

OMAHA WEST COAST SWING
CODE OF CONDUCT AND DANCE FLOOR ETIQUETTE

Dancing is a social experience that can be enjoyed by everyone. Omaha West Coast Swing wants to foster an environment of acceptance and encouragement where everyone feels good about cutting loose. You'll find success when you follow these simple guidelines while you're out on the dance floor.

Note for beginners:

Remember, everyone starts as a beginner. We encourage people of all levels to dance with all levels. Prior experience does not preclude people from enjoying this dance. We're all here to have fun!

Note for experienced dancers:

Remember, everyone starts as a beginner. We encourage people of all levels to dance with all levels. We're all here to have fun!

Be respectful: Smiles and eye contact are key! Always be polite when engaging with others. Thank your partner after each dance. If you accidentally hurt someone, apologize. Treat others like you would like to be treated, and do not force an interaction or dance. **Always be of good spirit with your practice partner, and afford them grace.** If someone is hurting you, tell them. If they persist or resist, report this bad behavior so we can address it.

Use good manners at all times: Social dancing mixes people of all backgrounds on the dance floor. It is always in good taste to use good manners when speaking to each other in these setting. Be on your best behavior when speaking to others, and chose topics of conversation wisely. Be good to each other.

Never blame your partner: Mistakes while social dancing happen all the time. The social dance floor is never a good place to bring to light these mistakes. Do your best during the dance, politely thank your partner, and look forward to another dance in the future.

No teaching on the dance floor: Unsolicited advice on the dance floor is never a good idea. There are too many opportunities to hurt your partner's feelings with even the smallest piece of advice. Even if asked, simply say something positive and remind your partner that the social floor is not the best place for such discussions. Do speak up, however, if your partner is doing something unsafe or unwelcome.

Mind your hygiene: Be sure to shower, apply deodorant, and wear clean clothes to dance. Dancing is an athletic activity, and you will sweat; bring a towel or extra shirt. Take care so that you do not offend with odors of breath or body.

Asking for Dances: Don't feel like you have to wait for someone to ask you to dance. It's encouraged that everyone can ask anyone for a dance. Be respectful and polite if someone declines your offer but don't let it discourage you from asking later.

Saying No to Dances: It is perfectly fine to turn someone down for a dance. You're not required to give a reason but if you offer a dance later be sure to mean it.

In most circumstances, it's good etiquette to accept a dance request. If you are unable to dance that particular song, please wait until the next song to dance with any other partner. Declining an offer means not dancing that dance with anyone else – no matter who might ask you next. If possible, seek the partner you previously turned down for a dance later in the night.

Dance Partners: We all have favorite partners for various reasons, but it's not good etiquette to keep them to yourself for the evening. It does happen, but it's not the best expression of social dance etiquette. Try dancing with as many different levels of partners each night.

Dance to the level of your partner: It's not polite to dance over the level of your partner, nor is it polite to "dumb down" your dancing. Dance your dance,

but take into account the level of your partner and adjust accordingly. Every partner is different, and hence, every dance should be different.

Aerials, Dips, & Drops: Swing dance tricks are exciting, but they are unsafe on a social dance floor; save them for jam circles and performances. These moves are dangerous without the right training, technique, and preparation. Be sure to get the “OK” from your partner before attempting any tricks, and always be mindful of your surroundings.

Mind the dance space: Be aware of those around you while dancing, and always check before you send your partner out on a move or do something sporadic, especially on nights with a crowded dance floor. No one likes getting thrown into another person without warning and errant elbows can ruin a good dance.

Live Bands: Musicians are artists, and we should appreciate them. Do this by clapping or cheering after each song or impressive solo. It is also a sign of respect to dress a little nicer than usual for a live band.

Inappropriate conduct: Bullying, sexual harassment, and other abuse will not be tolerated. You are not required to finish dancing with people that make you feel uncomfortable. Please seek a staff member or volunteer if you feel unsafe. We always have someone at the front desk on dance nights ready to answer any questions or concerns. Please check out our Code of Conduct for more information about tolerated behavior.

Feeling Ill? Take the night off and recover, we'll be here when you're better.

Dance Floor Care: We love our dance floor, no matter who it belongs to. Please wear shoes that are free of dirt, sand, snow, and will not hurt our floor. Do not put any floor-altering substances on the dance floor. An unexpected slick or sticky spot of the floor could really hurt someone, so let's keep it clean!

Shoes: Comfort is important, wear shoes that you can move around in for long periods. Good shoes equal happy knees and feet. If you like your shoes to slide, a quick remedy is to glue leather on the bottom of your shoes. When you're ready to buy proper dance shoes, options are available to suit any preference.

Dress Code: Dressing classy is encouraged but not required. Just make sure to wear something you are comfortable moving around in, and will stay in place while dancing.

Conclusion: The basics of dance etiquette are in place to make sure that everyone can enjoy an evening of social dancing. West Coast Swing is a great dance that brings together people from all walks of life into the same activity. It's important to use basic manners, thoughtful dance technique and a little bit of social dance etiquette to ensure that everyone has a good time. Try to be an example for people in your community. Doing so will go a long way to creating a great welcoming culture. If we all try hard to use these rules, we will positively influence new dancers as they join us on the dance floor, ensuring that we have lots of people to dance with for years to come!