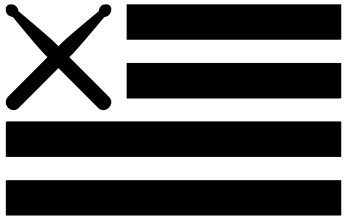
by Mark Perrett + John Lluvera

DRUMLINE MOVEMENT

MARCHING TECHNIQUES FOR MODERN CORPS STYLE DRUMLINE



AUTHOR'S NOTE

The world of the marching arts has a beautiful variety of approaches. (Corps Style, Show Band, Pipe Band, Etc.) We love and respect all forms of the activity and understand different genres do things differently. This book focuses specifically on the Corps Style approach. These methods are a mixture of our years performing and teaching in the DCI, WGI, and BOA circuits.

We have always tried to keep everything as generalized as possible when writing our books, so this was an opportunity for us to zoom in and get detailed on a specific subject. Whether this becomes your exact pedagogy, or simply acts as a reference, you will get the most out of this book if you approach it with an open mind.

With anything in life, it is great to always be a student. Take from this what you like and build your own idea of what the marching arts means to you. We are simply offering some helpful tips that have proven to be successful during our time as performers and educators in the Corps Style activity.

FITNESS FIRST

WE ARE ATHLETES

In drumline, being a great musician and mastering your music is important, but in addition to that you must be able to perform all of your musical demands on the move. Every ensemble will have different levels of movement in their performance, but you have to be in shape to play well. This activity is governed by movement and you will not be able to perform at a high level of quality if you cannot move your drum around the field with ease. A common tendency of marching drumlines is to play really well standing still, but the moment you start moving around in the drill, everything changes and the quality of playing suffers. This is often due to a lack of physical strength and endurance.

Even if you are performing the marching technique flawlessly, you might not be able to maintain the quality of your performance for extended periods of time due to a lack of endurance.

Drumlines often play well during their stationary warm up, and some even play well through small chunks of their show during rehearsal, but when they play their show from top to bottom, the quality goes down significantly. This is due to mental and physical fatigue. A typical marching arts show will last anywhere from 7-11 minutes. If your body is not trained to withstand the demands of your show, it doesn't matter how well you play. You should be able to march so well that your performance quality is the same whether you're standing still or on the move. That is why it is so important to be in shape during your marching season. The best drumlines in the world are the ones that move the best. That is why living a healthy lifestyle is so important. You have to understand stretching techniques, calisthenics, cardio exercises, and more.

LIVING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

PERSONAL FITNESS

Every performer who joins drumline will have a different level of physical strength and endurance. It is important that each performer takes the proper steps to develop their fitness level to match the demands of their performance.

This is seen in other activities as well. Football, soccer, hockey, and basketball players all train rigorously for the specific demands of their sport. In the marching arts, you are required to march around the field during your show. This includes following very specific marching techniques, visuals, step sizes that range from tip-toeing to full out sprinting, all while wearing a 15lbs - 45lbs drum.

FATIGUE IS REAL

There are a lot of variables in the importance of being physically fit, but one of the most important reasons for having great body strength and endurance is to combat physical fatigue. Every marching arts show has a beginning, middle, and end. There will be different levels of mental and physical exertion during each movement of your show, but you have to be capable of performing at the highest level of your potential through the entire show.

SCENARIO: You start your show feeling great and energized. You're playing really well and have great marching technique. About halfway your body starts getting tired and your playing and visual performance begins to break down. By the end of the show, you have lost your relaxed confidence and fatigue is causing your drum to move all over the place. Your legs are no longer following the marching technique and your feet are starting to slow down.

When a runner gets tired they can simply change pace. When you get tired, you still have to keep your feet in time with the tempo of the show. Fatigue in your hands and feet will directly cause your performance to suffer, but this can all be avoided by training your body for the demands of your show.

BEING IN SHAPE MATTERS

Watch any top competitive drumline and look at how well they are in shape. It may not seem that important as a spectator, but the best lines are the most in shape.

This is because your playing surface is connected to your body. The more your playing surface moves around when you march, the more variables you have to deal with during your performance. This is why playing standing still is the easiest to do. When you march you have to be strong enough to command your instrument with ease. Even when you are marching at high speeds with large step sizes, your playing surface should hover as if you are standing still.

