

“Best Of” Teaching Tips for Mainstream and Plus  
Tim Marriner & Andy Shore  
CALLERLAB XXXI, Reno NV, April 2004

Teaching Tips are proven hints that educators use during the teaching, walk-thru, or review process to help the dancers avoid common problems or mistakes. These tips do not replace the definitions but should be used to enhance the teaching and learning experience and reinforce the dancers’ ability to remember and execute the calls. Be careful, overuse of shortcuts can create dancers’ dependency on the hints and impede true learning. Good teaching skills with description words are necessary during the process. Styling hints should be presented. Keep the dancers aware of proper timing to smooth out rough or rushed dancing – this is not a race. Remember that different dancers learn differently – auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc. – and take these learning styles into account when you teach.

As a teacher, refresh your memory and understanding of the call definitions and standard applications before you teach.

Contact the CALLERLAB Home Office for notes from 2002 (Mainstream) or 2003 (Plus) Teaching Tips sessions, or visit Andy’s web site at <http://www.moveto.com/sd/>  
CALLERLAB definitions may be found at [www.callerlab.org](http://www.callerlab.org)

## **Mainstream**

### ***Circle to a Line***

- A. Might defer teaching until after Bend the Line to promote better awareness of lines.
- B. Review California Twirl action to enforce the “dishrag” turn out.
- C. Review “circle up four ½ way” (Circles are part of the MS program).
- D. Circle four ½ way round, the outside couple continues to slide to the left while the inside couple does a California Twirl to finish beside them.
- E. If by chance you end as a couple facing out, do a California Twirl.

### ***Swing Thru***

- A. Teach Trades first and this call is a little bit easier.
- B. Trade with Right hands first then if you can with Left hands.
- C. If you are on the ends standing still walk in place, it is hard to stand still.
- D. Stress that not everyone gets to do both parts of the call.
- E. First teach – gentle squeeze of Right Hands, etc.
- F. Speak out “Riiiiightt...Leeeffft”.
- G. If your group can handle it, show Swing Thru from LH waves the same night, emphasizing that it starts in the center with the Right hand.

### ***Flutterwheel***

- A. Use arm holds.
- B. Use the *outside* arm.
- C. Dancer not going in with arm hold can start walking across after you lead the others into the center.
- D. Avoid “go get him, drag him back” - that’s not the way we really dance it.

### ***Spin the Top***

- A. Review Cast Off  $\frac{3}{4}$  (RH & LH) - from waves, columns, etc.
- B. The person you start with is the one you finish with.
- C. Tell them you will meet them around the corner!
- D. Wave finishes at right angles from how you started.

### ***Dixie Style to an Ocean Wave***

- A. From a beginning double pass thru formation with the girls in the middle, work Centers Square Thru 3 (or Turn Thru, or Square Thru 1, or Pass Thru), Left Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$ .
- B. Right hand dancers pull by and do a Left Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$  with dancer across the set.
- C. Feels like a Two Ladies Chain but you *do not* Courtesy Turn, stop in the middle.
- D. First do half of a Half Sashay, those facing right hand pull by and all Left Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$ .
- E. May teach “single file” or “on the double track” first.

### ***Recycle***

- A. Ends solo Wheel & Deal (aka Cross Fold) while the other folds and follow adjacent end to be partners.
- B. From RH waves, feels like a Centers Run, Half Tag and face in.
- C. Each half of the wave will end up facing each other.
- D. Centers will end up slightly behind where they started, facing the same way.

### ***Cloverleaf***

- A. Start with just 4 people active – more like a Separate which they already know:  
Heads Pass Thru & Cloverleaf,  
Sides Star Thru, Pass Thru & Cloverleaf
- B. Leads separate and go around the outside until you meet someone, take near hands and move up.
- C. Trailers must move up and follow the leaders and stand behind them taking near hands with the new one you meet.
- D. Picture a four leaf clover or the off and on ramps of an interstate often called a cloverleaf. One lane only – no passing! Stay in your own quadrant of the square.

## **Plus**

### ***Teacup Chain***

- A. One approach is to do head ladies only, then side ladies only, then all.
- B. Another way is to do All 4 Ladies Center, then All 4 Ladies to the Right, then mix them, this keeps all dancers active during the teach.
- C. The girls will visit the boys in “promenade order” (have them single file promenade inside, and pay attention to the boys (partner, corner, opposite, bachelor #3, partner).

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- D. All RH Stars are  $\frac{3}{4}$ , All LH Stars are  $1\frac{1}{4}$  (or  $\frac{5}{4}$  works better for some).
- E. Girls control which hand/arm to use... girls should alternate hands between the stars and the arm turns.
- F. Head boys can whisper “into the center” as they turn a girl, Side boys can whisper “off to a head man (Joe, Steve, etc.)” Boys help the girls get where they need to be.
- G. Girls will always be starrng with the diagonal opposite girl. Find that girl for all the center stars.
- H. Review Do Paso to reinforce Right and Left Arm Turns, and the idea of “sending someone around the outside” for the chaining to the right.
- I. The only Courtesy Turn is the final turn with your original partner. Only “show courtesy” to your original partner.

