National Society regarding membership and insurance
- Provincial Festival during the summer of odd number years since 1983

### Canadian Square and Round Dance Society (CSRDS)

- Coordinates dancing nationwide, Maintains website at www.squaredance.ca
- National Convention in summer of even numbered years since 1978
- Carries the Liability Insurance policy for square dancers

### Association of Nova Scotia Square and Round Dance Teachers (ANSSRDT)

- Members are Nova Scotia callers and cuers who wish to join
- Holds two workshops yearly to improve calling and cueing skills
- The Alguire Callers Memorial Fund underwrites a school for callers in odd numbered years

### Maritime Callers and Cuers Association (MCCA)

- Umbrella association of leaders in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI & Newfoundland
- Organizes the Maritime Square and Round Dance Convention each November since 1970
- Holds a June training workshop for callers and cuers.

### Callerlab, Roundalab, Contralab

- International leader organizations which control the program lists and definitions
- Each meets annually to share expertise and work on ways to improve the activity

### Dance Nova Scotia (DANS)

- Non-profit organization promoting all forms of dance in Nova Scotia since 1974.
- Liaison to the government through the Cultural Federations

## **CLUB LOYALTY**

Support your Club by attending regularly Cooperate with the wishes of the majority Express your opinion in a constructive way

Help with the chores Be aware of club customs Wear your badge with pride

### VISITING PLEASURE

#### **Banner Stealing**

A square of visitors may come to your club to "steal" its banner. This is a time-honoured tradition that encourages visiting between clubs. Retrieval of the banner requires a square from your club to visit theirs. Detailed rules may be found on the SRDFNS website.

#### Visiting other clubs

Be aware of the list of moves you have learned and their name if you have completed a group. Visit only where you have learned enough to dance successfully. Initially ask for guidance from your caller regarding your ability.

Special Dances

Generally Special Dances advertise the dance program that will be called. Where your knowledge matches or exceeds the program, plan to attend and enjoy.

#### **Travel to Festivals and Conventions**

Festivals and Conventions generally offer several rooms dancing different programs. Again, be aware of your knowledge and select your rooms accordingly.

#### Nova Scotia Booster Dangle for your badge

Forms are available to fill out as you dance in each region of Nova Scotia.

The **Calendar of Events** lists the various dance events being held in Nova Scotia and some special functions elsewhere. Special club fund-raising dances are listed in bold print. The most up-to-date version is listed on the Federation Website at <www.squaredance.ns.ca> under Calendar of Events. The Calendar is e-mailed monthly to club representatives and dancers who request it.

### THE SQUARE AND ROUND DANCE WORLD

There are clubs in every province and state as well as in at least 26 countries around the world. All of them dance to the same calls that we do. Furthermore the calls are in English not only across Canada, the United States, in Britain and Australia but they are also in English across Europe (11 countries) and in Russia, China, Taiwan and Japan. Everywhere dancers are as friendly as those at your own club, you will be made welcome wherever you go and the same etiquette applies.

The best way to find information about worldwide addresses, contact names and numbers is to use the internet. Use standard search engines or begin by following the links from the Nova Scotia website <www.squaredance.ns.ca> or National Society website <www.csrds.ca>. Most of the websites for the Canadian provinces are similar to ours such as <www.squaredance.bc.ca> for British Columbia. For USA information go to <www.dosado.com>. If you plan on visiting, it is wise to call, write, or e-mail ahead to confirm locations, times and the dance program.

## HISTORY AND HERITAGE

#### **Ancient Times**

Primitive Societies danced in ceremony and celebration. The earliest records of people dancing are cave paintings in northern Spain believed to have been drawn about 50,000 years ago.

#### **Middle Ages**

On May 1st young girls in English villages danced around the Maypole weaving ribbons. The men performed the Morris Dance welcoming spring with bells and a weaving action waving swords and later white kerchiefs.

#### **Church Choral Dances inspire Social Dancing**

Church Choral Dances inspired the English Country Dance which included turning partners and corners and the Grand Right and Left. In France, aristocratic couples danced in a circle in intricate patterns and elaborate costumes and often performed before the king and queen.

