

# Community Dance Program Plan

This document is the first section of the  
*Community Dance Program Handbook*  
produced by CALLERLAB  
(The International Association of Square Dance Callers)  
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## PREFACE

Aside from the typical one-night stands that perhaps attract as many as one out of every ten Americans who have at least a single exposure to square dancing during their lifetime, the greatest potential for any future program lies in an easy-access, limited basics program that demands little commitment on the part of the dancers, but at the same time provides an almost unlimited scope of variety, friendship, and fun. However, the great majority of men and women who would like to be involved in square dancing on a limited time schedule find that such an on-going program is not available.

The Community Dance Program (CDP) is a grass-roots concept of the activity – the basic form of square dancing that Americans have enjoyed for years. While there is no limit to the variety involved, it is the form of variety that can be achieved in a limited amount of time and then enjoyed for a life-time.

Special thanks go to many callers and teachers whose material and dances appear in this handbook and to the many who have tried out this pilot program in the past two years.

Ken Kernen  
CDP Chairman  
November 1989

## THE CONCEPT

The basic concept for the CDP is that dancing patten calls and singing calls in squares is just a part of the program. Quadrilles – those smoothly timed dances – are also done in square formation. Also as part of all this, are the contras – dances done in facing lines using essentially the same square dance terminology. The big circle contras and mixers and trios serve as a bridge between the squares and the couple dances and are all included. Instead of complex rounds, you'll find simple couple dances and even simple solo dances (Amos Moses, etc.) to add to the program.

All of this has a purpose. In the series of six sessions you will achieve several goals that will help you insure the future of the group. Mixing of the dancers right from the

start of the program plays an integral role in the learning process, and you'll find this is a sure way to quickly meld your dancers into one friendly unit. For this program we find that you can do wonders with a limited number of basics. The 24 movements selected for this program are described and danced just as they have been standardized by CALLERLAB. Special attention is given to styling, in as much as the basics are the essential tools of the caller who knows exactly what each basic is designed to accomplish. By using these basics in tandem with good, descriptive, simple English terms, you'll find infinite variety. Here again, the secret of the success of this program is that once these basics have been introduced to the square dancers there will be no others. They can be easily taught and learned in the six 2-hour sessions. For a caller to reach out and add extra basics would be counter-productive and defeat the purpose of this program.

Here, then, are the 24 Magic Ingredients – the tools or basic movements from which you will build your program. We're listing them by name only and refer you to one of the CALLERLAB lists for description, styling, timing, etc.

## **BASICS FOR THE COMMUNITY DANCE PROGRAM**

### **In a Suggested Teaching Order**

1. Circle Left and Right
2. Forward and Back
3. Do Sa do
4. Swing
5. Couple Promenade
6. Single File Promenade
7. Allemande Left/Right
8. Arms Turns, Left/Right
9. Right and Left Grand
10. Weave the Ring
11. Star Right/Left
12. Star Promenade
13. Pass Thru
14. Split the Couple/Ring
15. Rollaway
16. U Turn Back
17. Separate
18. Courtesy Turn
19. Ladies Chain, Two/Four
20. Lead Right
21. Right and Left Thru
22. Circle to a Line
23. Bend the Line
24. Grand Square

As a recreational program, involving people who don't have the time or inclination to spend months in class and then be committed to more dancing time than they really can afford, the important part of this program is that not only can the ideas of the program be comfortably taught and learned in six sessions, but from that point on and with just the basics listed here, you need never run out of material.

Somewhere along the line someone is bound to label this program "low level". Low intensity it may be; low level, never. As a person begins the first session, he certainly would be considered a beginner. But then, as his reaction time improves and as he can handle the complete list of basics, helped along by good, descriptive, plain English directions, his ability increases. By the time he has finished the sessions and is into smooth dancing, there is no way in the world that he could be labeled "low level". This is important for all to understand.

A caller, in making the decision to take on the Community Dance Program, must realize that where, today, an extremely large percentage of our potential square dance population is dropping out of the activity before or soon after entering club dancing, the CDP is designed, by its very nature, to retain the greatest percentage of those participating in the CDP. Because this is not a "stepping stone" program, and no attempt is being made to move the dancers from this stage of their dancing experience to other programs involving a greater commitment or more involvement, the caller who adheres to this program will soon find that he has his halls filled with dancers. Since this program has completed its testing stage, it is hoped that nothing will need to be added to and nothing taken away from the list of square dance basics it includes. It should be understood that this does not curtail the invention and introduction of additional patten and singing calls, quadrilles, contras, mixers, couple, and solo dances utilizing just those basics on the CDP. To make this a successful program, the caller needs to possess as many if not more skills than the average caller involved in other square dance programs.

