



Dancing is for Everyone

If you can walk, you can dance. The activities of Round, Contra/Traditional and Square (RCT&S) dancing welcome all ages and ethnicities.

Community dance groups can be found all over the world.

Anyone with the desire to dance simply needs a little motivation to move and to find fellow dancers. Square Dancing has become so

popular and well-liked that 33 U.S. states have designated it their Official State Dance. Whether you are interested in Square, Round, or Contra/Traditional dancing, local dance groups are waiting for you to join the fun.

For information, go to www.arts-dance.org or www.you2candance.com

Dance Your Way to a Better Life

All forms of physical activity are good for the mind, body and soul, and dancing is no exception. Doing so on a regular basis contributes to the following:

- **Cardiovascular Fitness** – Dancing – Round, Contra/Traditional and Square (RCT&S) – is a safe way to exercise. The moves are interesting, and the level of exertion is up to each participant. “Rev up” for a high-intensity workout, or take it slow and easy for a relaxing, yet beneficial, workout. Dancing regularly can lead to a slower heart rate, lower blood pressure and an improved cholesterol profile.
- **Healthy Environment** – RCT&S clubs are smoke- and alcohol-free. This allows the participants to dance and socialize in a safe environment.
- **Body and Brain Boost** – RCT&S dancers react to directions which are given, forcing the body and brain to be tightly coordinated. A number of moves are memorized, which helps keep the mind sharp.
- **Calories Burned** – Dancing burns between 200 and 400 calories in thirty minutes – that’s the equivalent of walking, swimming or riding a bike.
- **Steps** – The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommends 10,000 steps per day to maintain physical fitness. Dancing, on average, provides over 3,000 steps per hour.

- **Sturdy Bones** – The side-to-side movement of dancing strengthens weight-bearing bones in the hips and legs, which helps prevent and slow the loss of bone mass.
- **Rehabilitation** – RCT&S is a great way to get back into the swing of things if you are recovering from an injury. Dancing keeps your joints moving, and is a nice alternative to jogging, or other high-impact activities.
- **Social Aspects** – You never know who you’re going to meet on the dance floor. Some types of dance, such as Contra, require you to switch partners every dance, so it’s easy to make friends. Lifetime relationships are formed, and some even meet the loves of their lives. There are dancing groups for everybody – handicapable people, gays and lesbians, youth, singles and couples.



Dancing Defined

Round Dancing

A ballroom-type dance characterized by movements where all couples dance the same steps in time with the music.

www.roundalab.org

Square Dancing

Modern Square Dancing is where four couples form squares and dance as a team.

www.callerlab.org

Contra/Traditional Dance

Includes several folk dance styles in which couples interact in two facing lines, plus other formations.

www.contralab.org

To locate fellow dancers in your area and learn how to dance, please visit www.arts-dance.org, www.you2candance.com, or contact:

Historical Timeline

1400s–1500s	Round and Square Dancing appear all over Europe. Throughout the continent, community events often include a variety of folk dances.
1600s	Across all levels of society, formal groups are formed to enjoy folk dances. This was commonly known as “English Country Dancing.”
1651	“The English Dancing Master or Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with Tunes to each Dance” by John Playford is published. This first book about Square and Contra dancing contained 105 routines. There were 18 editions between 1651 and 1728, which included many additional dances.
1700	Contra-style dancing becomes the most favored form of dance. The Waltz is first referenced in 1750.
Early 1800s	Four-couple set dances, i.e. Squares and Quadrilles, were added to both the folk and formal dances held in Europe and the Americas. Box socials usually included dancing, and drew settlers together all across North America.
1893-1940	The introduction of Ragtime music in 1893, Jazz in 1910, and swing dances such as the Lindy Hop (1920) and the Jitterbug (1930) changed the city dance scene. Formation dances like squares and contra were enjoyed by smaller crowds in mostly rural communities in New England, Appalachia and the American West.
1916–1951	Dr. Lloyd “Pappy” Shaw, as superintendent of Cheyenne Mountain School in Colorado Springs, teaches his students to Square and Round dance. A talented group tours the US creating interest, and the activity grows like wildfire.
1920s	Henry Ford revives the old style of dancing and builds a ballroom in Michigan. He hires a dancing master named Benjamin Lovett.
1926	Henry Ford and Benjamin Lovett publish “ Good Morning ,” a book that provided inspiration and material on dancing.
1939	“Pappy” Shaw publishes the first definitive book on Western Square Dancing, “ Cowboy Dances .”
1952	The first National Square Dance Convention ® is held in Riverside, CA, drawing 5,000+ dancers.
1973	SSDUSA , The Singles Square Dancers, USA, Inc. is established.
1974	CALLERLAB , the International Association of Square Dance Callers, holds its first convention in St. Louis, MO.
1976	The 25th National Square Dance Convention ® is held in Anaheim, CA and attracts nearly 40,000 dancers.
1977	ROUNDALAB , the International Association of Round Dance Teachers, holds it’s first convention in Memphis, TN.
1981	USDA , the United Square Dancers of America, is formed.
1983	IAGSDC , the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs, is established.
1986	CONTRALAB , the International Association of Contra Callers, is formed.
2001	50th National Square Dance Convention ® is held in Anaheim, CA.
2003	All Join Hands Foundation, Ltd , is created.
2003	ARTS-Dance , the Alliance of Round, Traditional and Square Dance, Inc. (ARTS-Dance), is formed.
2015	The Square Dance community adopted the logo and slogan “ Live Lively – Square Dance. ”
2020	The world-wide Covid-19 pandemic caused a shutdown of in-person dancing, but Zoom dancing with phantoms bloomed.
2021	Recovery from the pandemic allowed in-person dancing to restart.



What we stand for

Individuals passionate about the dance activity formed a coalition called ARTS (Alliance of Round, Traditional and Square Dance) to promote awareness and growth of contemporary Square, Round, Contra and Traditional Dance.

We invite you to join us in this fun, healthy and affordable activity. See for yourselves how the day-to-day stresses of modern life fade into the background when you are on the dance floor.

Leader's Corner

A Caller is a person who directs the dance pattern for Square and Contra dancing. This requires knowledge of the calls, a good sense of rhythm and an outgoing personality. Calling Square Dances can also involve singing.

A Cuer is a person who directs the patterns for Round Dancing. The Cuer must be able to deliver the cues in time for the dancers to start on the correct beat and phrase of the music.



Years of training are needed to perfect these skills, which require dedication and artistic talent. This allows them to create the choreography that makes dancing fun.

Leadership of local and national associations come from volunteers within the dance community.

Fun Factoid

One of the first musicals to feature Square Dancing was “Let’s Dance.”

We hope you dance!