

## Basic Maneuvers

One of the biggest hurdles new callers face is learning to put one call in front of the other. Anyone can learn to resolve a square, just as anyone can learn basic arithmetic. *Wade Driver* once quoted *Marshal Flippo* to me, saying, “There’s timing, there’s flow, and all that other @@@.” This phrase stuck with me over the years, and the more I think of it the more I believe it. *Resolution* deals with the *Science of the Square*. The *Art of Choreography* is *Timing and Flow*. In this article, we’ll take a brief look at delivering smooth and danceable choreography with the CALLERLAB Basic Program.

It is painful for me to watch a new caller, who’s been studying and practicing for a while, struggle to present even the simplest of material. It’s sometimes shocking to learn how long a “new caller” has actually been at it while failing to develop skill. If you want to progress, you have to put in the effort. Go that extra mile. Don’t worry, though, they say, “*There is very little traffic on the extra mile.*”

Modules can be instructive and are probably a wise place for the total novice to begin. Yet, we all expect a *moment* when a *module* shifts from a list of *calls on a page or in memory* to deeper understanding. Why is one module better than another? Why can’t the dancers dance what I write? What is <*your favorite caller’s*> secret? Let’s look at a starting place to seek enlightenment so you can answer these and similar questions for yourself.

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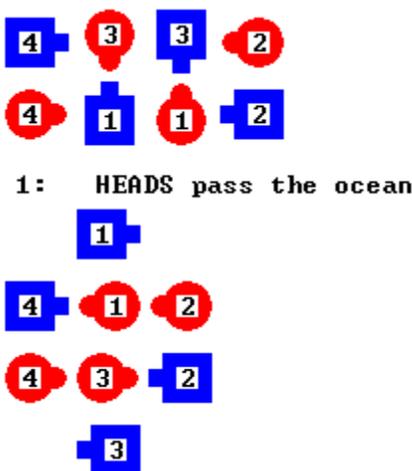
Before we can call any sort of a sequence, we must know what our choices are. What are the options? The tables below ask the simple question, “What can we do from ‘X’ formation?” Certainly, you need to know this information cold. Excluding phantoms, you wouldn’t call a *Pass Thru* to dancers who are facing no one! So, as a first step, take a look at the tables and explore *options*. There are certainly formations and options that are not included, but the tables should cover a good portion of danceable choreography you might construct with Basics.

<b>What Can We Do From Facing Dancers</b>	<b>What More Can We Do From Facing Couples</b>	<b>What Can We Do From Back To Back Couples/Lines</b>
Pass Thru Dosado Touch ¼ Circle Face a Direction U-Turn Back Turn a 2-Handed Star a Fraction Arm Turn Pull By Circulate	Square Thru <N> Veer Left/Right Lead Left/Right Flutterwheel Reverse Flutterwheel Sweep 1/4 Circle to a Line [8 Ch] Half Sashay/Rollaway Get into an Ocean Wave Pass the Ocean [Left] Swing Thru Partner Trade [less common] Other Trades Wheel Around Turn a Four Hand Star a Fraction Face a Direction Split 2 RL Thru * Dive Thru * California Twirl * Two Ladies Chain * Some Ocean Wave Calls (Facing Couples Rule)	Half Sashay/Rollaway U-Turn Back/Face a Direction Courtesy Turn * Circulate California Twirl * Wheel Around Trade Run Bend the Line [Lines] Cross Run [Lines] Wheel And Deal [Lines]
<i>If Facing Dancers Are Mixed Sex</i>		<b>What Can We Do With a Single Couple</b>
Star Thru Box the Gnat Courtesy Turn Swing		Half Sashay/Rollaway U-Turn Back/Face a Direction Separate Courtesy Turn * Wheel Around Trade Run

