

Swirls

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1 Overview

First, the most important thing that a program's documentation should tell you up front but often doesn't: how to quit. If the "Setup Display" or some other not-a-full-screen Display is showing, press the [Cancel] button or press the \otimes in the upper right hand corner of the display. Then press "q". If either whole-screen display is showing (Edit or Squares), just press "q". If you want to have the program save its current dancer information and exit, press "x" instead.

Swirls supports a mixed dance having both couples and singles. The database for Swirls includes a separate line for each dancer; dancers may have "partners". No partner? No problem! Swirls itself will match singles with other singles every tip.

Swirls supports multi-program-level clubs; use the Setup Display (hotkey **s**) and select your currently desired "Minimum Pgm" level, and then **Done**. Swirls will leave the availability indications alone, but will only select those for square dancing via the Squares Display (hotkey: **r**) that can dance the requested program level. Change the program level as needed.

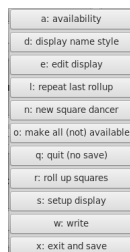
The program is largely run via hotkey and/or the rightmouse menu. To use the rightmouse menu, first click the right mouse button (or press **m**) ; a small menu of options will then appear. Make your selection by clicking on the item; to make the menu disappear just press the rightmouse button again (or **m**) .

Note that the hotkeys and the rightmouse will only work with the full-screen displays (Edit and Squares Displays). With the other (small) displays, your choices are typically on the bottom of the display (**Done**, **DoltNow**, and **Cancel**). You may select these by clicking them with your leftmouse.

If you've run the program before and generated a Swirls datafile, then the initial display will be the Edit Display using your last saved dance. Otherwise, you'll start with the Setup Display. Use it to set up your dance (program level, quantities of "anonymous" (ie. unnamed) dancers, where the output file goes, the name of your club, etc). Then you'll probably want to press the **New Square Dancers** button and enter your dancers' names. With the Edit Display, you may use the **n** key to generate new square dancers, or refer to the rightmouse menu.

Finally, once you've gotten yourself some dancers (either of the named or anonymous varieties), you'll want to use the "r" hotkey and roll up some squares!

2 rightmouse: Menu



Clicking on the “rightmouse” in the Edit Display or the Squares Display will bring up the rightmouse menu.

The rightmouse menu lists the hotkeys and actions one can take. Move the mouse up and down and then use the leftmouse button to select the action/Display that you want. If you change your mind and wish to cancel out, just click the rightmouse button again.

Selection	Action Taken
a: availability	Brings up the Availability Display
d: display name style	Changes the way names are displayed
e: edit display	Brings up the Edit Display
l: repeat last rollup	re-displays last rollup of squares
n: new square dancer	Brings up the New Square Dancer Display
o: make all (not) available	When in Edit Display, will make all (un)available
q: quit (no save)	Quits without saving
r: roll up squares	Brings up the Squares Display
s: setup display	Brings up the Setup Display
w: write	Writes square dancers to selected output file
x: exit and save	Writes square dancers output file and Exits

The hotkey for each action is shown just before the colon.

3 d : Display Name Style

The **d** hotkey will select a style for displaying names in the Edit and Squares displays.

Lastname only dancers' last names will be shown

LastFI dancers' last names followed by their first name's initial

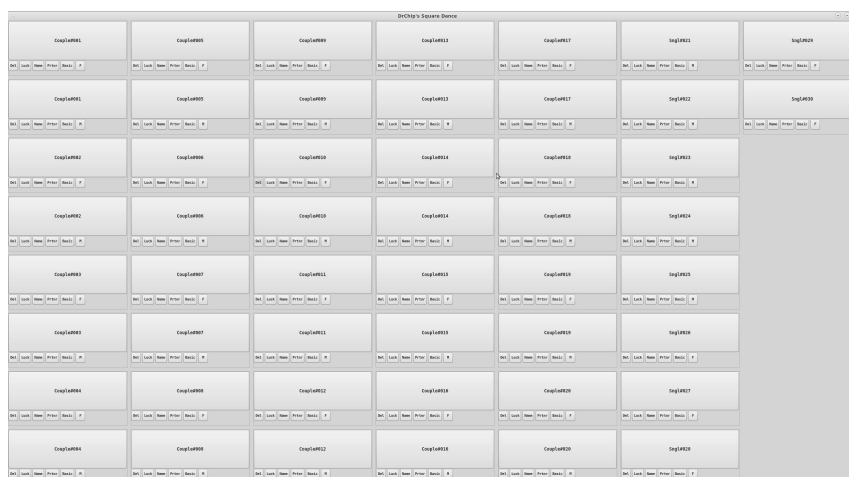
Firstname only dancers' first names will be shown

FirstLI dancers' first names followed by their last name's initial

The **d** key will go amongst these styles in a round-robin fashion.