Callers' schools and clinics on how to do these dances and then how to teach them well, is a valuable adjunct. This program calls for a special brand of caller, a talented yet caring individual, who sees the great opportunity for the CDP.

## **THE CDP CLUB OR "OPEN DANCE" PROGRAM**

Of equal importance to the learning procedure for dancers entering the CDP is an on-going program made up of club dancing or open dances. The caller who has his sights on the new program and recognizes its vulnerability to change may find, at least at the start, the need to bear the responsibility for any club leadership.

Taking our cue from earlier, non-complicated square dancing, we find that the "open dances" were the successful starting points for the club dancing that was to follow. That may work out to be the case for the CDP.

## THE PLAN

You'll find that the six sessions allowed for teaching and learning the Community Dance Program are ample to cover what you are going to teach. It is important to realize that all the dances that fit into this program could not possibly be taught in just six lessons. However it is important to start the dancers off properly, to teach them how to "listen", and how to be considerate and friendly dancers.

Remember, this is a concept. Rather than list an evening's specific dances, we're suggesting the types of dances to achieve a specific goal. Referring to the Dance Material section, the caller can build his own program – using these guidelines.

**THE FIRST NIGHT:** While the choice of material for this evening is important, its purpose is even of greater significance. This is a "selling" evening. You want the dancers to have such a good time that even the most skeptical among the neophytes will be "sold". This is an opportunity for the dancers to mix with each other, to sample things to come. This is a change for them to see that they do not have two left feet and that square dancing is not, as they might have believed, "square".

Here is an outline of that first evening. Remember, we said an outline, not the outline. There needs to be flexibility, for many things unplanned are likely to come along that the instructor may wish to change. But, here's a workable starting point.

**First Tip – Big Circle Drill:** Try this with the hoedown music playing in the background. Introduce the dancers to the first group of basics, Circle Left and Right, Forward and Back, Do Sa Do, Swing (hook right elbows and swing once around, teach the square dance swing later in the evening), Couple Promenade. Once the dancers are all comfortable with these basics, then use one of the easy mixers chosen from the Mixer section. Plan ahead which mixer you will use and call the basics of the mixer in the same order to the hoedown music several times, then stop the music, explain to the dancers that you are simply changing accompaniment, quickly walk the dance, put on the music and let them dance.

**Second Tip –** Again start the dancers in a large circle and teach them Single File Promenade, Allemande Left and arm turns if you wish. Then with the music still on and without stopping for further explanation, have the dancers Promenade in twos. Then with two couples together, Promenade in fours. Now, Promenade in eights, ends join hands and circle eight. Stop in squares and call/teach the square terminology.

**Third Tip –** Have the dancers form squares of their own, having been introduced to this formation in the previous section. By utilizing simple calls the dancers learn their position numbers around the square, which ones are the heads and which are the sides, etc.

Fourth Tip – Use a simple Mixer (There are several listed in the Mixer Section that have great music and add fun at this early stage.) Following the mixer – retain partners and join other couples in squares.

Fifth Tip – Two more squares including simple, appropriate singing calls.

Sixth Tip – Grand March into contra formations.

Final Tip – The Virginia Reel – simple version, can be the grand finale for the evening, or, if you have time, let the dancers form their own squares and either review two of the squares done earlier or utilize the same material in simple square dances with a minimum of teaching.

Although this first session in the Community Dance Program adapts simply to a one-night stand, the complete program is not designed as a series of one-nighters. Using the building block concept of teaching various patterns in their simplest form and then building on this knowledge is a proven technique. As the knowledge of the dancer grows, introduce slightly more complex forms of the same figure (pattern). By using this technique the dancers will, by the end of the sixth session, be accomplished to the point where they can quickly pick up, without long teaching sessions the new patterns (not basics) the caller may be using that evening.

NOTE: You may wish to keep the enrollment “open” for at least two nights when review will allow latecomers to catch up with the others. As the demand grows for the CDP, those who are unable to sign up for one series need only wait a month and a half for the next series to begin – if that is your plan.

