

ASK THE CALLER



“What is the correct way to hold your hands when dancing Swing thru?”

This question is not asked enough, and as we get older it becomes more & more important that ALL dancers take very seriously just how THEY are dancing when it comes to this particular issue! I'm personally aware of two dancers who had to stop dancing permanently due to injuries received as a result of being hurt in this manner during a dance! **So please take care!**

How many times have you been in an Ocean Wave (or other formation) & you find your hand is being 'held' firmly (roughly) by another (ready to arm wrestle)? The call is "Swing Thru" and someone starts going in the wrong direction...and because you're being firmly held... fingers, a wrist, a shoulder... something gets wrenched... someone gets hurt!!

So let's look at the 'total picture' of not Hand **HOLDS** but **Hand CONTACT**, there's a huge difference!

For those dancing the Basic, Mainstream or Plus, you use the "hands-up" position in Ocean Waves. Unfortunately, this is where the majority of the problem occurs.

In an Ocean Wave, you will be most comfortable with your hands up, palm to palm, with the dancers on each side. The palm to palm contact is most comfortable if the palms are turned or angled clockwise

slightly - but, in doing this, the contact should **not become a grip or a hold** – just a **light pressure contact!**

YES, 'palm to palm' contact with **NO GRIPS!** Just maintain slight pressure towards each other but **do not** close your hand over the other, or lock your thumbs!

Swing Thru from Ocean Waves is not the only movement from which, with incorrect hand contact, injuries can result. "Death grips" (eg: R&L Thru or R&L Grand); two-handed arm turns; California Twirls; Left/Right Stars; Allemande Thars; and many more movements which, with incorrect "hand contact", can result in potential injury to another dancer.

However, it is important to ALWAYS make hand contact with the person you are dancing beside. Making the contact is not optional – **how** you do it, **is**. As soon as you're standing beside another dancer, male or female, hand contact is mandatory in order that you "confirm" that "*right now, I'm your partner*". Yes, take Hands but always remember, it's hand contact, a gentle hand hold, just a small amount of pressure that says "*I'm here*".

Note: In some areas of the USA & Canada, when dancing Basic, Mainstream or Plus you may encounter the Ocean Wave hand position as 'hands-down' at waist-high level. Should you be visiting another area & encounter that variation, then "when in Rome...."

As well, the 'hands-down' position is used most often in the Advanced & Challenge programs both here & elsewhere. .

Written by Geoff Clarke - Jan 11, 2016 -