This comes with understanding great marching technique, but understanding the technique and being physically capable of performing that technique for the entire show are two different things. Even the most expensive car still needs gas to run. Your physical fitness and energy levels are the gas needed to facilitate your marching technique. So it is equally important to practice great fitness habits just as you practice your music.

MARCHING ARTS PERFORMER DIET

Since energy levels are important in fueling your performance, you should be eating foods that give you energy and help you feel great during the season. This is why you should practice mindful eating and understand the importance of nutrition, moderation, and paying attention to how you feel.

WHAT TO EAT

During any competitive season you should minimize or stop eating junk food and drinking soda/energy drinks. Anything can be fine in moderation, but these specific items can slow you down and do not allow you to perform at the highest level. In any physical activity, responsible performers understand their own bodies and train with a healthy diet that helps them reach peak physical performance. You never want the food you eat to create unnecessary fatigue. It is your job to research and experiment with foods that will be the best for you.

Take some time to really develop a healthy mixture of foods (THAT YOU ENJOY EATING) to create the best diet for your personal needs.

WHEN TO EAT

Once you know what to eat, make sure you are eating at the right times. For example, if you show up to rehearsal without eating you will lack energy. Then the demands of your show may actually push your body to feel sick. If you are not performing at 100% of your ability due to a lack of preparation THAT IS AN ISSUE.

Schedule enough time before every rehearsal to eat and digest the food. If you cram down breakfast in the car minutes before putting on your drum that can cause you to get sick as well. Be smart about your eating habits and work together with your staff to ensure meal breaks are happening if needed.

STAY HYDRATED

When you feel thirsty, like that feeling you get that has you reaching for a drink, you're already on your way to dehydration. Your body needs water to function and when you're in rehearsal you will lose a lot of water running through your marching drill. That is why it is important to have enough water with you to last you the entire duration of rehearsal.

It is important to drink frequently, but you also have to follow the schedule of rehearsal. It is the job of the instructor to give you water breaks, but make sure you are actually drinking during the breaks. ***Even if you don't feel thirsty***, you should still take a sip to simply coat your throat. At the same time don't drink too much because the water will move around in your stomach before absorbing into your body and can cause you to feel sick. Do your best to drink as much water as you can but know your limits. That way you have consistent energy and can focus more on your performance.

Another tip for drinking water is knowing the best temperature it needs to be. Some people put too much ice in their your water jugs and end up constricting their muscles. Cold water is great, but FREEZING water can shock your muscles and internal organs.

STAY ACTIVE

Just as practice should be a part of your daily routine, so should being active. Do your best to live an active lifestyle and create routines that keep your body in shape.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "GOOD" AND "GREAT" OFTEN DEPENDS ON YOUR WILLINGNESS TO INVEST FULLY IN THE PROCESS. DEFINE THE PATH, RESPECT THE DETAILS, AND STAY PERSISTENT IN YOUR PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE.