#### 1500-1800

The Renaissance brought a new liveliness and many countries in Europe developed new dances. The Germans danced the *Allemande* which was full of turns. Likely our "Allemande Left" simply means do a left turn as they used to do in the old Allemande. The French *Minuet* and *Gavotte* gave us our Standard Introduction used in rounds. In England the *Longways* dance became popular with facing lines dancing to gay tunes in phrases of eight. The *Longways* dance crossed the channel to France where the common folk were delighted to find an easy dance to learn by watching the head couple and called it the *Contredanse*. Scotland contributed the Reel and hence we have the roots of Contra Dancing.

#### The 1800's

Couple dances became popular including the *Waltz* from Austria in 1795, the *Polka* from Bohemia in 1830 and the *Varsouvienne* from Poland in 1850.

English Country Dancing included a "round for eight" which migrated to France and became the *Quadrille*. This is our first true square dance with four couples in a square and someone prompting the action. Certain Quadrilles had a strict structure and were called *Lancers* they ended in 4/4 time and that is the origin of our Grand Square.

#### The New World

British and French settlers came to the New World bringing their dances. Most were easy to learn and only required a flat area and a fiddler. Accordions were first made about 1830. Kentucky settlers from northern England and lowland Scotland danced a "running set" which featured a visiting couple figure. Scottish Reels, Irish Jigs and English Hornpipes melded with popular tunes of the day. Prompters began using rhyming calls and we have the beginning of Singing Calls.

#### The Revival

At the beginning of the 20th century there was a decline in the variety and quality of the square dance repertoire. In 1923 Henry Ford visited the Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts and saw Benjamin Lovett teaching the Virginia Reel and square dancing along with the popular dances for couples. Henry Ford used his automobile fortune to hire Mr. Lovett to teach dancing and train dance instructors in Dearborn, Michigan. The school lasted until 1949 and regularly filled specially built Lovett Hall with forty squares (the hall is still in use). Thomas Edison produced the first square dance records on thick 78s. Ford & Lovett ran a national newspaper column and a weekly radio show.

#### **History continued**

Square Dancing was introduced to students in 34 universities around the country. Dr. Lloyd "Pappy" Shaw took up the quest to research and revive the American dance and taught the students of Cheyenne Mountain School. By 1937 they were giving performances around the country. (This is still an active dance group.)

After World War II several factors set the stage for the big boom in square dancing. Communities had a more mobile life style, modern sound systems were developed out of electronic discoveries during the war, and there were many service personnel who had sampled square dancing at some recreation centre.

#### The Transition to Modern Square Dancing

In the 1950's callers began to take advantage of the new sound systems by introducing spontaneous variety into the dancing. This possibility inspired callers to create many new moves and it soon became difficult to dance in a new area because the repertoire of moves was different. Clubs formed with regular meeting nights. Callerlab formed in 1974 to standardize teaching procedures and terminology and to sort the commonly used moves into programs.

#### Modern Round Dancing expanded as new rhythms became popular

Americans created the Two-Step in 1890 and the Fox Trot in 1910. The Argentine Tango originated 1900 in Buenos Aires and was imported into the ballrooms of the Western world about 1910. The Rumba is a Cuban dance of African origin that became a popular ballroom dance about 1930. The Big Bands of the 1930's and 1940's brought in Swing and Jive. The Cha-cha and Mambo came from Cuba in 1954.

As with square dancing, the proliferation of new ideas made a governing body desirable if dancers wished to travel. Roundalab first met in 1977 and began standardizing the Phase lists and move definitions for Round Dancing.

#### A World Wide Activity

With standardization, it became possible for dancers to travel across North America and dance with confidence in a hall of total strangers. Europe also picked up on this possibility having experienced some square dancing when NATO troops were stationed there during the Cold War. This unique American folk dance has also spread across the Pacific and is now enjoyed in Japan, China, Australia, and New Zealand.

Everywhere the English terminology is used, although sometimes the accent of the caller can make interpretation tricky. National conventions draw dancers from around the world and make it possible to dance in a square with three other couples from distant lands. Although the dancers cannot speak a common language, they can dance together in harmony and with success.

Having brought lasting pleasure, fun and fellowship to many thousands of dancers, this is a recreation that builds bridges between ages and between cultures and brings smiles to all. Long may we all "square up".