

Contra dance, intro lesson

(no food or drinks in hall)

----- Part 1 -----

Contra lines

gents stage left
ladies stage right

"Same-sex partners are increasingly common in contra dancing, by preference or to accommodate different numbers of men and women attending; 'gent' and 'lady' refer to roles, rather than sexes."

Orientation

top/bottom of hall
inside/outside lines

Hands four

spacing, arms relaxed top
#1s and #2s M F #1 active
(proper formation) M F #2 inactive

Actives cross

spacing, arms relaxed top
(improper formation) F M #1 active
 M F #2 inactive

Still hands four, firm but yielding weight

"To give weight lean slightly away from your partner and maintain a distinct resistance in your arm, hand and fingers; don't squeeze, but don't let your arms go limp or fully extended, either."

"Weight is also known as spring, springiness, or tension."

Note location where everyone is standing

2 beats to move one spot

Circle left one time around, taking 8 beats with graceful steps

(count: one Two, three Four, five Six, seven EIGHT)

give/take weight

Circle right one time around, taking 8 beats with metered gait

(count: one Two, three Four, five Six, seven EIGHT)

Circle left 3/4, taking "how many beats?" = 6 beats

(count: one Two, three Four, five SIX)

Circle right 1/2, taking "how many beats?" = 4 beats

(count: one Two, three FOUR)

Circle left 3/4, taking "how many beats?" = 6 beats

(count: one Two, three Four, five SIX)

[should be back home]

Note: a contra dance is typically 64 counts, then repeats

Neighbor, left allemande once around, taking 8 beats, weight, eye contact

begin and end at home place

Neighbor, right allemande once around, taking 8 beats, weight, eye contact

Neighbor, Do-Si-Do (pass right shoulders, return home passing left, can twirl)

Partner (across the set), Do-Si-Do

avoid: arms in front, hands holding elbows

All four, right-hand star once around,

* New England style, sometimes called wrist-grip stars or wagon-wheel stars
taking "how many beats to return home?" = 8 beats

All four, left-hand star 1-1/4 around, taking "how many beats?" = 10 beats

top
#1#2

You are now on the side with your partner, with neighbors across the set

M F
F M

----- Part 2 -----

Ladies chain to your neighbor, with courtesy turn
ladies take R hands across set, pull by the R,
gents slide into your partner's place
give gents L hand, lady put R hand on lower back,
gents take ladies R hand,
trade places by ladies walking 1/2 around while gents walk backwards

Ladies chain home to your partner, with courtesy turn

(repeat Ladies chain)

Pass through, with courtesy turn
right hands across pull by
courtesy turn

Pass through, with courtesy turn, back

(repeat pass through)

Balance partner
right in together, left out together

(repeat balance a few times)

Swing partner
right foot forward
gallop L-R-. L-R-. L-R-. L-R-.
gallop toward partner, hook right arms and gallop around each other
Now with right foot on outside of partner's foot
take ballroom hold and do same gallop motion together (count to synchronize)
End swing facing in with the lady on the gent's R

Partner, Balance and Swing

Gypsy and Swing
gypsy is do-si-do with the eyes (no hands)
melt down into a swing

Circle left 3/4 taking 6 beats
end facing up and down the hall

Pass through neighbors up and down the set to meet new neighbors
You have progressed!

If extra time remains:

Hey for four
The ladies begin passing right shoulders in the center
Partners pass left shoulders as the gents advance to the center, ladies turn to left
The gents then pass right shoulders in the center,
Neighbors pass left shoulders
(that was half)
repeat

Reference:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contra_dance_choreography

Basic figures for singles and pairs

Allemande

Balance

Butterfly Whirl

Courtesy Turn

Do-Si-Do

Gypsy

Promenade

- * Courtesy turn position

- * Skaters' promenade

The gent may choose to spin the lady under his arm at the end as a flourish.

Roll Away with a Half Sashay

Sashay

Swing

Turn Alone

Turn as a Couple

Twirl to Swap

- * California Twirl

- * Box the Gnat

- * Star Through

- * Swat the Flea

Basic figures for four or more

Star

- * New England style, sometimes called wrist-grip stars or wagon-wheel stars

- * Southern style, sometimes called handshake-grip stars, English-style, or hands-across star

Ladies Chain

Long Lines Forward & Back

Right & Left Through

Petronella Turn

Hey For Four

- * The ladies begin passing right shoulders in the center

- * Partners pass left shoulders as the gents advance to the center

- * The gents then pass right shoulders in the center,

- * Neighbors pass left shoulders

- * repeat

Half Hey

Figure Eight

Circle Left (or) Circle Right

Down the Hall Four In Line

Pass Through

Cross Trail

Advanced and rare figures

Turn Contra-Corners

Right Hand High, Left Hand Low

Dixie Twirl

See Saw (left shoulder do-si-do)

Make a Basket

Mad Robin (Sashay Round)

Swinging star

Cozy Line (Turn Cozy)

Clover-leaf