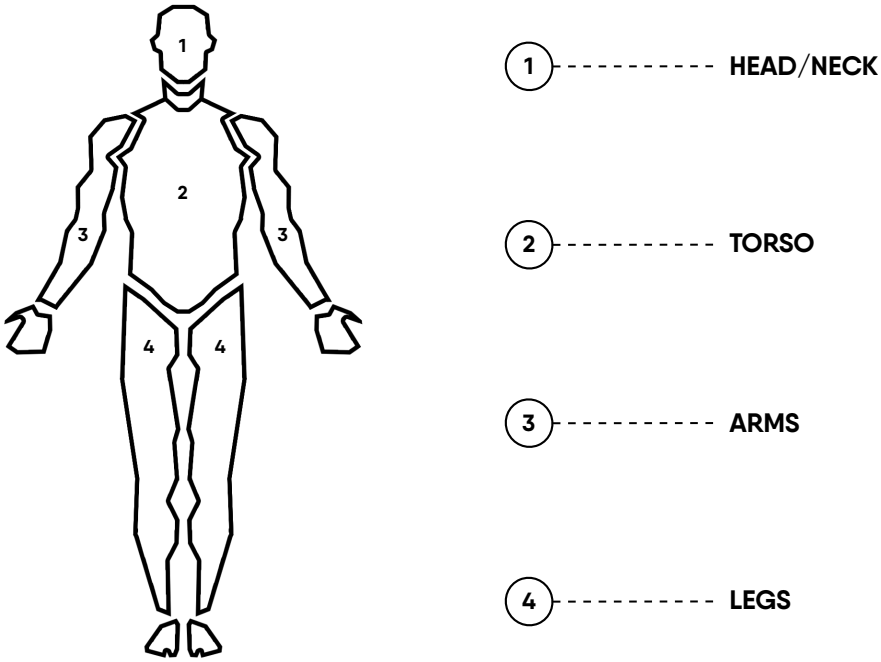
TOTAL BODY CONDITIONING

MARCHING ARTS FITNESS

THE MUSCLES WE USE

Modern day marching arts performances include high physical demands and require full body mobility. In drumline you will be wearing a drum for the majority of your performance. Depending on your show, you may be required to perform and understand dance movements. Drumline members with a background in dance often make the best performers due to their flexibility, agility, and consciousness of their own body. You may not have a background in dance, but it is important to understand your body and know how to fully isolate muscle groups. Knowing how to use different muscle groups to your advantage will maximize your ability as a performer. The diagram below illustrates the main muscle groups you will use as a corps style marching arts drumline performer:

BODY MUSCLE DIAGRAM



BEFORE YOU MARCH

During rehearsal you will do a lot of physical activity that requires strength and flexibility of your entire body. Just as you condition your hands to perform your show music, it is equally as important to condition your body to prepare for the demands of your marching drill/movement. Since there is a wide variety of conditioning options you can choose from, and time is limited, we have organized total body conditioning into four categories:

TOTAL BODY CONDITIONING	
1. BODY WARM UPS	Gets the blood flowing into the muscles
2. STRETCHING	Helps prepare the body for movement and increases muscle control, flexibility, and range of motion.
3. CALISTHENICS	Repetitive exercises that use the resistance of your own body to build strength, increase endurance, and burn fat.
4. CARDIO	Movement that gets your heart rate up, increases circulation, and develops heart and lung strength.

Use these four categories to help you get in shape and develop the strength you need for the season.

It is important that the drumline designs a schedule that includes this type of activity as a group, but that might not always happen. It is your job to be aware of what you need personally and include these exercises into your daily routine. It won't be fun at first, but once you start seeing progress in your performance and the drum becomes much easier to carry around the field, EVERYTHING you do will be much more enjoyable. You just have to put in the work. Once you find the best exercises that work for you, start small and gradually work into longer work-outs.

1. BODY WARM UPS

WARMING UP THE BODY

There are many philosophies in the realm of marching arts fitness, but in recent years we have found that body warm ups are the first thing you should do before any stretching or physical activity. You want to raise the temperature of your body and get blood flowing into your muscles. This creates more pliable muscles and makes stretching and calisthenics more effective.

Stretching cold muscles can actually be counter productive and possibly lead to injuries. You can do some light stretching before warming up, but only if you feel you need it.

A great body warm up routine should be short and include very simple movements of the body. Use the chart below to see a few examples of dynamic warm ups that will get your body warm and ready for stretching and calisthenics.

DYNAMIC WARM UPS

 High Knee	 Leg Swings (Front to Back)	 Leg Swings (Side to Side)	 Bent Over Twists
 Butt Kicks	 Jog In Place	 Lateral Hops	 Jumping Jacks

2. STRETCHING

WHY WE STRETCH

For anyone who has been involved in any physical activity, you probably know that stretching is a good thing, but the details of stretching are what makes the difference between a hobbyist and a professional athlete. Stretching has a variety of health benefits including increased flexibility and range of motion, increased joint mobility, improved athletic performance, improved posture, and helps prevent muscle soreness or injury.

There are many different types of stretching, but we most commonly use Static and Dynamic stretching techniques.

STATIC VS DYNAMIC STRETCHING

If you have ever stretched your body before you probably did some form of Static Stretch. Static Stretching is when you stretch a muscle as far as it will go and hold it in position for an extended period of time. Dynamic Stretching is when you stretch a muscle using constant movement to gradually increase reach, and range of motion. Both types of stretching are valid, but we use them at different times to be the most effective.

