

Calling software can be a wonderful learning tool if used the right way. **Jim Mayo** has pointed this out in [Computers for Caller Training, 2010](#). Please follow the link and read this.

Tutorials for beginning callers demonstrate how you can learn with Callarama while observing this important principle. They emphasize skills that can be practiced separately and, when put together, help you become a good caller in the technical sense.

Of course, technique is not all. We need to adapt to our dancers abilities, move them around in an entertaining way and challenge them just enough to bring them further along. I leave teaching the art of calling to the coaches.

To follow the tutorials, please install [Callarama](#) on your Windows computer or on a Mac with an emulator.

**You do not have to pay for it: All exercises can be done with the free-for-all version.**

The exercises are based on Callarama version **03/01/2021**. If you already have Callarama, please make sure it is updated (connect to Internet on start to be directed to the update).

Special thanks to **Kip Garvey** who is advising me on these tutorials. Kip's Online Caller School <https://www.kipgarvey.com/CSCS%20Flyer%2002.pdf> offers a unique opportunity to learn calling from home.

## Tutorial 1: Know the Outcome

This goes to the essence of Jim Mayo's advice: For every call, imagine the resulting footprint, the "formation" of the dancers, before you look at them. You will need this information in order to give the next call while they are still moving.

You can do this at a real dance by listening to the caller and observing the dancers after the call has ended. With Callarama, you can do it more conveniently, at your own pace, and at home.

# Exercise 1.1 Anticipate Formation and Arrangement

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The screenshot displays the Callarama software interface with several panels and a central dance floor diagram. The interface includes a top menu bar with options like LAYOUT, CALLS, LIST, MODE, VOICE, CHOREO, TOOLS, LEARN, DATA, HELP, and INFO. On the left, there is a 'LayOut' panel with radio buttons for 'Intro', 'List Mode', 'Label Mode', and 'Mini'. Below it is a list of dance formations such as 'NORMAL SQUARE', 'ALL LADIES CHAIN 3/4', and 'HD SQUARE THRU'. The central area features a 'Dancers' panel with settings for 'Reverse', 'Enhance', 'Heads Only', '2 CPL', '1 CPL', 'NO MATCH', and 'NO GEN', along with checkboxes for 'Numbers', 'Gray', 'B/W', and 'Mark'. Below the dancers panel is a central dance floor diagram with numbered dancer positions and arrows indicating movement. To the right of the dance floor is an 'Open Music Player' panel with options for 'Voice Recognition', 'Voice On', 'Open Voice Editor', and 'Voice Help'. On the far right is the 'Callarama Choreo Collection' panel, which lists various choreography collections and individual dance calls, such as '001 4 Ladies Chain 3/4...' and '002 4 Ladies Chain Across...'. At the bottom, there is a control panel with navigation buttons (back, forward, stop, play), a 'Reset' button, and a BPM display showing '131 BPM'. A large number '6' is overlaid on the 'Reset' button.

The Callarama Window has a bar across the top where you select options. To configure it for this exercise, please follow these instructions:

1. Click "LAYOUT" and select "List Mode". This mode has the features we need here, whereas the basic "Intro" mode has limited functionality.
2. If the dance floor shows 3-D figures, click  and select "Checkers".
3. Click  and make selections as shown: Only the Head couple is marked, others in b/w, and no numbers. We will focus on formations and don't want to be unnecessarily distracted.
4. Click "VOICE" and set the checkmark at "Speak Calls Played". You can select your system's computer voice here and adjust the tempo.
5. Click "CHOREO" to open the Callarama collection of pre-recorded routines. Andy Shore's 500 Singing Calls are a good start. Select one, and the routine will show in the list on the left of the dance floor.

Note: In the free version, you normally see only the last 8 calls given, but a routine that is loaded from Choreo or Samples will be shown unabridged.

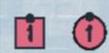
6. Adjust the speed in BPM to your personal ability of following the dancers. A normal speed for real dancing is 124 BPM.

Click  or press the down arrow on your keyboard to hear one call at a time while not looking at the dancers. Picture the resulting footprint (the formation of the dancers) in your mind and then compare to what you see.

To go back to the beginning, click  or press the left arrow.

To play the routine uninterrupted, click  or press the right arrow. Try to picture the dancers in your mind from beginning to end'

In the beginning, imagine (with closed eyes) just the formations (*where the dancers end up and where they are facing*). Recognize formation names ("*Parallel Waves*" etc.). Later on, recognize the arrangements (*where boys and girls are*) and their designations ("*normal*" or "*half-sashayed*" etc.). As an additional challenge, imagine where the Head Boy and Head Lady will be after a call.

To add a degree of difficulty, click  and switch to 3-D dancers. This feels more like a real dance floor; it is much harder to identify the footprints. Click the black markers at the edge of the dance floor to change the perspective (click in the middle to set back to normal). The perspective of a Caller from the same level as the dancers (not on a podium) is most difficult, but very often the reality.

**To make this exercise more challenging, use random choreography instead of routines from Choreo:**

In "VOICE", activate "Speak Calls Entered". Starting from any formation, click  in the lower left corner of the dance floor or (better) press "F3" on the keyboard. You will hear a random call announced. Imagine the outcome in your mind and then press the space bar to perform the call. This method will expose you to challenging situations.

**Note:** The resulting routine is random and not good dancing!

## Exercise 1.2 The FASR

“**FASR**” is an abbreviation for **F**ormation, **A**rrangement, **S**equence and **R**elationship. The latter 3 describe all possible locations of the 8 dancers in a formation. In normal (symmetric) dancing, a formation has 96 different combinations of ASR. This a daunting number, but you can start with recognizing the 6 **arrangements** (*how boys and girls are distributed in the footprint*).

There are over 300 formations programmed in Callarama, but the beginning caller needs much less and can study them as they occur in routines in the Callarama choreo collection.

To study formations and their arrangements, set all dancers to **b/w**; we will focus on the footprint and the arrangement of boys and girls.



Callarama displays the name of the formation at each step of a routine (before the next call) on top of the dance floor. For this exercise, go through a routine step by step and, looking at the dancers only, identify the formation by name. Then, only, compare to what is displayed above.

To learn about arrangements, click  to open the FASR monitor:

SEQUENCE		AFFILIATION			ARRANGEMENT		
BOYS		HD.BS. WITH		FLIP	NORMAL		
IN	OUT	PT	CRN	0	1/2 SASH		
1	2	3	4	RH	OPP	1	ARKY 3
GIRLS		SD.BS. WITH		2	ARKY 4		
IN	OUT	PT	CRN	3	ARKY 1		
1	2	3	4	RH	OPP		ARKY 2

We are presently focused on arrangement. Ignore the other settings and move the mouse over the 6 boxes on the right. The tooltip for each box displays the definition of the arrangement.

Click the boxes to display the arrangement on the dance floor.

The routine will disappear from the list, but you can restore it by clicking .

## Conclusion

This tutorial is completed when you can anticipate relevant formations and arrangements fast enough to still have time to give the next call at a normal dance BPM of 124.

When the next call is not specific to gender (e.g. “*Swing Thru*”), arrangement does not matter. However, for a gender-specific call (e.g. “*Star Thru*”), availability may be dependent on the arrangement, and the outcome will vary. Beginning callers should learn to anticipate when the active dancers end up in a 1/2 sashayed or same-gender arrangement.

**In Tutorial 2, we will associate formations and arrangements with available calls.**