

When and Where...

Dances are held every Monday night from 8 to 11 pm at the Laurel Theater (1538 Laurel Ave). The caller will teach a beginner's workshop at 7:30 pm.

Beginners are welcome; no experience or partner required. Admission is \$7 (\$3 for students) at the door. If you come in after the break, please pay \$3.

Who We Are

We are **Knoxville Country Dancers** (KCD). KCD is an affiliate of **Jubilee Community Arts** (www.jubileearts.org), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the traditional arts of the region. Please support Jubilee by becoming a member and attending other events in the Laurel Theater.

Family Policies

Dances are **non-drinking and non-smoking** events and include dancers of all ages. Currently we have no formal childcare. Older children are welcome to dance, but for the safety of all, children in the Laurel Theater must act appropriately and parents must account for their children.

Join the fun!

KCD is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization. We always need help setting up and cleaning up. Be a sport and **do your part!** You can also help the Board of Directors, which handles the business end of all this good clean fun.

For more information and a schedule of events, please visit www.knoxvillecontradance.org. Scroll down our website, or go to www.contradance.org/html/what_is.php for a great video introduction to contra dance.

Join **Knoxville Contra Dancers** and **Knoxville Contra Dance Gypsies**, our groups on Facebook!

Thanks to the Atlanta community www.contradance.org for these tips. And **thank you** for coming to our dance!

Welcome to Knoxville Contra Dance!

We welcome you to the best-kept secret in town: **live music** and high-energy dancing in a clean, safe environment. Contra dancing is **fun, easy to learn**, accessible to all ages, doesn't require you to bring a partner, and is great exercise!



We've assembled a few "pieces of 8" to help you master the basics and get the most out of your time. We're glad you're here and hope you'll enjoy yourself as much as we do.

The Basic 8

1. Contra dancing is a **group activity** as well as a partner dance. Over the course of a dance, you may interact with your "partner," your "neighbor," your "shadow," and everyone else in the set.
2. **Single dancers and first-timers** are welcome. You need not bring your own dance partner. In fact, the fastest and easiest way to learn contra is to dance with more experienced people.
3. Each **dance couple** is composed of a "Lady" and a "Gent" and the dance normally starts with the "lady" on the right. That said, same-gender dance couples are not uncommon, especially during an evening when the genders are unevenly represented. In such cases, the couple decides between them who will dance which role. Female "gents" may put on a tie to indicate the role they are dancing.
4. **Anyone may ask** anyone else to dance. Women can ask men.
5. All dances are completely explained and "**walked through**" by the caller before they are danced.
6. It is customary to **change partners** for each dance.
7. When you are dancing alone, feel free to skip and hop as much as you want. When you are with a partner though, please help them **glide** by using a **smooth walking step** in time with the music.
8. If you make a mistake or miss a figure, no worries! **Relax, have fun** and remember: it's only a dance!

8 Tips on Technique

The 8 techniques below explain how to manage your movements and quickly transform yourself into an **advanced dancer**. The most important tip is to listen, learn, and let your body flow with the rhythm of the dance.

1. **Hands Four:** As a line is forming, begin “Hands Four” (two couples join hands) at the top of the hall and continue down the line until all couples are paired. Couple #1 faces *down the hall*, toward the curtains, and couple #2 faces *up the hall*, toward the stained glass.
2. **Eye Contact:** Make eye contact with the person with whom you are dancing while executing a figure. This does **NOT** signal a proposition. It is simply meant to acknowledge their presence and, more importantly, to reduce dizziness during turns (swings, gypsies, allemandes). If eye contact discomforts you, look at their ear or forehead instead – anywhere but at the floor or the walls. Watching the walls or floor while turning is guaranteed to make you dizzy.
3. **Give Weight:** Picture the gentle tension you use when helping a seated person stand up. In contra, this gentle tension is called “giving weight” and provides the energy used in a swing, allemande, ladies chain, petronella twirl, and other moves. While giving weight helps propel both dancers through a figure, being “noodle armed” makes both people have to work harder to maintain their balance and energy.
4. **Swing:** Square your shoulders parallel with your partner, hold your arms firm but not rigid, and give weight so that you and your partner can move as one. Don’t squeeze their hand too tightly. Though you and your partner may choose to swing vigorously, always maintain balance and control of your own space while respecting the space of other dancers around you.
5. **Twirling:** “Twirling the lady” is a popular embellishment. Leading the lady into a twirl **should be done as a gentle suggestion only** -- it is the lady’s prerogative to follow the lead or override it. Note: “Cranking” your partner’s arm *will* risk injury to her shoulder.
6. **Timing:** Each musical phrase takes **8 beats**; counting the beats (to yourself) can help you stay on time as you go from figure to figure. All dances are designed and timed so that each figure should work with the musical beat to flow seamlessly from one pattern to the next.

7. **Recovery:** If you lose your place and all else fails, wait for the inevitable partner swing, find your partner, and pick up from there.
8. **Graceful Exit:** If you must drop out mid-dance (this is rare), please try to hang on until you are out at the top or bottom of the set. From there, you can usually leave the dance without disrupting the other dancers in the line.

8 Points of Etiquette

1. **Be sensitive** to the safety of your fellow dancers. Never force a lady to twirl; jerk a partner’s hand, arm or shoulder; apply excessive force; squeeze with an inescapable grip; or push a dancer beyond his or her comfort level. Stomping, large steps, or out-flung arms can hurt others. Not only will this spoil the fun, it may also risk serious injury.
2. If you and your partner are both newcomers, split up and **seek out experienced dancers**, especially for the first few dances. You will learn faster and be better partners when you come back together.
3. When the caller is teaching, silence should prevail. **Pay attention**, take “hands four” promptly, follow the instructions, and be patient while others learn.
4. Smiling, eye contact and innocent flirtation are part of the fun, but predatory or intimidating behavior is not allowed. Use common sense, discretion, and **respect others’ personal space**.
5. A delicate reminder: Dancing generates heat and keeping **clean and dry** can sometimes be a challenge. As a courtesy to all, consider packing a hand towel, fresh shirts, breath mints, and, possibly, deodorant. If you use fragrances, please do so sparingly.
6. Protect our (rented) floor. Wear shoes with **clean, soft soles**.
7. **Dress comfortably**; beyond proper shoes, there is no dress code. Most women prefer to wear dresses or skirts. Dress in layers that you can remove if you get hot. Avoid things like big belt buckles and large rings that might scratch others.
8. Make it a practice to **thank** guests for coming, instructors for teaching, callers for calling, bands for playing, partners for dancing, and everyone else who made your evening a pleasant one.