



Teaching Tips for Basic and Mainstream

(Revised June 21, 2010)



Introduction:

The following information is the result of a 2002 CALLERLAB Convention interest session held in Richmond, VA on Mainstream Teaching Tips conducted by Tim Marriner and Andy Shore. It is suggested that teachers review the CALLERLAB definitions and Mainstream Standard Applications booklet before teaching a call. Teachers need to understand the call and not just “parrot” or read a definition to the dancers. The tips are not meant to replace the technical definitions. They are merely a tool to assist teachers with teaching the dance action in a simplified manner. Several follow up sessions have revised and updated the contents reflecting changes to the Program List. Calls are listed in the current suggested teach order. Thanks to all the contributors.

Teaching Tips – Basic Program Part A:

1. Circle Left / Right

- A.) Boy palms up, girl palms down.
- B.) Shuffle along to the beat.
- C.) Don't grip! The boys hand will act as a platform for the girls to rest her hand in.
- D.) Face slightly in the direction you are traveling.

2. Forward and Back

- A.) Remind dancers to retain hand holds with the ones beside them.
- B.) Ends can pat palms of their hands together.
- C.) Look at the dancers across from you.
- D.) A “Charleston” dance move; step forward touch, back touch.

3. Dosado / Dosado to a Wave

- A.) Keep facing the same wall through out the action.
- B.) Action ends right back where you started.
- C.) Both are moving around each other at the same time.
- D.) Dosado is actually a French term that means “back to back.”
- E.) From a squared set try, Head Girls Dosado, or Side Boys Dosado.
- F.) Only when called, step to a wave.

4. Swing

- A.) Get in a ballroom dance position, as if you were going to do a waltz.
- B.) Boys' left hand and girls' right hand form a pump handle.
- C.) Slide right hip to right hip and walk forward around each other.
- D.) Place the girl on the boys' right side, rolling off the arm after the swing.
- E.) Open up, like a book, toward the center of the set.
- F.) Demonstrate.

5. Promenade Family

- A.) Circle right, drop hands but keep walking this direction single file.
- B.) Boys step up along the inside of the girls in front walking side by side.
- C.) Shake right hands introduce each other; don't let go, join left hands underneath with boy palms up, girl palms down, fingertips pointing away from the body.
- D.) For Star Promenade have the boys Star Left, keep hold of the star and scoop up the Partner/Corner with an arm around for a Star Promenade. Don't let go of the star!
- E.) For Wrong Way Promenade, tell them to promenade the other direction.
- F.) From promenade position tell the boys to back up, wheel the girls around in front and all promenade this other direction. You don't know this is the Wrong Way but it is!

6. Allemande Left

- A.) Shake left hands; now slide up to the forearm, but that's all.
- B.) Join left forearms; - the other left!
- C.) Trade places with one on the arm, let go, and walk by passing left shoulders towards the Partner.
- D.) Don't grip or grab tight!
- E.) After turning, drop the arm hold before moving forward to avoid breaking something.

7. Arm Turns

- A.) Similar tips as Allemande Left.
- B.) Do research on old dance routines like Sally Goodin' and Arkansas Traveler for added variety.
- C.) This action has no definitive ending. Dancers continue to turn until the next call is given.

8. Right and Left Grand Family

- A.) Alternate hands and shoulders like you are climbing a ladder or a rope.
- B.) Get the dancers in the habit of counting as they go.
- C.) Don't forget to let go!
- D.) From a squared set, all face Partners, now in this direction move forward, alternating hand holds, starting with your right hand, until you meet the partner again.
- E.) Don't pull or yank hands.
- F.) Do a Right & Left Grand without hands weaving in and out by each other for Weave the Ring.
- G.) For Wrong Way Grand, set it up, and tell them to do a Right and Left Grand in this direction.

9. Left-Hand Star / Right-Hand Star

- A.) Single file promenade, now extend the left hand in the middle to touch palms.
- B.) Move forward.
- C.) The hand in the star should have fingers tips pointing up to the sky.
- D.) Turn around towards the center and star with the other hand the other way back.

10. Pass Thru

- A.) Right shoulders!
- B.) Once you pass them, stop.
- C.) Rejoin hands with someone beside you if present.
- D.) Don't keep walking. Once you have passed them you can't pass them any more.
- E.) After passing, adjust slightly to the right to end back to back with the one passed.

