

Movement and Maneuvering Guidelines

for University/College Marching Bands
(with adaptations for secondary school bands)

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MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

I. IMPORTANT FIELD DIMENSIONS

- A. There are 8 – 22 ½ inch steps between yard lines.
- B. NCAA hash marks are 32 steps from the sidelines. This leaves 20 steps between the hash marks. Public school band directors should consult the activity association within their state for hash mark distances.
- C. On a regulation football field, the midfield is usually marked with an “X” on the 35 yard lines (which is 10 steps from either hash).
- D. Colored paint is used to mark check points on the drill field every four steps on the yard lines from sideline to sideline. The marks are called “GEORGES”.
- E. Most college football fields have yard slashes between the yard lines to mark the field in one yard increments. While these markings offer very little help in trying to establish an 8 to 5 interval, they can be of some help if approached logically.
 - 1. A four-step interval from a yard line is halfway between the yard lines, or between the 2nd and 3rd yard slashes
 - 2. The 2 step interval centers the body 9” beyond the closest yard slash to the yard line.
- F. Because the yard lines on college fields are wide, where each band member places the arch of their foot has an important effect on alignment.
 - 1. **YARD LINES:** When marching across a yard line, place the arch of the foot on the center of the line. When marching parallel to yard line, center the body on the center of the yard line.
 - 2. **HASH MARKS:** Same rules as yard lines.
 - 3. **SIDE LINES:** The inside edge is the actual line in this case.
- G. For purpose of body orientation while on the field, the press box is west and the backfield side is west., When facing the press box., the end zone to the right is south and the end zone to the left is north.

II. INDIVIDUAL DRILL

A. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMANDS

1. **FALL IN** — Find your predesignated place at a position of **AT EASE**.
This command will signify the beginning of each drill period. Listen for a long blast of the drum major's whistle.
2. **FALL OUT** — You are going to go somewhere else quickly, based on a set of instructions given before you fall out. The command should be given from the position of attention.
3. **DISMISSED** — You are released from the drill period until the next specified drill period.
4. **UNDER THE LADDER** — You fall out from any position or assignment and immediately run to whichever ladder the director is standing. Everyone must remain on the in-bounds side of the rehearsal field.

B. STATIONARY COMMANDS

1. FOOT PLACEMENT ON FIELD MARKINGS:

- a. The **ARCH OF THE FOOT (AOF)** — The part of the foot that we use to line up with.
- b. **YARD LINES** — Place the **AOF** on the center of the yard line when marching across the line. When marching along the line, center the body on the line.
- c. **HASH MARKS** — NCAA hash marks are 32 steps from each sideline. Use the same technique as for yard lines.
- d. **SIDELINES** — Because sidelines are inconsistent in size and width, we place the **AOF** on the inside edge of the sideline. When marching long the sideline, center the body on the inside edge.
- e. **CHECK POINTS** — We have small red dots on our practice field on the yard lines which mark each 4th step from the sideline to sideline. Center the body over the check points with the **AOF**.
- f. **YARD SLASHES** — College football fields have slashes for each yard

of the football field. We use these to help establish midpoints between yard lines and a two-step interval from each line. The two-step interval is 9" beyond the closest yard slash to the yard line. The midpoint should be obvious.

2. **AT EASE** – Left leg bent slightly at the knee with the heel of the left foot at the position where the left toe would be if standing at attention. Point the toe out slightly; most of the weight is on the right leg. The left hand, with fingers flat together, is placed on top of the left thigh with the fingers pointed inward in line with the forearm. The right foot remains in place. Talking is not acceptable.
3. **ATTENTION = PART I (also known as PARADE REST)** – Position is the same as attention part II (see below) except heels approximately 18 inches apart; instrument to right side; left hand is closed with back of hand in small of the back. The right foot stays in place.
4. **ATTENTION = PART II** – Position heels and toes together; weight evenly divided on both feet; knees straight, but relaxed; stomach pulled in; shoulders back but relaxed and down; instrument in proper carry position; chin up, look at a point just above the horizon; mind alert. Attention is a silent demonstration that projects pride, confidence, self-discipline, and energy shown with your eyes and stance.

