

Dance Tips

- If you make a mistake, it's okay! Just keep moving until you catch up.
- Keep in mind that anyone can ask anyone to dance: women can ask men, younger people can ask older people, new dancers can ask experienced dancers, men can ask men, etc.
- It's okay to decline a dance for any reason. If someone declines a dance, don't take it personally—just ask someone else to dance.
- To minimize dizziness and increase friendliness: make eye contact during swings and other turning moves. If this makes you uncomfortable, look at another part of the person's face like their nose or forehead. Let your partner know if you're getting dizzy! Slower swings and fewer flourishes may help reduce dizziness.
- Contra dance has its own rhythm and timing. Trust that the music and the experienced dancers will guide you through the moves.
- Be aware of how you connect to others—don't cling too tightly or loosely to your fellow dancers. A good handhold resembles a good hand shake; you can feel the connection, but they aren't squeezing or crushing your hand.
- Dance smoothly. Avoid bouncing, hopping, and galloping; these ways of moving can jostle other dancers.
- Stand up straight; using good posture can help you keep yourself centered and balanced.
- At the end of the dance, show the band and caller your appreciation, and don't forget to thank your partner!
- Most people change partners between dances. This way they get to dance with lots of people. We highly encourage you to dance with people of all sizes, ages, genders, and abilities.

A CONTRA partner of choice:

C is community-minded

- dances with the whole set, not just their partner
- can dance both roles and asks a variety of people to dance
- is a welcoming ambassador of our dance community; they seek dances and conversations with newcomers

O is on time

- is in the right place at the right time
- dances to the phrasing of the music
- helps others to arrive at the next move on time

N is nurturing

- realizes each dancer they interact with has different needs and abilities
- is gentle when interacting with others, moving smoothly through the dance
- takes their time finding a partner and does not aggressively pursue other dancers
- is on the lookout for dancers who need guidance

T treats others with respect

- is sure to ask for consent before leading moves like twirls and dips
- maintains a good dance frame with an appropriate amount of space between their body and the bodies of other dancers
- moves on gracefully when someone declines a dance, and does not pressure them to accept

R radiates joy

- expresses appreciation for their partner, the band, the caller, and volunteers
- shows their enthusiasm for the dance in warm ways: if you want to, smile! Compliment someone's dance style! Applaud, stomp, or cheer (at friendly volumes)!

A advocates for their own needs

- takes breaks when needed
- makes partners aware of injuries and requests
- alerts organizers to any inappropriate behaviors