

Tips for Your Tips

A series devoted to helping you become a more confident dancer

Walls Are Our Friends

Our favorite pastime is called square dancing. We “square up.” Much of the time we are dancing in boxes, lines, and columns. Most of our halls are rectangular. With the geometric nature of many of our formations, it makes good sense to use the walls to our advantage.

Walls are our friends on the square dance floor. They assist us in keeping our square’s formations neat, or, as one of my teacher/callers would say, help us “prettify” our formations. Lines/waves/columns that are straight, parallel, and lined up with one another and the walls help us identify *where we are in the formation, whom we are facing, who our partner is at the moment, and our circulation route*. When everyone is promenading and two couples are asked to Wheel Around, try to complete the call so that the resulting facing lines are parallel to a wall. Why? Your square will execute the calls more easily and smoothly when its formations are parallel to a wall rather than on a diagonal.

How do the walls help us perform calls more accurately? When dancers face a wall, not a corner of the room, they can more easily keep track of how far they have turned. With calls such as Touch ¼ and Cast Off ¾, the two dancers involved can easily tell when they have turned their twosome the correct amount (¼ = one wall, ¾ = three walls). During Bend the Line, a north/south line becomes an east/west line (turning one wall). Spin the Top requires four dancers to move in synchrony: The initial Trade has each pair turn one half (two walls). Then, the new centers turn three quarters (three walls) while the outside dancers move forward in a quarter circle (one wall). Both the original and the resulting ocean waves should be parallel to a wall.

See if you can identify how many walls you turn while dancing the following Basic and Mainstream calls. The answers are below, but don’t cheat!

	Call	0	1	2	3	4
A	Ferris Wheel					
B	Star Thru					
C	Box the Gnat					
D	Run: The Runner					
	Run: The Person Being Run Around					
E	Lead Right					
F	Dosado					
G	Pass the Ocean					
H	Veer Left					
I	Cloverleaf					
J	Scoot Back: Dancer Facing In					
	Scoot Back: Dancer Facing Out					
K	Zoom: Lead Dancer					
	Zoom: Trailing Dancer					

What topics would YOU like me to address in future columns? Please contact me at ltpt1@yahoo.com or 732-577-9413 with your suggestions. Happy dancing!

Jan Thompson

(A) 2 (B) 1 (C) 2 (D) 2 (E) 1 (F) 0 (G) 1 (H) 0 (I) 3 (J) 2 (K) 4 0