<b>What Can We Do From ...</b>		
<b>Two-faced Lines</b>	<b>Trade By</b>	<b>Starting Double Pass Thru</b>
Circulate Trades California Twirl * Center Arm Turns/Casts Half Sashay/Rollaway U-Turn Back/Face a Direction Courtesy Turn * Chain Down the Line * Veer Left/Right Bend the Line Run/Cross Run Wheel Around Ferris Wheel Wheel and Deal	Work Centers as Facing Couples Work Ends as a Single Couple U-Turn Back/Face a Direction Wheel Around Courtesy Turn * Circulate California Twirl * Trade By Run Half Sashay/Rollaway Ends Separate ...	Work Centers as a Facing Couple Work Ends as a Single Couple Half Sashay/Rollaway Wheel Around U-Turn Back/Face a Direction [uncommon] Circulate Double Pass Thru Trade Run Zoom
<b>Completed Double Pass Thru</b>	<b>Ocean Waves</b>	<b>Columns &amp; Mini-waves</b>
Work with Ends or Centers U-Turn Back/Face Any Direction Half Sashay/Rollaway [very uncommon] Circulates Wheel Around Trade Run First Go L/R, Next Go R/L Zoom Leaders Separate Trailers Split 2	Swing Arm Turns Some Facing Couple Calls (OW Rule) Swing Thru/Left Swing Thru Run/Cross Run Trades Circulates [uncommon] Ends Zoom	Circulate Arm Turns Trade Run
		<b>Quarter Tag</b>
		Extend Work with the Center Wave Work with ends as a Couple Work with Facing Dancers (very centers and an outside dancer)

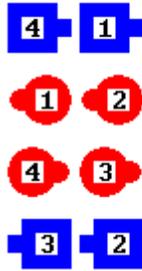
\* Requires Standard Couples

Let's say you want to call a sequence of about 10 calls. You stare out at the squared set. What are your options? Going by the tables alone, you should be able to see you have some choices. You could work the Heads as Facing Dancers, Facing Couples, or perhaps work only a Single Couple. The choice is yours. Keep in mind that *knowing what the dancers are comfortable with is one key to producing smooth choreography.*



Now that you have selected a call, you need to know how it transforms the formation and what its movements are. Be conscious of the *arrangement*, which refers to where the sexes are in the formation. Standard Couple material is usually easiest. *Heads Pass the Ocean* transformed the Squared Set into a Quarter Tag. What are your options? Consult the table.

2: extend

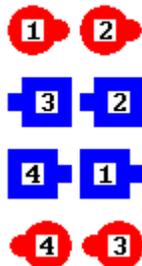


Dancers should be very comfortable with *Extend* from a normal quarter tag. Remember, calling “comfortable material” for the dancers helps to make your choreography *smooth*. The formation has transformed from Quarter Tag to Parallel Right Handed Ocean Waves. What are your options?

Suppose you chose *Swing Thru*, or *Girls Trade*. Dancers should be able to handle either without a hitch. When presenting this combination, *Extend – Girls Trade*, or *Extend – Swing Thru*, you might consider delivering both calls at the same time. Say, “*Extend and Swing Thru*” or “*Extend and Girls Trade*”. This avoids allowing the dancers to come to a *complete stop* before getting the next call.

Reasonable timing should lead the dancers into the next call without pause. There are times when a pause, or balance, or *collection*, is necessary. It might mean the difference between breakdown and success in one or more squares. Getting *everyone* moving to the beat and *dancing* can be tricky on floors with a wide range of ability, but that’s part of the game. Try to lead dancers into the next call without hesitation whenever you can.

3: swing thru



The *Swing Thru* is a call with *flow* built into its motion. Dancers turn right, then left; those moving into the center dance in a *figure 8 pattern*. Ideally, a good portion of your choreography should have a nice balance between left and right motion. So, what are your options now? Consult the tables and select a call.

Now, ask yourself this question, “What is a good continuation after *Swing Thru*.” Remember to consider the arrangement as well, but the usage above is about as standard as it gets. What are dancers expecting? Do you want to build their confidence or shake them up a little? This is your choice also.

