

Square Dancing Study Guide

History

Square dancing is considered to be our “official national folk dance” since President Reagan signed an act of Congress in 1982. It began in New England when the first settlers and the immigrant groups that followed, brought with them their various national dances, which we now call folk dances. Square dancing represents our country's warmth and unity by being a form of dance where almost every movement starts by extending your hand to another. It is estimated that today this recreation activity is enjoyed by millions of Americans.

Terms

Partner – opposite sex. Boy is on the left, girl is on the right.

Honor – men bow, women curtsey.

Corner – the dancer to your right (girl), left (boy).

Allemande Left – each dancer faces his/her corner. Join left hands and walk completely around each other back to your original place.

Swing – facing each other, partners hook right elbows or join both hands and skip around turning clockwise.

Do-Si-Do – while facing one another walk forward and pass each other with right shoulders almost touching. Without touching, pass back-to-back, then return to your original place by backing up and passing left shoulders.

Promenade – one person crosses their arms and takes partners hand and walks around the square counter clockwise. (Right hand to right hand/left hand to left hand.)

Grand Right and Left – facing partners join right hands and walk past each other passing right shoulders. Release right hands; join left hands with the next person and walk past left shoulders. Continue to chain around the square until you reach your partner and promenade home counter clockwise.

Sashay – fast sliding step to the right or left. (4 steps.)

Square – 4 couples, all facing each other. The group forms a square.

Couple 1 – the couple with their back to the music.

Couple 2 – the couple to the right of couple 1.

Couple 3 – the couple across from couple 1.

Couple 4 – the couple to the left of couple 1.

Head Couples – couple 1 and 3.

Side Couples – couple 2 and 4

Possible Dances Learned

Red River Valley
Girls to the Center
Patty Cake Polka
Hinky Dinky Parlez-vous
Divide the Ring
Form an Arch
Electric Slide
Tahoe Kicker
Chicken Dance

Rules and Regulations

- Teacher will set you up with a partner and in your square.
- Follow the callers directions.
- Respect one another when partnered off and dancing. This means no funny faces, wiping your hands, not holding hands or making any comments.
- Respect the other couples in your square.

Strategies

1. Be a good listener.
2. If your square gets confused, stop, square your set and listen for the next set of calls.
3. Ask questions if you don't understand something.