

Reprint

SQUARE DANCE AND CLASS DO'S AND DON'TS

Author Unknown

DO be aware at all times that square dancing is a “courtesy” recreation rather than one of competition.

DO keep smiling even if you are angry with yourself for “goofing”. The other seven people in the square might think that you are frowning at them.

DO recognize your corner and remember who he or she is. Next to your partner, this is the most important person in the square.

DO be quiet and attentive to the caller during instructions even though you know what he is explaining; perhaps someone else in your square needs to be briefed.

DO leave sharp jewelry at home. It can cut fingers or catch on clothes and inflict injury.

DO remember to treat all dancers as you would like to be treated.

DO wear name badges at all times. It might surprise some of the oldsters to learn that they are not as well known as they thought. Many dancers are now aware of the origin of the name badge. When western style square dancing began to flourish, someone suggested that everyone should be identified by means of a name badge so that dancers would be on a first name basis to further friendly fellowship and recreation. Some clubs decided to add their club name and city or area where it was located. They also created original designs for their badges. **THE RUDE SQUARE DANCER IS THE ONE WITHOUT A BADGE** because this places other dancers in the embarrassing position of not being able to call a name. **DON'T BE CAUGHT BEING RUDE.**

DO admit it when you “goof”. Next time it could be someone else’s turn, so you needn’t feel bad about it. When you “goof”, do it gracefully and recover as best you can in order to keep your square from breaking down.

DO remember your position when you square up – heads, sides, what couple number, and in some instances whether you are in a boy or girl position.

DO end each dance with a flourish, applause, and sincere THANKS to all in your square.

DON'T be a “competitive” dancer. Instead cooperate with the other seven people in your set to make it a good square.

DON'T be over-exuberant. Your yell might drown out the next call for everyone around you. Learn to be “noisy”, if you must, at the right time – during a right or left grand or allemande.

DON'T be a “know-it-all”. Let the caller be the instructor unless someone asks you for help at the close of a tip.

DON'T cut in or out of a square unless you know how. And if you are cut out, leave gracefully.

DON'T be guilty of “horseplay” unless you are positive your square and the club will not be offended.

DON'T take that extra swing with your partner. It might make them late for the left allemande with the waiting corner.

DON'T forget. It is the “female” who determines whether or not they wish to twirl. If their hand is held high, they would like to twirl. If it is low, then they do not wish to twirl.

DON'T forget to trade a dance, especially with the guests and solos. And don't overlook the caller's spouse. He/she might like to dance. ASK THEM!

DON'T sit like a “bump on a log” when another couple is needed to complete a square. If you want to sit out a tip, leave the floor – go to the rest room or where you can not be seen. This prevents embarrassment to you and to the three couples wishing to square up.

DON'T complain about the caller, the hall, the sound, the tacky floor. Seek to find the good things about the dance and express them. Your attitude will contribute to your enjoyment as well as to the enjoyment of others around you.

DON'T pre-arrange sets of four couples before squaring up. You insult the ability of other dancers and reflect a snobbish image contrary to the democratic ideals square dancers wish to exemplify. If you wish to dance with friends, you and another couple could stand in opposite positions in the set and allow two other couples to join you.

DON'T insist on dancing your way when visiting other areas. If these people dance palms up on the Alamo, go along with it. If they do or do not stir the bucket, DO AS THE ROMANS DO – EAT ROMAN CANDLES – but keep your opinions to yourself.

DON'T try to help the caller when filling in with a new class by explaining or pushing or pulling. Dance as though it is your first night too.

DON'T PARTAKE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BEFORE OR DURING THE DANCE! Some people object; others may not wish to be close to one with alcohol on his breath. Children are often present, and many clubs dance in churches or schools. Drinking may even adversely affect your dancing ability. This is a cardinal rule of square dancing.

DON'T be "breath offensive"! Ask a friend for gum or mints if you forget yours.

DON'T forget to use a deodorant after your pre-dance bath or shower. You may become quite warm when you are dancing.

DON'T be a ROUGH HANDLER. Use light, easy handholds; that is, don't grab or squeeze tight on box-the-gnats, grand right and lefts, circling, etc.

Reprint from DANCERgram – January 19, 2009