

16. Ladies Chain Family

The general action of Ladies Chain has two or more women each leave their current man, star (or right pull by) with each other, and be courtesy turned by a man. The caller indicates which women are involved and how far they star.

16.a. Two Ladies Chain (Regular & 3/4)

This definition covers the regular Two Ladies Chain. Two Ladies Chain 3/4 is described in the comments section.

Starting formation: Normal Facing Couples

Command examples:

Head Ladies Chain
Right and Left Thru; Two Ladies Chain
Right and Left Thru; Ladies Chain
Side Ladies Chain Over; Side Ladies Chain Back

Dance action: Women step toward each other and Right Pull By (or Right-Hand Star 1/2). Each man Courtesy Turns the woman coming toward him to end in Facing Couples.

Ending formation: Facing Couples

Timing: Facing Couples: 6; Squared Set: 8

Styling: Each man releases his partner, sidesteps to the right while turning his right shoulder slightly toward the center of the formation blending into the Courtesy Turn. Women use skirtwork for the Courtesy Turn (and in the star, if used).

Comments: Two Ladies Chain is improper if either couple is sashayed or same-sex.

From a squared set with the men at home, Head Ladies Chain is danced by those currently at the Heads position, even if this involves the original Side women (e.g., after Four Ladies Chain 3/4).

The next four comments refer to uncommon or regional applications of Ladies Chain and may require workshopping.

From a Squared Set, on the call Head Ladies Chain 3/4, often called as “Head Ladies Chain 3/4, Side Men Turn Them”, the head women will do their part of a Four Ladies Chain 3/4 (see below) using a 2-dancer star. The Courtesy Turn will be with the side men, and the ending position will be lines of 3 (boy, girl, girl) at the sides of the set with lonesome head men at the heads of the set. The timing of this application is 10.

From a Squared Set, "Head Ladies Chain Right" or "Head Ladies To The Right, Chain" has each Head couple work with the Side couple on their right. These couples momentarily face, do the call, and then adjust back to a Squared Set. Head Ladies Chain Right is the same as Side Ladies Chain Left.

From Facing Lines, “End Ladies Chain on a Diagonal” has the right-end women chain with each other, to be Courtesy Turned by the adjacent men. The phrase “Center Ladies Chain on a Diagonal” can also be used. Some callers use these calls to work up to Four Ladies Chain from

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Facing Lines. (The caller must distinguish these applications from Ladies Chain from Facing Lines, where the women chain with the dancer straight across.)

From Facing Tandems with women in front, the variation "On A Double Track, Ladies Chain" can be used: the women Right Pull By and Courtesy Turn with the far man. For example, Couples Circulate, Tag The Line, Cloverleaf, On a Double Track, Ladies Chain. This may also be called as "Single File, Ladies Chain".

16.b. Four Ladies Chain (Regular & 3/4)

Starting formations: Squared Set, Infacing Circle Of 8, or a "turning your partner left" formation (the dynamic formation obtained from a square plus all arm turn your partner by the left an indefinite amount)

Command examples:

Four Ladies Chain

Four Ladies Chain 3/4

All Four Ladies Chain

All Four Ladies Chain Across

Chain Those Ladies Over And Back (i.e., twice)

Four Ladies Chain; Chain Them Home (i.e., twice)

Do Paso, partner left, corner right, partner left; Four Ladies Chain

Shoot The Star; Four Ladies Chain

Dance action: All four women Right-Hand Star 1/2 (or 3/4, if designated). All Courtesy Turn to face the center of the set.

Ending formation: Squared Set

Timing: Regular: 8, 3/4: 10

Styling: Men use the Two Ladies Chain styling. Women use a palm or finger tip star. If at least two women are wearing full skirts, an elegant variation is for each lady to pick up and hold a bit of the right edge of her skirt, or an arm's length of a long skirt, as she reaches into the star. This arm's-length hold can be continued through the Courtesy Turn at a comfortable height and longer if the next call is Chain Them Back.

Comments: Four Ladies Chain is improper if any couple is sashayed or same-sex.

Four Ladies Chain can easily blend into an 8-dancer call that starts with a left arm turn or into an Allemande Thar. For example, "Four Ladies Chain; Chain Them Back with a Do Paso". See "Part 4: Additional Detail: Blending one call into another".

Some callers use Four Ladies Chain from normal facing lines. This is danced as if all couples were directly facing the center of the set except that it ends in the same facing lines. In some areas this is an extended application, and in other areas it is considered a gimmick. (See "Part 4: Additional Detail: Commands: Gimmicks".)

16.c. Chain Down the Line

Starting formation: General Line with the centers holding right hands

Command example:

Chain Down The Line

Dance action: Centers Turn 1/2 By The Right while ends adjust as necessary. Then the ends Courtesy Turn the centers to finish in Facing Couples.

Ending formation: Facing Couples

Timing: 8

Comment: At Mainstream, Chain Down The Line starts only with women as centers and men as ends because Courtesy Turn is restricted to men turning women.