

# Swing Into Health With The Swinging Swallows Modern Square Dance Club

**By: Rosa Lee**  
*OVHealth.ca Writer*

The Swinging Swallows Modern Square Dance Club has put a new bounce in an old step.

When most people think of traditional square dancing, they think of wild-west movies where couples swirl in dizzying colourful circles. Others recall those embarrassing gym classes in high school where we stumbled around, trying to decipher the caller's instructions. But, according to Gloria Bateman of The Swinging Swallows, square dancing has gotten modern, and more and more people are taking notice.

“Modern square dancing is not difficult to understand or to dance,” says Gloria, who has enjoyed both traditional and modern forms of square dance.

While traditional square dancing is usually a repetition of moves done to fast-paced fiddle jigs and reels, modern square dancing is done to pre-recorded music from many genres. Under the instruction of a caller, members of the club can learn Basic, Mainstream and Plus level dance steps.

Although callers may attend Caller Schools, Gloria explains that there is more to calling than just knowing the names of the moves.

“Callers first need to be thoroughly proficient modern square dancers,” she says. “They need to have patience and a sense of humour. They also need a good singing voice!”

The Swinging Swallows Square Dance Club is one of several throughout Ontario and the world. Membership packages include lessons, an instructional booklet, and a ticket to the annual Half-Way Dance in Carleton Place. The Swinging Swallows also have parties for most every occasion, including Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. These events are more reasons for members to get together, which continues the social aspect of the Club.

Besides being a fun social activity, Gloria claims that the modern square dancing promotes good mental and physical health. “For some, modern square dancing has improved their marriage by providing an active, inexpensive social evening out together,” she explains. “Others feel better because they

are more active and energetic.”

For someone who is legally blind, Gloria discovered personal therapeutic benefits from modern square dancing when the loss of central vision prevented her from working.

“Dancing kept my spirits up and provided an active lifestyle,” she says, noting that some of the other happy dancers also have medical conditions, including: heart surgery, knee replacement surgery, Downs Syndrome, and even an artificial foot. “None of these problems affect our dancing!” Gloria proclaims with pride.

“The benefits are many,” Gloria says. “It's an inexpensive method to getting exercise, making new friends and having a ton of fun!”

## **About The Club**

The Swinging Swallows Modern Square Dance Club meets on Thursday evenings in Pembroke. Their membership ranges in age from those in their twenties, to those in their eighties!

For more information on the benefits of modern square dancing, and to learn how you can become involved in this physically and mentally active group, please visit them online at: [www.getupanddance.ca](http://www.getupanddance.ca).