

Rotorua Scottish Country Dance Club

Introduction to Scottish Country Dancing (SCD)

Terminology

There is a whole new language in SCD and here are some of the terms that you will come across.

Set	Dances are normally danced in sets of 3 or 4 couples, arranged either longwise or in a square.
Top/Bottom	The top is the part of the set that is nearest to the band or music and the bottom (or foot) is that which is furthest away. 1st couple is at the top of the set and other couples are 2nd, 3rd etc. (counting clockwise in a square set).
Own/Opposite side	In a longwise set, looking from the top, the ladies stand on the left and the men stand on the right. This is referred to as your 'own' side. Your partner's side is referred to as your 'opposite' side. Of course, where two ladies (or two men) partner each other, one opts to dance as a 'man' and the other as a 'lady'.
Cast Up/Down	To cast, is to dance behind the dancers (one or more) standing beside you. The direction may be towards either the top (Up) or the bottom (Down).

Music

There are three main musical rhythms in SCD.

Rhythm	Tempo	Learn more and listen to some example tunes
Reel	Faster (4/4 time)	rscds.org/learn/music-resources/types-tunes/reels
Jig	Faster (6/8 time)	rscds.org/learn/music-resources/types-tunes/jigs
Strathspey	Slower (4/4 time)	rscds.org/learn/music-resources/types-tunes/strathspeys

Steps

The steps that are used in SCD are performed while either travelling or setting (on the spot).

Type	Reel or Jig	Strathspey
Travelling (forwards and backwards)	Skip change of step	Strathspey travelling step
Travelling (sideways)	Slip step	
Setting	Reel and Jig setting step	Strathspey setting step

Learn more and watch the steps on video here: rscds.org/learn/steps-techniques/steps-holds

Formations

The formations which are covered during your first few weeks include:

Circle or Hands Round	Cast	Turning
Lead Down the Middle and Back	Figure of Eight	Advance and Retire
Hands Across	Rights and Lefts	Promenade

Learn more and watch the formations on video here: rscds.org/learn/steps-techniques/formations

Have Fun!

Never forget that while good technique and precise footwork may enhance your enjoyment, the pleasure in Scottish country dancing comes from the way everyone dances together in a spirit of friendliness, accompanied by social courtesies and helpful anticipation between the dancers.