

Smoothness Workshop

(Designing Smoothness Into Your Calling)
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WHY IS SMOOTHNESS DESIRABLE?

Defining the Purpose (“I Could Have Danced All Night”)

- Smooth dancing makes dancing easier.
- Smooth dancing makes dancing less tiring.
- Smooth dancing makes dancing more enjoyable.

Valid Reasons for Departure from Smoothness

- Gimmicks, workshopping, challenge, etc.

But sometimes it’s not even appreciated (or “Tales of a Pogo Stick Dancer” and “Things That Go Bump in the Night”)

ACHIEVING SMOOTHNESS

In order for square dancing to be SMOOTH, a lot of different elements must **ALL** be right. The more important ones are: Body Flow, Overflow, Hand Availability, Timing, Phrasing, Tempo, Dancer Ability, Difficulty, and perceived effect of Music and Voice.

Conscious Decisions - timing, music, delivery, etc.

- Proper Timing in Giving the Command
- Selection of Music
- Smoothness of the Delivery
- Recognition of Body Flow

Unconscious Effort

- Born of Experience

ANALYZING THE COMPONENTS OF SMOOTHNESS

Body Flow of Choreography

Analyzing Body Flow (“Whadaya mean, pretend I’m a girl?”)

- Be aware of inactives as well as actives.
- Be aware of women as well as men.
- Be aware Left side part as well as Right side part

Identifying Awkward Body Movements (“Can you believe he called *that*?”)

- Some calls are inherently awkward
SWAP AROUND
- Some sequences are awkward
BEND THE LINE, FLUTTER WHEEL.
CENTERS IN, BEND THE LINE.

- Some sequences are boarder line; use your own judgment
WALK AND DODGE, PARTNER TRADE.

STAR THRU, VEER TO THE LEFT.

Body Position & Position offsets

TAG THE LINE from RH vs. LH 2-faced line.

SQUARE THRU 3/4 to DOSADO vs. ALLEMANDE LEFT.

Overflow (Too much of a good thing)

Be aware of dancers going around and around in the same direction.

SWING THRU, SPIN THE TOP, CENTERS TRADE, FAN THE TOP

COUPLES CIRCULATE, WHEEL AND DEAL, VEER LEFT, FERRIS WHEEL

Correct for it with calls that reverse the normal clockwise flow

Right & Left Thru, Chain Down the Line, Dixie Style to a Wave, or Reverse Flutter Wheel

Correct for it with actions that are counter clockwise.

From LH 2-faced lines, call Ferris Wheel or Couples Circulate.

Hand Availability

Do not use a call that starts with a hand that is not available at the end of the previous call.

e.g. SQUARE THRU, STAR THRU.

If hand *is* available, it is okay to use even if it was just used.

e.g. ALLEMANDE THAR, SLIP THE CLUTCH, ALLEMANDE LEFT.

SCOOT BACK, SWING THRU.

BOX THE GNAT, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU.

Timing of Delivery

What makes well timed dancing?

Dancers are moving smoothly from one call to the next, while taking one step with each beat of the music.

What makes well timed calling?

Each call is delivered at the right time so that dancers can dance as described above. (It is the caller's responsibility to have the timing be correct, not the dancers.)

Bad timing, variations on the theme!

Stop and Go

Dancers hesitate between each call. — Calls delivered too late.

Stacking

Dancers appear rushed, but yet frequently have to wait. — Although enough time is given for each call, the calls are delivered too soon, frequently two or three calls early.

Clipping

Dancers must rush, frequently make mistakes because they shortcut or start a call before finishing the previous one. — Calls are delivered too soon, not leaving enough time for completing previous calls.

Workshop timing (Exceptions to every Rule)

Use stop and go timing when teaching or helping dancers through very difficult material.

Poor timing causes:

Mistakes, Tiredness, Loss of the feeling of good dancing.

How to do it right.

Timing Charts vs. Sight Timing.

Phrasing

Hard to have dancers start calls with beginning of phrase of music using contemporary choreography (BUT...!)

It is worth working to get Grand Square on the phrase.

When starting Singing Call Breaks, it is easy to start the following calls on the phrase:
Grand Square, Circle Left, Four Ladies Chain

Tempo (“Is 45 rpm too fast for patter?”)

Tempo is beats per minute of the music, *not* speed of turntable.

Using a slightly slower tempo:

Is less tiring

Gives dancers more thinking time.

Knowledge and Ability

Dancers cannot dance smoothly if they do not know the calls being called!

Choreographic Difficulty

Learn to recognize whether material is hard or easy.

Exercise judgment when calling hard vs. easy material.

Help the dancer with key phrases.

e.g. “In your *NEW* wave...”

Slippery Floor, Full Moon, etc.

Many additional things can cause interruptions in the smoothness of the dancing.

PERCEIVED SMOOTHNESS

Music

Easy-going, Rip-Snorter, etc.

“I love the two-step but...” — too much of the 3-legged beat?

Vocal Delivery

Some singing calls demand smooth delivery.

Rely on VISUAL FEEDBACK to improve the smoothness of your dance. If you see actions that are not smooth; first decide which of the above items is causing the problem; then adjust your delivery to eliminate the problem. *Caution:* Which Square are you watching?