## Tension and Release

There is a game of building and releasing *tension* that is played while maneuvering dancers through a sequence. Calling what the dancers expect *releases* tension, while calling anything *unexpected, difficult, or awkward* builds tension. You might want to play it safe and keep the tension low. This is a good choice when gaining the dancers' confidence. You might want to raise it to build excitement and create a little challenge. Too much tension causes breakage. The *release*, after a buildup of tension, can translate into *reward* for the dancers – especially when that *reward* is the *get-out!*

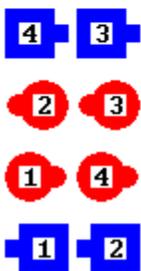
For call #4, did you select *Boys Run*? Does this raise tension, or keep it leveled? *Boys Run* is a good continuation after this usage of *Swing Thru*, and it is a very common continuation that the dancers

expect. So, it does not raise tension. Let's try a different continuation.

4: By the Right Hand trade and the GIRLS circulate



5: BOYS circulate



*Swing Thru* is natural after a *Swing Thru*, and you've probably heard it called, "*Swing Thru Double*," from time to time. The choice above starts like a *Swing Thru* and continues with a *Centers Circulate*. For one dancer, it will feel somewhat like a *Swing Thru*, while the other must move across the square. Since the girl moving across is not there to *trade* with the other girl, it could cause trouble. This is *not* what dancers are expecting. Does this raise tension, keep it leveled, or lower it?

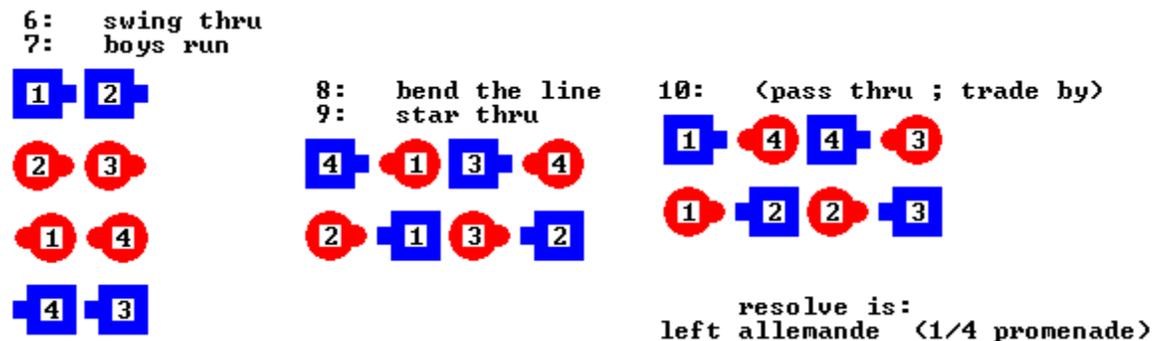
Notice that both the *Trade* and the *Girls Circulate* are packaged together. Hopefully, the momentum of the trade will propel the trailing girl across the square while the other figures out where she needs to go.

If you are calling to a strong floor and want to make it more challenging, you could combine #4 and #5 and call, *Swing Thru 1 ½ ... All 8 Circulate*. Why is this more challenging? Dancers have more to think about and decode before translating the calls into motion. The fractionalized *Swing Thru* forces dancers to figure out that the call can be divided into two parts and then execute only the first. The *All 8 Circulate* has everyone moving all at once, which removes landmarks that dancers use to keep themselves oriented.

Breaking the *All 8 Circulate* is into 2 calls, as in our example, makes it easier for the dancers. While the boys remain standing, the girls can see their box delineated. If the boys are not standing there, some dancers lose all sense of position and formation. The waves *vanish* in their minds and before their eyes – they are lost. In the combined version, *dancers are not dancing what they expect*. Therefore, the two call format is probably a better use of judgement. Now, if you have a slightly above average floor, you can probably call the *Boys Circulate* just before the girls finish their circulate. With a weak floor, you might have to wait until the wave has nearly reformed. Call *Balance, then Boys Circulate*.

