

Contra Timing Chart

Dances are usually structured to match the call timing to the phrases of the music.

An 8 beat call should start at the beginning of an 8 beat phrase.

A 16 beat call should start at the beginning of part A1, A2, B1 or B2.

Allemande (Left or Right) – 8 beats

Arm Turn – 4 beats for a half turn

Balance – 4 beats

Balance and Swing – usually 4 beats to Balance and 12 beats to Swing.

Some folks use 8 beats to do a Double Balance and 8 beats to Swing.

Use a tune with accents (or chords) at the point where a balance occurs, it's nice to have a quarter note figure in a jig or a heavy accent in a reel.

Box the Gnat – 4 beats

California Twirl – 4 beats

Cast Down – 4 beats if unassisted Cast Down around One; more beats the farther the dancers must go.

Cast Off – 4 to 8 beats

Circle (Right or Left) – 8 beats

Contra Corners – 16 beats

Courtesy Turn – 4 beats

Dixie Style to a Wave – 8 beats

Dixie Twirl – at least 4 beats

Do-sa-do (Dosido) or (Dosado) (Right or Left) – 8 beats

Down the center – Usually 8 beats are allowed to go down and turn around. Often dancers are expected to come back up more quickly and Cast Off all in the next 8 beats. Some dances only allow 8 beats to go down, turn, and come back. It is desirable to have march-type music for this section.

Figure Eight – 16 beats for a Full Figure Eight; 8 beats for Half Figure Eight

Flutterwheel or Reverse Flutterwheel – 8 beats

Forward and Back – 8 beats

Full Hey – 16 beats; use smooth music

Grand Square – 32 beats

Gypsy – 8 beats; smooth music; a minor key works well

Half Sashay – 4 beats

Hey – Full Hey for Four takes 16 beats

Hey for Three can be completed in 12 beats but is sometimes allowed 16 beats.

Two Ladies Chain across the set – 8 beats

Ladies Chain across and back – 16 beats

Pass through or Pass Thru – 4 beats

Petronella Turn – 4 beats; with a clap-clap on beats 3.5 - 4

Promenade – around a Square takes 16 beats

Half Promenade either in Contras or in a Square is 8 beats

Right and Left Through or Right and Left Thru – across is 8 beats

Right and Left Through over and back is 16 beats.

Some traditional contras assume over and back.

Roll Away – 4 beats

Slow Square Thru – In contra dancing this is usually allowed 4 beats per hand. Square dancers complete a Square Thru four hands in 10 beats so in contras it is often combined with a Balance step.

Star Promenade – at least 12 beats for full around in a Square

Star Right or Star Left (Right-hand Star) – 8 beats to go around once
Also called Right-hands Across or Left-hands Across

Star Thru – 4 beats

Swing – 4 to 8 beats (or longer)

Veer Left or Right – 2 to 4 beats

Wavy line balance – 4 beats; jigs work well

Weathervane – 8 beats for across, 16 beats for full around

Wheel Around (or Turn as a Couple) – 4 beats