

MARCHING

ATTENTION

At attention, the body is completely erect, but relaxed. You should always carry yourself with an air of confidence, imagining yourself slightly taller than you may be. The most important thing is to remain relaxed at all times. The following describes attention beginning with the feet and proceeding up the body.

- Bring the heels together, separate the toes so there is about a 45° angle between them.
- Keep the knees straight, but relaxed. Don't bend them, but don't "lock" them back either.
- Keep your weight balanced and equal on both legs.
- The hips should be square to the toes.
- Bring your stomach in and keep your lower back straight.
- Shoulders should be back and down but relaxed.
- The neck should be comfortable and straight.
- The head should be straight with the chin slightly elevated above the horizon

For arms and hands, consult the individual technique pages.

1000 YARD STARE

When performing on the marching field, players should watch the drum major at all time, while watching where they are going and checking alignment of course. When warming up and playing exercises however, total focus of attention should be on listening. Try to focus the eyes "1000 yards" off into the distance, even if you're rehearsing indoors. This helps remove visual distractions that can break concentration and forces you to listen more.

MARK TIME

In mark time roll the foot heel-to-toe only high enough for the toes to leave the ground. The ankle should remain relaxed. There should be a slight natural "sway" of the drums when everyone is executing mark time properly.

GLIDE STEP

The glide step is used for forward movement or oblique (diagonal) movement across the field. From the attention or halt position, step off always beginning with your left foot on count "1". Extend the left leg forward with the knee straight. The toes should point up, keeping the angle of the foot to the ankle the same. The heel should hit the ground exactly on the beat. Moving forward in a "normal" manner, the foot should be rolled from heel to toe and from outside to inside. Your upper body should remain erect; don't lean forward or backwards. At the middle of the beat, the right foot should pass the left and continue to the next step/beat just the the left did.

It is important to remember to point the toes up with each step.

8 to 5

8 to 5 means 8 steps to 5 yards on the football field. Quick division means that this step size is $22\frac{1}{5}$ inches long. For most people, this step size is slightly shorter than a normal walking stride. To ensure an equal size step when moving across the field, visually divide the distance of five yards by the number of steps required. For example, every five yards on the football field is marked with a white line. If it takes exactly 8 steps to march from line to line, then it takes exactly 4 steps to march halfway. You should easily be able to visualize the half-way point between the two lines. March evenly so that you hit this half-way point in 4 steps. Half-way to the mid point should be reached in two steps. Half-way beyond the midpoint should be reached in 6 steps.

Unfortunately (or fortunately) very little marching during the halftime show is done side to side on the field, where the feet are pointing sideways (except for bass drummers. More on that later). But it is important to be able to develop a feel for the 8 to 5 step size, since this spacing is used to determine coordinates for the marching formations. The 8 to 5 step is also utilized in parades formations. Lastly, being able to divide steps evenly within any distance is crucial in executing fluid movement within the section.

Adjusted Step Size

Most movement on the field utilizes what is known as an adjusted step, decreasing or increasing the step size to fit the number of counts in a particular movement. Movements of this nature are called FLOATS, meaning the form "floats" to the next picture or set. In a float, it is imperative that band members guide off of one another, remaining equidistant from the member on either side. To determine the size of an adjusted step, each person should determine the distance required from point to point, then divide that distance by the number of counts required for the move. Visualize the half-way point and plan to reach that spot at half the number of counts, and so on as described above.

Upper Body Position

Generally speaking, for shares and quads, the upper body should face the audience most of the time. The angle of the instrument is determined by the shoulders and the hips and these should remain in alignment at all times. Whereas a wind player can keep their shoulders square to the sideline and turn their hips in the direction they are moving, when a drummer does this, the instrument will somewhat turn with the hips, making for poor presentation and more difficulty in playing, since the drums will be out of alignment with the arms.

In order to facilitate this, several marching techniques have been developed. The following section discusses these.

