



Larrys Corner

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This is called Larrys Corner because when I teach I stand in the corner so I can see everyone.

If you want to read dance stories they are under Headlines or Larrys Corner.

[Http://www.comedancewithus.com](http://www.comedancewithus.com)
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Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters. If you have anything you would like to write about, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry. I enjoy writing something for you.

Come Dance With Us

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Country Western Dance floor etiquette

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The dance floor is divided into concentric lanes. The outside lane is the FAST lane.

Traffic moves around the dance floor in a counter-clockwise direction.

If you are going slow, stay in an inner lane and let people pass you on the outside. The closer you go to the center, the slower you may go.

If you are doing a stationary dance such as a line dance or swing dance instead of a progressive dance, you should dance in the center area of the floor.

Line dancers should never line up out to the rail and block progressive dancers. This gives line dancing a bad reputation. Even if the DJ called a cha-cha or an electric slide, somebody else might want to do a two-step.

If there are just a few popular line dances done where the floor gets filled up, it is probably better for the progressive dancers to let the line dancers have the floor.

Line dancers should also be aware of those around them and aware that progressive dancers may be coming around the edge of the floor. The faster the song, the smaller the steps! In other words, be careful not to kick someone in the head, step on someone's foot so they can't dance next weekend, or trip someone who is spinning so fast in the fast lane that she doesn't see your fancy legwork sticking out there!

A hardwood dance floor should be treated with care. Drinks and cigarettes should never be brought onto the dance floor. When you spill liquid on a hardwood floor, it leaves a dangerous wet spot. Even when it dries, this spot is pretty much ruined for the dancers the rest of the night because it becomes "tacky" and they cannot slide across it.

It's not cool to stand on the dance floor to socialize. Most poor dancers stand around inside the rail. This is the FAST lane on a country-western dance floor. You are likely to entice a big calf roper into scraping you off this rail with his forearm. Look out, those guys work fast! (3.8 seconds at the National Finals Rodeo!) That's not much time to find yourself on the floor roped, tied, and bawling for your mama!

Be nice to your fellow dancers and try not to bump into people. Nothing looks worse than great dancers bumping into other people because they really should know better! Since the man is leading, it is his job to keep an eye out for traffic. If you do cause a wreck, smile and look apologetic. You will usually get a smile in return.

If you are a beginning dancer, remember that everyone out there has probably experienced that same sweaty palm, stiff as a board, first time

around the floor feeling. It will pass if you can get past the urge to argue with your partner about who blew it. If someone makes a mistake, the best thing is to just smile and keep going! Everyone came to have fun. Hopefully, the experts at your club will be kind enough to give beginners the right of way. It may be fun to watch the experts, but it is just as much or more fun to watch the beginners! It's even kind of fun to watch old married couples argue.

I've also heard single ladies talking about how hard it is to get asked to dance. My advice is to try standing near the opening to the dance floor, smile, tap your foot, look around behind you, and get a look on your face that you really need to dance to this song. Dance with the first person who asks. Once you get out there a couple of times with different partners, the available dance partners know you won't turn them down.

I don't mean to offend anyone, but it is my opinion that if you want to look western, you should not take country-western dance lessons from a ballroom instructor unless they have a real clear idea of the differences. If you want to dance and dress ballroom, that's different. I have seen many fantastic ballroom dancers on a country-western dance floor. They sure paid their cover charge too and deserve to be there just as much as anyone else! But nothing looks funnier to me than a rhinestone cowboy doing hand and toe pointing moves like John Travolta in Saturday Night Fever. Ballroom and country-western both have their places, but I, personally, don't think the styles should be mixed up.

There is definitely a fork in the road on the way to learning how to country-western dance. Some people learn to do it for competition, and some people just do it for fun. So you have competition, or what I call country-ballroom dancers, and you have social country-western dancers, and they are two different things entirely! Competition dancers have lots of rules and social dancers just have lots of fun!

Just for fun, I'll try to describe some of the more noticeable styles of "western" wear too:

- **Country-Ballroom Style:** Matching outfits, fringe, rhinestone hatbands, white pants on men so they show up in spotlights, ladies always wear skirts and "dancing underpants." Sometimes seen changing into tennis shoes before leaving the club!
- **Western Style:** Outfits usually do NOT match, Texas starched Wranglers or Rockies jeans long enough to wear when riding horses, "stacked" over leather-soled boots, hats, big western belt buckles, men wear long-sleeved shirts, and ladies usually wear jeans and look like they can handle a horse or a cowboy.
- **Yuppie Style:** Short baggie Levi's, artificial snakeskin boots, ladies have purses.

Now don't take this cowboy outfit stuff too seriously. Cowboys don't all look alike. Cowboys pride themselves on their individuality. The shape of their hat is as unique as their personality. A cowboy may take years to settle in on a hat shape, but once he does, you can recognize him from a distance just by his silhouette. Here's an important tip that isn't just for the dance floor: **NEVER touch a cowboy's hat without first asking permission.**

Is more spinning better? No. Most ladies don't like constant spinning give them a break and add other things. Ladies try to keep your center of gravity and Man tries to keep his hand directly over Ladies head during spins.

LEARNING TO DANCE

Can I learn to dance?

Yes, anyone can learn to dance. If you can walk and keep your balance, you can learn to dance.

How long will it take?

