

WINTER FOR SENIORS

“Hand over hand and heel over heel, the faster you go, the better you feel.”

SQUARE DANCING - AN EXTREME SENIORS' SPORT



Joanne Fontana

Did you know that the safest extreme sport for seniors is taught in Mississauga?

Forget about sky diving, or catapult surfing, or bungee jumping from a helicopter.

And, while you can practice parkour almost anywhere in Mississauga, just try to keep up with the enthusiasm and energy at the Mississauga Seniors Centre.

If you've lived more than 60 years and you have an exuberance for life, you might consider joining their square dancing lessons.

Four couples (8 dancers) take various forms of traditional folk dancing, and whip up a sashay storm.

Actually, it's really not that difficult.

Various Dance Steps

American (Western) square dancing is the most popular form with 19 US states where Square Dancing is their official dance.

A Caller who cues all dancers into several sequences of steps. Most calls are between 4 and 32 counts.

► On example is the Allemande Left call – each dancer takes the left hand of the other dancer and, walking around the centre, steps through the centre axis.

► You can Circle Left or Circle Right by joining hands to form a circle, face slightly left or right, and move forward in a circle as directed. When left or right is not specified, left is the default.

► Forward and Back – each dancer takes three steps forward and pauses while bringing the free foot forward and touching it to the floor without transferring weight.

Then, each takes three steps back beginning with the free foot and pauses while touching the free foot beside the weight-bearing foot.

The Dosado Step

► The Dosado – dancers advance and pass right shoulders. Without turning, each moves right, passing in back of the other. Then moving backwards, each passes left shoulders returning to the starting position.



► The Swing – dancers step forward, ending right side to right side, and move around each other, turning clockwise four or more counts.

To end the swing, the lady continues turning right until facing the same direction as the man, to form a couple.

► A Couples Promenade – the couple walks forward around the circle counterclockwise until reaching the man's home position.

At the end of the promenade the couple turns, as a unit, to face the center of the set.

If promenading to the man's home position, the couple always goes at least one quarter around the square.

If need be, they continue past the man's home position for another full time around.

► The Single File Promenade – dancers move forward in single file counterclockwise or clockwise around the circle, as directed.

► The Left Arm Turn – dancers join left forearms and walk forward around each other.

► The Right Arm Turn – dancers join right forearms and walk forward around each other.

► There is also the Right & Left Grand, the Weave The Ring, Wrong Way Grand, Left Hand Star, Right Hand Star, and the Star Promenade.

► Positions include Partner, Corner, Head, Sides, Centers and Ends.

There is no set standard for square dancing. Every Caller has their own individual dance pose and movements with the hand or arm positions.

The fiddle is the most common instrument used in square dancing and the piano provides chording to encourage rhythm. Square dance clubs use popular country and western songs from the 1930s to the 1950s.

The Mississauga Seniors Centre, located at 1389 Cawthra Road, provides lessons. Register now to start a your session in January: (905) 615-4810.

Joanne Fontana is a Mississauga resident who has taken an interest in writing.

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In the newspaper version, the one you hold in your hands, we are very limited in our space. Once it's full, we have no more room for anything else.

However, we provide much more fun on the website because there's lots of space. You will find:

- Each page of the newspaper in a PDF format.
- PDFs about many other fun events that couldn't fit into the newspaper.
- Archives of features about fun events going all the

way back to January, 2009, our first edition.

► At the bottom of the home page, you will also find links to dozens of puzzles, fun websites that help you learn about all kinds of topics, and we're starting a link that will offer photographs and artwork from people who wish to contribute.

► Additionally, we intend to provide lots of short and entertaining videos to tickle your interest.

Finally, if you love designing websites, you might consider joining us. We are starting to form a team of volunteers to make our site a truly impressive one.

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