Simply put, Static Stretching should be done AFTER your main activity (Rehearsal) and Dynamic Stretching should be done before your main activity.

AVOIDING INJURY

Understanding how and when to stretch is important and can help you prevent performance related injuries. That is why you should create a routine that includes stretching before you start rehearsal. Doing static stretches, especially when you hold the stretch for long periods of time, will elongate your muscles. An elongated muscle is not as prepared for vigorous activity, and potentially increases the risk for injury and hinders performance. Doing dynamic stretches, like arm circles or torso twists are much better at getting your muscles ready for movement. Use the diagrams on the next page to see examples of both stretching types.

DYNAMIC STRETCHES

(Pre-Activity)

These are great before rehearsal and performances to get the body prepared for movement.

Neck Rolls

Shoulder Rolls

Arm Circles

Arm Swings

Torso Twists

Knee To Chest

Glute Stretch

Lateral Stretch

STATIC STRETCHES

(Post-Activity)

These are great for after rehearsal and performances to get the body stretched and cooled down.

Neck Stretch

Shoulder Stretch

Tricep Stretch

Pectoral Stretch

Shoulder Blades

Hamstring Stretch

Quad Stretch

Floor Work (Leg Stretches)

3. CALISTHENICS

BUILDING STRENGTH & ENDURANCE

It is important that you are not just relying on the physical activity during rehearsal to provide you with the strength you need to perform your show. In addition to the actual marching and moving you do during rehearsal, you should also have a work out routine that you do to strengthen your body. Calisthenics are a great way to exercise before rehearsal because they don't require any machines or weights. They use the weight of your body and use repetitive movements to burn calories, tone muscles, increase flexibility, and build strength. Since these exercises can be done anywhere and only require your body, they are great for drumline members who often have limited time and access to facilities. Use the following diagrams to see calisthenic exercise examples.

CALISTHENICS

Air Squats

Lunges (Right & Left)

Calf Raises

Push Ups

Leg Raises

Crunches (Variation 1)

Crunches (Variations 2 & 3)

Crunches (Variations 4 & 5)

4. CARDIO

THE IMPORTANCE OF CARDIO

It doesn't matter how well you play your drum and understand your responsibilities as a performer if you're going to be out of breath after the first minute of your show.

If you are out of shape and don't have great lung capacity it will effect your ability to perform. Your body must have enough stamina to last the entire length of your performance.

A great way to develop body stamina is through Cardio (short for cardiovascular) Exercises. Cardio is any exercise that raises your heart rate and increases lung function for sustained periods of time. There are many different ways you can perform Cardio Exercises including running, sprinting, cycling, rowing, swimming, jumping rope, and many more. All of these are great and can be done in your personal time, but as a pre-rehearsal routine it is best to do exercises that can be done quickly and without equipment.

CARDIO EXERCISES	
RUNNING LAPS	SPRINT DRILLS
Find a place where you can run, uninterrupted, for long distances. Depending on your facilities you may have access to a track, but if not, try finding a parking lot or sidewalk where the entire drumline can run together. Avoid running anywhere that may be dangerous or slippery to avoid injury.	Sprint drills are a great way to build cardiovascular endurance within a small space. If you do not have access to a large open area, select a spot about 5 to 10 yards apart and make a mark or line at both points. Sprint back and forth touching both lines for a few minutes. The key is to elevate the heart rate.

THE ROUTINE

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

MARCHING ARTS FITNESS ROUTINE

Now that you know the four main categories of conditioning the body, you can design a routine that will help you put all of those elements together. This routine is something you should do daily to build strength and endurance.

In drumline, you typically warm up the hands before every rehearsal block by playing exercises ("8-On-A-Hand", "Double Beat", "Stick Control", etc) but there should also be a physical warm up for the body as well. Since there is limited time before rehearsal to warm up it is important to develop a routine that has maximum benefits for the body in the shortest amount of time. Every ensemble has a different schedule structure but we recommend scheduling 15 - 30 minutes before each rehearsal day to do a group fitness routine that includes dynamic warm ups, dynamic stretches, calisthenics, and cardio.

