

CHARLESTON Folk: Music~Dance~Life

Contra Dance Tips for New Dancers!

Singles are welcome.

Part of the tradition is dancing with many people. Men or women may ask to dance. Unless otherwise instructed, change partners after each dance. Don't be shy!

Line up and try it!

Learn by doing. Watching won't help you learn. The basic skills are taught during the first dances of the evening.

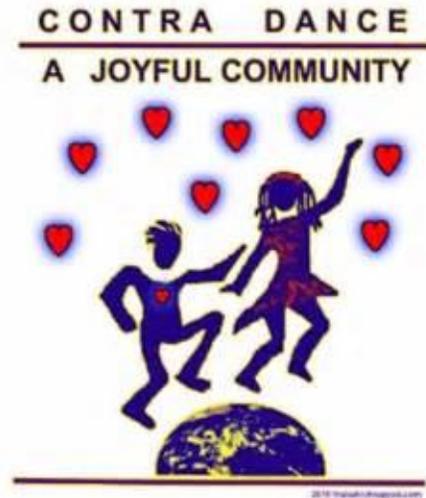
Dance with experienced partners.

Beginning couples are encouraged to split up. You can contribute to the enjoyment by dancing only with experienced partners during your first night.

Be assertive.

The best location for beginners is at the top of the set near the band. Find your next partner and line up quickly to join in with the enthusiastic old timers. But never cut in after the line has formed.

Stay alert & listen to the caller!



Use a smooth walking step.

Avoid skipping or bouncing. Pull gently and evenly during handholds (turns, circles, swings, etc.) to help each other around.

Keep it simple.

Don't add extra turns, twirls or flourishes until after you are comfortable with the basics.

Confused?

Ask the caller immediately or wait until the end of the walk-through. Don't miss the next instruction while asking other dancers.

Mistakes are a part of learning

Everyone goofs occasionally, even experienced dancers.

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Bring your beginner friends to an introductory session held at 7:30 pm at all dances.

Lightweight and comfortable clothing is suggested. Low, soft-soled shoes are best for dancing. Shoes with hard heels or soles mark the floor and can injure others' toes. Sneakers tend to grab too much.

Experienced dancers and the caller are eager to welcome beginners and to offer extra help. You will be increasing your own enjoyment and the enjoyment to others by finding experienced partners and beginning to dance early in the evening.

Try not to arrange partners far in advance. You will be less likely to forget a commitment and you won't have to disappoint others

Line up at the bottom of the set. Never cut in after the line has formed.

Maintain eye contact with your partner and other dancers. Smile and enjoy their company.

Give weight during hand turns and while swinging. A little tension against your partner's hand will allow them to help you through the figure.

Relax and enjoy moving with the music. Accept a helpful push with thanks. If you can help others, don't talk, just give them a gentle lead in the right direction.

Considerate dancers add extra turns or movements only when they are certain it will not make them or their partner late for the next figure.

Except in an emergency, never leave your set once the dance has started. If you suddenly find that you have no other couple to dance with (someone has left the set), go to the bottom of the set and join in as the inactive couple.

If you have enjoyed the dance or the wonderful live music here at Charleston Folk, show your appreciation with applause after the music is over. Please don't clap during the dance. It is distracting to the musicians and prevents others from enjoying the music.

Contribute to a friendly atmosphere by thanking your partner and others nearby.

Thank you for coming!

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