

Social Dancing: Do's and Don'ts

Courtesy may seem to be an old-fashioned idea in Modern Ballroom Dancing, however politeness and consideration for others is timeless and always appreciated. Here are a few broad guidelines which if followed, will contribute much to the enjoyment of your dancing and to that of your partners.

Approaching a new Dance Partner

It is quite normal and encouraged to dance with different partners, this helps you to build confidence, learn new steps and techniques and make friends! However it is common courtesy to dance at least the first and last dance with the partner with whom you arrived.

Before approaching a new partner to dance, it is wise to observe them dancing first with someone else and take note of their level of experience so that you won't cause embarrassment by attempting some advanced steps that they may not yet have learned. Start with the basics and build up gradually. If your partner finds something difficult, smile and encourage them to try the step with you again or revert back to the basic steps with which they are more comfortable. Do not try to show off, no one least of all a new partner, will appreciate it.

If you visit a dance event without a partner, avoid trying to monopolising one partner as they may already have a dance partner with them or want to approach others for a dance. If things work out, you can always make a date to visit again, as a dance couple.

Please note it takes a lot of courage for a man to ask a lady to dance with them (and vice versa). If you do receive an invitation to dance, you should be flattered and agree to dance if you want to. If you are a little shy, or a beginner, it is OK to let your partner know. Your partner will appreciate your modesty in confiding this to them.

Dance Floor Courtesy

When taking to the floor, it is important to be aware of others on the floor and give them plenty of space, especially if it's crowded. Since, in the ballroom dances, the man normally starts a dance facing the wall, it may seem natural for him to walk onto the floor backwards while his attention is focused on his partner. This however can create an irritating and unnecessary hazard for other dancers. It is far better to approach the floor and assess the flow of floor traffic before taking up your start position with due consideration for other dancers.

Avoid dancing moves which take up a lot of space if there is not the room to dance them. If you keep on bumping into other dancers, it's time to cool it. In any case, it is much nicer to dance close to your partner when the floor is full - and is a great opportunity for conversation. When the dance is finished, thank your partner and leave him or her the option of dancing the next dance with you if they so wish. It should not be an automatic assumption. If you are leaving the floor, the man should escort his partner at least to the edge of the floor if not back to her seat. When

leaving the floor, especially during the course of a dance, the same consideration should be shown. If you are finishing before the music has ended in a travelling dance, you should dance to the edge of the floor, and leave the floor at that point.

Risks & Hazards

Under no circumstances should drinks be taken onto the floor or carried over the dance floor. Fluids and broken glass pose a genuine hazard and may cause injury. If you have to pass the floor on the way from the bar, wait until the dance has finished.

Remember that a little consideration can go a long way and is always welcome.