

English Country Dance Glossary

Steps and Patterns

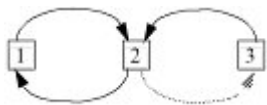
Updated from *Steps and Styling* published by the Folk Dance Federation of CA, Inc.

- Arming:** Arm R: Partners move forward, hook R arms at the elbow, turn once around clockwise, release arm hold, and move back to original position.
Arm L: Same action as Arm R, but hook L arm and turn CCW.
- Back-to-Back:** Facing dancers move forward passing R shoulders and move backward to place passing L shoulders.
- Basket Swing:** Two couples: Men join hands behind women's backs, women rest hands on men's nearer shoulders.
One man, two women: Man place his arms around the back of the women. Women rest near hands on man's nearer shoulder, free hands around each other's back.
With R foot in front of L, turn CW with a Buzz step.
- Cast:** Dancer turns outward (away) from set or partner in order to move to a designated place. If begun facing partner, dancer turns the long way, e.g., turning up to move down.
- Change places:** Designated dancers exchange places passing R shoulders and turning to the R to face each other.
- Corners:** The 2 other dancers that each active dancer faces when in the center of the set facing partner across the set, M facing W line, and W facing M line. First corner is to the diagonal R and the second corner is to the diagonal L.
- Circle:** (Three-hands, four-hands, etc.) Dancers form a ring by joining hands (W-pos, a little below shoulder level) and dance once around to the L with designated step (usually either Walking or Slipping). If the circle is to the R, the direction is specified. Three-hands involves three dancers, four-hands is four dancers, and so on.
- Cross:** Specified dancers move across the set passing R shoulders unless otherwise directed. Dancers might face each other or remain facing in traveling direction for the next figure.
- Double:** Duple time: Three light springy steps and a close in a specified direction (with weight or no weight), as in "forward a double."
Triple time: Two steps and a close in specified direction.
- Fall Back:** Move backward as directed.
- Gipsy (Gypsy):** Keeping eye contact, dancers move CW completely around one another and fall back to place.
- Hands Across (Star):** Two couples: Use hand-shake hold at approximately shoulder level, holding hand of diagonally opposite person. There is no rule as to whose hands are on top. Giving some support, dancers move around in the direction they are facing.

Hey: (A weaving pattern)

Circular Hey: Even number of couples in circle, partners facing, W move CW, M CCW, passing R and L shoulder alternately, and continue to original place. Unless specified, dancers pass without taking hands.

Hey for Three: Three people in line formation: #1 facing #2 and #3. All moving at the same time, describe a Figure 8 pattern. All go around the Figure 8 in the same direction (follow the leader). The Hey can begin by passing either R or L shoulders, depending on the dance.



Dancer #1

Curve CW passing R shoulder with #2
Dance through center

Curve CCW

Curve CCW around #3's original place

Dancer #2

Curve CW passing R shoulder with #1
Curve CW around #1's original place

Continue curve CW

Dance through (original place)

Dancer #3

Curve CCW

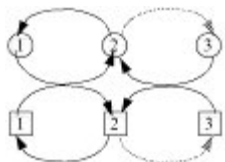
Continue curve CCW

Dance through the center passing behind #1

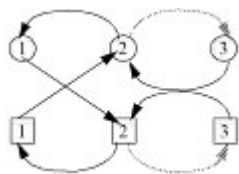
Curve CW around #1's original place

Continue moving in the Figure 8 to return to original places.

Half Hey for Three: Only half of the Hey for Three is danced, ends changing places and middle dancer ending back in the middle.

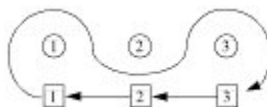


Mirror Hey: Both sides dance a Hey for Three at the same time, M1 and M2 passing R shoulders to begin the Hey (as described above), and W1 and W2 passing L shoulders to begin. Cpl1 begins by leading down the center, the second couple facing up and separating outside Cpl1; Cpl3 leads up the center and cpl1 separates to the outside around them. Partners continue to meet, moving to the center of the set and dance out around the ends of the set.



Crossover Mirror Hey: Same as Mirror Hey except that Cpl1 begins by crossing down, W passing in front of M, to dance the Hey for Three on the opposite side of the set.

Sheepskin Hey: Danced by three couples, M in one line, W in another, partners facing. M line usually moves first. W line remains in place until M have returned to place.

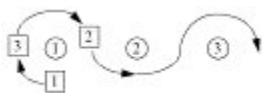


M Sheepskin Hey (skipping): M1, followed by M2 and M3, dance across the top of the set and pass behind W1, between W1 and W2, in front of W2, and between W3 and W3. M1 and M2, upon reaching W3 pass CW around her.