## **Track 2**

- A. Dance them thru “Leaders Trade, Pass Thru, Trade By, Step to a wave” or “Leaders Trade, Pass to the Center, Centers Pass Thru, Step to a wave” a few times to get the traffic pattern.
- B. Another good call to demo first.
- C. Lead 2 wind up in the far wave looking out; trailing 2 wind up in the near wave looking in.
- D. If you are a trailer, you will stay behind the person in front of you for the entire call.
- E. Left-side dancers have the wider “outside track” (and will move clockwise to their right). Right-side dancers have the tighter “inside track”.(and will move counterclockwise to their left) – towards each other, follow the right shoulder passing rule.
- F. Have trailer put a hand on the leader’s shoulder and do the “Tandem Partner Trade” then Extend Twice.
- G. Move *towards* the person beside you (not away from them as you would in a Cloverleaf).
- H. Keep hands in a ready position, but don’t be grabby.
- I. Can workshop Track 0, 1, 3, & 4 – gives a good history lesson.

## **Relay the Deucey**

- A. Another “mantra call” –  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ .
- B. Great call to demo first – observing one dancer at a time thru the entire move.
- C. Notice you wind up beside (and holding onto) the exact same people – “2 All 8 Circulate spots away” or “diagonally across the square”.
- D. The action feels like a Spin the Top, Grand Swing Thru, Spin the Top.
- E. If you leave the wave, dance single file around the outside moving forward. Don’t turn around, don’t try to make stars, and don’t jump into the middle of the wave.
- F. The person you started with will “relay you back into the grand wave” when it’s your turn, and you’ll meet them again at the end of the call.

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- G. If you are moving around the outside, watch that person with your peripheral vision, this will help pace you down the square.
- H. From a 0 wave, the girl facing in works 4 hands down the wave & the girl facing out works 2 hands down the wave.
- I. Everyone keeps moving. No one stands still.
- J. 6 parts – either arm turns or  $\frac{1}{2}$  circulates, you can count them to the end.
- K. Centers – when you meet the same center you’ll do the  $\frac{3}{4}$  cast with them, and you’re done.

### ***Spin Chain Thru***

- A. This is a “mantra call” –  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ .
- B. Describe the “spin” action as an ends and adjacent centers trade and then new centers cast  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Then the new wave will “chain down the wave”.
- C. Always starts on the “outside” of the wave with ends and adjacent centers (unlike Swing Thru, which always starts with the right hand).
- D. Those who 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. The initial leading end (facing out) will be the one who waits (stand still, don’t wander) while the very centers trade.
- I. Reinforce that the new ends are done after the initial arm turn  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

### ***Spin Chain the Gears***

- A. Review Spin Chain Thru a few times first – here’s a “cousin” of that call.
- B. Starts like a Spin Chain Thru and after the gears turn, centers finish like Spin Chain Thru.
- C. A good one to demo first and cue heavily.
- D. Emphasize that 4 people “line up” after the stars turn  $\frac{3}{4}$ , they will do a trade and a cast  $\frac{3}{4}$ , while the others “flip out of the way!” (like a Peel Off or Run action).
- E. “Gears, Gears, Gears” chant during the star turn – helps distinguish this later from “Exchange”.

### ***Spin Chain and Exchange the Gears***

- A. Review the cousins first: Spin Chain Thru, and Spin Chain the Gears.
- B. Demo this one first.
- C. Outfacing “spoke” will lead the exchange (Parade, or Snake pattern) raise up your hand when you are turning your star.

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- D. “Exchange, Exchange, Exchange” chant while turning the star  $\frac{3}{4}$  to help distinguish this call from “Gears”. Some make a duck quacking sound as they follow the leader – making “esses” out of themselves as they finish the call.
- E. Feel of the end of the call is a lot like a Flip the Diamond.
- F. If danced from a Zero Box Wave, before the “exchange” look at where your original partner is and “snake” to that position – then finish the call.

### **Chase Right**

- A. Review Split Circulate before introducing this call.
- B. Think “behind you” (look over your right shoulders at the two spots behind you, that’s where you two will end up).
- C. You will end up holding right hands with the dancer you started with.
- D. Teach or review from a 2-couple setup.
- E. RH dancer starts and finishes facing the same wall.
- F. LH dancer snubs the RH dancer, who turns away. Then LH dancer chases them to make up.
- G. Best usage for LH version is “Left Chase” not “Chase Left”

### **Crossfire**

- A. Another good one to demo, and to show or teach from 2-couple setups.
- B. May want to review Cross Fold in the weeks or tips leading up to this.
- C. Quick review of “Extend” – watch close or you’ll miss it! – Caller takes a step forward.
- D. Centers, in a minute, you are going to Trade and Extend.
- E. Ends, in a minute you are going to Cross Fold. Now lean forward and see where you would cross fold behind (she won’t be there anymore).
- F. From a 2-faced line, have the ends follow behind the centers. Don’t get beside or in front of this dancer.
- G. Set up so that ends will finish behind original partner.

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