

A quick summary of squaring-up etiquette

Adapted from THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE:

F. William Chickering's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Square Dance Behavior

What is square dancing all about? Square dancing is all about pleasure: the pleasure of calls well executed, the pleasure of a good laugh if your square does break down, the pleasure of a social activity in a friendly atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. To keep square dancing pleasurable, we must all observe a few guidelines. After all, square dancing is a group activity.

- It is considered unfriendly and discourteous to pass by a forming square to look for another.
- Don't walk through a square to join that square or another square.
- Once in a square, under no circumstances abandon it.
Exception: in a medical emergency or if someone is injured, of course you should use common sense. There is an accepted "emergency call for medical assistance": members in a square should surround the ill or injured person with uplifted arms to notify the caller or other persons in charge.
- Holding on too long or too tightly can cause wrist, elbow, or shoulder injuries in your wonderful corner. Be sure to release hands immediately and squeeze gently.
- Don't cut anyone out of a square.
- At the beginning of a new tip, introduce yourself to dancers you don't know. And then be quiet and listen.
- Get ready to dance when you join a square. Notice if there are any "Leading Ladies" in the square so you recognize them later in the tip.
- If you see a need to direct a fellow dancer, be sure that you are correct, be very brief, and be gentle in your assistance. Think of the best interest of the group and take care not to hurt other dancers' feelings. Do not be too critical of others. This can ruin everyone's fun if it results in bickering or a condescending attitude. Remember, we all make mistakes and the next one might be yours.
- Listen to the caller. Do not talk when the caller is talking or calling. Not only is it rude, but all dancers may need the information offered.

In some areas, dancers consider it good etiquette to leave the # 1 position open, to be filled by the last couple to join the square. It's somewhat like giving your guest the most comfortable chair in your living room.

F. William Chickering is a member of the Times Squares Square Dance Club; this is taken from an article in the Times Squares newsletter. It is not subject to copyright and may be freely copied and distributed.