M3, instead of following M2, pass CCW completely around W2 and faces up, thus becoming the leader.

English Country Dance Glossary—continued



M3, followed by M1 and M2, continue weaving to the top, and M2, who is last in line, instead of following M1 and M3, pass CCW around W2 and face down, thus becoming the leader.

M2, followed by M3 and M1, continue weaving to the bottom, and M1, who is last in line, instead of following M3 and W2, passes CCW completely around W2 and faces up, thus becoming the leader again.

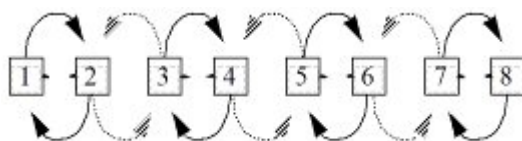
M1, followed by M2 and M3, continue weaving to the top of the W line.



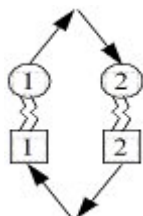
M dance CW and around W1, dance down the outside of W line, across the bottom of set and up to original places.

W repeat action danced by M (mirror image) while M line remains in place.

Straight Hey: Any number of couples in a single line, partners facing. Move up or down the line passing R and L shoulders alternately. At end of line curve CW to continue in same manner to original place.



Hey for Four or Reel for Four: A Straight Hey for four people, Starting positions are designated in the individual dance descriptions.

Poussette:

Couples change places, moving CW out and back. Partners join both hands, arms extended at almost shoulder level. Cpl 1 dance four steps out of the set M going forward, W backward and then dance into the other couple's place, M foing backward, W forward. At the same time, Cpl 2 dance four steps out of the set, W going forward, M backward and then into other couple's place, M going forward, W backward (Half Poussette). Continue the movement to return to original place (Full Poussette). This is sometimes done in CCW direction. In triple time, it takes three or six steps for each poussette.

Rant Setting Step:

Hop on L (ct ah); tap ball of R in front of L (ct 1); hop on L (ct &); step on R in place (ct 2). Step alternates.

Rant Travelling R: The step of the north of England, mainly Northumberland and County Durham. It is similar to a Polka step; very vibrant and danced to reel tunes. Hop on L (ct ah); step fwd on R (ct 1); step fwd on L (ct &); step fwd on R (ct 2). Step alternates.

Set: Spring onto R to R; step on ball of L beside R; step on R in place and pause (QQS). Step is smooth and light. Repeat action to L to complete pattern. This is often done advancing toward partner or corner.

Waltz Setting Step: Same footwork as setting in three even beats, eliminating the pause.

Siding:

A movement of courtesy, keeping eye contact with partner.

Siding (Cecil Sharp): Moving in a CCW arc and beginning with the R, dance two steps forward (cts 1,2), exchanging places with partner; with one step, turn CCW to face (ct 3); bring both feet together (ct 4). To return, repeats cts 1-4 beginning with the L and moving CW. Can be done starting with either foot.

Side-by-Side Siding or Pat Shaw Siding: Partners face and move forward a Double bringing R shoulder to R shoulder; fall back a double. Repeat to L shoulders.

Unless specified, use Cecil Sharp Siding.

- Skip Change of Step:** **R:** This is similar to the Scottish Skip Change of Step but is danced in a flatter style and with feet parallel. Hop on L (ct uh); step forward on R (ct 1); step on L near R heel (ct &); step forward on R (ct 2). Bring L foot forward, passing through at ankle level in preparation for the next step, which begins with hop on R. Step alternates.
- Slip:** (Slide-Close) A series of smooth steps close to the floor. Step sideward on the ball of the advancing foot taking weight and close the other foot taking weight.
- Turn:** Rotate CW as a couple as specified in dance directions, with one hand or both, arms extended, rounded with elbows down. Dancers should give weight and maintain eye contact.
- Turn Single:** Turn in a small circle with four light, springy steps (CW unless otherwise specified). In triple time, this takes three or six steps.

Styling

The body lead (center of gravity is out in front of the feet), relaxed knee, and flexible foot are the most noticeable features of contemporary English Country Dancing. The arms are relaxed and move easily with the motion of the body, but are firm and usually extended on turns and held strongly in circles, just below shoulder level. Hands are taken in hand-shake position (forefingers to forefingers)—not thumb grip. The step is usually a “dance walk,” sometimes changing to a skipping step or Skip Change of Step for traveling farther. “Footwork” is seldom mentioned, and never mandated

Formation

- Longways set:** Line of M facing ptr across the set, M’s L shoulders to music. A duple minor is a set in which the dance pattern involves two couples.
- Proper and improper:** This refers to the side of the dance—all are on the usual side (proper), or some couples are on the opposite side to begin (improper). Not a moral judgement!