



The Glenview Square Dance Club

Styling Tips

Styling & flourishes
commonly used by
Glenview Squares dancers.



Styling Tips

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Styling Tips

Introduction

Good styling is an integral part of good square dancing. Although you can enjoy square dancing without focusing on styling, with some attention to styling square dancing becomes more like dancing and helps everyone execute the calls correctly and on time which makes each tip more successful and more fun. In addition, it makes square dancing more enjoyable to watch. Styling includes dancing with poise (balance, equilibrium, control, and refinement of movement) and good dance techniques. For highly skilled dancers styling may include flourishes (frills) for some calls.

Dancers should not only master the calls but also the basic styling of square dancing. Just as you would not move up a level of square dancing without a good mastery and lots of experience at each level, dancers should not add flourishes or frills until they have mastered: (1) the calls, (2) dancing as a member of a team and (3) basic square dance styling. Never let styling interfere with your dancing and timing.

Glenview Squares' Styling Tips are arranged by two types (Basic and Flourishes) with two ability levels within each type. They are:

Basic Square Dance Styling

Level One - For everyone, including students

Level Two - For those who are very comfortable with the calls

Flourishes/Frills

Level One - For those who have mastered the calls and basic styling

Level Two - For those who have mastered the calls, basic styling and are able to dance with precise timing.

Moving through and mastering these styling tips will add another level of enjoyment to your square dancing.



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STYLING TIPS

Basic Square Dance Styling

Level One - For everyone, including students

1. Move in time to the music: do not race, do not lag behind. The call does not usually start when the caller says the call but a beat or two after the call is named.
2. Use a shuffle step. Glide on the balls of your feet, rather than walking heel to toe. This creates a smooth movement for ease of transitions. Try to make it noiseless so as not to distract from the music. Smooth shoe soles or dance socks (covers on gripping soles) help.
3. Finish calls square to a wall. Feet, hips, shoulders should be square to a wall. Don't stand at an angle, instead turn your head if you need to look around. Standing with your shoulders, hips and/or feet at an angle will confuse other dancers as to the correct formation and may lead you in a wrong direction.
4. Use gentle hand holds (**DO NOT grip with your thumbs**) to reduce injury and discomfort. Do not clasp/grip hands, allow your partner's hand to move freely; this avoids hurtful, tight hand holds. A flat hand to flat hand hold with a stiff wrist allows for the contact and slight resistance needed to facilitate the execution of the call.
5. Touch hands immediately at the end of each call. This may mean just a tap as you pass through the end position of one call and continue moving to start the next call. This helps others know where they are in a call, in a sequence of calls and their position in the square. Do not grab or reach out before you are in your ending position. Each time a new line is formed be sure all dancers immediately join hands. In lines, maintain hand holds while executing "Forward and Back", with only the ends tapping hands.
6. Use conventional hand positions to avoid confusion:
 - If there is a dancer on your right facing the same direction as you, extend your right hand palm up. If there is a dancer on your left facing the same direction as you, extend your left hand palm down.
 - When circling left or right, left hand dancers (boys) have both palms up and right hand dancers (girls) have both palms down.
 - When two adjacent dancers are facing opposite directions, hand holds are done with slightly curved fingers.

7. When 'pulling by' release your hand hold when you are shoulder to shoulder. Holding on can turn both parties in the wrong direction.
8. Keep hands about waist high for most calls; shoulders relaxed. Low hands tend to pull the other dancer down and to the side forcing him/her to be off balance. Hands held too high can cause discomfort for your partner. Hand and arm positions should be at a level comfortable for the shortest dancer; this is a team activity, be aware of the others dancing with you.
9. Keep elbows in (bent) and down, close to your sides. This keeps square tight (smaller) so calls are easier to execute in time to the music.
10. Use forearm hold for turns. This makes it easier get around in time to the music. Use flat hand; no thumb around arm. Adjust to hand hold after turn if needed.
11. Retain some tension in your arms. No floppy arms. Give slight resistance during turns, etc (especially helpful for 'Roll Away'). This makes it easier to move from one call to the next.
12. Be gentle when raising arms or making an arch to avoid shoulder stress/strain.
13. Keep square tight. The square should be small enough so on the first beat you can touch your corner or opposite's hand to begin the call. Left hand dancers' left shoulders should almost touch during promenade. Use forearm hold for turns. Touch hands after each call. Keep elbows in.
14. Hold your head up; do not look at the floor. Make eye contact with other dancers to more easily execute the call correctly. This helps you see where to go and find the open space if you are lost. In addition, this makes it easier to help others.
15. Good posture helps ensure good styling and better dancing. Tuck in what needs to be tucked in for good balance. Keep your weight over your moving feet.