11. Half Sashay Family

- A.) Lady should turn towards the man, momentarily join both hands, and then must release her original hand hold in order to get to the other side of the man for Rollaway.
- B.) Man should step back slightly and then forward as the lady slides to his other side for Half Sashay.
- C.) For Half Sashay think of an American auto, passenger slides in front of driver while driver moves over behind passenger taking each others seat.
- D.) For Ladies In, Men Sashay, girl steps forward then veers backwards to get to the other side of the boy while the boy slides over to take the girls position.

12. Turn Back Family

- A.) Turn around towards your partner out of courtesy, unless flow dictates otherwise.
- B.) About face!
- C.) 180 degrees turn back in the same spot.
- D.) Turn to face the wall behind you.

13. Separate Around 1 or 2

- A.) From a squared set have heads/sides Pass Thru, separate around two, And Swing At Home.
- B.) Make sure they are counting the inactive dancers.
- C.) If you meet someone while you are dancing pass right shoulders.
- D.) If the inactive dancers need to slide apart be sure to slide back together like a sliding door.
- E.) Take hands to form lines if called.

14. Split Two

- A.) Action can be explained with directional English.
- B.) Step in between the two dancers, move past them, and wait for the next call.
- C.) Inactive dancers slide back together after they have been split apart.

15. Courtesy Turn

- A.) Join left hands boy palms up, girl palms down.
- B.) As a couple, left face wheel around to face in.
- C.) Girls' right hand is used as a target for the boys to reach for.
- D.) Do not grip hands.

16. Ladies Chain Family

- A.) Describe the action as exchanging the girls.
- B.) Get the girls to count the boys because the boys are just looking at the girls.
- C.) Have the boys slide right and slightly left face to be prepared to turn the girl.
- D.) For Chain Down the Line, the action can be described as a side ways chain and be sure to face the direction where she chained from as a couple after the Courtesy Turn.

17. Do Paso

- A.) Treat it like another Arm Turn routine with a Courtesy Turn at the end.
- B.) A similar tip as Arm Turns, however there is a definitive end to the action.
- C.) Many cue or prompt the action.

18. Lead Right

- A.) From a squared set have Heads/Sides Ladies Chain, Prom. $\frac{1}{2}$, and as a couple walk out to the right and stand in front of the others.
- B.) Ask the dancers to point to the couple on the right, move forward to stand in front of this couple to face.
- C.) Repeat action, only describe it as Leading over to the Right and stand in front of the other couple.
- D.) "Oh by the way, the lead right action we were doing is called ... Lead Right"
- E.) Action makes a $\frac{1}{4}$ wall change.

19. Veer Left / Veer Right

- A.) As a couple, slide over and forward.
- B.) Couples together don't let go of near hands.
- C.) No wall change.

20. Bend the Line

- A.) Each half of the line must turn $\frac{1}{4}$ to face.
- B.) Fold in the center like closing a book or a fence gate.
- C.) Must have hands joined to form a line before it can bend.
- D.) Take hold of new near hands quickly when finished to establish the new formation.
- E.) Centers always back up; ends always walk forward.
- F.) Action can be taught from Sicilian Circles. Promenade couples two by two then teach them to bend to face.
- G.) Action can be taught from a Squared Set, having couple #1 split #3, around one to form a line on one side of the square. Then have them bend in the middle to face.

21. Circulate Family

- A.) First time dancers are expected to know formations.
- B.) All are standing on magical spots, move forward to the next spot in front of you.
- C.) Look before you leap.
- D.) Work call from increasing degrees of difficulty: Single File, As Couples, Ends, Centers, from two faced lines then from Waves, lastly All 8.
- E.) If facing different directions all must let go first.
- F.) Move them to all positions and remind them not to think right/left but advance forward one spot in the formation.
- G.) Have the dancers visualize a race track, rail road track, or running track oval.
- H.) Action can be described as taking a walk around a city block.
- I.) Emphasize, "Circle-late" a forward action that can be done multiple times, bringing you back to the same starting point.