THE SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT NIGHTS: It is virtually impossible to guess, beforehand, how a group will progress. For that reason it’s important to maintain a certain degree of flexibility. Your dancers may be older than usual or much younger. They may show a tendency for learning more quickly or slowly, so plans from this point on, after having been worked out carefully beforehand, may need to be changed on the spot. Nevertheless, without this form of preplanning, the caller can find himself truly unprepared, a situation that is quickly recognized by the dancers.

We suggest that each evening be started with a “relaxer” that includes some review. Getting the people back into the fun and friendly spirit in which you left them the previous meeting is the goal. So, depending on whether or not you have some new people on the second night, start in a big circle or in squares and avoid using the first tip as a teaching session. Although you will do your best to encourage dancers to be on hand at the starting time, there are some who may arrive late, so hold your first teaching back just a bit.

Second Tip – Introduce a simple mixer that you didn’t use on the first evening.

Third Tip – Following the mixer, “Scatter Promenade” the dancers into squares. Do a relaxed review of material taught to this point. There’s a slight difference between a teach, a re-teach and a review, but, essentially, what you want to accomplish is to bring the entire group up to the same plane of receptivity so that you can move on with the new material. A simple patten call, perhaps using the building block system of adding to the star figures taught previously and a singing call or quadrille to introduce yet another figure works out well here. The balance of the evening would include the variety of dance forms already mentioned in an order that best suits the teaching order of the caller.

The continually shifting of patterns from circles to squares to lines and to solo dances provides an almost unlimited sense of variety. Avoiding the sameness in accompaniment music does a similar thing. Toss in a polka or two-step for good measure, and you will convince the new dancer that he is dancing, not simply maneuvering, but moving to music. This is dancing.

Use every opportunity to emphasize the “fun” of the activity. This doesn’t mean to trick the dancers or to play unfair games on them, but it does involve providing them with well-planned dance material set to a wide variety of enjoyable, danceable music.

Actually the purpose of the sessions is not to teach dances only, but to teach everyone “How to Dance.” If in the course of the six 2-hour sessions he learns to do the basics and the various patterns well, he will indeed be an accomplished dancer at this CDP plateau. In addition to learning the calls involved, the new dancer is learning to “listen.” That’s why, when dancing these foundation basics over and over in the different dances, the dancers will begin to react automatically.

The success of the program depends upon the friendliness of each dancer but it is the caller/teacher who must instill this in the group from the first night.

## **DANCE MATERIAL – SOME DANCES FOR THE CDP**

You’ll discover, as you work with this program, that there is a wealth of material available using just the 24 basics. Within the Dance Material Section are enough examples to get you started. They’re broken into categories and are not necessarily in the order that you may wish to use them because much of the selecting is left up to the individual caller/teacher.

(Note: Much of the dance material in the original handbook is now present in the CALLERLAB Dance Resource at <http://dances.callerlab.org/> .)

## **PROMOTING THE CDP**

So much has been written about publicizing new dancer classes that we’re only going to touch on a few of the elements that may be different in recruiting members for your Community Dance Program. Of course, demonstrations for the public in shopping

malls, fairgrounds, etc., give non-dancers an opportunity to see what square dancing is all about. Publicity in newspapers always attracts some attention, but as you may have noticed, recruiting on a one-for-one basis, one happy square dancer selling a non-dancer, is, by far, the best method.

In recent years, where, in many communities, hundreds have signed up, taken part in classes, joined clubs, and eventually dropped out, you may find among them individuals who have looked for a less complex, less involved square dance recreation program. Finding these people may be a challenge. Check old club and class rosters and set up a telephone or mailing committee. Your present dancers may know individuals who would like to join in, but the non-dancers, having learned what amount of time that has been required of them up to this point, may be looking for something less demanding.

Members of service clubs, church fellowship organizations, and other groups of this nature are often made up of busy individuals, folks with growing children and with demanding businesses that preclude their getting too involved in square dancing as it has become. At the same time they may be looking for a form of recreation a husband and wife may enjoy together which takes a limited number of sessions and then provides limitless fun and friendly dancing. They could be looking for something that does not require strict on-going, after class, attendance or workshops in order to keep up.

The activity has apparently lost many dancers who, discovering that it is necessary to be away from club dancing for periods of time, find it impossible to catch up with the dancing when they return. This would not be the case with the CDP. After completing the six sessions, a dancer, finding it necessary to leave the activity for a time, can fit right back into CDP dancing with no problem. The Community Dance Program has so much going for it that these ideas should pique your own imagination in different forms of recruiting.