*Balance* is a call – not a device to give your brain a rest. Here, it allows dancers to *collect* in an ocean wave and still perceive the sensation of *dancing* rather than standing around waiting for the caller to get on with it. When you use any call, use it with purpose.

Tension was raised by #4. Now, continue with straight-ahead calls, and move quickly to the *get-out*. Use a short series of “expected” and “comfortable” calls to keep that tension roughly in the same zone. Tension will begin to ease off with every “easy” call delivered. So, a short sequence preserves the current tension level somewhat. Give the dancers a little momentum going into that *Allemande Left*, and they will perceive a greater reward.



Certain flow modules are ingrained from long practice hours or repetitive use at live dances. Building or preserving momentum by giving the dancers smooth, danceable, material is what some of us call, *Wind in the Face*. When dancers are moving smoothly from one call & formation to the next with minimal effort, when it looks as if they may be experiencing a slight breeze on their cheeks, you are calling *Wind in the Face* material.

Strive to get to a point where presenting *Wind in the Face* material is automatic. Many new callers struggle to present a simple sequence like this (calls 6 – 10) with reasonable timing and a projection of confidence. Conveying to the dancers that you know where they are going, and that all will be well, is another piece of the puzzle. To summarize our discussion so far:

### 1. Understand your Options!

- Select an appropriate call for the current formation.
- Consider arrangement, dancers’ expectations, and comfort level when making a choice.
- Judge whether a choice is a good continuation from your *last call*.

### 2. Understand the Selected Call!

- Be intimately familiar with the call’s definition and motion.
- Know how a call will transform the formation and arrangement of the square.

### 3. Control the Tension!

- Be aware of tension levels and use them to your advantage. Dancers comfort and expectations relate directly to the tension level.
- Build tension to give your *get-out* more impact.
- Reward dancers with a *release of tension* through the *get-out*.

These three principles guide the groundwork you need to do to build a solid foundation of skills.

## Go with the Flow

What is a *flow module*, anyway? To my mind, a flow module is a short sequence of calls with reasonably good body flow that work well together. A *flow module* need not be functional. Where most modules have some functional point to them, zero, equivalent, conversion, and so forth, a *flow module* is just a representation of *good, smooth, calling*. In this section, we'll take a look at a few well known and reliable *flow modules* used by most successful callers.

I am going to be somewhat biased by my own region where the dancing level is not particularly brilliant. Obviously there are many choices that will work well, and in your own region, your range of choices might be wider. First, we look at the *most common* calls used from an 8 Chain Thru formation.

### Standard 8 Chain Thru Common Choices

Dosado to a Wave	Swing Thru
Star Thru	Pass Thru
Right and Left Thru	Touch 1/4
Circle to a Line (if preceded by Lead Right from a Squared Set)	
Veer Left (following Right and Left Thru, or if preceded by Lead Right from a Squared Set)	

These are your choices if you are calling what the dancers expect and find comfortable. Of course, other less common choices work well also. Now, after selecting one of these choices, what are common continuations that flow reasonably well?

### 8 Chain Thru Flow Modules

F1. Dosado to a Wave; Girls Trade

F2. Dosado to a Wave; Swing Thru

F3. Swing Thru; Boys Run

F4. Swing Thru; Boys Trade; Boys Run

F5. Swing Thru; Girls Circulate

F6. Swing Thru ... Double

(Swing Thru; Spin the Top is very common at Mainstream)

F7. Star Thru; Pass Thru; Bend the Line

F8. Star Thru; Pass Thru; California Twirl

\*F9. Star Thru; Right & Left Thru – note this is a hand violation, but it is still very common.

F10. Star Thru; Pass The Ocean

F11. Star Thru; Reverse Flutterwheel or Flutterwheel – note less common, but reasonable flow.