22. Right and Left Thru

- A.) Prepare the action by calling Right hand shake, Pass Thru, and Courtesy Turn.
- B.) Boys, you have to let the girl go as you walk past the other couple, then Courtesy Turn.
- C.) Right hand shakes, and left hand shakes, now turn the girl until you're thru!

23. Grand Square

- A.) Can have the heads only do the action, later just the sides, then all together.
- B.) Can have all do the action to start by explaining dancers either walk forward and turn or back up and turn except at the reverse point and end.
- C.) If you are close you must back up, if far away you must move forward.
- D.) Never turn your back on anyone, always turn in to face your partner or your opposite.
- E.) Shuffle your feet to the beat and take near hands whenever you can; it's a contact sport!
- F.) From a squared set have everyone point to their nearest side wall then to the opposite dancer.
This is the small square pattern you will trace when you dance the action.
- G.) From above, the pattern each dancer walks is a small square; together it's a Grand Square!
- H.) The action is a thirty-two beat figure, with thirty-two steps and turns; sixteen halfway.

24. Star Thru

- A.) Work with the one across from you.
- B.) Boys right hand, girls left.
- C.) Don't grip the hand; extended it forward with fingertips up, girls left hand touches and turns under left face.
- D.) Girl goes under the arched hands.

25. Circle to a Line

- A.) Show where the action will end beforehand, then, talk them through to the ending point.
- B.) Can teach California Twirl first for a better understanding of how the action finishes.
- C.) The dancers Circle Left half way first, then, finish the action.
- D.) After the Circle Left half way, the couple on the outside must veer left while the centers do a California Twirl type action out of the center.

26. Walk Around the Corner

- A.) Like a right arm turn without hands.
- B.) Have the dancers stand right shoulders together then move forward around each other.
- C.) Try and maintain eye contact until you pass.
- D.) Use right hand stars turning to simulate the action which is later done without hands.

27. See Saw

- A.) Like a left arm turn without hands.
- B.) Have dancers stand left shoulders together then move forward around each other.
- C.) Maintain eye contact until you pass.
- D.) Use left hand stars turning to simulate the action which is later done without hands.
- E.) When preceded with Walk Around the Corner, the actions combined seem like a figure eight.

28. Square Thru (1,2,3,4)/ Left Square Thru (1,2,3,4)

- A.) Alternate the hands through out the action.
- B.) Let go before you move through.
- C.) When turning for the next hand, turn towards the center of the box.
- D.) Establish the four points of the box and be sure to step to the point after each hand.
- E.) Always ends back to back; don't turn after the last pull-by.
- F.) Explain the action as walking around a city block or square building in the middle.
- G.) Use a chair or describe a square card table that the dancers are to move around the perimeter.
- H.) For Left Square Thru, just do the same thing but start with your left hand.

29. California Twirl

- A.) Don't grip the hands.
- B.) Boy turns right face, girl turns left face.
- C.) End looking at the wall that was behind you.
- D.) Boy raises near hand with partner, palm upward like a landing field position, moves forward around the girl while she rotates her fingers in the boys palm and twirls under the arched hands to face the wall behind; each dancer moves handhold back to normal dance position.

30. Dive Thru

- A.) Centers arch, move forward while the outsiders duck under.
- B.) Archers moving forward can let go.
- C.) Outside dancers "dive" into the swimming pool in the middle.
- D.) Couple #1 Lead Right, those who can Dive Thru six times, Lead Right, California Twirl; similar to the old "Dip and Dive" routine.

Teaching Tips – Basic Program Part B:

31. Wheel Around

- A.) As a couple; pivot left face to look at the wall behind you.
- B.) Action can be used while teaching couples Wrong Way Promenade.
- C.) Standard couple arrangement, without letting go of hands the boy backs up while the girl moves forward to face the opposite direction.
- D.) When designated couples do it, hands must be taken quickly to establish new formations.

32. Thar Family

- A.) Can use directional English to form a Thar, then, provide the name.
- B.) From a squared set, Turn Partner Left, boys hold on and form a right hand star in the middle.
- C.) Demonstrate or explain the "Pack Saddle" styling star for centers to assist with balance while backing up.
- D.) Good idea to explain what a forward direction is verses wrong way.

