

When and Where...

The CCD gathers most Friday evenings throughout the year in midtown Atlanta at the **Morningside Baptist Church** gym, 1700 Piedmont Ave at Montgomery Ferry.

The Friday night dance normally runs from **8 pm till 11**. An introductory class is offered at 7:30. Newcomers, those bringing newcomers, and volunteer helpers are all invited. Price at the door is \$7. Dancers under 16 pay \$3. Non-dancers under 16 are free.

Bi-weekly Tuesdays dances, a weekend festival, and other special events also dot the CCD schedule. To plug in, check www.contradance.org and join the ChattahoocheeCountryDancers YahooGroup email community.

Family Policies

Dances are **non-drinking and nonsmoking** 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 dance hall must act appropriately and parents must account for their children.

Join the fun!

The CCD 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 Steering Committee, which diligently produces a year's worth of dances. Your energy and talents will be appreciated and you'll earn some friends in the process. The monthly meeting schedule is announced at the dances, posted on the web, and is open to all.

Dance around the World!

You can find contra dancing across the country and around the globe. Numerous dance communities including the CCD host dances and festivals throughout the year, providing wholesome recreation, affordably priced, and drawing guests from far and wide. For recommendations, search the web, check the announcement table, and ask your fellow dancers. "Hands four," we'll **see you on the floor!**



Welcome to Contra Dancing!

The **Chattahoochee Country Dancers** welcome you to the best-kept secret in town: live music, live caller, and lively, high-spirited dancing in a safe clean environment. Contra dancing is a traditional folk dance that is easy to learn, accessible to all ages, great exercise, and lots of fun.



We've assembled a few "pieces of 8" to help you quickly master the basics and get the most out of your time. For more information and a schedule of events, please visit www.contradance.org. We're glad you're here and hope you 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 single dance, dancers interact not just with their own partners but with everyone else in the set.
2. **Single dancers** and first-timers are welcome. You need not bring your own dance partner. The best way to learn is to dance with more experienced dancers.
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-sex dance partners are not uncommon, especially when the genders are unevenly represented. In such cases, one of the two partners must assume the role of the opposite gender.
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. Unlike elementary school where we skipped and hopped, contra dancing uses a simple, **smooth walking step** in time with the music.
8. If you make a mistake or miss a figure, don't worry about it. Relax, **have fun** and enjoy the dance!

8 Tips on Technique

Contra dance incorporates various figures, the Balance & Swing, Do-Si-Do, Promenade and several others, each of which will be taught as needed in a walk-through preceding each dance. The 8 techniques below tell how to manage your movements and quickly transform you into a seasoned dancer. Listen, learn, and let your body flow with the rhythm of the dance.

1. **Hands four:** Most dances begin with "hands four," meaning four people, i.e. two couples, join hands. Couple #1 faces down the hall, away from the music, while couple #2 faces up the hall. It begins at the head of the line and continues down until all couples are paired.
2. **Eye contact:** Whenever executing a figure, make eye contact with the person with whom you are dancing. This does not signal a proposition but merely acknowledges a connection with your fellow dancers. It also enhances balance and reduces dizziness during swinging. If eye contact discomforts you, you may offset your gaze.
3. **Give Weight:** Imagine how you help a sitting person to their feet, or how, as children, you would lock elbows and swing each other around. This is what is meant by giving weight. It is the physical connection between dancers, whether in a swing, balance, courtesy turn, etc. where each counterbalances their own weight with that of fellow dancers to propel one another through the figures. It enhances grace, fluidity, and continuity throughout the dance.
4. **Swing:** Square your shoulders parallel with your partner and hold your arms firm but not rigid. When swinging, give weight so that you and your partner move as one. Don't squeeze too tightly or bend your partner's wrists. Though you and your partner may choose to swing vigorously, always maintain balance, control your space, and respect the spatial needs of the other dancers.
5. **Twirling:** "Twirling the lady" is a popular embellishment. Though the gent typically leads the lady into a twirl, it is the lady's prerogative to follow the lead or override it.
6. **Timing:** Dance each figure within its musical phrase. All dances are designed and timed so that each figure flows 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 till you reach the end of the line. From there, you can usually step out without disrupting the other dancers in the line.

8 Points on Etiquette

1. **Be sensitive** to the preferences of your fellow dancers. Never apply excessive force, squeeze with an inescapable grip, or push a fellow dancer beyond their comfort level. Not only will this spoil the fun, but it may also risk serious injury.
2. Experienced dancers are encouraged to initiate contact and **welcome newcomers**.
3. 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 have more fun when you come back together.
4. When the caller is teaching, silence should prevail. **Pay attention**, take "hands four" promptly, follow the instructions, and be patient while others learn.
5. Smiling, eye contact, and flirtation are part of the fun. However, take care not to read more into a gesture than is intended. Use common sense, discretion, and **respect others' personal space**.
6. A delicate reminder: Keeping **clean and dry** can be a challenge in the heat of the dance. As a courtesy to your fellow dancers, consider packing a hand towel, fresh shirts, breath mints, possibly deodorant, and, if you use fragrances, please do so sparingly.
7. Wear comfortable clothes and appropriate **clean soft-soled shoes**. If you observe men dancing in skirts, this unusual fashion merely signifies that twirling is simply more fun in a skirt, nothing more.
8. Make it a practice to **thank** guests for coming, instructors for teaching, program leaders for leading, bands for playing, and everyone who made your evening a pleasant one.

