

WRANGLERS SQUARE DANCE ETIQUETTE

Before the Dance or Class

- I. Please no alcohol, and no drugs that could make you lose your balance or cause you to lose focus. Square dancing isn't hard--but you do need a clear head to be successful and to stay alert.
- II. The wearing of what is considered traditional square dance attire is admired but not required. Wear what you want. At our class we are very casual. At a dance, some consider it fun to dress up a little. Some wear dressy-casual and some don the traditional square dance attire (Men: long sleeve shirts to avoid grabbing a sweaty arm. Women: round or prairie skirts or nice slacks, and ruffle or somewhat dressy blouse.) Avoid excessive jewelry that could hurt you or a fellow dancer should it fly about or scrape against another dancer. Wear a name badge--if you forget your club badge, ask for a temporary name tag.
- III. Personal hygiene--make sure to take precautions to avoid body odor and to avoid strong perfumes, colognes, and other overpowering scents. You are dancing with others and strong odors (good or bad) will not be appreciated by the others in your square. Same applies to mouth odors. Avoid eating strong smelling foods (garlic, onions, etc.) beforehand and consider using something to sweeten your breath (mouth wash, chewing gum, or mints).
- IV. Review the flyer or dance notice to make sure you dance at that level. No one expects perfection but you are expected to learn the calls because the entire square depends on each person. Remember--the only way to get better at dancing is to dance. Attend as many dances as you can (and if you are a student, try your best to attend each class). If you don't understand a call, ask for help or clarification at a break. Take a look at the online videos of calls to refresh your memory.
- V. Arrive on time--actually ahead of time to make sure you sign in and greet your fellow dancers before the first tip.

At the Dance or Class

- I. Square up as soon as the caller indicates it is time to dance. If you form a square after the caller has started the tip, do so quietly so as not to disturb the other squares. If you are not dancing that tip, please be mindful when you talk to others to keep the volume of your voice low. The dancers need to hear the caller and it is rude to the caller to have to call above distracting noise.
- II. If you are a solo dancer, try to arrange for a partner before the squares form. But if not, jump in a square and put your hand up to indicate you need a partner.
- III. When you square up, join a square near you rather than avoiding a square that needs to be filled. Join the square nearest to you that needs a couple. Don't pass a square needing dancers. If you are looking for a square, raise your hand as you move across the floor. If your square is not full, raise your hand with as many fingers extended, as couples are needed. If two or three couples are squared up and do not have a hand up, it indicates that

- they are waiting for someone who has promised to dance with them. Do not try to square up with them without asking.
- IV. Once you join a square, don't leave it in search of a "better" one or because someone has joined your square that you would like to avoid.
 - V. Welcome everyone in your square--if you don't know them, introduce yourself. It isn't necessary to hug or shake hands with all the dancers in your square--but recognize that many people do this as their way of saying welcome.
 - VI. Once the caller starts, talking is over--or at least severely limited. We are here to dance and we need to hear the caller. Talking and socializing are what the breaks are for.
 - VII. If you are an experienced dancer and see another dancer struggling, it is acceptable to gently guide that person but it is not acceptable to push or pull. Also, be aware of what could be considered roughness--no squeezing hands, no over the top twirling, no cursing or yelling. Remember that the call "swing your partner" is just that--it isn't a challenge to see how many times you can twirl your partner. Some dancers wear a notice that says "no twirling" or "no swings"--respect that.
 - VIII. If your square breaks down, don't panic! If it is a Singing call, just quickly go back to your original home position and wait for the caller to start the next routine of the song. If it is a Patter call, the easiest way to get back to dancing is to quickly and quietly create lines of four facing the side walls and wait for the caller to call something akin to "lines go forward and back".
 - IX. Never leave a square early. If you become ill or a clothing/shoe emergency arises, inform the others in your square and, if possible, try to find a replacement.
 - X. At the end of the tip, thank everyone in your square.

We Recommend

Be on time and don't leave early. In square dancing, late comers may lead to a situation where others must sit out the first tip. By leaving early, are you sending a signal to the other dancers and caller that you did not have a good time at the dance? The last tip is just as important as the other tips. If you are not feeling well, of course leave. But otherwise, plan to spend the complete evening when you come.

At the end of the dance or class we form a "Friendship Circle" and thank the caller (and cuer) and the other dancers. If the club needs help putting away chairs or cleaning up, that will be announced. And if it is, please spend a few minutes helping out. Remember that often the hall that is rented has time and noise restrictions, so please leave promptly and if you talk with one another out in the parking area, do so quietly.

Smile—Have Fun. If you mess up it is not the end of the world. Just practice the troubling call before the next event. If you are a new dancer, remember, everyone was once a new dancer and faced the same challenges that you are experiencing now. We are all in the same boat! We share one thing in common—the enjoyment of square dancing. Let's dance and have fun!