



**2026 - 2027**

## **New Dancer Handout**

### **Welcome to the World of Square Dancing!**

**Congratulations** from the **Mount Baker Council**! You've stepped into a world full of smiles, laughter, and music! Square dancing blends golden oldies, rock, country, and contemporary tunes — it's great exercise for both body and mind, and you'll meet some of the best people around.

We hope this handout answers your questions and helps guide you on your journey! We refer to the **MBC Website** often in this handout -- it is your go-to source for current information on available **lessons**, **student level dances** (these are dances held just for those **taking lessons**), mainstream dances (attend these **after** you graduate from lessons), the clubs that make up the council, special events and more!

**All current dance information is here —> [www.sqdance.org](http://www.sqdance.org)**

### **Square Dance Levels**

In the Mount Baker Council, we offer the following square dance options:

- **Mainstream:** 50 moves; ten clubs offer lessons and dance at this level. ***If you received this handout, you are likely taking mainstream lessons!***
- **Plus:** Adds 50 new moves (100 total); three clubs dance at this level and two offer lessons.

- **Advanced:** Adds even more moves; one club offers lessons and dances at this level.

## **Dancing**

While learning, be sure to attend **no-experience** or **student-level** dances — they're open to everyone taking lessons and perfect for practice. There's a list of these dances on the MBC Website. You can bring non-dancing friends to the no-experience dances!

After graduation, enjoy **mainstream dances** all over the world! If you feel you'd like to try advancing, consider enrolling in **Plus** lessons.

💖 Don't miss **Council Dances** each fall & spring — big, joyful gatherings for all clubs.

🎁 Many clubs also host charity dances for causes like Alzheimer's Research, Toys for Tots and Fisher House. Often clubs make donations to food banks.

## **Round Dancing**

Like ballroom dancing — waltz, cha-cha, foxtrot, swing, two-step — danced in a circle with a **cuer** prompting steps. There are two round dance clubs in the Mount Baker Council.

## **Square Dance Terms**

**Angel:** Experienced dancer helping new dancers.

**Caravan:** Club visit wearing club colors or outfits.

**Caller / Cuer:** Lead dancers through moves.

**Heads / Sides:** Within a square, head couples are in line with the stage, side couples face each other.

**Hot Hash:** Fast-paced patter calling, no pauses.

**Left Hand Dancer / Right Hand Dancer:** The position you are in within a couple.

**Patter Call:** Quick succession of calls to practice moves.

**Singing Call:** Square dance calls mixed with a song's lyrics.

**Square:** Eight dancers consisting of 4 couples, one couple has one left hand dancer and one right hand dancer.

**Tip:** Two dances — patter + singing call.



## Dress the Part

Square dance attire adds to the fun! But modern square dance attire is flexible and comfortable, so wear what makes you happy. Some clubs offer themes such as “crazy t-shirt” or “forever in blue jeans”, check out the flyers for those suggestions. Flyers are available on the MBC Website. On wooden floors, leather soled shoes help you slide and twirl.



When caravanning, it's tradition to wear your club's colors or special outfit if possible.



## Seven Ways to Be a Great Dancer

1. **Listen closely** to the caller. Please do not talk.
2. **Be friendly** and welcome newcomers, introduce yourself.
3. **Work as a team** in your square.
4. **Practice often** — it builds confidence and muscle memory.
5. **Form squares quickly** when music starts. *If you don't have a partner just raise your hand!*
6. **Stay positive** and patient. Learning the moves and practicing them does not come easily to everyone, be kind. **Please do not pull or push.**
7. **Have fun!** That's the whole point!



## Dance Etiquette

Square dancing is about fun, mutual respect and cooperation.

- Avoid alcohol or drugs that slow reaction time.
- Practice good hygiene.
- Join the nearest forming square — don't skip around.
- Never abandon your square; raise arms if someone is injured.
- Be kind and helpful without criticism.

## **Join a Club**

After Mainstream graduation — join a club!

Clubs are the **heart** of square dancing and each club may offer additional opportunities for activities in addition to square dancing. Clubs need **volunteers** to keep the club running, and by **joining a club**, you'll learn about the various ways you can **contribute**! You can join multiple clubs if you'd like to.

## **Bars & Dangles**

Clubs have special name badges identifying the club and your name. You can earn and collect **dangles** that can be hung from the badge for special events, attending ten dances at ten different clubs (this is called the **Round Tuit**), being an angel, club anniversaries, and more — wear them with pride!

## **Learning Resources**

 **Taminations:** Animated calls → [tamtwirlers.org/taminations](http://tamtwirlers.org/taminations)

 **YouTube Lessons:** Watch and practice steps at home → [videosquaredancelessons.com](http://videosquaredancelessons.com) with the Saddlebrook Squares

 **Mt. Baker Council Notes:** Monthly newsletter with events and updates. You will be mailed your copy.

 **Footnotes:** State magazine → [squaredance-wa.org/footnote.htm](http://squaredance-wa.org/footnote.htm)

## **Federation & Council**

The **Square & Folk Dance Federation of Washington** promotes dancing statewide, provides insurance, and hosts an annual festival.

Our **Mount Baker Council** includes 13 square dance clubs and 2 round dance clubs across six counties. It publishes monthly Council Notes and hosts Fall & Spring Council Dances. The primary function is to promote square and round dancing. Meetings are open to all and information can be found in your copy of the **Mount Baker Council Notes**, which you will begin to receive in the mail 6-8 weeks after starting lessons!

## Dancing Resources

**Mount Baker Council** - see all dances within our council using the calendar functionality.  
Look under “special events” for additional dance opportunities! → [www.sqdance.org](http://www.sqdance.org)

**Where’s the Dance:** Find dances ALL OVER → [wheresthedance.com](http://wheresthedance.com)

## Emergency Call for Medical Aid

If a dancer goes down:

- 1 One person attends to them.
- 2 Others join hands and step back.
- 3 Raise hands high to signal the caller.
- 4 Caller or monitor places the Emergency Call.