The Setup Display (**s**) has a selector button for these choices, too.

4 e : Edit Display



has hotkeys has rightmouse menu

The “e” hotkey will bring up the Edit Display.

This display is composed of a grid of Dancer names and editing tabs. Each Dancer name is actually shown in a “toggle” button; if bright, the dancer is *available*; click on it and the dancer becomes “dark” and is no longer available for dancing.

For Partners: Double-clicking with the leftmouse will change the availability status of both the dancer and his/her partner.

I’ve extracted a single such Dancer as shown below:



This dancer is the female half of Couple#7.

You may have a popular club and have so many dancers that the Edit Display is full. Swirls does attempt to choose a font that will fit the dancers onto your display, but the Edit Display may still be too full. There will then be a scrollbar on the right hand side of the display that you may move up and down to see all the dancers' names.

There are six actions one can perform with this dancer using the editing tabs below it.

Del Click this and you'll get a requestor asking "Just checking: Are you sure?". Two options here: "OK" and "CANCEL".

OK Click on "OK", and the dancer will be deleted from Swirls's database.

Accidental Deletion: The dancer may not be totally gone if that dancer was in your database file; until you either exit the program by pressing x or save the live database with w the database file will still have the dancer. Pressing "q" will quit the program without saving, and thus you may then recover from erroneously deleting a dancer. Of course, whatever other changes were made since the last save will also be lost.

CANCEL Click on "CANCEL", and the dancer will *not* be deleted!

Luck Dancers are in two categories for dancing: they are either "Luck" or "Must". This is a matter of priority – "must" dancers have priority over "lucky" dancers. Use the "must" dance priority for a class with students, for example, and "luck" for your experienced angel dancers. Normally, the expectation is that dancers will have "Luck" priority.

Higher priority dancers will be spread out over the squares. This feature helps student dancers by not concentrating them in a few squares, exposing them to more experienced dancers.

Deep There's actually two more priority levels controlled completely by the program itself. In order to insure that dancers don't miss out on dancing more than one tip in a row, the program keeps track of the number of dances (tips, actually) a dancer has participated in. Dancers with fewer dances get a "want-to-dance" bump in their priority. So the priorities are, from the highest to the lowest: must+want, must, luck+want, and luck.

Name The “Name” button, when clicked, brings up another (small) display:



no hotkeys no rightmouse menu

One may change an already existing Dancer’s name with this tool. Press “Done” when you’re satisfied with the modified name. If you wanted a new dancer instead, press “Cancel” and then “n”.

Prtnr A dancer may or may not have a partner. Clicking on this tab will bring up a slider and a name (or “None”). When “None”, the dancer is considered to be single and Swirls will endeavour to match that dancer up with other single dancers every tip. The slider will only show names that are dancing-compatible with the dancer: that is, with singles that can dance the other part (a belle will be matched with someone who can dance beau, for example). When you’re done with this selection, just click on the “Prtnr” button again or click on the partner’s name.

Why can’t I make these two into partners?

Note that the Prtnr slider will only present dancers that are both available and dancing compatible. In other words, no M-M or F-F couples. If you get a request that a pair of people wish to be a couple on the floor, make sure that the program knows that they’re not both beau or belle dancers (can one dance MF or FM?).

What happens when a dancer’s partner isn’t present?

Sometimes only half of a couple will show up for your dance or a dancer will leave early. Swirls has no problem with this; just make the present dancer available and leave the absent partner unavailable. Swirls will then treat the single dancer as, well, a single!