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STYLING TIPS

Basic Square Dance Styling

Level Two - For those who have become more comfortable with the calls

1. Connect with others as you dance; make eye contact, smile, let people know through your expressions that you enjoy having them on your team. This will help them relax and dance better.
2. Keep your head turned to the center of the square; be aware of the big picture.
3. Help your square stay square to the walls by making small adjustments.
4. Help your square stay small by adjusting when others spread out.
5. Let your square breathe. Expand and contract the size of the square as needed to accommodate the movements of the other dancers. For example, back up a little when pairs adjacent to you are performing a square through that will end with one pair being in front of you.
6. If someone in your square gets lost, continue to execute your part of the call; get to your ending position. This will help them find the open space. Use soft comments or subtle hand motions to help guide them into place. The best hint is to hold out your (correct) hand. If the square can't recover go home and make lines. **Never pull hard or yank other dancers.**
7. If you get lost, move slowly in the direction of the flow of the call. Don't try to complete all parts of the call, catch up to where the others are and proceed from there. This may mean going to the end position of the call. Watch for hints from your teammates. Look for the empty spot.
8. Adjust to others as needed to insure smooth transitions between calls. If someone in your square moves slowly, don't wait until they get to you but move toward them, into the call to shorten the distance for them to travel in the correct number of beats. If someone moves too fast, use gentle pressure in your hand or arm to slow the movement or delay the start of a call.

9. Adapt to the styling of the square/current partner. For example, hand and arm positions for waves vary depending on where you are dancing. Hand holds vary. You may have one style on your right and a different style on the left. Don't try to bend anyone to your way. When visiting other clubs, whether in your area or while traveling, observe the styling and flourishes used. Do not assume your way is their way. Do not attempt unfamiliar styling/flourishes unless you are certain you can perform them in time to the music.
10. Fine tune moving to the music. Calls fill a designated number of beats of the music, e.g., take the full 32 counts for executing Grand Square. Learn how many beats for each call. Enter the ending position on the last beat designated for the call. If your timing is good, very often the movement for one call will flow into the movement for the next without you having to stop.



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STYLING TIPS

Flourishes/Frills Introduction

Before adding Flourishes/Frills you must:

- master basic square dance styling; Glenview Squares' Basic Styling Tips will help.
- be able to dance in time to the music so you can begin and end each call on the correct beat.
- be competent and comfortable with the calls.
- not have any imbalance issues or physical limitations that make you unsteady or limits your ability to adjust quickly.
- have good square awareness and be able to quickly assess your orientation in the square. If you often don't know where 'in' is, if don't know if you are a leader or trailer or which box of four you are in you should not add flourishes.
- have a good sense about the capabilities of the other dancers in your square. Your styling may be distracting and/or confuse some dancers.
- know how to add the flourish within the correct number of beats for the call.
- know how to add the styling without increasing the size of the square.
- be able to dance well enough to assist dancers who make a mistake or get lost.
- know how the styling affects your position and the position of your partner and others in the square.
- be able to dance well enough that you can assist others if your styling confuses your partner, others in the square or yourself.
- be able to add or delete styling as needed to accommodate others.
- know that many callers dislike seeing flourishes because it throws off the timing and often looks sloppy if not done correctly and precisely.

Please Note:

1. Never participate in adding flourishes if you don't want to. Keep arms to your sides so others can't initiate flourish with you. If someone's styling technique causes discomfort, don't hesitate to kindly mention it to them. Most dancers don't realize that they are using too much force.
- 2. Never use flourishes and frills during lessons.**
3. Never use flourishes during a dance with a dancer who has not learned the maneuvers. Flourishes should be taught and practiced at other times - between tips perhaps.
4. Verbal styling should be done in a quiet voice, audible to only the dancers nearest you. In a tight set you are always near someone's ear and a loud shout can be distracting and painful for some. The fun comes if all can make the soft sound on the same beat enhancing the impact without annoying any individual. Loud verbal styling may make it hard to hear caller.
5. Don't make up your own styling or incorporate styling from other dance styles into square dancing. Conform your styling to that of the majority of dancers at the venue. Unconventional styling can confuse others in the square and throw off timing.