CRABBING

Crabbing refers to marching sideways, like a crab, keeping the entire body facing forward. The feet move "across" each other, rather than in front or behind each



other. When crabbing, one foot reaches out, and the other crossed either in front of or behind the other foot. Because of this, step size is always going to be uneven - one step larger, one step shorter. The same division of the distance in the adjusted step size applies, however.

Left to Right Crab

Since we always step off with the left foot, the first step when moving to the left is with the left foot "reaching out". The right foot then crosses in front of the left . The left leg should move slightly behind the center of the body and the right should move slightly ahead so that the feet may pay without making any contact.

Right to Left Crab

Again, since we always step off with the left foot, the first step when moving to the right is with the left foot this time crossing in front of the right foot. From a starting position, this will always be the smallest step. Make up the distance on the first right step, which reaches out to the right. The next left step will be slightly larger due to the momentum gained from the movement.

when crabbing, there is a tendency to gradually move "forward" in the direction of the crossing foot (right foot when moving left, left foot when moving right). This is usually caused by allowing the crossover foot to establish a new forward position and not moving the reach foot slightly backwards from center. Always use the hips as the guild for body position.

OBLIQUE OR DIAGONAL MOVEMENT

Obliques are a combination of forward (or backward) movement and crabbing. As always, it is important to keep the hips square to the sideline and audience. As a general rule, point the outside foot into the direction you are moving or in the case of backward movement, the direction from where you are coming. Keep your other foot pointed to the sideline. This will equalize the angle of the hips and keep the instrument aligned forward.

BACKWARD MARCHING

When marching backward, never allow the heel to touch the ground except at a halt. Whereas when marching forward the heel hits on the beat, when marching backwards, the ball of the foot hits on the beat. Staying on the ball of the foot helps to keep the upper body erect, avoiding a backward lean, and also eliminates the shock that occurs when the heel hits the ground, allowing for a softer, cushioned stride.

Backward step size will naturally "feel" larger. Practice dividing the distance as described above until you develop a feeling for 8 to 5 backward marching as well as the adjusted step. Think of "reaching" behind. Always keep the upper body straight and the instrument level.

BASS DRUM MARCHING

Bass drummers usually face sideways in relation to the rest of the line. as such, normal directional terms have different definitions for bass drummers.

<u>Normal</u>	<u>For Bass Drummers Side 1 Facing the 50 yard line</u>	<u>Side 2 facing the 50 yard line</u>
Forward March	Crab Step to the Right	Crab Step to the Left
Backwards March	Crab Step to the Left	Crab Step to the Right
Move to the Right	Backward March	Forward March
Move to the Left	Forward March	Backward March

The chart above may seem complicated, but it is not as hard as one may think once put into application. Bass drummers should always remember to keep their heads facing forward, to the sideline. This makes understanding direction much easier. Just follow the commands as normal, from the perspective of your head.

DIRECTION CHANGES

Much movement from set to set during a show is continuous, where there is very little complete stopping. As such, it is often necessary to execute abrupt direction changes such as moving from left, then right. The most important things to remember is that you should not bring the feet "together" before moving in the new direction. The first count of the next move should flow out of the last count of the previous move and in the new direction.

If the new direction is the complete opposite of the previous direction (left, then right or forward followed by backwards), then the last step in the previous move is THE SAME STEP in the new move. Don't bring the feet together or "shuffle" at the change. There will be a feeling of suspension of time as the feet remain in the same position for both counts. The only adjustment should be the slight shift in weight in order to change the momentum of the body.

MOMENTUM

Lastly, it is important to accept the fact that drums are "heavy". in order to move smoothly, you must develop the energy and skill to begin motion and change motion while controlling the instrument at all times. Everything starts with the feet and balance. Learn to push off and pull back while keeping the instrument still and level at all times (unless visually dictated to do otherwise). Avoid "telegraphing" movement with any preparatory motion. When stopping, control your momentum so that your instrument doesn't keep moving after you stop.