

Eightsome Reel

The Eightsome Reel is one of the harder ceilidh dances, but this has never prevented it from being very popular at ceilidhs. Even if you don't get all the steps right great fun is had by all those on the floor. It is a long set dance, but there is plenty of opportunity to catch your breath because of the order of dancing. Suitable music is any fast reels.

DIFFICULTY RATING: HARD (due to the speed, its length and number of steps)

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Sets of four couples, arranged in a square formation. A good memory for the steps (or at least one couple in your set that knows what they are doing).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE STARTING

Gentlemen with their partner on their right hand side, number the couples round the square (working clockwise) 1 to 4, starting with the couple with their back to the band.

The dance come in three parts - the beginning and end steps are the same and are only noted once below. After the beginning steps repeat the middle steps for each person in the set, starting with the ladies (1 through 4) and then then gents (1 through 4). The middle steps are described below referring to the first lady. During the middle steps if you are not dancing feel free to clap along to the music.

When dancing the grand chain at the beginning and end it is important to remember that gents always work their way round the circle anti-clockwise and ladies work their way round the circle clockwise - don't stop and don't change direction or things will get confused very quickly.

THE STEPS

Beginning and end	
Beats	Description
1-16 (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all in a circle holding hands dance round clockwise for 8 and then anti-clockwise for 8;
17-32 (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> drop hand holds, gents place your right arm round your partners waist (ladies left arm round partners waist) and hold onto them whilst ladies place their right hand in the middle of the set (forming a right hand star) and all dance clockwise for 8; couples about turn (don't let go of your partner's waist whilst turning) so that the four gents have their left hand in the centre of the circle (left hand star) and all dance anti-clockwise for 8;
33-48 (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turn to face your partner and set to them for the count of 8; link right arms and turn your partner clockwise for 8;

49-80 (32)	<p>The Grand Chain</p> <p>Note: during the grand chain gents are always moving anti-clockwise and ladies clockwise. It's important that you offer your first right hand to your own partner, otherwise people may be trying to offer you the wrong hand as you work your way round the set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • break the hand hold for turning your partner and take a small step back from your partner, offering them your right hand and casting them off ie dance past them; • offer your left hand to the person approaching and dance past them; • continue offering right and left hands, continue passing your partner when you meet the first time round and only stop when you meet them for a second time.
------------	--

Middle - Repeat for ladies 1 to 4 then gents 1 to 4	
Beats	Description
1-16 (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st lady enters the centre of the circle and dances solo (generally highland dancing style but it is up to the individual) whilst the rest of the set all join hands in a circle and dance clockwise for 8 around the centre dancer, anti-clockwise for 8 and then drop hand holds;
17-32 (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st lady faces their own partner and sets for the count of 4 then right hand turns their partner all the way round (this should take the count of 4); • 1st lady faces the gent opposite their partner (ie gent 3) and sets for the count of 4 then right hand turns the gent all the way round;
33-48 (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st lady alternately right hand turns their own partner and the gent opposite their partner twice each (ie partner, opposite, partner, opposite). Each right hand turn should take the count of 4; • 1st lady returns to the centre of the circle.
Repeat above 48 beats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st lady repeats the above this time dancing with the other two gents in the set (ie gents 2 and 4);
Next dancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • once the 1st lady has danced with all four gents she retires back to the side of her own partner and the 2nd lady enters the circle - following the above steps but starting with their own partner and his opposite (ie gents 2 and 4) before dancing with the other gents; • once 2nd lady has dance with all gents the 3rd lady will follow and repeat the above (gents 3 and 1 first, then 2 and 4). and then finally the 4th lady will repeat the above; • after all four ladies have taken their turn in the centre each gent takes their turn in the centre; • once all four gents have taken their turn repeat the beginning steps.

HOW TO CONTACT THE HEADLANDERS CEILIDH BAND

If you would like a specific dance included on these pages or want to know more about us then please let us know.

Email: mail@headlanders.co.uk, or telephone/text: **07721 494 004**

If you want a list of ceilidh related books with a wide range of dances please refer to the links page.

We have invested substantial time and effort in putting these resources together and you are welcome to use these dance instructions if you are seeking to organise your own ceilidh. In return all we ask is that you do one, or more, of the following:

- send us an email saying thanks, let us know how you found the site (Google etc, recommendation by a friend), some details about your ceilidh - how it went, what it was for etc, tell us if the instructions are clear enough;
- if you're in Aberdeen or the North East of Scotland why not ask us for a quote/check our availability. Our prices are competitive and having a band, with all the equipment, music and dance calls can make organising the ceilidh significantly easier on you - we know the amount of work that is involved in organising a ceilidh (and how heavy PA equipment is!) having been there ourselves;
- mention us to your friends and relatives if they are looking for a ceilidh band;
- provide a link to our homepage on your own website. All you need to do is paste the code between the square brackets into your own html code: [`the Headlanders ceilidh band`]