You will start dancing from your very first lesson. To complete a course, it usually takes 4 to 12 lessons depending on how many hours per lesson.

How much will each lesson cost?

Group lessons cost between S\$60 to S\$100 per course, depending on the level of the dance and the reputation of the teacher. Private lessons cost S\$40 to S\$80 per hour.

Do I have to relearn my steps often?

Frequent practice is recommended if you want to remain polished in your dancing. However, once you have learned the basic steps in a dance, you can easily pick up the new variations, sometimes by just observing how other people do them.

Can I learn at a time convenient to me?

Most dance schools run classes in the evening from Monday to Sunday. Afternoon classes are also available but only if there are sufficient students to form a class. Individual classes can be scheduled anytime.

What is the best way to learn?

If you are new, you should take group lessons, which will introduce you to more dance enthusiasts and let you have a rotation of partners. You should also practice your steps frequently, say every week, at a Dance hall. Individual lessons are recommended when you want to focus on specific problems or to learn proper technique and styling.

DANCE SHOES

	Man	Lady
Rock 'n' Roll	flat	flat
Latin	1.5" heel	2.5" heel
Ballroom	1" heel	2" heel

What to Wear?

Protocol:

Dancing has its own culture. If you want to join a group of dancers and enjoy their company, it is a good idea to follow the accepted costumes of their dance group. One of the ways you get accepted into a group is by the way you're dressed.

How formally should we dress at a dance? The general rule is this: the more formal the dance, the more formal the outfit. For example, if you are invited to a formal charity ball, anything less than a tuxedo for men or ball gown for women would be inappropriate. On the other hand, at a dance lesson at

your local studio, there is usually no need to dress formally.

A little common sense goes a long way. Also, if in doubt, follow the crowd! See what others do and follow suit. If all else fails, you can always ask the dance organizers about the dress code.

Below I give a guideline and explanation for dress code, which you may see on invitations and announcements, as well as a general idea of what to wear at different dance venues.

- **White tie:** White tie is the most formal category of dressing. For the gentleman, it means a black tailcoat with matching trousers trimmed by ribbon of braid or satin on the outside of each trouser leg, a white pique' tie, white pique' single or double-breasted vest, and a wing-collar shirt with a stiff pique' front. White gloves are nice optional accessories for gentlemen. The lady appears in a ball gown, which is an evening dress with a full skirt, possibly with open back and low neck line. Elbow-length gloves are a nice addition for the lady.
- **Black tie:** Gentlemen in black tuxedo coat, trousers trimmed with satin ribbon along the outside of the legs, cummerbund and bow tie. The phrase ``black tie'' does not refer to the color of the tie. In fact colorful ties (with matching cummerbunds) are very popular. Ladies appear in ball gowns.
- **Black tie optional:** Same as above, except gentlemen have the option of wearing a regular suit with a tie (bow tie preferred), and ladies wear a cocktail gown or dinner dress. Long to full-length skirts are preferred; short skirts are not recommended.
- **Formal:** Gentlemen in suit and tie (nowadays a sport coat is often an acceptable replacement for a full suit), ladies in cocktail gown or evening dress.
- **Semi-formal:** Applies to most dances at studios, universities, and dance halls. Gentlemen in dress slacks with dress shirt and tie, jacket is optional. Other options include a vest or a sweater that shows the tie. At the lower end of formality, these events can be attended without a tie, e.g. with a turtleneck and jacket. Ladies in evening dress or dinner dress, but other chic outfits are also acceptable (like flowing pants, etc.)
- **Informal:** Applies to practice dances, workshops, and dance lessons. Dress for comfort, but stay away from shorts, tank tops, and sneakers. Gentlemen can wear solid color T-shirts, turtlenecks, mock turtlenecks, and cotton slacks. Ladies have a much wider set of clothing options. Use your imagination and sense of fashion. Don't forget your dance shoes!
- **Country/Western:** Country western attire varies according to different regions, but generally it is acceptable to go in blue or black jeans (not stone-washed) and cowboy boots. Make sure that the boots will not mark the dance floor. If you wear a hat, it is best to take it off when going on the floor. Note that country western folks can be very sensitive about their hats. It is improper to touch or otherwise handle someone's hat, even if it sits on a table. For a lady to pick up and put on a gentleman's hat is considered very flirtatious.
- **Milongas:** (Argentine Tango) For both ladies and gentlemen, black or dark themes are preferred.
- **Latin:** This refers to venues that specialize in Salsa, Merengue, Cumbia, etc. For gentlemen, any button-up shirt, solid T-shirt or mock turtleneck, dress slacks, and dance shoes. Jackets are nice, but a vest can be even more stylish. Unlike most other dance venues, bright and colorful outfits for gentlemen are acceptable, although dark themes are more common. Ladies can (and often do) wear sexy outfits: both short skirts and longer slit skirts are popular. Low necklines and exposed midriffs are not uncommon.
- **Swing:** There are no strict rules for swing outfits. Both the Gentleman and the Lady wear outfits that are reasonably neat and chic, although often not very formal. Many types of swing are fast-paced and athletic, so wearing suitable clothing is essential. For example, the Lady would be well advised to stay away from short, tight skirts. See also the next section on Comfort and Safety. A cute trend, especially in Lindy Hop circles, is to wear vintage outfits from the 1930's and 40's. But this is not done everywhere and is not at all a requirement.