

Line Dance Study Guide

Line dancing is exactly what its name implies: people dancing in lines to music. Line dances are choreographed dances with a repeating series of steps that are performed in unison by a group of people in lines or rows, most often without the dancers making contact with one another.

All of the dancers performing a line dance face the same direction and perform the steps at exactly the same time. Although there are usually several lines of dancers, small groups may only form one line, but it's still considered a line dance even if only two people are participating.

From the 1800s American immigrants' adaptation of polka and the waltz that developed into square dancing to folk dances in schools of the 1900s, the origins of the format of dance are widespread.

Line Dancing History

Although many popular line dances are set to country music, the first line dances did not originate from country and western dancing. Line dancing is believed to have originated from [folk dancing](#), which has many similarities.

Contra dancing, a form of American folk dance in which the dancers form two parallel lines and perform a sequence of dance movements with different partners down the length of the line, probably had a huge influence on the line dancing steps we are familiar with today.

During the disco era then into the 1980s and 90s, line dances began to be created for popular songs. A country line dance created for the Billy Ray Cyrus smash hit "Achy Breaky Heart" in 1992 took the country by storm. Even pop music began to see an upswing in line dances in the 1990s with the "Macarena" serving as a sort of hybrid folk-pop dance number that swept the world by storm.

Line dancing Today

Because its steps are simple and don't involve dancing with a partner, line dancing is ideal for singles and nondancers alike. Line dancing is taught and practiced in country and western dance bars, social clubs and dance halls around the world.

Line Dance Format

Basic line dances focus on movements of the legs and feet, with more advanced dances including the arms and hands, and the movements of a line dance are marked as "counts" where one count generally equals one musical beat, with a particular movement or step taking place at each beat.

Each dance can be described to consist of a number of walls. A wall is the direction in which the dancers face at any given time, which would be the front, the back or one of the sides. A one-wall dance would mean that at the end of the routine, the dancers would be facing in the same direction as they had started and so each sequence would repeat exactly the same. A two-wall dance would mean the start of each routine alternates between two walls (almost always the front and back walls) A four wall line dance is one in which at the end the whole routine of dance moves, the dancers turn 90 degrees, so that they would face all four walls in turn during four repetitions of the routine.

Pulled from www.thoughtco.com and www.auburn.edu

Things to think about while studying...

What is line dancing?

What dance form are line dances supposed to have originated from?

What era did line dances begin?

A wall means what, in line dancing?

Where might one find line dancing?

Can you name all the line dances that you've learned?

Name popular steps or moves that might be commonly found in line dancing?

Who can do line dancing?

What particular form of folk dance might have had an influence on line dancing?