

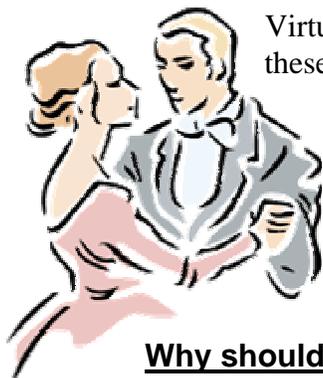
What Are the Benefits of Attending Special Dances

Festival, Convention, Weekend...

Why should I attend Special Dances and Dance Events?

What can I get out of it?

Will I make a fool of myself?



Virtually every dancer, from every type of dance activity, has asked one or more of these questions at one time or another.

Answering the last question first, no, you will not make any more a fool of yourself than every other couple there. Armed guards are not going to appear and escort you off the floor and out of the hall if you make a mistake, crash into inanimate objects (walls, chairs...), trip over your partner, fall, or any make any other faux pas.

Why should I attend the Festivals and other special dances?

The reasons are as varied as the number of people dancing, but some of the basic benefits are:

1. **Increase the Amount of Floor Time Spent With Your Partner:** Remember the old saying "practice makes perfect". In reality, practice increases your "body memory" (ability to almost subconsciously execute figures and movements). It also increases your sensitivity to the movement with your partner, allowing you to better feel and give leads (remember, only one person should be the leader – ideally this should be the man, but...).
2. **Learn and Workshop New and Old Figures** that have been and/or will (95% of the time) be choreographed into other routines. You may not become totally comfortable with the figure, but you have gained useful information and the next time you are exposed to that figure (or another figure in the same class*) it will come more easily.

** For example: Left turn, reverse turn, telemarks, reverse wave, telespin... are all in the same figure class – in this case, the first two steps are very similar for the man & the rotation is to the left.*

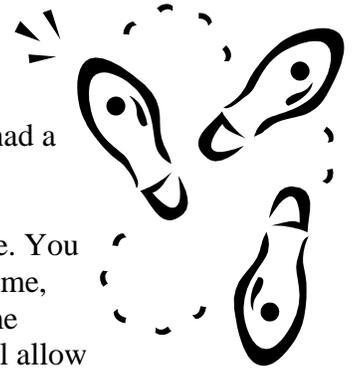
3. **Workshop Dance Technique:** Technique is the mechanics of how a figure should be executed, from the toes on up. Technique does not include "styling", which individualizes figures and actions.
4. **Learn and Workshop Rhythm Characteristics:** These are what make one rhythm look and feel different than another rhythm, even when executing the same figure.

For example: A waltz flows up and down and glides across the floor, while a jive is springy, energetic, and less rigid, and generally confined to a smaller amount of floor space.

5. **Styling Tips and Development:** Learn new methods of styling, reinforce the styling you already do, and/or develop unique styling with your partner. Styling normally involves parts of the body that are not otherwise in use while executing a figure; it is something you can do that will not interfere with the proper execution of the figure or action. Styling is always optional.

6. **Experience Different Teaching and Cuing Methods**: Sometimes an instruction worded or shown in a different way can, all of a sudden, make sense.
7. **Socialization and Fellowship** with other people interested in the same thing you are.
8. **Romance and Companionship**: Round Dancing is a wonderful way to spend quality time together with your partner. Even in a room of hundreds of people, dancing focuses your attention on just one person, your partner.

If you are open and receptive to the information presented at the festival, even if your instructor does not teach the routine or the level, you have learned and experienced a tremendous amount, gained valuable knowledge, and hopefully had a little fun in the process.



In addition, as a dancer you do not need to rely on your instructor all of the time. You can tape (audio and/or video) the routine being taught at the festival, bring it home, and keep it up on your own or with others who attended the same festival. Some dancers are lucky enough to have a recreation center/community center that will allow them to use space at no charge; others work on routines in the living room, basement, garage, and even the driveway (hopefully not a slanted driveway). I have even heard of a couple driving home after a festival who were listening to the tape of the teaches and periodically stopped the car along the side of the road to try out various figures and combinations, and solve various disputes.

There are many other benefits to attending Festivals and other special dances. Talk to a fellow dancer who does attend these and see what they have to say.

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