33. Shoot the Star /Shoot the Star Full Around

- A.) Just trade places with each other.
- B.) Action has a definitive start but an indefinite ending determined only by the following call.
- C.) If all have corners, the Shoot the Star action seems like an Allemande Left.
- D.) Explain how the action is a half turn unless the caller specifies a Full Turn Around.

34. Slip the Clutch

- A.) Many teach this action before Shoot the Star as an easy way to get out of Thars.
- B.) Centers must stop to meet the outsiders.
- C.) Drop near hands, maintain hand hold with center star and move forward to take hold of next dancer.
- D.) Can be done multiple times in a row or asked to keep moving forward until some other action is called.

35. Box the Gnat

- A.) Old "Jitter Bug" or "Swing" dance move that changes places with facing partner.
- B.) Girl turns left face 180 degrees, boy turns right face 180 degrees while passing right shoulders to exchange places under joined right hands.
- C.) Don't grip the hand; girl rotates fingertips in cup of boys palm like a ball in a socket.
- D.) Action ends with right hands in a normal hand shake position to face.
- E.) Starts nose to nose, ends toes to toes.

36. Trade Family

- A.) Designated dancers move forward to take the other dancers position ending in reverse facing direction.
- B.) Two types of trades, with or without hands held.
- C.) If facing the same direction, pass right shoulders as you go around each other.

37. Ocean Wave Family

- A.) Don't stand shoulder to shoulder, step back to see the wave.
- B.) Balance is like a "Charleston" dance move, forward touch and back touch.
- C.) Should be able to see the wave crest as it rises and falls with each balance.
- D.) Spread apart just a little while forming waves, square breathing, to allow more space within the formation.

38. Alamo Style

- A.) Adjust hands as in waves.
- B.) Step back to see the ring.
- C.) Same tips as Ocean Wave Family

39. Swing Thru/ Left Swing Thru

- A.) Prep with trades first, using right then left handed trades.
- B.) Trade with right hands first, then if you can with left hands.
- C.) If you are on the ends standing still, step in place to mark time.
- D.) Action can be first taught from an Alamo Ring.
- E.) Action always starts with the right trade unless the caller says LEFT Swing Thru, then the action always starts with a left.

40. Run/Cross Run

- A.) Run can be used to form waves, not just as a way to get out of them.
- B.) Only the runner reverses facing direction, runner slides over without turning around.
- C.) When running around someone the same shoulder is always nearest the one getting the run around.
- D.) This is an action where dancers can go from ends to center and from centers to ends.
- E.) Great place to teach "counter dancing," from zero lines facing out have the end boy run right around three, the new end girl run right around three, the new end boy run right around three, the new end girl run right around three; should end with in facing lines.
- F.) On Cross Run the designated dancer must run around the furthest dancer, not the near dancer, crossing by the center of the formation.

- 41. Pass the Ocean**
- A.) Prep with Pass Thru, face each other and Step to a Wave.
 - B.) Stop as soon as you pass.
 - C.) You will be shaking right hands with the person beside you after you pass and face.
 - D.) Angles, it is not a left touch 1/4 for the girls.
 - E.) Get the dancers in the habit of quickly saying “Pass, Face, Touch” while doing the call.
- 42. Extend (From 1/4 Tag Only)**
- A.) Everyone let go and step forward to establish a wave with the outsiders using the same hands.
 - B.) Centers step through to a new wave.
 - C.) Outsiders have to let go, slide apart with hands ready for waves.
- 43. Wheel and Deal**
- A.) Stressing the right passing rule, logically the ones on the right go in first.
 - B.) Couple on the left end of out facing lines step forward first then wheel behind the others.
 - C.) Each couple reverses facing direction.
 - D.) Don’t think right or left, think towards the center of the line.
 - E.) Starting like a Bend the Line.
 - F.) This is often called Wheel “IN” Deal as a reminder to turn “IN” towards the others.
- 44. Double Pass Thru**
- A.) Everyone walk single file past the ones looking at you.
 - B.) Pass two right shoulders.
 - C.) Can be explained using directional English; everyone pass the ones you are facing.
- 45. First Couple Go Left/Right, Next Couple Go Left/Right**
- A.) As a couple with ends as a pivots, wheel the given direction to look at the wall behind you.
 - B.) Take hands quickly after completing the action to establish formations.
 - C.) Don’t go too far, only a two wall change, not three.
- 46. Zoom**
- A.) Funny name, easy action to remember, yet leaders forget because it is done behind them.
 - B.) Prep the dancers with “leaders and trailers” rules.
 - C.) Leaders separate, turning all the way around to stand behind the trailers.
 - D.) Action ends with no wall change; in other words, ends facing the same wall as started.
- 47. Flutterwheel/Reverse Flutterwheel**
- A.) For Flutterwheel, dancer on the right side of a couple goes to the center with right arm holds.
 - B.) For both actions the ones going into the center use outside arm holds to wheel across picking up the opposite dancer with near hands returning to the starting spot.
 - C.) Action can be described as a two finned water wheel.
 - D.) Dancer not leading the action can follow the leader after leading them towards the center.
 - E.) Don’t let go of the arm hold in the center until you are ready to back out at the starting spot.
- 48. Sweep a Quarter**
- A.) Rotate the entire box of four 1/4 the direction you were turning with previous call.
 - B.) Circling without taking the other couples hands.
 - C.) As if both couples were standing on a “Lazy Susan” table that spins 1/4.
 - D.) Don’t veer off, stay facing.
- 49. Trade By**
- A.) Those facing out trade as the centers pass by.
 - B.) Centers go forward, through to the other side.
 - C.) Everyone can’t trade because that would just be a Partner Trade.

