

For this session on Specialty Squares, I will present some invented calls and techniques that you or your dancers can use to add variety to their square dance experience.

1. **Racetrack Promenade**
2. **"Girl Power" Singing Calls**
3. **Stir and Progress**

Racetrack Promenade

Racetrack Promenade: Directed dancers face promenade direction and Promenade ahead out of their square, while other dancers follow behind so that all side-by-side squares form a large oval promenade.

Command Examples:

- Heads Lead, Racetrack Promenade
- Ends Lead, Racetrack Promenade
- Head Girls Lead, Racetrack Promenade (*all become a single-file oval promenade*)

This is a fun call to use at the end of a progressive squares session or club dance to easily get all the dancers into a big circle for final Thank You. "Heads Lead, Racetrack Promenade" will quickly create a horizontal oval. If needed, "Ends Lead, Racetrack Promenade" will turn those ovals into a whole-floor circle.

"Girl Power" Singing Call

"Girl Power" is an easy, amusing variation for singing calls. The caller can direct the dancers to do this, or the dancers can choose "Girl Power" on their own during the short break between patter and singing call.

During a "Girl Power" singing call with standard corner progression, Girls retain their Home throughout the singing call. Boys will change their Home clockwise four times. Promenade will be 1/4 (4 steps) shorter, so the dancers will have more time for flourishes or to accommodate mobility issues.

This singing call variation is EASILY learned, and is fun for the dancers. With the corner progression roles reversed, it just feels different. During promenade, the Boys like telling the Girls to take them Home! Or the Girls have fun reminding the Boys of their new Home.

"Girl Power" is so easily learned, that one dancer in a square can take advantage of the short break after patter to ask the square, "Hey. Do you all want to try something interesting? Let's Girl Power this singing call. It's easy. At the end of each sequence, the Girl takes the Boy to her Home. Remember, Girls, always promenade to your Home. Boys, remind the Girls to take you home!"

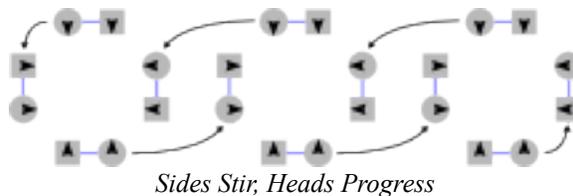
Stir and Progress

Stir: Promenade 1/4 and become that Home Position.

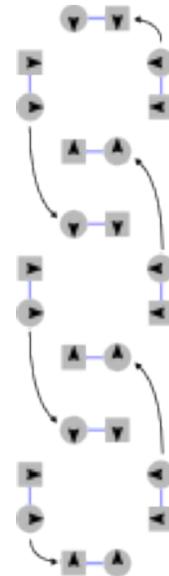
Progress: "Stretch" Promenade 1/4 (like a big Lead Right) to the next square and become that Home Position. When no next square exists, dancers stay in own square and Stir instead.

Command Examples:

- Promenade Home, All Stir (= "Stir the Bucket")
- Sides Stir, Heads Progress
- All Progress (Great for a matrix of squares. For a 1-row horizontal hall, the effect is the same as Sides Stir, Heads Progress.)
- Girls Progress, Boys Stir



The arrows in these diagrams show the promenade path for Progress. Stir is intuitively understood by most dancers, so that path is not drawn.



Stir and Progress Singing Call

In a club environment, the use of Stir and Progress can be an effective and fun way to move dancers around among squares, perhaps to redistribute dancers of various skill levels.

For a session of progressive squares, these calls may be used not only to redistribute the dancers in a novel way, but also to provide the means for a "**Wow**" ending to the session:

If you end the session with a standard singing call, and if the dancers do an automatic "Sides Stir, Heads Progress" after every Promenade Home, original partners will go their separate ways into different squares during sequences with corner progression. However, **EVERYONE WILL GET THEIR ORIGINAL PARTNER BACK** at the end.

This singing call variation will always work, as long as the singing call is constructed in the standard way with corner progression during the 4 figures: Opener, 2 Figures, Middle Break, 2 Figures, Closer. Whether you use an automatic "Sides Stir, Heads Progress" (rows of squares) or "Heads Stir, Sides Progress" (columns of squares), original partners will reunite at the end.

Moreover, this seemingly magical "Stir and Progress singing call" phenomenon will work regardless the number of squares. Rows (or columns) of any number of squares will work. Even just two side-by-side squares will work.

For dancer success...

- Make sure that squares are aligned in rows and/or columns.
- Make sure that the squares are not too far apart.
- Make sure your dancers have enough energy.
- From static squares, drill "Sides Stir, Heads Progress," for the case of rows.
- Once the dancers are proficient, call several sequences that end in "Promenade Home, Sides Stir, Heads Progress."
- To help the dancers remember their constantly changing Home positions, encourage the Boys to dance each sequence with their left hand indicating their Home number. Then during Promenade Home, the Head Boys (the ones who will Progress) should show their left hand in the center of the square, similar to what the lead dancer does in Spin Chain and Exchange the Gears. This action will serve as a check so that everyone remembers their Home and will be able to either Progress or Stir as directed.
- Once the dancers master the skill of remembering their constantly changing home positions, instruct the dancers to automatically "Sides Stir, Heads Progress" after every Promenade Home. After a couple of such short patter sequences, announce that you will end the tip with a singing call.
- Instruct the dancers to automatically "Sides Stir, Heads Progress" after every sequence Promenade Home.
- Warn them that they will have to rush Promenade Home to finish each sequence in the time the music allows.

If your home club dancers all become proficient in this technique, they can decide on their own to Stir and Progress during any singing call. This could become a fun tradition for the last tip of the night.

NOTE: With the extra time saved by shorter promenades, it may seem that "Girl Power" is perfect for "Stir and Progress." However, it won't have the same effect. For everyone to get their original partner back at the end of a "Girl Power" singing call, the dancers would need to "Wrong Way Promenade, Sides Reverse Stir, and Heads Reverse Progress." Wrong Way Promenade during a singing call is perhaps a little bit too weird!

Stir and Progress

Progressive Squares Patter

- For ANY arrangement of squares; incomplete matrix is OK. Bigger is better.
- Dancers move horizontally and vertically all over the floor.
- Everybody gets home, even dancers in the margins!
- From squared sets, call 4x
 1. Progress
 2. Progress
 3. Reverse Stir
 - Or equivalent: Stir 3x. Better: resolve set opposite of Home, then Stir.

The above sequence of calls, called four times, will resolve everybody at Home for ANY arrangement of squares. However, All Progress will have dancers scatter horizontally and vertically, causing many squares to totally disappear and reform. This action likely is beyond the ability of many dancers to spatially orient themselves and see target spots.

Here I propose a better sequence that likely will have the entire floor succeed.

- From squared sets, call 4x
 1. Girls Progress
 2. Girls Progress
 3. Four Ladies Chain, Girls Stir

The Boys will provide target spots for the Girls, and because of normal corner progression in singing calls, Girls are already accustomed to changing Home multiple times during tips.

Of course, the above sequence is merely a template. For variety and showmanship, before each/any step in the sequence, you would call and resolve the set to provide a great dance experience.

If you believe the Boys on the floor can reliably manage to remember their Home after a Stir (4x), consider the better flowing set of calls:

- From squared sets, call 4x
 1. Girls Progress
 2. Girls Progress
 3. Four Ladies Chain, All Stir

I would love to hear about your experiences using Stir and Progress for both small and large groups of progressive squares.