

SMOOTH DANCING & BODY FLOW

2023 GSI Caller School - 72nd NSDC

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Presented By
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Smooth Dancing is dance action which allows the dancers to move comfortably, without abrupt changes of direction or excessive stops, and with steps that match the beat of the music.

Two key conditions exist:

1. The movement must be physically comfortable allowing the dancers to move in natural ways.
2. The action should allow the dancers to match their steps to the beat of the music.

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Factors Affecting Smoothness

Timing - is the relationship between Key Words of the square dance command and the dancing action, measured in beats of music. The goal of timing is to allow the dancer to start moving with the first beat of a musical phrase, and then to move smoothly and without interruption until the dancing action has been completed.

Tempo - refers to the speed of the music and is expressed in number of beats per minute. The dancers' sensation of speed is affected both by the timing and the tempo

Body Position - The caller must choose material where the dancers are positioned at the completion of one call so the transition to the next can be accomplished without abrupt changes in direction.

Hand Availability - The hand that is to be used next must be available at the completion of the preceding action for the action to feel smooth.

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Principle Factors Affecting Smoothness

Anticipation –

Encouraged anticipation is rhyming word patterns that sometimes encourage dancers to anticipate a particular call. Example: "Forward up and back you reel, Pass Thru now Wheel and Deal."

Conditioned anticipation is continued use of the same rhymes and calls to develop and condition a reflex-like dancer response. Example: "Ladies Lead Flutterwheel..." or "Pass the Ocean, Ladies Trade"

Instinctive anticipation occurs when existing momentum of the dancers create an instinctive tendency (anticipation) to continue a given body action in the same direction.

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Principle Factors Affecting Smoothness

Execution –

Familiarity of material being used will affect the smoothness and rate of execution. Precision of movement creates the sensation of smoothness from one person to the next even in the same square.

Adequacy of training on how the dancers are taught. Or even if the calls are taught differently geographically.

Space available. If dancers are "squeezed" they cannot dance smoothly. Example: From a starting Double Pass Thru or 8-Chain Thru, the calls Flutterwheel or Ladies Chain will cause "squeezing". If you have a crowded floor, it is generally not a good idea to use Tidal Waves or Tidal Two-Faced Lines.

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Principle Factors Affecting Smoothness

Body movement needs to be comfortable, so dancers remain balanced and can manage their momentum. Try to avoid “Overflow”.

Body relationships play into "counter-dancing" which the need for dancers turning around each other to counter-balance each other.

Call design refers to the body movement difficulties that are built into some square dance calls. Perhaps the most obvious example of the problem is the call Square Thru.

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Summary

Callers must strive to understand that smooth dancing requires more than not using the same hand twice in a row.

It is true of smoothness, as it is with other aspects of square dancing, that there are exceptions to all the rules.

The dance is a total experience that involves the dance patterns, the timing, the sensation of smoothness, the intellectual excitement and many other factors.

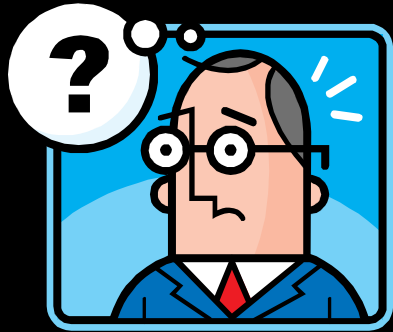
The competent caller knows when the rules are broken and does so only when the total program goals require it.

Certainly, most of a square dance evening should be smooth flowing, comfortable dance patterns that move without hesitations or scrambling and do not require abrupt direction changes.

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QUESTIONS



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ANSWERS