

# FUNDAMENTALS FOR THE FIELD

New Hampshire Music Educators Association

Friday, April 13, 2012

Sponsored by New Hampshire Band Directors Association

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## MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

### **Body Breakdown**

- Heads
- Heads, Shoulders
- Heads, Shoulders, Upper Back
- Heads, Shoulders, Upper Back, Lower Back
- Reverse

### **Foot Posture**

- Heels together, feet at 45° angle
- Arches of feet are on yard line or halfway between yard lines
- Center of body over drill set

### **Marking Time**

- Feet stay in position
- Toes stay on ground
- Height of mark time is bottom of heel to opposite ankle
- Command
  - “Mark, time, mark {4} ‘and’”
  - “Mark, time, mark {4} ‘and one’”
- Halt
  - “Band, halt ‘step and close’”

### **Forward Marching**

- Do not break knee of first step forward – heel pushes out
- Watch for “bicycling” – do not lift heel off ground
- Glide Step Breakdown
  - Push left foot forward, dragging heel, for four counts
  - Roll through left foot for four counts
  - Push right foot forward, dragging heel, for four counts
  - Roll through right foot for four counts
  - Continue for 8 equal 8 to 5 steps
- Sixteenth note breakdown (1, e, +, a, 2, e, +, a, ...)
  - Heel of foot hits on downbeats (whole numbers)
  - Feet cross on upbeats (+’s)
  - Roll through the center of the foot, not on the outside or inside of foot
  - Toe is stretched up as high as possible
  - “1” = heel, “e” = roll forward, “+” = ankles cross, “a” = toe up and heel elevated
- Eighth note breakdown (1, +, 2, +, 3, +, ...)
  - Heels hit on beat, ankles cross on +’s

- 8 normal quarter note steps (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

### **Forward marching into mark time or halt**

- Roll into right foot's last step
- Slide left foot in for close
- No roll step for closing left foot

### **Step sizes**

- 8 to 5 (22.5" step size)
- 6 to 5 (30" step size)
- 5 to 5
- 4 to 5
- 16 to 5
- Get body lower for larger step sizes
- Control movement for smaller step sizes

### **Backward marching**

- "Backward, harch {4} 'and one'"
- Lift up on toes on +
- Stay off heels
- Push through step – feels larger than forward march

### **Shifts**

- Winds and Colorguard
  - Hips are on 45° angle
  - Upper stays in same direction, 90° to feet
  - Pull back opposite shoulder (right shift = pull back left shoulder)
  - Keep upper body/shoulders square/parallel to sideline
- Percussion
  - Crab step
  - Left foot always steps in front
  - Outside leg recovers distance

### **Direction changes**

- Forward direction to another forward direction
  - Feet cross on the upbeat (+) of last count
  - Start the new direction change (pivot) exactly on count 1
  - Make a definite direction change on count 1
  - Continue with forward march style roll step
- Backward direction to another backward direction
  - Feet cross on upbeat (+) of last count
  - Start the new direction change (pivot) exactly on count 1
  - Make a definite direction change on count 1
  - Continue with the backward march style (pushing motion)
- Forward direction to backward direction
  - Plant the left foot on count 7
  - Roll through right foot on count 8
  - Pop up on right toe on (+) of count 8
  - Left foot will already be in position for count 1, so transfer weight to left toe
  - Continue with backward march style (pushing motion)

### **Right Flank, Left Flank, To-the-Rear**

- Execute snappy pivot on (+) of count on right foot
- Snap 90° for flanks, 180° for To The Rear (to the left)
- Take full-sized step in new direction
- For To The Rear, put right foot in front of left for easier turn

### **Right and Left Oblique**

- Executed in same way as Flanks, but 45° angle instead

**STEP SIZE WILL CHANGE TO 31.8" STEP TO MAINTAIN 8 TO 5**

# MARCHING STYLE

## POSITIONING

**Position of attention:** When standing at attention heels should be together and toes should be apart (feet should be at a 45° angle). The body should be stretched upward with the head held high. Do not make the body stiff or raise the shoulders up. For good posture while marching or standing, try to maintain this “stretched upward” feeling, as if the body is suspended from above and the feet are barely able to touch the ground.

**Parade rest:** The purpose of this command is for resting for a short period of time, such as in a parade when the forward movement is briefly stalled. There should be no moving or talking while at parade rest since it is a modified position of attention. While at parade rest, only the commands of “attention” or “relax” can be given. The left foot moves while the right foot stays stationary. Feet should be shoulder-width apart.

**Standby:** This position will primarily be used in rehearsal and is a combination of “attention” and “parade rest.” Combine the body and foot position of “attention” with the instrument position of “parade rest” and you have “standby.” This is different than “set,” because “set” does not have an official position; it is used as a warning that the “attention” command is coming. There should be no moving or talking at “standby.”