F12. Pass Thru – Trade By

F13. Pass Thru; U-Turn Back

F14. Pass Thru; Ends California Twirl – (A Dive Thru Equivalent)

F15. Pass Thru; Centers Pass Thru

F16. Right and Left Thru; Veer Left

F17. Right and Left Thru; Pass Thru – Trade By

F18. Right and Left Thru; Half Sashay

\*F19. Right and Left Thru; Star Thru – (another *common hand violation that dancers are used to*)

F20. Touch 1/4; Split Circulate; Boys Run

F21. Touch 1/4; Girls Run; Touch 1/4; Boys Run

F22. Touch 1/4; Girls U-Turn Back

(Touch ¼; Scoot Back is very common at Mainstream)

After Lead Right from Squared Set ...

F23. Circle to a Line; Forward and Back

F24. Circle to a Line; Touch 1/4; Single File Circulate; Boys Run

F25. Circle to a Line; Right and Left Thru

F26. Circle to a Line; Pass Thru – Wheel & Deal

F27. Circle to a Line; Pass the Ocean

F28. Circle to a Line; Right and Left Thru; Flutterwheel

After Right & Left Thru ...

F29. Veer Left; Ferris Wheel

F30. Veer Left; Couples Circulate

F31. Veer Left; Chain Down the Line – (*Flutterwheel is a nice continuation from here*)

F32. Veer Left; Girls Trade; Bend the Line or Couples Circulate

After HEADS/SIDES Lead Right from the Squared Set ...

F33. *Any of the above (F29 – F32)*

F34. Veer Left; Couples Trade; Bend the Line

F35. Veer Left; Veer Right (Relatively common. Veer Left; Girls Trade; Veer Right seems to flow better)

These are common flow modules in use, and dancers will mostly dance to them without blinking an eye. Get your checkers out and play with these combinations. I would personally avoid F9 and F19, because of the hand violations. To fix F9, I might call: *Star Thru, Forward and Back*, and then the *Right and Left Thru*. I might replace *Forward and Back* with *Dosado*. From the facing line, I am more likely to get a back to back *Dosado* rather than a *Highland Fling*, which is in fashion around town. The actual back to back version of the *Dosado* frees up the hand nicely, whereas arms locked around spinning Highland Flingers make matters worse! A good old fashioned *Dosado* is also a nice precursor to *Veer Left*, although it is not particularly common.

These combinations are snippets of patterns that you will see on the dance floor in your home town. Some of these are woefully overused patterns. Observe callers in your own area, and watch the dancers carefully to discover what they find “easy” and what makes them stumble. Then, fill out your own set of combinations for other formations – start with facing lines.

## Classic Continuations

Here are some *flowing* continuations that have stood the test of time, and are staples in many a bag of tricks. Beneath each listed call are continuations that you can rely upon. Hopefully the discussion will also help engender new insights and inspire you to analyze each call you use.

### Right and Left Thru, Ladies Chain, Courtesy Turn, Chain Down the Line

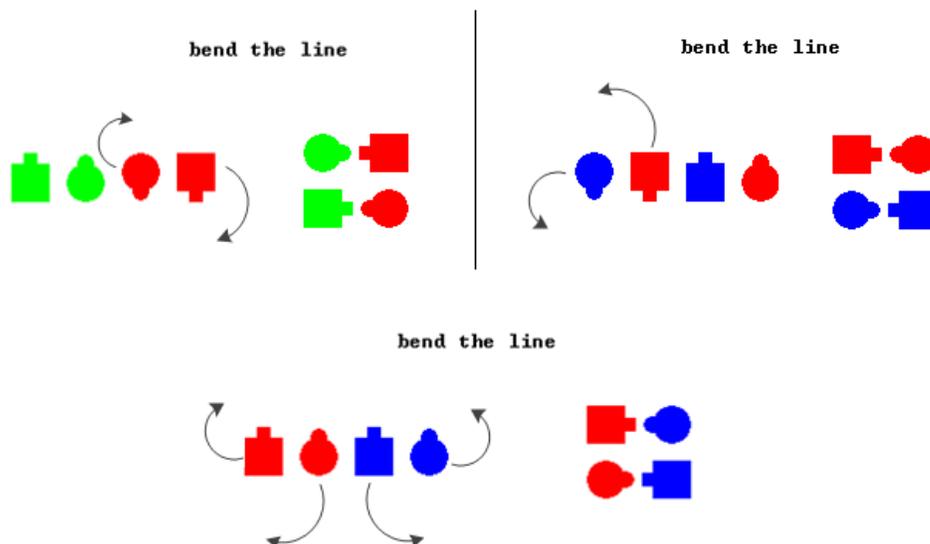
A *Courtesy Turn* provides leftward motion. The boy backs up in an arc, while the girl moves forward. This propels her into anything that sends her the least bit forward. If both dancers need to move forward, the girl will experience better flow than the boy since he has to abruptly change direction. Here are some good continuations following a *Courtesy Turn*.

