



Scottish Ceilidh Dance Guide



Dashing White Sergeant

A classic progression dance — one of the most popular at any Scottish wedding

Formation Groups of 6 (two lines of 3)	Difficulty ♥♥ Medium	Music 32-bar reels
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About This Dance

The Dashing White Sergeant is probably Scotland's most recognisable ceilidh dance after Strip the Willow. Groups of six — two trios facing each other — work through a set sequence before one line passes through an arch and moves on to meet a new group. It's sociable, progressive, and keeps the whole room moving at the same time — wonderful for getting guests from both sides of the family mixing together.

How to Dance It

1	Form groups of six: two lines of three facing each other. Each line has one person in the middle with a partner on each side. Lines spread around the room with space between groups.
2	All six join hands in a circle and step to the left for eight counts then reverse back to the right for eight counts.
3	The centre dancer of each trio turns to face the person on their right. They set to each other (a small bouncing step, two counts), then turn with right hands joined once around (four counts).
4	The centre dancer turns to the person on their left. Set (two counts), then turn left hands once around (four counts). The non-active person stands still.
5	Centre person turns with right-side partner first, then left-side partner.
6	Both lines of three, holding hands, advance toward each other for two skip-steps, stamp stamp stamp, then retire for two skip-steps, clap clap clap.
7	Both lines advance again. One line raises their joined hands to form a long arch. The other line ducks underneath and walks through to meet the next group of three coming the other way.
8	Reform into a new group of six with the new trio and repeat from step 1.

Caller's tip: *The arch-and-through moment is where people get confused about which line makes the arch. Nominate one line as 'always the arch line' before starting and keep it consistent throughout.*

What to Watch For

- Groups forming incorrectly — remind people it's always two lines of three facing each other.
- The turning sequence (steps 3–4) — the centre dancer does the work; side dancers stand still and wait their turn.
- Timing on the arch-and-through — both lines must advance simultaneously or the progression breaks down.

Did you know?

The tune 'The Dashing White Sergeant' is a 32-bar reel and the dance is always started and ended with that specific tune. The title is thought to refer to the white dress uniform of a regimental sergeant, though the exact origin is disputed.