

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SQUARE AND ROUND DANCING

A guide for the newly graduated square dancer and those who have been dancing for a while!

SQUARE DANCE ETIQUETTE

- I. Never leave a square early. Your ability, or that of your fellow dancers, is no excuse. We all start at the same level and the only way to get better is to dance. If you become ill or an emergency arises advise the other members of the square and if possible, try to find a replacement.
- II. Don't dance over your own level of dance, unless invited. If you attempt to dance over your head without being invited you will only embarrass yourself and may upset the remainder of the square. If you haven't completed mainstream lessons don't expect to dance with those who have unless you are explicitly invited. If you are a mainstream dancer and a plus level tip is announced, sit out.
- III. Male dancers please wear long sleeves. No one will deny they are warm; however, most will admit they don't enjoy grabbing a sweaty arm. Ladies should avoid wearing excessive jewelry. It hurts. Everyone is expected to wear a name badge.
- IV. Don't come to a dance, workshop or class if you have been drinking or under the influence of drugs, be they legal or not. Square and Round dancing requires your best mental and physical alertness. Your coordination must be at its very best. Should you be suspected of being "under the influence" you will probably be asked to leave.
- V. Personal cleanliness is important in square and round dancing. If possible always shower or bathe. Use your deodorant, cologne or perfume (but, not too much) and, don't forget to use something to sweeten your breath (mouth wash, chewing gum, etc.) Avoid eating garlic or other offenders before attending a dance.
- VI. In addition to applauding the caller and thanking your fellow dancers at the end of each tip you should personally speak to and thank the caller and or cuer before leaving the dance. If you are a visitor you should also make a point of speaking with a club officer.
- VII. Once a tip is underway, refrain from talking. It is frequently difficult to hear and your talking may very well prevent someone else from hearing a call. It is also extremely rude to talk while announcements are being made. Try to quiet anyone speaking to you. Give the speaker the same consideration you would want if you were speaking.
- VIII. When the music starts, get on the floor. Don't make other dancers wait or the caller "beg" you to fill the square. Join the square nearest to you that needs a couple. It is considered "bad manners" to pass a square needing dancers in order to fill another. If you are looking for a square, raise your hand as you move across the floor. If your square is not full, raise your hand with as many fingers extended, as couples are needed. If two or three couples are squared up and do not have a hand up, it indicates that they are waiting for someone who has promised to dance with them. Do not try to square up with them without asking. Do not arrange squares more than once in an evening. It is best not arrange a square at all. Do not get on the floor and expect the caller to find you a partner.
- IX. Be on time and don't leave early. In square dancing, one late couple or person may mean that three other couples or seven people must sit out. By leaving early, you are telling the other dancers and caller that you did not have a good time at the dance. The "wind-down" tip is just as important as the first or middle tips. Plan to spend the complete evening when you come.

- X. Always introduce yourself and your partner to others in the square if you don't know them. Thank them for dancing with you after the tip.
- XI. For some, square dancing can be a strenuous exercise. If you feel you are unable to dance, sit out. It is usually best to remove yourself from the dance area and return after the tip has started. Sometimes you can learn a great deal just by watching and listening. Be considerate. If another dancer is watching and listening, don't insist upon talking. Square dancing is a social event but not a place to socialize during tips or rounds even if you are not dancing.

CLUB SUPPORT

- I. Square dance clubs are the backbone of Square & Round Dancing. While there are Round Dance only clubs, there are many more Square Dance clubs where Round Dancing is also a part of the activity. The point of this dissertation is that without the clubs, Square and Round Dancing will cease to exist. Therefore, it is important that all dancers belong to and participate in at least one club's well-being. What I am attempting to say is really very simple: If you square or round dance then you should belong to a club and as a member of the club you need to support the club by 1.) Becoming an officer. 2.) Paying dues in a timely manner 3.) Supporting refreshment obligations. 4.) Attending club visitations. 5.) Attending club meetings and social activities.
- II. Every club has to have money that they can count on to operate. Halls are expensive and getting more costly. Callers and cuers must be paid enough to meet their expenses and be compensated for their time. Some clubs charge admission for members as well as visitors. Others only charge visitors and club dues are the member's admission to the function. You would never go to a movie, bowl, or play golf without expecting to pay. Compare the cost of nearly every other activity with the cost of square dancing and you will find that square dancing is a bargain.
- III. At the end of the dance the hall usually must be swept and chairs have to be put away. Sometimes a kitchen must be cleaned up, and several other small chores must be accomplished. Responsible club members don't just walk out after the dance; they stay until all the work is done. Also, make it your personal responsibility to welcome, visit with, and say good-by to every visitor.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

"Yellow Rock"(hug your corner) or "Red Rock"(hug your partner) are common signals to square dancers. "Hugging is a miracle medicine that can relieve many physical and emotional problems". Some women do not like strangers hugging them, so be a little careful until you get to know them. Most men like the tradition. In any case, "Have you hugged somebody today?"

Invite non-square dancers out to visit with you. Try to get them interested in lessons. Non-dancers may be afraid to start lessons. You should bring them to class until they are comfortable coming by themselves. Make friends and share the fun with those friends.

DON'T FORGET "A SMILE ON YOUR FACE HELPS YOUR FEET WORK BETTER.