As a caller you may find that it is an inexpensive investment to offer a one-night stand to a church, synagogue, or service group in the area and out of it develop a six-session Community Dance Program, perhaps right there in that organization's social hall. Don't limit yourself to what has happened in the past. This is a new concept. And, if you look at it in that light, there's no reason in the world why you can't be as busy calling and teaching as you wish and, using halls that could hold 20 squares, no longer satisfied with just 6 squares in attendance.

This is not the gateway to other square dancing – at least it is not intended in that light. Naturally, a person who attends a one-night stand may find himself so entranced with square dancing that he wants to learn more – that's natural. A person who finds his "home" in a Community Dance Program may find his way of life changing as his children grow up, as he retires from business, etc., and because of a greater time availability may decide to go into other square dance programs. That's fine, but it is not the purpose of the Community Dance Program to serve as a "stepping stone."

The CDP should be presented as, and continued as, a complete, self-contained, square dance – no more, no less. Anyone suggesting that the concept of CDP may lead to boredom without changing the basic terminology has simply not made an effort to understand what this program entails.

## DANCE MATERIAL

It should be noted that the dances and material included in this section are a small fraction of the material that is available to fit the Community Dance Program. A large amount of excellent material is available from numerous sources. You will also find that much additional material with minor modifications and changes can be adapted to fit within this program.

In the majority of cases, the dances in this collection are specifically written for the music indicated, instructions are included with the record and often the flip side is either called, cued, or prompted. In the cases where the record is listed as 'suggested music', the instructions most likely will not be included with the record and the calls shown in this section must be used.

No attempt has been made to list all possible variations of the dances as there are many! It should also be noted that there are numerous additional records and music that may be used for each of these dances. An example of this is the Lloyd Shaw Foundation One-Night Stand kit which contains eighteen records with thirty-six different tunes. A manual is included with 94 dances which can be used with these 18 records. Dances include singing calls, quadrilles, contras, couple mixers, rounds, solo, and trio dances. This is just one of many sources of useable material that is available to you.

## SQUARE DANCE DRILLS

The following 14 square dances from Dick Leger and Kimbo Records are patterns that make excellent drills. They have also been arranged so that all of the patterns time out exactly to 64 counts and may be used as breaks and figures for singing calls. Those marked with an (\*) have a partner change and when repeated three more times, will return dancers to their original partners. All of these patterns will work equally well when prompted and used in a quadrille.

With the corner, allemande left Weave the ring Do sa do with your partner All join hands and circle half way Men star right Turn your partner left full around Keep her and promenade -----	* Four ladies chain across Chain the ladies back Put the ladies back to back Men promenade outside Turn your partner by the left Corner by the right Partner by the left Take the corner and promenade -----
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<p>Four ladies promenade inside  Swing with your partner  All join hands and circle left  Allemande left . . . Weave the ring  With your partner, do sa do  Promenade  -----</p> <p>Sides face, grand square  Four ladies chain across  Chain them back  Promenade  -----</p> <p>All circle left all the way  Reverse single file  All go forward and back  Do sa do your corner  Promenade partner  -----</p> <p>Four ladies chain across  Chain them back  All circle left halfway  Allemande left . . . Weave the ring  Do sa do . . . Promenade  -----</p> <p>* Men star right  Corner swing  All circle left  Allemande left . . . Grand right and left  Do sa do the one you swung  Promenade  -----</p> <p>All circle left half way  Four ladies chain  All promenade half  Four ladies chain  Sides face, grand square  -----</p> <p>* Heads promenade all the way around  Sides circle left full around  Make a right hand star  Allemande left the corner  With your partner, do sa do  Corner swing . . . Promenade  -----</p>	<p>Heads promenade half way around  Sides turn back to back, separate  On the other side, everybody swing  All circle left half way around  Do sa do your corner  Same girl swing  Promenade  -----</p> <p>All circle left full around  Allemande left the corner  Turn partner right all the way  Men star left  Swing your own girl  Promenade  -----</p> <p>* All swing your corner  Heads forward and back  Heads promenade half way  Four ladies chain  Sides promenade half way  Four ladies chain  All promenade home  All go forward and back  -----</p> <p>Head gents and corner, forward and back  Do sa do  Side gents and corner, forward and back  Do sa do  All circle left half way  Allemande left  Grand right and left  Do sa do partner  -----</p> <p>* Head gents and corner, forward and back  Same four circle left full around  Left hand star the other way back  Dosado your own girl  Corner swing  All go forward and back  Promenade  -----</p>
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