Square Dancing was called that because the dance took place in a square formation. Dancing in a square began in France, and became very popular in the American West. Every square dance needed a caller. A caller was a fellow with a loud voice who could call out the dance formations for the dancers and be heard during this lively dance. Dance music was played by a fiddler or an accordion player. It didn’t take much to have a good time!

You’ll need eight people to dance in each square. Pick a caller (the caller can be one of the dancers). Take plenty of time to practice, and go slowly at first. Once everyone knows the steps, turn on the music and speed it up! For music, try to get a recording of lively square dancing music—a favorite song is “Turkey in the Straw.”

Square your set. Stand in a square formation beside your partner. Everybody faces into the center. (Note: The black feet show where the boys stand; the white, where the girls stand.)

Square your set. Everyone faces center.

Bow to your partner. Turn to face your partner and bow to them. Then turn back to the beginning position.

Bow to your partner. Everyone turns to their partner and bows.
Allemande left. Turn to the person beside you who isn’t your partner, and hold their left hand with your left hand. Walk a full turn to the left. Turn back to your partner and drop hands.

Grand right and left. Hold your partner’s right hand with your right hand and walk by them. Put your left hand out to the next person in the square and walk by them. Keep going around the square switching from left to right hands as you walk by them, until you meet your partner again.

Allemande left. Turn to the person beside you (not your partner) and, holding left hands, make a full turn to the left. Drop hands and go back to face your partner.

Grand right and left. Hold your partner’s right hand with yours. Swing on past them to the next dancer. Hold left hands and dance on past to the next dancer, taking right hands. Keep going, right then left until you return to your partner.
Swing your partner. Loop right arms at the elbows and swing each other around, staying in the same spot in the square. All four couples swing around once, at the same time.

Swing your partner
Stay in your spot in the square as you swing your partner around.

Promenade back home. Partners link their arms, hands at the hip. The girl uses her left arm, the boy his right arm. Walk around the square a complete circle until you’re both back where you started.

Girls on outside, boys inside.
Promenade back home
Make a complete circle, stopping back where you started.