5. **COMMAND SEQUENCES FOR AT EASE AND ATTENTION:**

a. **AT EASE TO ATTENTION PART I**

COUNT 1: From **AT EASE**, snap the left foot up to where the arch is in contact with the side of the right knee keeping the toe pointed to the ground. At the same time, drop the left hand down at a slightly outward angle with the hand closed and palm facing backward. Shout "**GO**".

COUNT 2: Move to position of **PARADE REST**. Shout "**JAGS**".

b. **ATTENTION PART I TO ATTENTION PART II**

COUNT 1: Same as count 1 above but shout "**BEAT**".

COUNT 2: Snap to position of attention and shout "**TIDE**" or whatever the mascot is of the next team we play.

c. **ATTENTION PART II TO AT EASE**

COUNT 1: Snap to position of **AT EASE**. Let your left hand slap your thigh to make a loud slap and shout "**UGH**".

C. EQUIPMENT CARRIAGE COMMANDS

- A. **TWO HAND CARRY** – As prescribed per instrument type by section leaders, this is a normal on field method of horn carriage. Mouthpieces must be aligned across the section.
- B. **RIGHT HAND CARRY** – This method of holding the instrument is used only during stadium march in, parades, and while marching in formations that utilize percussion sheers requiring hand movements.
- C. **FIELD HORNS UP** – A four count sequence is executed by the conductor.
COUNT 1 – Conductor slaps hands on side of thighs. (you shout “POP”)
COUNT 2 – Conductor slaps hands on side of thighs. (you shout “POP”)
COUNT 3 – Conductor brings both hands to chest. (you shout “HORNS”)
COUNT 4 – Conductor extends both arms to a 45 degree angle. (you shout “UP” and bring the instrument into playing position)

The band responds on the visual cues by saying the words in parenthesis above. On count 4, the instrument is snapped from carry position to playing position. Due to different levels of crowd noise during our performances, we will always vocalize the visual cues when receiving the HORNS UP command.

- D. **PARADE HORNS UP (PERCUSSION ROLL-OFF)** -- During parade or stadium march-in, we use an 8 count percussion roll-off to get horns to playing position. On count 5, move to 2-hand carry and shout “HORNS”. On count 7, snap horn to playing position and shout “UP”.
- E. **HORNS TO THE BOX** -- This is a maneuver that is used to enhance the sound projection of the band. In a single count, the instrument is shifted sharply upward to just above the top 1/3 of the stadium seating and toward the press box. If you do not play a bell front instrument, you need to simulate the movement for uniformity.
- F. **HORNS DOWN** -- The horns are brought to carry position on the next left foot after the release of the last note. You shout “DOWN”. Sometimes we will change this for drill design purposes. For now, shout “RELEASE, HORNS DOWN”. You will bring the horns down on the word “DOWN”.
- G. **DRESS CENTER DRESS** -- The horns are brought to playing position. Your head and eyes turn to face the center of the formation to check spacing and alignment. You say “HSSSSSS”.

- H. **READY FRONT** -- Horn returns to carry position from the **DRESS CENTER DRESS** and your head and eyes face forward. You say "**POP**".

III. MOVING THE FEET

A. MOTION COMMANDS

1. **MARK TIME** – A form of attention with motion designed to give the unit action while remaining in place.

HIGH MARK TIME – The toes leave the ground last and come down first. The instep of the foot touches the inside of the knee joint. The toe is pointed straight down. Tempo is in the toes.

LOW MARK TIME – Mark time by lifting heels off of the ground in tempo. The balls of the feet remain in place. Keep toes together.

2. **KNEE LIFT HALT** – A two count maneuver which stops motion.

COUNT 1: The right foot strikes the ground stopping forward motion.

COUNT &: The left foot moves to the ankle-knee position.

COUNT 2: The left foot is placed on the ground, toes first, in the position of attention.

