

Ben's Top 10 Tips for Ceilidh beginners

1. Don't be afraid to ask someone to dance – that's what we're here for silly!
2. Always join a new set of dancers at the bottom – it's considered rude to push in at the top unless invited!
3. Enjoy the dance and don't be afraid of making mistakes – that's all part of the fun! Too many people take it far too seriously.
4. By the same token, be aware that constantly 'playing the fool' may irritate the purists!
5. Ask the caller if you don't understand – they will always be happy to go over it one more time - you won't be the only confused one in the room - promise!
6. If you're anxious about making a mistake, ask to be 'top' couple in the set – that way you benefit from the walk through... cunning.
7. Stay well hydrated – non-stop dancing is thirsty work.
8. Try to listen to the rhythm of the music and the caller. A common mistake novice dancers make is to try to dance all of the figures *exactly* as they were explained in the walk through. Most dances (and music) are written in 8 beat segments. If during the dance you haven't quite finished a figure when the 8 beats is up (and the caller shouts the next figure) – move on! Don't try to squeeze it in or you won't have time for the next bit.
9. Try to view the dance as a whole by following what other dancers are doing to see how this fits in with 'your bit'. Don't be put off if a friendly arm nudges you in the right direction – it's with the best of intentions (usually!).
10. Consider joining your local folk club. You will learn many traditional dances, meet new friends and keep fit - all at the same time.