**Instrument in down positions:** Hold the instrument with both hands in front of the body, parallel to and 10” away from the body. For most instruments the elbows are at a 90-degree angle. Instrument heights will be explained by section leaders. Sousaphones should keep the right hand on the valves and the left hand on the tubing on the left side of the horn. Saxophones should keep the left forearm parallel to the ground. All instruments should be held the same way within each section. Section leaders should check the height, angles, and hand positions for uniformity.

**Instrument in playing position:** The instrument should be held in the natural playing position, elevated for projection. Trumpets, mellophones, trombones, and baritones should hold the instrument 10 degrees above parallel. Flutes should be parallel to the ground. Clarinets should be pushed out from the body. Saxophones should be perpendicular to the ground. Brass adjustments should be made by moving the entire head and **not** the embouchure.

## MARCHING STEPS

**Glide step:** The glide step is the most practical step for playing and marching simultaneously. Roll from the heel to the toe while shifting the weight forward, creating a smooth “gliding” action. When stepping forward, the heel should touch the ground first. Roll from the heel to the toe in a straight line smoothly to shift the weight forward. The shoulders should be square with the hips. There should be no movement from the waist up.

**Backward march:** This step is executed by rising up on the balls of the feet and the tips of the toes and marching backwards. Keep the upper body erect. Avoid squatting, leaning forward, slumping, or bouncing. Shoulders should be in line with the hips. Step sizes feel larger than forward marching.

**Crab step:** Utilized only by the drumline, the crab step is used as a way to move the body sideways while keeping the hips in line with the upper body. Legs cross in front of each other, and the step is performed on the balls of the feet. The heel of the crossing leg should point in the direction of travel. Generally, the crossing leg will move in front of the other leg, unless moving backward. Step sizes are naturally uneven (larger when uncrossed, shorter when crossed).

## UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMANDS

- Unless otherwise shown, each command is given in five even quarter notes.
- The entire band will respond to the commands with the words shown in quotes.
- All of the vocal responses other than the attention, parade rest, and dress commands will be used in rehearsals only.
- Left Face, Right Face, and Halt are two-count moves. Four-count turns are four-count moves. The rest are all one-count moves. We may learn additional commands as well.

Command	Counts			Response	
Attention:	<i>Band</i>	<i>Ten</i>	<i>Hut</i>	(rest)	“Hut!”
Parade Rest:	<i>Band Pa-</i> 	<i>-rade</i> 	<i>Rest</i> 	(rest) 	“Hut!” 
Horns Up:	<i>Band</i>	<i>Horns</i>	<i>Up</i>	(rest)	“Up!” *
Horns Down:	<i>Band</i>	<i>Horns</i>	<i>Down</i>	(rest)	“Down!” *
Dress:	<i>Dress</i>	<i>Left/ Right/ Center</i>	<i>Dress</i>	(rest)	“Blue!”
Ready Front:	<i>Ready</i>	(rest)	<i>Front</i>	(rest)	“White!”
Left Face:	<i>Band</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Hace</i>	“One”	“Two” *
Right Face:	<i>Band</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Hace</i>	“One”	“Two” *
Mark Time:	<i>Mark</i> 	<i>Time</i> 	<i>Mark</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 
Forward March:	<i>Forward</i> 	(rest) 	<i>March</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 
Backward March:	<i>Backward</i> 	(rest) 	<i>March</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 
Halt:	<i>Band</i> 	(rest) 	<i>Halt</i> 	“Step And” 	“Close” * 
Flank:	<i>Flank</i> 	<i>Left/ Right</i> 	<i>Flank</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 
Shift:	<i>Shift</i> 	<i>Left/ Right</i> 	<i>Shift</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 
Ready Front:	<i>Ready</i> 	(rest) 	<i>Front</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 
Four-count turn:	<i>Four-count</i> 	<i>Turn-to-the</i> 	<i>Right/ Left</i> 	(rest) “And” 	“One” * 

\* Response used only in early season rehearsals.

## AROUND-THE-WORLD EXERCISE

Excellent way to quickly warm-up your marchers.

Feet continue moving in the same direction the whole time.

The marcher will travel in a straight line, but their upper body position will change, along with the type of marching (forward or backward).

You'll need 35 yards to complete one full rotation.

- Mark time 8 (horns up on count 5)
- Forward march 8
- Upper body to left (right shift) 8
- Lower body pivots; backward march (backward right shift) 8
- Upper body to left; regular backward march 8
- Upper body to left; continue backward march (backward left shift) 8
- Lower body pivots; forward march (left shift) 8
- Upper body to left; forward march 8
- Step and close; horns down on count 3 (unless you're continuing down the field)

Separate the band into lines 4 to 8 steps apart. They can step off 8 or 16 counts apart.

## RESOURCES

Handouts from this clinic, along with additional links and downloadable materials are available at [tinyurl.com/mbclinic](https://tinyurl.com/mbclinic)

If you have a QR code reader, you may go directly there by scanning this:



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