

## Ten Tips for Beginning Dancers

(with thanks to CDSS News #109 Nov/Dec 1992)

1. **Relax. It's just a dance!** Everyone was a beginner at one time.
2. Don't panic. If you mess up, smile, laugh, apologize and go on to the next figure. It's more important to be in the right place for the next figure than to complete every move.
3. Learn the basic figures and timing before adding flourishes. You'll have lots of time later to add your own touches.
4. Don't look at the floor, or far away. Eye contact is an important part of contra dancing, and it may help to keep you from getting dizzy.
5. It's the custom to change partners for each dance, and women ask men to dance as often as men ask women. (And women ask women, and men ask men.)
6. Don't rush away from your partner at the end of a dance. Take time to thank them, and calmly find another partner. (Warning: this is hard to do in some dance communities.) You're much more likely to find a partner if you're moving around than sitting down.
7. If you ask someone to dance and he or she says "No", don't worry about it. If someone asks you to dance, and you're not comfortable with them, you can graciously decline. Keep moving, you'll find a partner.
8. Do ask experienced dancers to dance with you. Don't think they're too good for you. They'll guide you in the right direction if you get confused.
9. Sweating is natural and healthy, and there's a lot of it at dances. Dress coolly, bring a towel (or extra shirts fellows), take breaks to get some air, and drink water. Many experienced dancers bring water bottles (not glass) from home.
10. After you have some dance experience and know what you're doing, beginners will need your help.

Tell them to remember: **Relax It's just a dance!**