THE ROUTINE | 15min

The following routine works you through a full body warm up, stretch, and workout. Typically exercises are performed using "REPS" (repetitions) or "DURATION" (seconds). When using reps, the entire drumline can do the repetitions in time together which is great for building a sense of uniformity. You can also count out loud which is another great way to align performers and work on timing. If you choose duration, everyone can work at their own pace depending on their personal level fitness. For the purpose of this book we have chosen to use the DURATION method, but both ways work great. When you are developing your own fitness routine for your ensemble, choose the format that best fits your group.

NOTE: *When using the DURATION method you will do "As Many Reps As Possible" (AMRAP) within the time limit. Use a workout timer or interval app to help keep time. Also understand that this routine is written for 15 minutes of continuous motion. Depending on your fitness level, take breaks in between sessions as needed.*

THE ROUTINE | Warm Up & Stretch

STEP 1 | DYNAMIC WARM UP | DURATION: 3 MINUTES	
30 SECONDS	STANDING HIGH KNEES
30 SECONDS	LEG SWINGS FRONT TO BACK
30 SECONDS	LEG SWINGS SIDE TO SIDE
30 SECONDS	JUMPING JACKS
30 SECONDS	BENT OVER TWISTS
30 SECONDS	BUTT KICKS

STEP 2 | DYNAMIC STRETCH | DURATION: 4 MINUTES	
30 SECONDS	NECK ROLLS (LEFT & RIGHT)
30 SECONDS	SHOULDER ROLLS (BACKWARDS & FORWARDS)
30 SECONDS	SMALL ARM CIRCLES
30 SECONDS	WIDE ARM CIRCLES
30 SECONDS	ARM SWINGS
30 SECONDS	TORSO TWISTS
30 SECONDS	KNEE TO CHEST
30 SECONDS	GLUTE STRETCH

THE ROUTINE | Calisthenics & Cardio

STEP 3 | CALISTHENICS | DURATION: 6 MINUTES	
60 SECONDS	AIR SQUATS
60 SECONDS	LUNGES
60 SECONDS	CALF RAISES
60 SECONDS	PUSH UPS
60 SECONDS	LEG RAISES
60 SECONDS	CRUNCHES

STEP 4 | CARDIO | DURATION: 2 MINUTES	
2 MINUTES	Run continuously for two minutes.

PROGRESSION

Any fitness routine should always evolve and get more intense as time goes on. Your body will get stronger and if you don't add more reps or extend durations your physical fitness can plateau. Adjust the routine to best fit the growing fitness level of the group as the season progresses.

** This book provides information and advice that includes physical activity. If you choose to use the information in this book you do so at your own risk and acknowledge that the exercises carry a potential risk of physical injury. To the extent permitted by law, THE GRID BOOK SERIES disclaims any and all liability in connection with the exercises in this book and any instructions and advice provided. Consult with your doctor if you have any previous health conditions or concerns about your ability to perform the fitness/marching routines.*

MARCHING TECHNIQUE

THE BODY

KNOWING YOUR BODY

When you march, you will use all parts of your body in different ways. It is important to understand the different sections of your body and know how to isolate them for different purposes.

Marching technique is the specific way you move and position your body to perform specific drill moves on the field. Some of these movements are based on natural movements of the body, but are modified to help you look strong and move with confidence as you perform your show.

NATURAL VS UNNATURAL MOVEMENT

In your daily life you wouldn't naturally walk around doing the "robot" like a break dancer. You move without thinking and all of your limbs work together to help you move around. In the marching arts we try to recreate these natural movements as much as possible, but there are some modifications made so you can play your instrument properly on the move.

An example of this modification is seen in the difference between walking and marching. When you walk, you swing your arms back and forth to help with weight distribution, but when you march your arms have to stay in place so you can hold your sticks and play your instrument. This will feel unnatural because your legs will be moving, but your arms will be still. This may sound like a simple concept, but if you don't know how to mentally separate your arms from your upper torso you will probably swing your arms on the move without even knowing you're doing it. This will cause your drum stick beads to move out of the main playing zone and create a bad sound from your instrument.

