

TEACHING BEGINNER AND COMMUNITY DANCE CALLS

As explained to the dancers mostly while they are in motion or with very slight pauses.

Compiled by Dottie Welch and Clark Baker for BDPLS, Colorado Springs, 2007

Circle Calls:

- 1) **Circle Left / Circle Right:** Join your hands and Circle Left, smooth steps with the music, step, step, step, step, Circle Right the other way back, step, step, step, step. (With young children include an older person in the Circle to help establish direction.)
- 2) **Forward and Back:** Four small steps into the middle, 1, 2, 3, together, back, 2, 3, together. "Together" means place feet side-by-side. Technically this should be a "Touch" from Mixer cues.
- 3) **Bow to Partner:** All turn and face your Partner and Bow. (If the purpose is primarily to identify Partners then any type of Bow is fine.)
- 4) **Bow to Corner:** Turn to face the person on your other side, Bow to your Corner.
- 5) **Dosado:** (From facing dancers) First identify your right shoulder. There are no turns in this action. With the person you are facing, pass right shoulders, slide sideways back-to-back, and back up passing the other shoulder. You end up where you started. ("Dos à dos" is French for "back-to-back".)
- 6) **Promenade:** Circle Right, drop hands go single file. Freeze. Moving to the inside, Boys (or the partner behind) step forward to stand beside your partner. With your partner shake right hands and join left hands underneath. Now Promenade, walking forward two-by-two. ("Promenade" is the French word for "a walk".) Another way to teach this is from a square: Girls, face your corner, Boys step up on the inside to stand beside your partner. Shake right hands with your partner and join left hands underneath. Start walking this way for a Promenade and stop when you have returned to your Home.
- 7) **Single File Promenade:** Circle Right, drop hands go Single File.
- 8) **Girls step out & Backtrack:** (From a Single File Promenade) Girls step out and turn around to the right to go the other way around the outside.
- 9) **Allemande Left:** Turn to face your Corner, shake right hands, let go and shake left hands, both slide your hand forward to just before the elbow for a left forearm hold. Pivoting on the arm hold turn once around to face your partner then release the arm hold. ("Allemand" is the French adjective for "German" and probably refers to a turn used in an old German Folk Dance called the *Allemande*.)
- 10) **Swing:** Consider your group carefully before using Swings. Demonstrations are important here. A two-hand Swing using the same handhold as for a Promenade is a good option because it allows dancers to move smoothly into the Promenade without hand fumbling. Also consider changing the right hand hold to a right forearm hold along with a normal left hand hold below. This allows a smooth Buzz-step turn (right foot forward near the pivot point, left foot pushing).

Circle Change-Partner Moves:

- 11) **Rollaway:** Ladies roll to your left in front of the Man to move to his other side. Gents your job is to step back slightly and guide her across changing hands as she moves in front of you. "Circle Left, Ladies Rollaway, Circle Left" (Also can be called to a Normal Couple.)
- 12) **Ladies Center, Men Sashay:** Circle Left, Ladies into the Center, Men continue moving behind one Lady, and then rejoin hands, Circle Left, Ladies Center, Men Sashay to your left behind one.
- 13) **Right and Left Grand:** Face your partner, moving forward in your facing direction around the ring, shake hands then gently pull forward to walk by passing right shoulders, left hand to the next and walk by passing left shoulders, right hand walk by the third, left hand walk by the fourth.

Sicilian Circle Calls:

- 14) **Star Right** (From facing couples): Reach out right hands to shake hands across. All four dancers raise those hands to shoulder height and all touch fingers in the center to make a Right-Hand Star. Walk forward once around.

15) Star Left (After a Right-Hand Star): Turn and put the other hand in for a Left-Hand Star.

16) Pass Thru: (Teach first from facing couples.) When passing someone always pass right shoulders. When couples pass each other one dancer from each couple will go between the other couple. All pass right shoulders with the one you are facing and move ahead for a Pass Thru.

Square Calls:

17) Separate: Designated dancers turn their back on each other and move separately around the outside of the square as directed.

18) Lead Right (From a square): Head Couples (or Side Couples) look toward the couple on your right. Move as a couple to stand in front of that couple.

19) Ladies Chain (From facing couples): Ladies shake hands and walk by, Men take her left hand in yours and turn to put your right hand behind her waist, turn around to the left as a couple to face in.

20) Right and Left Thru (From facing couples): All join right hands with the dancer in front and walk by. Partners join left hands with each other, Men put your right hand behind her waist, turn around to the left as a couple to face in.

Contra Calls:

21) Go Down in Four: As the previous call ends adjust so that all four dancers are in a line facing away from the music or prompter, that direction is known as "Down". Lines move forward down the hall (usually 4, or 6 steps). ("Up the hall" is motion towards the music or prompter.)

22) Turn Alone: Towards your partner individually turn half around (180-degrees).

22) Wheel Around: Partners stay connected, couples turn as a unit toward the left half around.

23) Cast Off: This may begin from lines of four facing up the hall or from two active center dancers coming up the hall towards inactive dancers who turn to face up and join the actives. The center dancer and their adjacent end dancer turn side-by-side three-quarters around pivoting on their center point and ending with both dancers in a line facing in. This may be done without contact except for adjacent shoulders, or with hand contact, or with an arm-around waist assist.

24) Lead a Cast Off and March to the Foot: The top and active couple turn away from each other and go outside around the top of their own line to lead down along the outside of their line. All other dancers turn to face up and then march single file behind their leader.

Facing Directions for Mixers and Rounds:

Line of Dance (LOD): Facing towards line-of-dance means couples or individuals are facing around the hall like spokes of a wheel in counter-clockwise direction. (Normally Man in center, Lady outside.)

Facing Towards Reverse (RLOD): Couples or individuals are facing clockwise around the circle.

Place an imaginary center point in the middle of the available dance area.

Back to the Center means standing with your back to that center point.

Men Facing the Wall means the gents have their back to the center point.

Ladies Facing the Center means they are facing towards the center point, but usually they are also facing their partner directly in front of them.

Mixer Cues:

Side: Step to the side onto the designated foot.

Close: Place the free foot beside the other foot and step on it. This frees the other foot.

Touch: Place the free foot beside the other foot but do not change weight so the free foot stays free.

Behind: Place the free foot behind the other foot and step on it (most weight will be forward on toes).

Vine: Side, Behind, Side, Touch (or sometimes Side, Behind, Side, In Front).

Heel and Toe: With the designated foot reach diagonally forward to touch the floor with your heel, and then bring that foot back to touch the floor beside the other instep with your toe.