C1. Ladies Chain	<i>Best used in lines where there is more maneuvering room.</i>
C2. Half Sashay or Rollaway	
C3. Veer Left	<i>Best avoided from facing lines.</i>
C4. Turn Her 1/4 More 'Til Girls Connect	<i>This is becoming more popular.</i>
C5. Girls Run	<i>Uncommon. Next call critical to avoid overflow.</i>

*Pass Thru, Forward and Back*, or the Chicken Plucker's *Dive Thru* are common continuations after a *Right and Left Thru*. *Pass Thru*, or some forward motion calls are common after *Chain Down the Line*. From a flow standpoint, forward motion calls aren't *best* for the right hand dancer who is backing up in the courtesy turn, but some usages, like *Flutterwheel*, have been so ingrained from rote exposure that dancers accept them.

### Bend the Line

Bend the line moves roughly to the right, left or both depending on the starting formation. The end dancers have the momentum, so, just as above, some calls naturally flow following a bend the line. Center dancers are backing up at least slightly. For best flow, choose a call that capitalizes on the forward momentum and downplays the backward motion.



### Bend the Line from Right Handed Two Faced Lines

C6. Reverse Flutter Wheel	<i>Say, "Bend the Line, Reverse Flutter Wheel" for timing. Treating the combination as one call avoids unnecessary stopping and takes advantage of the forward momentum.</i>
C7. Reverse Half Sashay	<i>Likely needs to be workshopped.</i>
C8. Veer Left	<i>Best from Tidal Formations or isolated centers.</i>
<i>{MS} Ends Walk Others Dodge</i>	<i>Common at Mainstream</i>

### Bend the Line from Left Handed Two Faced Lines

C9. Flutter Wheel	<i>Say, "Bend the Line, Flutter Wheel" for timing. Treating the combination as one call avoids unnecessary stopping and takes advantage of the forward momentum.</i>
C10. Half Sashay or Rollaway	
C11. Ladies Chain	<i>From Standard Couples. Combine as one call.</i>
C12. Veer Right	<i>Best from Tidal Formations or isolated centers.</i>
<i>{MS} Dixie Style to a Wave</i>	<i>Nice Flow at Mainstream.</i>

### Bend the Line from Back to Back Lines

Ends are moving forward, and can be tasked to act. Many callers avoid these choices despite the fact that they flow naturally. The most common continuations are forward moving calls for *everyone*.

C13. Pass Thru	<i>Common</i>
C14. Pass Thru – Wheel and Deal	<i>PT – WD called as one call.</i>
C15. Right and Left Thru	
C16. Pass the Ocean	
C17. Touch 1/4	
C18. Star Thru	
C19. Forward and Back	<i>Use only to "collect" and synchronize your floor.</i>
<i>C20. Ends Pass Thru</i>	<i>Uncommon, but nice flow. Make sure you have a normalizing continuation.</i>
<i>C21. Ends Touch ¼</i>	
<i>C22. Ends Star Thru (if Mixed Sexes Facing)</i>	

### Star Thru

*Star Thru* leaves the boy's right hand and the girl's left hand tied up, or unavailable for the next call due to previous use in *Star Thru*. This makes following *Star Thru* with any sort of hand movement for the *couple undesirable*. Often a better choice is to call *Slide Thru* if it is available or "*No Hands Star Thru*" if you think that will cause no issues with your dancers. Still, a great many common continuations suffer through a hand violation, and most often the women are the victims.