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STYLING TIPS

Flourishes/Frills Level One

For those who have mastered the calls and basic styling

Call	Timing	Verbal	Action
Allemand Left	Usually 8		Forearm hold; Single clap
Circle Left/ Circle Right	Full = 16		Twist body to right and left; starting with twisting toward partner.
Cut the Diamond	6		Points use slight chopping motion with inside hand while sliding together to trade.
Dixie Grand	6	"Right, left, right"	
Dosado	6 or 8 from and to squared set		Ballroom hold or Highland Fling hold (right arm around partner's waist, left hands touching above heads); finish facing each other. Never ends in wave unless told to.
Double Pass Thru	4		3 rapid claps
Eight Chain Thru (etc.)	Each odd-numbered part = 2; each even numbered part = 3	Count out loud	
Ferris Wheel	6 or 8 from and to squared set	"Whee"	Couples facing In, step straight forward and the very center dancers tap hands before each couple turns into place.
Flip the Diamond			Points flip hands quickly up and down while moving into place.
Forward and Back	8 or Lines close together 4	Make noise on beat 4.	When in lines only the ends tap free hand, all others maintain hand hold.
Ladies Center & Men Sashay	4	"Whee"	Girls' raise hands as if flipping hem of skirt up.
Linear Cycle	8-10	"Hinge, Fold, Pass, Peel" (Caller will sometimes respond "Big deal")	
"NOW"			Drop hands, individually turn 360° in place, re-join hands.
Pass the Ocean	4	"Whoosh"	
Ping Pong Circulate	6		Single clap
Promenade 1/2	8	Inactive couples "whoohoo" while hugging.	Inactive couples move into center, group hug.

Call	Timing	Verbal	Action
Right & Left Grand Wrong Way Grand	10	Slight hoot while pulling by with 1st and 3rd person.	Slight hop with 1st and 3rd person.
Roll Away	4		Each dancer should 'give weight' (slight resistance) so rolling dancer can move smoothly into place.
Scoot Back - 'Boys'	6	Make slight grunt at end of turn	Slight pause before parting but no pulling or other action.
Scoot Back - 'Girls'	6	High pitched "aahh" or "oohh"	May primp hair with free hand while doing arm turn.
Spin Chain Thru	16		Ends clap while others finish the call.
Square Thru 4	From squared set 10; from box 6		Inactive couples clap while actives complete the call.
Right/Left Hand Star	Full = 8		'Girls' or Mixed Boy/Girl Stars use hands in tent. 'Boys' use pack saddle hold (hand on wrist of person in front of you) especially for back up stars. Hands should be held at shoulder height of shortest dancer.
Swing	At least 4		Ballroom hold, buzz step for at least a count of 4; If you don't do the call 'Swing' you must just stand and wait for a count of 4. Some twirl a finger in the air while they wait. If you don't want to Swing approach with arms already in promenade position. Alternate swing style: walking in short dance steps around central pivot point.
Track Two	8	"Toot toot"	Make hand movement like pulling horn chain.
Weave the Ring	10		No touching or perhaps tapping hands lightly while passing.
Yellow Rock			Hug person in front of you or named person.



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STYLING TIPS

Flourishes/Frills Level Two

For those who have mastered the calls, basic styling and are able to dance with precise timing.

Call	Timing	Action
Right and Left Grand with Twirls	10	'Girl' initiates by raising right arm. 'Boy' allows his arm to be raised. 'Girl' twirls under with 1st and 3rd person. 'Girl' must be able to exit the twirl in the same position as if she pulled by. She does not move her feet in a circle but does a forward moving spin in the line of dance. 'Boy' should not stop his forward motion. 'Boy' may offer to twirl with slight upward motion of his arm but should not force the partner's arm up. 'Girl' is not obligated to respond by raising her arm. 'She' can just use slight resistance to signal her desire not to twirl.
Grand Square	32	Styling should only be added to Grand Square if precise timing can be maintained. Symmetry should be a goal when adding styling to Grand Square. When meet in center fast 2 hand, tight 360° turn and back away. When meet on sides Ballroom hold/Highland Fling hold full turn. Must be sure each person is positioned correctly to execute next part of call. Excessive styling on Grand Square detracts from the team concept at the heart of Grand Square.
Promenade 1/2	8	Inactive couples do 1 ballroom hold turn or Highland Fling turn with opposite dancer. This must be very tight so as not to extend beyond the center of the square and impede the promenade dancers.
Swing with Twirl	4	'Girl' initiates by raising right arm. 'Boy' allows his arm to be raised. 'Girl' twirls under.
Swing and Promenade with Twirl		'Girl' initiates by raising right arm. 'Boy' allows his arm to be raised. 'Girl' twirls under and rolls into promenade position. See Action for Swing. If just doing the Twirl you should not begin Promenade until after 4th beat. If you Swing for 4 you must do the Twirl on beat 5 which means it must be moving a twirl, both moving forward while executing the twirl. You could also Twirl on beat 4 and begin Promenade on 5.
Weave the Ring with Twirls	8	'Girl' initiates with 1st and 3rd person by raising right arm. 'Boy' allows his arm to be raised. 'Girl' twirls under. 'Girl' must be able to exit the twirl in the same position as if she pulled by. She does not move her feet in a circle but does a forward moving spin in the line of dance. 'Boy' should not stop his forward motion. 'Boy' may offer to twirl with slight upward motion of his arm but should not force the partner's arm up. 'Girl' is not obligated to respond by raising her arm. 'She' can just use slight resistance to signal her desire not to twirl.