



*Connecting and Inspiring
Through Traditional Music and Dance*

General Dance Etiquette

Here are some tips/suggestions to help you participate comfortably in our dance.

- **Hygiene** is important. You'll be up close with many others. Do your part to avoid the spread of germs and wash/sanitize hands as needed.
- **Avoid perfume** or other scented products as some people are allergic.
- If you perspire heavily, **bring clean shirts/tops** to change into.
- **Smooth, soft-soled shoes** work best for dancing and help protect the floor. If you do not have shoes that are worn indoors only, wipe them thoroughly.
- When the caller or instructor is teaching, **please be quiet and pay attention**. You may not need the instruction, but others around you might.
- **Dance moves should be led/offered verbally or non-verbally, not forced**. Lifts and throws are not acceptable at a social dance. It helps to ask permission of your partner before doing any close embraces, twirls, or dips. If someone asks you to refrain from something, be courteous and cooperative. Handhold should be a connection, not a grip. The person who wants to let go should be able to.
- **Adjust your dance style** to your partner's needs and abilities. Aim to accommodate your partner, whatever their gender, size, age, or level of experience. This could include moving slower, softer connection, avoiding an injured body part, and keeping your hands in the appropriate places.
- **Mistakes are OK**. When helping other dancers, keep the atmosphere light. New dancers will relax when they sense your enjoyment and that you are more interested in being part of the flow than in perfection. While dancing, do not give tips unless asked; limit your response to the question that was asked. You can ask for or offer to provide more general guidance at the beginning or end of a dance, but avoid unsolicited feedback.
- **Finding partners**. When looking for another partner after a dance ends, thoughtful dancers will look to the sidelines to see if there is someone who sat out the last dance who would like to dance the next. If you are an experienced dancer and notice new dancers, please ask them to dance. Your gesture will help a newcomer feel welcome in our dance community. Generally, dancers wait until a dance is over before asking someone for the next dance. Everyone has the right to decline to dance.
- If someone is interacting with you in a way that you are **not comfortable** with, let them know. If this doesn't seem safe or doable, you have the right to remove yourself from the situation. Please alert a volunteer, and let them know if you would like them to intervene.

Traditional dancing is a social event, and not inherently romantic or sexual. You may attend with or without a partner. We want to keep the event safe for people of all ages, so please refrain from drug use, including excessive alcohol and tobacco.



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Dance Etiquette at Particular Dances

- **English Country Dance (ECD) & Contra** take place in long lines. Couples join the line at the bottom, rather than inserting themselves in the middle or the top. If you need to drop out of a line mid-dance, try to do so when you reach the top or bottom. When joining a line, choose the shortest set to avoid overcrowding.
- **Traveling Dances** include traditional **Cajun dances, the Cajun Waltz, One-Step, and Two-Step**. In these dances the dancers travel around the floor in a counter clockwise direction. Turning is mostly, but not always, done at the corners of the floor, especially those corners of the floor on either side of the band.
- **Waltz, Schottis, and Hambo** are also **traveling dances**, often happening at the mid-dance break or at the end of a Contra Dance or English Country Dance (ECD). They also move counter-clockwise. Their movement differs slightly from the previously-mentioned dances, as couple turning takes place throughout the dance.
- In all of these **traveling dances**, always dance forward around the floor; don't stop or go backward against the flow of the dance. If you need to stop, dance off the floor or move to the center; don't block the travel lane. If things go wrong on the floor, for example, if you bump into another couple, apologize and make sure that nobody got hurt.
- **Spot Dances** include **Swing, Cha-Cha, Rhumba, and Salsa**, among others. Couples generally dance in their own space. At many swing dances almost everyone is doing swing, and the floor will be full. There likely will not be enough room for an outside traveling line, so the couples doing swing will find a suitable spot, making sure not to interfere with their neighbors. If you choose to do a traveling dance while others are doing a spot dance, you should aim to move around the outside, being aware of spot dancers as you go. If you are at a traveling dance event and choose to do a spot dance, stay in the center.
- As a courtesy to others and for the safety of all, if you are engaged in conversation and not dancing, please move off of the dance floor.
- **Dancing should be fun and enjoyable**. If your partner or anyone else is doing something that hurts or makes you uncomfortable or embarrassed, don't hesitate to let them know. If the behavior persists or you feel unsafe asking them to change it, ask a volunteer at the event for further assistance.

We welcome feedback and input on these guidelines. They are a work in progress.