Facing dancers do a modified Pass Thru with one another, and then, turn ¼ to become partners, boys to the right, girls to the left. This is complicated by the fact that the girls are turning beneath a hand held arch—there are all kinds of ways to get tangled up. After *Star Thru*, there is a slight adjustment period to

appropriately take hands. More experienced dancers often hold off on that adjustment until they hear the next call – assuming it is delivered with reasonable timing. I believe this is one reason, that for some continuation, you might observe *smoothness* from the more experienced and near derailment from beginners. Add Advanced or Challenge dancers into the mix and some might use a “touch and go.” This leaves the inexperienced baffled about what to do next. The security provided by the hand has been stolen away. Without that security and left to their own devices, new dancers may experience a short spike of panic.

All this should reinforce the idea that you need to be aware of the ability level and styling practices of your floor. Some dancers may find *Star Thru* slightly disorienting. Make appropriate adjustments in timing and choices of continuation. An “expected” continuation will go a long way toward increasing success. Because of the contrary turning motion, a continuation that moves forward is a good choice. Calling, “Face Your Partner” is not a bad choice. There is slight momentum that tends to split dancers apart from one another after *Star Thru*, so calling *Veer* (left/right) grates against that tendency.

### Star Thru Ending In Facing Couples

C23. Pass Thru	<i>Common</i>
C24. Pass Thru – Wheel and Deal	<i>Lines: PT – WD called as one call.</i>
C25. Pass Thru – Trade By	<i>8 CH: Called as one call.</i>
C26. Dosado	<i>Frees hands.</i>
C27. Split 2, Round 1 to a Line	<i>8 CH: Plays into the Ends’ tendency to move away from their partners.</i>
C28. Face Your Partner	
C29. Double Pass Thru	<i>Common From Starting Double Pass Thru.</i>
C30. Flutterwheel or Reverse Flutterwheel	<i>Infrequent, but the flow is acceptable.</i>
C31. Two Ladies Chain	<i>Uncommon</i>

### Star Thru Ending In Back to Back Couples

C32. Trade By	<i>Common from Trade By Formation</i>
C33. California Twirl	<i>Common – especially from Back to Back Lines.</i>
C34. Partner Trade	
C35. Face Your Partner	<i>Uncommon, but it has no flow issues.</i>

### Star Thru Ending In Two Faced Lines

*These calls should be delivered together as one. The idea with the timing is to present before completion of the Star Thru. Dancers will adjust to smooth things out if they know where they are going in advance.*

C36. Centers Trade	<i>Common. Called to sexes (Boys/Girls Trade).</i>
C37. Couples Circulate	<i>Fairly Common. Not as smooth as the trade.</i>
C38. Ferris Wheel	
C39. Couples Trade	<i>Uncommon. Reasonable Flow.</i>
C40. Centers or Ends Circulate	<i>Uncommon. Called to sex. Dancers have to release.</i>

## Wrap Up!

With the flow modules given and the selected call studies above, you should be able to gain some significant ground in increasing your understanding. Everyone must start somewhere, and I need further study as well! There are brilliant callers out there who know and practice the art far better than I. I hope this discussion can get you thinking in a helpful direction. Obviously this article has left more for you to explore. It is by no means complete. I encourage you to fill in the blanks, and would love to hear what you created.

Remember to dance. Remember to observe. Remember to consult. Remember to practice with your checkers and write material; make it as smooth as you can. Finally, remember to have fun. That translates into success – at least on some level.

Cheers,

Michael Haworth