

FRENCH REEL (Denmark)

This Danish group dance with a French title, similar to an American contra dance, is good to use as a preliminary to learning American contras.

OPENING FORMATION: Two lines of dancers, with the ladies in one line and the men in another opposite them. There should be an even number of couples in each line. The couples are numbered 1 and 2.

PART 1: Number 1 and 2 men face each other. Number 1 and 2 ladies face each other. Shake right hands four times. Shake left hands four times. Now face own partner across the set and shake right hands four times. Shake left hands four times. All this is done in time to music and with broad smiles while saying "How do you do."

PART 2: Clap own hands, clap right hands with partner; clap own hands, clap left hands with partner; clap own hands, clap both hands with partner; clap own hands 3 times quickly.

PART 3: With hands on own hips, dance 4

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French reel steps in place as follows: Ordinary reel step: step on left foot behind right foot. Chug forward on left foot as you hop-swing right foot upwards. Step on right foot behind left and chug-hop on right foot. Keep repeating pattern. To make this a "French" reel step, the free foot is swung way out to the side on each chug-hop-step.

So, for **PART 3**, do four of these steps, starting on the left foot: left, right, left, right. Join hands in a circle of four (two couples) and do 4 step-hops to the left, starting on the left foot. Then 4 step-hops to the right and finish in two straight lines.

PART 4: HALF CHAIN: Partners join right hands and pass each other with 2 step-hops, changing places with each other. When they get over to the other side, the ladies turn towards each other and join left hands. The two men do likewise. (Do NOT TURN AWAY FROM THE SET.) With 2 step-hops ladies now change places with each other, and men do likewise; all finish facing their own partners

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across the set. Give right hand to partner and change places with 2 step-hops, and with 2 more step-hops turn in place so that all are in two straight lines again, EXCEPT that couple #1 is now in #2 couple's place, and vice versa.

NOTE: Walking steps may be substituted for the step-hops, in which case dancers would take 4 walking steps for each change of hands and, the last time, would take 4 steps in new positions.

PART 5: An arch is now formed by #1 and #2 men as they join inside hands. The #1 and #2 ladies join inside hands, too. Ladies and

men move forward, the ladies going under the arch to change places with each other. When they reach the other side, they drop hands and turn singly inwards to face across the set again.

Rejoin hands and return to place, this time with the ladies making an arch as the men go under. 8 walking steps are used to cross over and turn, and another 8 to return to place.

The dance is now repeated from the beginning, BUT each #1 person now faces a new #2 person.