Basic (or some other square dancing program). Clicking this button will allow you to change what Swirls knows about the dancer’s program level: basic, mainstream, plus, dbd, a1, a2, c1, c2, c3a, c3b, or c4. When rolling up squares, this selection is important, because dancers who have programs less than the selected program level won’t be considered. In other words, when the club program is at C1, a DBD dancer will not be considered when rolling up squares. You can change the club’s current dancing program by using the “s” hotkey (see Setup Display below).

If a dancer’s program level is less than the club’s current dancing level, then although the dancers’ availability will not change, available dancers’ PGM level’s (DBD, A2, etc) background will be displayed in red.

Why isn’t this dancer included in the Squares display?

Make sure that Swirls knows what their proper program level is; ie. use the Edit display as needed to fix their program level.

F (or M, MF, or FM) This is the sexy button! Oddly, there are four possibilities here:

Dancers who dance “F” are assumed to be able to dance the “belle” part.

Dancers who dance “M” are assumed to be able to dance the “beau” part.

A “MF” dancer is one who prefers to dance beau, but can dance the belle part, too.

A “FM” dancer is one who prefers to dance belle, but can dance the beau part, too.

This choice also affects the “Prtnr” button’s slider as to which dancers a dancer may potentially be partnered with, and the “Squares” display which will attempt to match single dancers with compatible single dancers.

5 n : New Square Dancer Display



no hotkeys no rightmouse menu

The “n” hotkey will bring up this display from the Edit Display; if you’re in the Squares Display, pressing “n” will bring up the Edit Display and the New Square Dancer display.

Here you can enter the first and last names of the new dancer, and use the buttons to specify luck vs must, program level, partner, and belle-beau preferences. See “Edit Display” for details on how these buttons work.

One may press “Done” which will enter the new dancer into the database, or “Cancel” to cancel without entering that new dancer into the database. The “DoItNow” button will enter the new dancer into the database but remain ready for another new dancer to be entered.

Entering two people as partners in the New Square Dancer display is also supported! In the “First name” entry box, enter the couple’s two first names separated by an “&”. If the couple shares the same last name, simply enter it into the “Last name” entry box; if the couple has different last names, enter them like you did their first names: separated by an “&”. Either way, Swirls will generate two dancers, one “M” and one “F”. You can always go and change something about a dancer in the usual way later (ie. via the Edit Display).

As a reminder, after you’ve entered in new dancers, when you’re next in the Edit display or the Squares display press w to write out the new dancers to a file.

6 o : Make all (not) available

The “o” hotkey, when in Edit Mode, will set the availability of all dancers to not available, unless all square dancers are already not available. In the latter case, the “o” hotkey will cause all square dancers to be set to available. This action makes it quicker to “reset” the display for a new dance session; one may then enable dancers as they enter.

7 r : Roll Squares Display

Couple#001: 2	Couple#007: 3	Couple#013: 5	Couple#019: 6	Sngl#025,027: 6
Couple#002: 3	Couple#008: 4	Couple#014: 6	Couple#020: 1	Sngl#026,022: 4
Couple#003: 5	Couple#009: 1	Couple#015: 4	Sngl#021,029: 2	Sngl#027,025: 6
Couple#004: 3	Couple#010: 2	Couple#016: 4	Sngl#022,026: 4	Sngl#028,024: 2
Couple#005: 3	Couple#011: 1	Couple#017: 5	Sngl#023,030: 1	Sngl#029,021: 2
Couple#006: 6	Couple#012: 5	Couple#018: Out	Sngl#024,028: 2	Sngl#030,023: 1

has hotkeys has rightmouse menu

The “r” hotkey will bring up the Squares Display.

This display is the one that your dancers will see most often. It consists of a grid of display-names followed by a square assignment. If you want a new assignment of dancers to squares, just press “r” again. There are four styles of display names (lastname, lastname+first initial, firstname, and firstname+last initial – use “d” to try them out).

Suggestion: if your roster has two or more couples with the same last name, use the d hotkey to use a name display style that will differentiate the dancers.

AutoScrolling: When the number of couples+singles exceeds the carrying capacity of the screen, the Squares Display will only show a subset of the dancers, but it will auto-scroll up and down to show all dancers’ assignments over time.

The Edit Display provides a vertical scrollbar which must be manually moved in such conditions.

