

# Rounds at Tech Squares

Tech Squares alternates square and round dances. Now you know how to dance club-level squares. If cued partner dancing looks like fun, you should give round dancing a try, too!

If you have any questions about round dancing, find one of our rounds coordinators—they wear labels under their Tech Squares badges. The current rounds coordinators:

Andy Latto

Rachel Downing

They can be emailed at [tech-squares-rounds-coordinator@mit.edu](mailto:tech-squares-rounds-coordinator@mit.edu)

There is also a low-traffic mailing list for those interested in round dancing—no experience necessary, just interest. To subscribe, go to

<http://mailman.mit.edu/mailman/listinfo/tech-squares-rounds>

Rounds classes are offered every week just before Tech Squares, from 7–8. Unlike the squares class, which takes a 13-week commitment, we break the rounds classes up into month-long pieces. Just like the squares class, you don't need a partner, and you should expect to change partners frequently. We normally ask new dancers to take one of the beginner's classes (September, January, February) first, but if you're interested in starting rounds earlier than that, talk to one of the rounds coordinators, and they will help you find an appropriate class to start with.

Rounds includes a variety of dances, or “rhythms”; At Tech Squares, we dance Two-step, Waltz, Cha-Cha, Rumba, Foxtrot, and occasionally Tango, Jive, or Slow Two Step. Round dances have cues instead of calls and are organized into phases instead of levels. We dance rounds at three levels of difficulty: Phase II (easy), Phase III (intermediate) and Phase IV (advanced). There is no phase I.

Each month of lessons covers a different rhythm/difficulty combination. The schedule of classes is available on the web at

<http://www.mit.edu/~tech-squares/schedules/rounds-sched.html>

One way to learn round dancing is to come to our classes before Tech Squares. Each month usually starts with a technique class for that month's rhythm, taught by Jessica Wong. For the remainder of the month, Tech Squares's cuer, Phil Gatchell, will teach lessons focussing on the various steps of that dance.

Why you want to attend Phil's steps classes: in round dancing, as in square dancing, everything has a name, and you have to know the name to respond to the directions given over the microphone. Round dances have beautiful choreography written to fit the music, but you have to know the names of the steps to appreciate the choreography.

Why you want to attend Jessica's technique classes: round dancing is a form of partner dance (along with ballroom, swing dancing, and others). Technique teaches you how to dance with a partner—not merely next to them—and makes it more fun for both of you.

If you miss the first week of the month, feel free to come to the second week anyway—although Jessica's classes are excellent and we're very lucky to have him as a club resource. If it's later in the month, talk to one of the rounds coordinators; we can often catch you up on the classes you've missed. Please try to arrive for rounds classes promptly at 7 so that we can begin on time and avoid unnecessary review.

The other way to learn rounds is to just get up and try them! For squares, we discourage dancers who have not learned a level yet from joining a square, because if you can't dance the level, you can decrease the enjoyment of the other 7 people in the square. For rounds, your ability and experience only affect you and your partner. If you get up on the floor and have a good time, as long as you don't crash into any other couples (hint: keep moving counterclockwise around the circle most of the time), that's great! When in doubt, dance; you can always leave the floor if the dance is too hard for you. So don't be shy about trying rhythms or levels you haven't learned yet, but please be courteous and warn any unsuspecting partners if this is your plan.

Traditionally men dance the "lead" part and women dance the "follow" part in round dancing. Tech Squares isn't your traditional square dance club, of course, and you should feel free to pick whichever part you want to learn. However, the two parts are very different, much more so than in square dancing, so we strongly recommend that you choose one of the two parts, and stick to it for at least a year before starting to learn the other part.

Many of the more experienced round dancers enjoy dancing with new round dancers and helping them out—feel free to ask.

Each set of two rounds cued are at the same level of difficulty, and progress II-III-IV and back over the course of the evening. Start by trying the easier ones.