



## OTONABEE SQUARES – *Square Dance Etiquette*

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### **A guide for the newly graduated square dancer, and for that matter, those who have been dancing for a while!**

Arrive on time whenever possible. Set up squares promptly when the music starts or at the caller's request. Don't keep the whole floor waiting.

Join the nearest square that is forming. In a club such as ours, you are not always expected to have lined up a partner before squaring up. In this case you will notice single dancers holding up either a right or left hand. This indicates the kind of partner they require based on partnership hands. In other words an upheld right hand says that the dancer requires someone able to dance in the lady's position. Likewise, when a left hand is held up this means that the dancer requires someone able to dance from the gent's position.

It is considered very bad manners to walk through the middle of one square to get to another. It is equally as bad to pass a square in need of dancers. Never leave a square once you have joined it. In the event of an emergency, try to get another dancer to replace you.

While dancing, hand-holds are very important, but please be gentle. Dancers need to establish contact with adjacent dancers in their formation. It is the way in which dancers guide each other, since no one can be alert every second; however, you should hold on loosely so the other dancers can get away if they are supposed to move and you don't realize it. When doing arm turn calls (allemande left, turn thru, etc.) grip lightly the forearm not the elbow. In waves, gently touch *fingers and palms* to adjacent dancers. Don't grab thumbs.

Listen quietly during all instructions from the caller. Resist the temptation to explain it to others in your square. Let your fellow dancer hear all the professional instruction that they have come to hear. However, after the tip is over your friends may appreciate some help from you; it is perfectly in order to offer it.

Once a tip is underway, refrain from talking. It is frequently difficult to hear and your talking may very well prevent someone else from hearing a call. It is also extremely rude to talk while announcements are being made. Try to quiet anyone speaking to you. Give the speaker the same consideration you would want if you were speaking.

If mistakes are made or a square breaks down, it is a waste of time and energy getting angry with yourself or anyone else. We all make mistakes and the goal of square dancing is to have fun. If mistakes are made, try to gently guide your neighbour back into place if possible but don't push or shove. If the entire square should break down, (no one knows where to go), it is best to simply go to your original home spot and then form lines. This is done by the head couple sliding over to the right side couple's position while the side couple slides over to make room for them. Presto! Two facing lines. (At the beginner level, dancers usually just square up.) If any dancer is unclear about a particular call don't hesitate to ask the caller or more experienced dancers to help you with it. Anyone



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will be glad to workshop with you.

At the end of every dance be sure to applaud the caller and thank the others in your square. They did contribute to your fun.

Before coming to dancing, we ask you to please not ingest alcohol or other drugs that might impair your coordination or memory. Alcohol will not only affect your dancing but your breath; as will cigarettes and strong smelling food. Since square dancing involves a lot of close contact, we should all try to be considerate of our fellow dancers. Personal cleanliness is essential too and please do not use perfumed products as some people are allergic to these.

Square dance etiquette also dictates that dancers should not get up for a tip which is beyond their level of competence, other than when being taught the higher level. Similarly a higher level dancer should relinquish their place in a square to a less experienced dancer sitting out. (For instance if you are a competent mainstream dancer and the caller has announced a basic tip, make sure all the basic-only dancers are up. The reason for this is that the more experienced the dancer the more chances they have to dance and the less experienced, the fewer chances.)

Always remember to wear your club badge.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

**"Yellow Rock"(hug your corner) is a common signal to square dancers. Some people do not like strangers hugging them, so be a little careful until you get to know them. . In any case, "Have you hugged somebody today?" "Hugging is a miracle medicine that can relieve many physical and emotional problems".**

Invite non-square dancers out to visit with you. Try to get them interested in square dancing

With all its moving, twisting, and turning, square dancing provides more than the daily dose of heart- and bone-healthy physical activity. Remembering all the calls keeps the mind sharp, potentially staving off age-related memory loss, experts say. And the companionship that regular square dancing offers is an antidote to depression and loneliness, a statement confirmed by square-dancing advocates everywhere.

*Square dancing is friendship set to music*

***DON'T FORGET***

***"A SMILE ON YOUR FACE HELPS YOUR FEET WORK BETTER.***