Sometimes there just aren’t enough single dancers to make a temporary couple in some square. In those situations, Swirls will give the single’s name and display “(ask)”. Hopefully someone who is otherwise slated to sit out the dance will join in! I suppose that a phantom dancer could drop in, too.

Swirls will endeavour to match single dancers to other single dancers, and will display their names separated by a comma. Couples with different last names but permanent partners will be displayed with a colon separating their names. Couples with the same last name will always be displayed with just their last name.

Since Swirls knows about “MF” and “FM” dancers, it tries to honor preferences by matching M and MF dancers to F or FM dancers (and vice versa). No guarantee; the other combinations (MF:M, MF:MF, FM:F, FM:FM) can occur.

If you are running Swirls, you too may wish to participate in the dancing, but running halfway across the crowded room to your square assignment and back is not exactly optimal. You’re in luck: see the Setup Display’s square tagging!

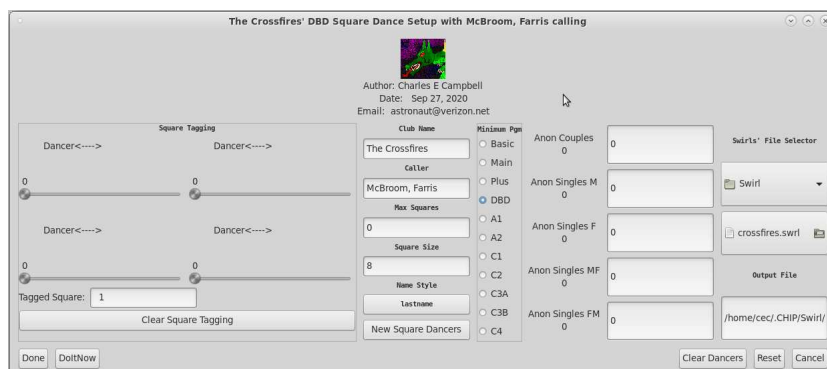
The “f” (ell) hotkey will bring up the previous (last) Squares Display.

Deep There are four priority groups of dancers (see Edit Display’s Luck description). Swirls knows how many dancers are in each priority group. Think of four decks of cards with dancers’ names on them; Swirls randomizes each deck and “deals” the dancers out to the squares, starting with the highest priority group, and spreading them out as it does so. Note that the “cards” are not by couple, but by each individual dancer. When a dancer is selected, their partner also gets selected, both are placed into a square, and both are then marked as assigned. When a card comes up with an already assigned dancer, that dancer is skipped as s/he is already in a square.

Why is this dancer displayed twice?

You’re looking at a single dancer who has been matched up by Swirls with another single dancer. You’ll note that the two square assignment blocks show “name1,name2” and “name2,name1”. This helps the single dancers to find themselves on the display. Don’t worry, the square still has just the right number of dancers in it!

8 s : Setup Display



no hotkeys no rightmouse menu

The “s” hotkey will bring up the Setup Display.

Here’s where the odds and ends of setting up your dance go.

Anon Couples Anonymous couples are appended to the list of square dancers; they have “names” like “Couple#042”. Entering 10 into the adjacent box will add 10 more anonymous couples to your dance.

Anon Singles F Quantity of anonymous single females (dances as belle); has a name like “Sngl#043”. These are appended to the list of square dancers.

Anon Singles FM Quantity of anonymous single females (prefers to dance as belle, can dance beau); has a name like “Sngl#043”. These are appended to the list of square dancers.

Anon Singles M Quantity of anonymous single males (dances as beau); has a name like “Sngl#044”. These are appended to the list of square dancers.

Anon Singles MF Quantity of anonymous single males (prefers to dance as beau, can dance belle); has a name like “Sngl#044”. These are appended to the list of square dancers.

Caller Used in the title of the two main windows (Edit and Squares). To actually get the caller’s name entered, you must follow their name with a <Return>.

Club Used in the title of the two main windows (Edit and Squares). To actually get the club’s name entered, you must follow the clubname with a <Return>.

Cancel Ignores any settings in the various dialogues and buttons, and returns to Edit Display.

