

CALLERS CORNER

A forum for the exchange of information
between Callers & Dancers

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Hi folks!

When Tom was asking for some new ideas & contributions etc. to Square Times, I thought that perhaps a regular 'Callers' column might be beneficial to all of you readers out there that might be 'wondering' about some aspect or other about Square Dancing in general or something of a very specific nature.

The true form and nature of the contents of this column will evolve over time driven primarily by what YOU the Dancers would like to see in it, as well as what your Callers may also want to say. It may also provide information & details regarding any changes in the Square Dance programs such as moves deleted or moved, such as the recent changes in the Mainstream/Plus programs this past season. Dancer Tips will also appear from time to time to assist all dancers experience a smooth, comfortable, safe and FUN dancing experience no matter what 'level' they dance. And finally, I will be asking all of my colleagues – your Callers – to contribute their comments, suggestions & ideas in making this column a true two-way conversation between all the Dancers & Callers of EOSARDA.

This is also a good opportunity for YOU to ask any "Caller" related questions that you might like to see answered. Although the first person you should address your question to is your own Club Caller, if you haven't had the time or opportunity, then you can send your questions directly by email to: askthecaller@squaresandrounds.com or by "snail mail" to the Square Times Editor, who'll pass it along. All questions will be answered and those that would be of interest to all will be published in this column, with anonymity ensured unless you request otherwise.

Ok, over to you!

Geoff



ASK THE CALLER

This question comes from a dancer who'd had a very uncomfortable experience on the dance floor and was asking :

"What is the correct way to hold your hands when dancing Swing thru?"

Good question!

How many times have you been in an Ocean Wave (or any other formation) & you find your hand is being 'held' firmly (roughly) by another (ready to arm wrestle)? The Caller says..... "Swing Thru" and someone starts going in the wrong direction...and because you're being firmly held... fingers, a wrist, a shoulder... something gets wrenched... someone gets hurt!!

Let's look at the 'total picture' of **Not Hand HOLDS** but **Hand CONTACT** – there is a huge difference!

Quoting from portions of the Callerlab Caller/Teacher manual on Ocean Waves: ***“Dancers should use hands-up position. distance between dancers should be determined by the arm position of the dancer which is extended forward and bent slightly at the elbow..... This set-up will be most comfortable if dancers have their hands up, palm to palm, with the dancers on each side.....The palm to palm contact is comfortable if the palms are turned or angled clockwise slightly, but, in doing this, the contact should not become a grip or a hold – just a light pressure contact!***

In summary then, for Ocean Waves, it's 'palm to palm' contact with **NO GRIPS!** Just maintain slight pressure towards each other but **do not** close your hand over the other!

Swing Thru from Ocean Waves is only one movement from which, with incorrect hand contact, injuries can result. “Death grips” or two-handed arm turns; California twirls; left/right stars; allemande thars; and many more movements which, with incorrect “hand contact”, can result in potential injury to a dancer.

It is important to ALWAYS make hand contact with the person you are dancing beside. Making the contact is not optional – **how** you do it, **is**. As soon as you're standing beside another dancer, male or female, hand contact is mandatory in order that you “confirm” that ‘right now’, I'm your partner. Take Hands! And always remember, it's hand contact, a gentle hand hold, just a small amount of pressure that says “I'm here”.

Note: In some areas of the USA & Canada, you may encounter Ocean Wave hand

position as ‘palms-down’ at waist-high level. This is a known ‘regional difference’ to the Callerlab recommended method (discussed above). Should you be visiting one of those areas & encounter that variation, then “when in Rome....”
(Thanks to John Charman for reminding me about this variation)

WHAT THE CALLER SEES!

Dancers standing around after a square breaks down trying to decide who, what, when, why... instead of dancing ?

HOME or LINES which?

So when your square breaks down, what do you do? The “rule” is very simple folks! **In both cases, do it quickly** so that you can get back to dancing, and it doesn't really matter who's dancing with who, as long as you're dancing and not standing around trying to sort out each other!

OK, if your square breaks down during a '**Patter**' call, form two facing lines of 4 (ie: B,G,B,G), parallel to one wall, and wait for the caller to “pick you up”. Callers will quickly spot a square that's broken down, but can't do anything to help you until you're in lines. Once there, the caller will ‘adjust’ the dancing to bring the whole floor to “lines of four”, whereupon you can start dancing again!!

Similarly, with **Singing** calls, square your set up quickly, and wait until you hear an Allemande left, or Promenade, or any call that can be done from a squared set

In both cases, the key is to **quickly** move into position and get ready to start dancing again – after all, **isn't that what you'd rather be doing ??**