3. **PULL HALT** – Plant your right heel on count 8. Roll weight up your right leg on the end of 8 while pressing your left toe into the ground. Lock knees together, then pull your left foot into position with your right foot on count 1, dragging your toe across the ground. Use this halt with the glide step.

B. GLIDE STEP COMMANDS

1. **FORWARD MARCH**

The **GLIDE STEP** style is used in 8 to 5 marching. Forward march is forward movement while retaining attention. This style always begins with a **KICK**. You shout "**KICK**" when beginning this step on count and before count 1.

On **KICK**, the left leg breaks forward slightly at the knee and then snaps straight forward as it extends. The toe should point up 1 foot from the ground. **ALL WEIGHT REMAINS ON THE RIGHT FOOT**. The **KICK** is the preparatory beat to count one.

COUNT 1: The heel strikes the ground, feet do not cross over, foot stays in L shape, foot rolls from heel to toe. The **GLIDE STEP** most closely resembles a graceful, controlled walking style with heel hitting the ground first and rolling forward to the toe.

2. MARCHING VARIATIONS

- a. **NORMAL TIME:** One step per pulse of tempo
- b. **HALF TIME:** One step every two pulses of tempo.
- c. **DOUBLE TIME:** Two steps for every pulse of tempo.

The steps do not change until beat one of the bar of the change.

3. **LATERAL SLIDES** – A maneuver used to keep horns pointing toward the audience. In a lateral slide, you project in one direction while moving in another. To execute a 90-degree lateral slide, the shoulders are parallel to the sideline with the head and instrument also turned a full 90 degrees. The lower body faces the direction of march.

C. LIFT STEP COMMANDS

In lifting, the first step is preceded by a knee lift. The toes must always point down and strike the ground first.

D. CHANGE OF MOTION COMMANDS

1. **LEFT FLANK** – A two count maneuver from attention or while in motion which changes the direction of motion 90 degrees to the left using the right foot to pivot.

COUNT 8 – The right foot is placed down checking the body's motion and the weight is shifted to this foot. On the upbeat, the body is pivoted 90 degrees to the left on the ball of the right foot.

6. **TO THE REAR HALT** – A two count maneuver to halt motion while changing direction of facing 180 degrees.

COUNT 8 – The right foot is placed on the ground one full step ahead of and in line with the left foot checking forward motion and pivot to the left.

COUNT 1 – The **LIFT HALT** ends the maneuver.

7. **LATERAL MARCH** – A maneuver from attention or while in motion designed to change the direction of marching without changing the facing. Execute the **GLIDE STEP** – feet do not cross over, foot stays in the L shape, foot rolls from heel to toe. Always prepare your right foot to the facing of the new direction on the final count of the phrase.
8. **BACKWARD MARCH** – A maneuver from attention or while in motion designed to change the direction of marching without changing the facing. You should feel as if you are moving forward while marching backward. You must elevate the body to the toes of the feet and drag the toes across the ground. Your feet should remain in constant contact with the ground and you body must remain elevated throughout the move.

From stationary position:

COUNT 8 – Elevate your body so that weight is on the toes of both feet.

COUNT & -- Left leg moves backward keeping the toe in contact with the ground. Right toes bear the body weight.

COUNT 1 – Step and shift the body weight to the left foot.

From moving position:

COUNT 8 – Push the body weight upward with the right toes.

COUNT 1 – Step and shift body weight to the left foot.

9. **DRAG TURNS** – Change of direction similar to mark time but gradually pivot in the direction of the turn. Turns can consist of different numbers of counts.

3. **COVER** – The straightness of elements in a file.
4. **DISTANCE** – The space between the centers of individuals in the direction of depth.
5. **INTERVAL** – **Lateral:** The space between the centers of individuals in a lateral projection. **Curvilinear:** The space between the centers of individuals facing the same direction regardless of whether or not they are in the same physical line.
6. **DRESS** – **Lateral:** straightness of elements across a lateral form.
Curvilinear: adherence of elements to the boundary of a curve.
7. **INBOARD** – A direction toward the 50 yard line.
8. **OUTBOARD** – A direction away from the 50 yard line.

