

AACTMAD: Dance Courtesy

AACTMAD wants a welcoming atmosphere for everyone. Everyone has more fun when we all follow these norms of etiquette:

- 1) Anyone can ask anyone to dance, and everyone has the right to say yes or no. It is not usually courteous to refuse one partner and accept another, unless more dancers are needed. However, you may refuse partners who have given you reason to avoid them.
- 2) If you are experienced, dance regularly with beginners and those who need help. Avoid moves that are fun for experienced dancers but can confuse or distress beginners—flourishes and twirls, fast swings, or role-switching in the middle of a dance. Whether you are interacting with a new or an experienced dancer, do not impose flourishes the other person doesn't want, and be careful not to hurt anyone. Do not squeeze others' hands when passing through, or pull on their shoulders. **The well-being of the dancer who is less experienced, physically challenged, or simply less energetic always takes priority.** But not all older dancers like to be sedate—when in doubt, ask!
- 3) Dancing can be a form of flirtation, but do not make others uncomfortable. Sexual advances do not belong at the dance. Keep your hands away from sexual areas, and if you touch someone accidentally, apologize.
- 4) If you are a new dancer, look for experienced partners! We usually change partners for each dance.
- 5) If people have been sitting out for a dance, ask them for the next.
- 6) Listen to the caller or teacher and let him or her be heard. Be helpful to other dancers, but try to avoid being bossy or patronizing to them, or taking over from the person teaching. If you are sitting out, avoid making noise that could interfere with musicians or callers.
- 7) In a longways dance, join at the bottom. But allow new dancers to start at the top so that they don't have to change roles too soon.
- 8) Be generous about other dancers' mistakes.
- 9) If you bump into someone or step on a foot, apologize (even if it wasn't your fault).
- 10) Be tolerant. For example, some men are comfortable having other men as partners, some aren't.
- 11) Thank your partner at the conclusion of the dance.
- 12) **If another dancer does something that is physically uncomfortable for you or if someone touches you inappropriately, please, tell them so (e.g. "please don't squeeze my hand!").** You may also speak to one of the leaders at the event, if possible. AACTMAD also has an email address, saferspaces@aactmad.org, where you can report any problems. AACTMAD will intervene in accordance with its policy for safe and fun dancing.