50. Touch 1/4

- A.) Join right hand holds used for waves and turn 1/4 around each other.
- B.) Center of pivot is in middle of the handhold for balance.
- C.) Use right hands.

51. Ferris Wheel

- A.) Couples looking out will do a standard Wheel and Deal.
- B.) Couples looking in will do half couples circulate then Wheel and Deal with the ones they meet in the middle to face.
- C.) Two couples looking in on diagonal must step forward to Wheel & Deal with each other.
- D.) All couples reverse facing directions.
- E.) Some nickname this action the “Big Wheel” because all four couples are working, as oppose to the “Little Wheel” referencing Wheel and Deal, an action done with only two couples.

Teaching Tips – Mainstream Program

52. Cloverleaf

- A.) Leaders separate and go around the outside until you meet the opposite leader, take near hands and move forward as a couple to the center.
- B.) Trailers must move forward following the leaders, taking near hands with the opposite trailer and as a couple stand behind the leaders.
- C.) Picture a four leaf clover or the off and on ramps of an interstate often called a cloverleaf.
- D.) One lane only, single file – no passing! In other words, trailers should stay behind leaders.
- E.) From a standard completed Double Pass Thru, can show the boys first then girls.
- F.) Can have the trailers touch shoulders of leaders to assure they follow.

53. Turn Thru

- A.) A right arm turn with someone that ends back to back.
- B.) From waves have them rear back first to see they are almost facing.
- C.) Trade places with the one in front if facing couples, or beside you if in waves, let go & pass them by, ending back to back.
- D.) Different than an Arm Turn, there is a definitive ending spot.

54. Eight Chain Thru / Eight Chain 1, 2, 3, Etc.

- A.) Tell them they get to count! “I want to hear you dance!”
- B.) Action is a series of alternating hand pull bys, or if facing out courtesy turn.
- C.) Talk them thru it slowly the first time, counting as you go.
- D.) Stay in rows. Don’t form a circle.
- E.) All eight dancers are doing the action, hence 8 Chain.
- F.) You are next to the one you started with throughout the entire action.
- G.) If a pull by is needed for the last hand you must dance through the last hand as in square thru, ending back to back.

55. Pass to the Center

- A.) Pass Thru, new dancers on the outside trade.
- B.) Outsiders pass “into” the center.
- C.) If you become the new outsider don’t forget to trade.

56. Single Hinge /Couples Hinge

- A.) Designated dancers Cast 1/4 around each other hand hold.
- B.) From two faced lines, Couples Hinge, the center dancers do not let go of hands.
- C.) Keep aware of square breathing, in other words, space to dance.

57. Centers In

- A.) The action can be explained with directional English.
- B.) Ask the centers to squeeze in between the others.
- C.) Outsiders slide apart.

