

Reprint

Skirt Work – Where to do it.

By Ed Foote

Two months ago we looked at skirt work on Weave the Ring, which we said was the most common place it is used. It was noted that skirt work adds a high degree of elegance to the dance, and those who do it correctly are admired. This month we look at other places where skirt work can be used.

PROMENADE: Instead of holding both of the man's hands in front in the typical skater's position, hold the man's right hand in your left hand. This leaves your right hand free to raise your skirt. Do not move the skirt back and forth – just hold it outstretched. It looks great.

IF YOU ARE ON THE END OF A LINE FACING IN: Raise your skirt with your free hand when the caller says "up to the middle and back."

RIGHT AND LEFT THRU; ALSO LADIES CHAIN: When you do the right hand pull by, use your left hand to raise your skirt. During the Courtesy Turn, use your right hand to raise your skirt.

TEACUP CHAIN: Use skirt work with your free hand, especially when working in the center.

GRAND SQUARE: When walking in to the center of the set, or backing out from the center; raise your skirt with the hand that is AWAY from your partner. In most cases this will be your right hand. When by yourself on the outside of the square, raise the skirt on the side AWAY from the center of the set.

OTHER CALLS: a GOOD GENERAL RULE IS TO USE SKIRT WORK ANY TIME YOU ARE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE SET. Ideal places are when you are on the outside in an Allemande Thar or Wrongway Thar. You can also use skirt work if you are on the outside for calls such as Circulate and Load the Boat. From facing lines, on the command "Pass Thru – Wheel and Deal", skirt work looks nice if you are on the right end of the line. You probably should lower the skirt prior to completing the Wheel & Deal so as to not brush the left-side couple.

In all cases, the skirt is simply held out and up slightly. The skirt is NEVER swished back and forth.

As you can tell, I am a big fan of skirt work, since it makes square dancing look elegant. Unfortunately, in these days of women wearing pants to dances, skirt work is not as common as it once was. While I understand the desire of some women not to have to wear the big fancy dresses and petticoats, I still think that women should at least wear an informal skirt. If the skirt they choose is a loose flowing one, then skirt work can still be done.

Skirt work keeps the beauty and elegance in square dancing, and makes the person doing it look very impressive. If I see someone doing good skirt work at a dance, I always make a point to congratulate them after the tip.

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