



### *Are there classes for children & teens?*

Classes for children and teens meet at various locations in the GTA and surrounding area. Check our website for contact details. Young people learn teamwork and social skills as they learn to dance. It's highly aerobic and everyone has wonderful fun. As one teenager said: "The feeling you are part of something so special and floor-shaking is magic."



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**Contact:**  
[www.rscdstoronto.org](http://www.rscdstoronto.org)



# Come Dancing With Us!

Dance  
Scottish  
Country  
RSCDS Toronto



# Scottish Country Dancing!

## *Fun, Fitness and Friends!*



### *What is Scottish Country Dancing?*

Scottish Country Dancing is an ancient tradition, typically danced in lines, with sets of 4 couples. It is accompanied by uplifting, rhythmic Celtic music, usually played by a band with accordion, drums, fiddle, and keyboard. When the music starts, you bow or curtsy to your partner and then go into a series of flowing patterns that vary for each dance. There are a few basic steps to learn, and a challenging variety of formations and dances. You can't think of your problems when Scottish Country Dancing.

### *Do I have to be Scottish?*

You need to be a “people person” not a Scottish person. Everyone is welcome. Despite the name, Scottish Country Dancing has roots in ballet and the royal courts of France, as well as Scotland. It was once the ballroom dancing of Scotland. Many dances are hundreds of years old and have fascinating historical associations. The music is infectious with lively jigs and reels, and the lovely and distinctively Scottish Strathspey. Highland regiments took SCD with them all around the world, and it thrives today from Moscow to Melbourne, Hungary to Hokkaido. It's BIG in Japan.

### *Do I need a partner?*

No! Scottish Country Dancing is an equal opportunity activity. *It's very sociable.* Dancers are encouraged to change partners after every dance. If you would like to dance with someone, just ask; others will certainly ask you. Man or woman, young or old, it doesn't matter: there are no wallflowers or shrinking violets — everyone takes part. Women often dance with women. Despite the long military tradition of dancing in the Highland regiments, men tend to feel uncomfortable dancing with other men but that's rarely necessary. However, a favourite dance, *The Reel Of The 51st Division*, was devised in a prisoner of war camp during World War II and is traditionally danced by men only.

### *Do I need a kilt?*

No. For beginners, and for many social occasions, all you need is comfortable casual clothing and soft shoes such as sneakers. As you progress, and start going to monthly dances, men, you will want a kilt! For formal balls men typically wear a kilt and black jacket; women wear a formal dress. It's a good idea to buy special dancing shoes early in your dance career. Men usually wear *ghillies*; women often use ballet pumps; jazz shoes are also popular. You will get a list of dance suppliers at the beginner lessons.

### *What happens at the classes?*

Your group is taught by a qualified Association teacher who will instruct you in the basic steps and formations commonly used in Scottish Country Dancing. In each class, you do several dances, building in complexity as you progress week-by-week. They are great fun to learn in a relaxed, friendly, and encouraging environment.

### *What exactly is a “social group”?*

Social groups tend to be neighbourhood oriented, and typically meet weekly in a church hall or similar location. They meet to dance, and to enjoy the company of others. Some groups organize “pub nights” or other events so people can socialize for more than brief intervals between dances. Though you may, you don't have to officially join a social group; most welcome casual visitors. Everyone pays a nominal fee to cover costs. You can dance almost any night of the week if you are willing to travel a bit.

### *Are there age limits, or health concerns?*

Dancers range from 4 to 94. It's good physical and mental exercise for everyone. There are special youth groups (check the website) and young people with dance experience are welcome at all events, particularly the annual Christmas Family Night dance. Dancing can be strenuous so if you have concerns, talk to your doctor. Dancing can be hard on the feet so proper shoes and due restraint are called for.

### *What if the class locations or days don't suit me?*

Another option is to dance with a “social group”. There are many social groups scattered through the GTA and surrounding communities. Most welcome beginners and provide basic instruction. Check our website for a comprehensive list of area groups.

### *What would be my best plan to become a Scottish Country Dancer?*

Sign up for beginner classes or join a social group that offers beginners instruction. Plan to attend the Association's annual Beginners' Night Dance (kilt nice, but not necessary). Attend special workshops to improve your skills. Social groups prepare you for RSCDS Toronto's Monthly Dances where dozens dance to wonderful, energizing live music. As you become more confident and accomplished, attend a formal ball — it may be the most fun you'll ever have!

### *Where are Adult classes held?*

Toronto RSCDS is affiliated with the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society of Scotland, who accredit our teachers. The Toronto Association holds classes at four locations. There are two 10-week semesters, one beginning in September; the next in January. It's best to start at the beginning of a semester, but late applications are accepted. Cost is reasonable.

**North End:** Mondays 7:30 - 9:30 pm  
St. Leonard's Anglican Church, 25 Wanless Ave.  
(2 short blocks north of Lawrence & Yonge.)

**East End:** Thursdays 7:30 - 9:30 pm  
Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave.  
(1 block west of Chester subway station.)