

SQUARE DANCE ETIQUETTE

Square dancing, like all forms of dancing, has its own set of guidelines.

1. **Ready to Dance** - When getting dressed for square dancing, think about what you are going to wear.... square dance attire, polo shirts, t-shirts or blue jeans. If you sweat excessively, wear a long sleeved top/shirt. Do not wear any jewelry that could poke or hurt someone and make sure you wear comfortable and supportive shoes or sneakers. Avoid using alcohol or drugs or anything that could affect your reaction time or equilibrium before attending the dance. Personal cleanliness is also important in square and round dancing.
2. **Arrive on Time** – There's a lot to do and a short time to do it. Give yourself enough time to park, get situated with personal items and check in at the treasurer's table.
3. **Dance at Your Level** - Don't dance over your own level of dance, unless invited. 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 tip is announced, sit out.
4. **Square Up Promptly** - When the music starts, quickly get on the dance floor. Try to join the square nearest you. It is considered "bad manners" to walk through a square or pass a square needing dancers in order to fill another square. If your square is not full, raise your hand with as many fingers extended as couples needed. If couples are squared up and do not have a hand up, they are waiting for someone who has promised to dance with them. Don't cut into their square.
5. **Dancer Considerations** - When squaring up, if needed, introduce yourselves to each person in the square. Check to see if there are dancer considerations in your square. Be aware of "do not swing/twirl" badges. Some dancers have a difficult time lifting their arms and use a tap of the hand instead. Remember to not hold hands too tightly or to grab and clamp down on your hands or hook your thumbs. Be a gentle dancer.
6. **Refrain from Talking** - Once a tip is underway, refrain from talking. It is frequently difficult to hear and talking may very well prevent someone else from hearing a call. It is also difficult to hear announcements when others are talking. Give the speaker the same consideration you would want.
7. **Never Leave a Square Early** - Always dance to the end of the tip unless you become ill or there is an emergency. If so, advise the other members of the square so someone can find a replacement.
8. **Thank you and Clean Up** - At the end of each tip, applaud the caller and then thank each dancer for dancing with you! At the end of the dance, remember the dance is not over until the clean-up is done!

Additional Square Dance Manners

Sitting This One Out – You are not required to dance every tip. “No, thank you” is a perfectly acceptable answer. Don’t let anyone talk you into dancing if you need to sit one out.

Dance With Lots of Different People – Do your best to always avoid dancing with the same group. Also, when you “square up” don’t always be a Head or Side Couple. Mix it up!

Courtesy – Treating others how you want to be treated is a good rule of thumb. Each person who attends a dance should be able to leave saying they were treated with courtesy, friendliness and helpfulness.

Refrain From Giving Unsolicited Help to Other Dancers. We have knowledgeable callers/instructors and it is their job to teach students. When people are learning at the class level, angels are teamed up with new dancers in the squares to support the instruction of the caller. They can help the dancers in that specific tip to execute the calls.

Mistakes Happen - The goal of square dancing is to have fun, but we all make mistakes. Do not be angry with yourself or anyone else. Remain calm so others are encouraged to keep trying and practicing. If the entire square breaks down, it is best to form lines or square your set and start over again!!

Emergency Call for Medical Aid (ECMA) – If a dancer goes down, a second dancer attends to him. The remaining couples join hands and take a step backward (this allows the injured person and attendant space and air). They raise joined hands as high as possible in the form of an arch. Upon seeing this signal, the caller or hall monitor will immediately access the situation and possibly place an emergency call for aid. If you send for medical help or an ambulance, put a spotter outside the building to help the EMT team find the location

Welcome visiting dancers – it is important to try to welcome every visitor to your dance. You want them to like dancing with your club and come back.

SQUARE DANCERS NEED TO SUPPORT THEIR CLUB

Square Dance clubs are the backbone of Square and Round Dancing. While there are Round Dance clubs, there are many more Square Dance clubs where Round Dancing is also a part of the activity.

Without our clubs, Square and Round Dancing will cease to exist.

Therefore, it is very important that all dancers belong to and participate in at least one club. As a member of the club, consider how to support the club in addition to paying dues and attending dances.

You can volunteer to be an officer, support refreshment obligations, help set up and/or clean-up at the dances, attend dance demonstrations, attend club meetings, participate in special events, etc.

It is important to help clean up at the end of the dance. The rented hall along with the kitchen, bathrooms may need special clean-up before the building can be locked up and the officers leave.