

Swirls: 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 ⊗ in the upper right hand corner of the display. Then press "q". If a whole-screen display is showing (Edit, History, Present, or Squares), just press "q". You'll then be asked to verify your choice: [QUIT] or Cancel. Quit, of course. If instead you want to have the program save its current dancer information and exit, press "x" instead of q.

Swirls is "*freeware*"; read the license at the end of the main Swirls manual. Using Swirls means that you have agreed to the terms of the license.

Swirls supports a mixed dance with both couples and singles together. 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 is fast! On my desktop computer it rolls up squares for 500 couples in about 2 seconds. That many squares won't legibly fit onto most monitors all at once; Swirls will automatically scroll the display in small increments up and down so that all squares will be shown over time. (*roll: think of dice!*)

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. As of version v3, you can also change the program level with the l and L keys.

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, History, Present, or 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 have already 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 but numbered) 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.

Please don't forget to save all that information you've laboriously entered by pressing the w key and writing the swirls file!

Dancers are indicated as available for dancing by being brighter on the Edit Display; non-available dancers have a gray background. Whenever you enter a dancer via the New Dancer display, that dancer is assumed to be available. To *change* a dancer's availability

status, simply click on his/her name in the Edit Display.

Swirls supports festivals with *rfid* cards. Couples receive one rfid card and Singles each receive a rfid card. The cards carry a unique number on them; swiping the card over a rfid reader sends that number to Swirls. Swirls will then toggle the availability of the associated dancer/couple. There are “special cards” which tell Swirls to switch between the Present display and to roll up a new set of squares, change the sex (M F MF FM E) associated with the dancer, etc.

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!