Clear Dancers When one wishes to remove all dancer information from Swirls, use this button to clear them out. Probably you should save the dancers’ information first!

DoItNow Implements whatever settings have been made, but stays in Setup Display.

Done Implements whatever settings have been made and invokes the Edit Display.

Max Squares This is the maximum number of squares that Swirls can assign to. If zero, it means unlimited. Use this feature when your hall is limited as to the quantity of squares it can handle.

Minimum Pgm Subsequent tips require at least this program level of Square Dancing. For clubs that do various programs, use this to change the current dancing program (level).

Name Style This button shows the current name style (lastname, lastfi, firstname, firstli). Pressing the button will bring up a small menu of choices for the styling on how names are to be displayed on the Edit display and on the Squares display. Press **Done** when complete.

Output File The path to the file where the square dancing information will be saved.

Reset Resets all settings to their standard default values; Setup Display remains active.

SqrDancers' File Selector One may specify a file to read and write square dancing information with this chooser. The upper box specifies the *path* where **.swrl* files are located. The lower box holds the *name* of the swirls file you're wishing to use. Typically **.swrl* files are named after their club; ie. *clubname.swrl*. These **.swrl* files hold the saved square dancers' information (names, m:f:mf:fm, program level, etc). They are also used to specify the output file.

Changing the output file will cause Swirls to read in the new file if it exists and append the newly selected file's dancer information to the previous square dancer information. If you want the new set of dancers to replace the old set, press the Clear Dancers button.

Square Size Normally squares are composed of 8 people; one may choose a variant such as 12 (6 couples), etc, instead. Such a choice must be an even number; otherwise, it will be rounded up.

Square Tagging Up to four dancers may be "tagged" to a square. One may use the sliders in this box to select dancers and one may use the Tagged Square box to specify which square is tagged (default: 1). After rolling up new squares in the usual manner (Squares Display), Swirls will then swap any assigned and tagged dancers into the tagged square. Naturally this means that the tagged dancers' partners will also come along! The idea is to help those who are running the Swirls program to get in some dancing time themselves without having to run across a potentially crowded room to their otherwise assigned square. Square-tagged dancers get no priority bump from being tagged, though.

New Square Dancers this button will bring up the New Square Dancer display.

9 a : Availability Display



no hotkeys no rightmouse menu

The “a” hotkey will bring up the Availability Display.

The Availability Display is mostly intended to be used with Anonymous dancers (Couple#..., Sngl#..), but it can also take names. There are two boxes, one for those dancers who wish to become available and one for those dancers who wish to become unavailable for dancing.

By the numbers: Just enter the number, not the “Couple#” or “Sngl#” – the program will figure out who you mean and either make them available or not, depending on which box you used. You can even use a range such as “10-20”.

By the name: Enter in the last name, and the program will make them available or unavailable depending on the box you used. Just thought I’d point out that its probably easier to simply click on their names in the Edit Display, though. Don’t forget the o key – use it to turn availability off for all dancers.

10 w,x,q: Saving, Exiting, Quitting

w With the “w” hotkey, Swirls will write the square dancers’ information to the current output file

x With the “x” hotkey, Swirls will do a w and then exit

⊗ The ⊗ control in the upper right hand corner of the displays will terminate the small displays (New Square Dancer, Setup, Availability) or perform a w action and then terminate the Swirls program (Edit, Squares).

q The “q” hotkey will cause Swirls to quit without saving anything.

11 t : Total Dancers

The “t” hotkey will display, when in Edit mode, the total number of available dancers. In Squares mode, the “t” hotkey will display the total number of displayed dancers (ie. those explicitly displayed or implicitly as a couple). These two numbers should match, of course. A second press of “t” will clear the note away. You can also use this hotkey to clear any warnings.

Currently, I have elected not to put the t key in the menu.

12 Contact Information and Charity

If you have a problem with this program or a suggestion for additional features, please send me an email: astronaut@verizon.net.

In the event of problems, it will be a big help if you could provide your dancer database (ie. your *.swrl file) along with exactly what you were doing so I can duplicate the situation.

Swirls is “charityware”; if you wish to make a donation please send it to: *Columbia Presbyterian Church, 10001 MD-108, Columbia, Md 21044*; put “swirls” in the remarks area.