58. Cast Off 3/4

- A.) Explain the action as being banished away, “a cast off” from the center.
- B.) Count the walls as you turn.
- C.) Ends 1/4 behind you, casting 4/4 brings you back where you started.
- D.) Centers walk forward around ends.
- E.) Ends act as a fence post or pivot point of a gate.

59. Spin the Top

- A.) The person you start with is the one you finish with.
- B.) Tell the ends to meet the centers around the corner.
- C.) Wave finishes at right angles from how you started.
- D.) The action can be taught in parts; spin: ends and adjacent turn $\frac{1}{2}$, new centers cast $\frac{3}{4}$, top: new outsides move around the corner $\frac{1}{4}$.
- E.) Don't assume dancers can Right and Left Thru from waves and don't try to teach both.

60. Walk & Dodge

- A.) Trailer moves forward while the leader slides over.
- B.) Action ends facing the same wall as started, nobody gets to turn.
- C.) Leader slides the door open to an imaginary van while the trailer loads in the groceries.

61. Slide Thru

- A.) Pass, turn and take near hands.
- B.) Boys always turn right and the girls always turn left after they pass.
- C.) From normal facing couples it's like doing a Star Thru with no hands.
- D.) Dancers can start to turn the body while passing by, sliding into position; hence “slide” thru.

62. Fold / Cross Fold

- A.) Action can be explained with directional English.
- B.) Designated dancer either folds in front or behind someone.
- C.) Folder does the action to reverse facing direction but the other dancer does not move.
- D.) Similar to Cross Run for Cross Fold, do the action with the furthest dancer not the nearest, crossing by the center of the formation.

63. Dixie Style to An Ocean Wave

- A.) Right hand dancers pull by with the right hand, then, all left touch $\frac{1}{4}$.
- B.) Feels like a two ladies chain but you do not courtesy turn, stop in the middle.
- C.) Action can be described as $\frac{1}{2}$ Half Sashay, those facing right hand pull by, all left touch $\frac{1}{4}$.
- D.) Action can be first taught from a “single file” or “on the double track” position.
- E.) From normal facing couples, boy backs up, dodges right while chaining the girl across, then left touch $\frac{1}{4}$ with approaching girl to form a wave.

64. Spin Chain Thru

- A.) This is a “mantra call” – 1/2, 3/4, 1/2, 3/4.
- B.) Describe the “spin” action as an ends and adjacent centers trade and then new centers cast 3/4. Then the new wave will “chain down the wave”.
- C.) Always starts with ends and adjacent centers (unlike Swing Thru, which always starts with the right hand).
- D.) Those that begin in the center only do the first part.
- E.) Some people have to stand still for parts of this call, which is the hardest thing to do in square dancing.
- F.) All of the actions are Trades & Casts with someone else, you’re never moving or turning alone.
- G.) If you are moving and using one hand, change your focus of attention to your other hand next.
- H.) The initial trailing ends facing in will be the ones chaining thru the very center.

65. Tag the Line (In/ Out/ Left/Right)

- A.) Let go first!
- B.) Turn individually in the direction where there are more people in your line.
- C.) Turn towards the center of the line.
- D.) Right shoulder passes.
- E.) The action takes about four dance steps to get past everyone.
- F.) Listen for follow up directional call if given.

66. Half Tag

- A.) Turn towards the center of your formation with hands ready to stop.
- B.) Pass right shoulders but don’t go all the way through.
- C.) Stop when each half of the line is almost shoulder to shoulder, about two steps.
- D.) Ends will meet the far center dancer; centers will meet the far end dancer.

67. Scoot Back

- A.) Feels like you are using the same hand three times, don’t cross hands.
- B.) All are turning back.
- C.) Come back to the same person beside you with the same hand.
- D.) Those looking in do a Turn Thru, those looking out Fold into vacant spot beside them, to join the same person with the same hand.
- E.) Let go and step straight forward first.
- F.) Inside hands or arms are used in the center.
- G.) Can be described as a half split circulate, centers trade, then finish the split circulate.

68. Recycle (From a Wave only)

- A.) Ends solo Wheel & Deal while the other folds and follow adjacent end to be partners.
- B.) From right hand waves, feels like centers run, half tag, and face in.
- C.) Each half of the wave will end up facing each other.
- D.) Can be described as ends start to trade or cross fold while centers Zoom out to follow the leading end.