Another example is knowing how to relax your shoulders while moving your arms. When you wear your drum it will rest on your shoulders and abdomen. This means your upper torso has to be stable the entire time you march so the instrument stays in one place. You have to know how to move your arms and legs without moving your shoulders. If the shoulders move, so does your instrument.

BODY BASICS

As we mentioned before, your body can be separated into many different parts. In the marching activity it is important that you know each part of your body and what it is used for. Your ability to separate muscle groups and use them for a specific purpose will help you control your instrument as you march.

HEAD - Your head will mainly stay straight ahead, but will move to interact with visuals.

SHOULDERS - Shoulders should always be relaxed. Moving/Raising your shoulders will cause the Drum/Playing surface to move.

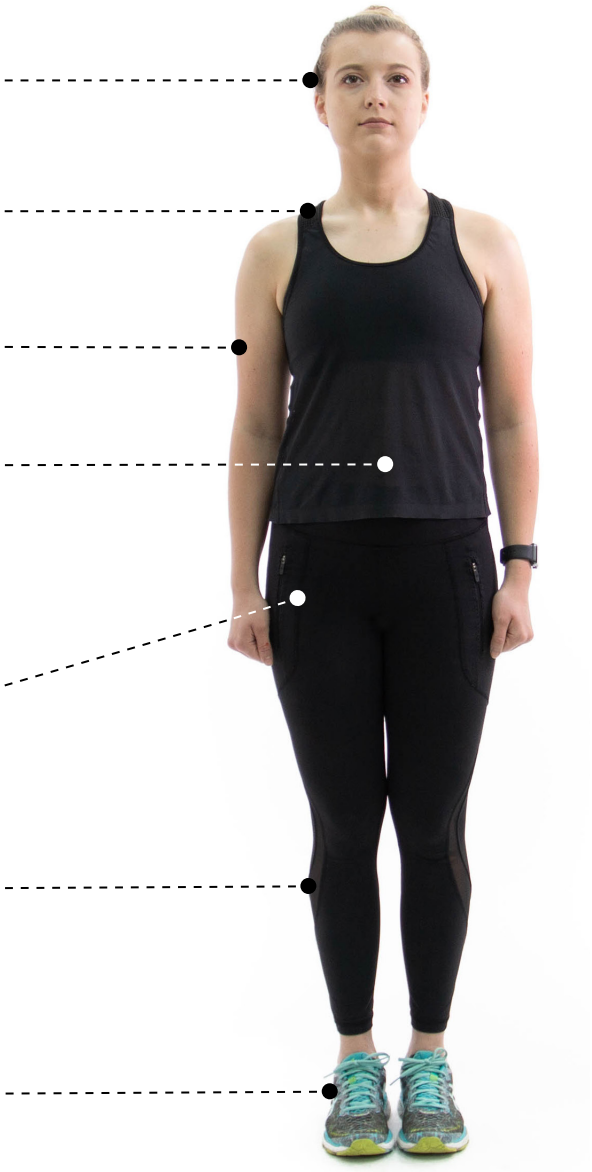
ARMS - When you play your instrument your arms will move but should never cause your drum to move.

TORSO - This includes your upper spine, lower spine, and abdomen. Your harness will rest on your torso, so it is important for your upper body to be still. As you move, the torso should feel relaxed and rest on the hips like a table top as if you're standing still.

HIPS - Your hips are the connectors between the upper and lower body. Use your hips to keep your upper body stable while your legs flex to allow movement around the field.

LEGS - Depending on the technique, your legs will either be bent or straight, but will always do most of the work in the marching technique.

FEET - Your feet, including your ankles, are your connection to the ground and acts as a platform for your entire body. Whether you are on the platforms of your feet or rolling heel to toe, your feet help you glide smoothly when you march.



SET POSITION

Set Position (*"Standing At Attention"*) is the first position you are in before you start marching. Regardless of which direction you move, you will always start and stop in Set Position. As you begin marching in different directions, the upper body will maintain this posture as the lower body flexes to march the drill.

STAND UP STRAIGHT & HEAD UP – When you perform, your body should stand tall and your head should always be up towards the audience. A common tendency when marching is to look at the ground. Performers look at the ground for drill cues (like yard lines), but to the audience you will look weak. Body language is HUGE in the marching arts, so make sure you are presenting a confident look at all times.

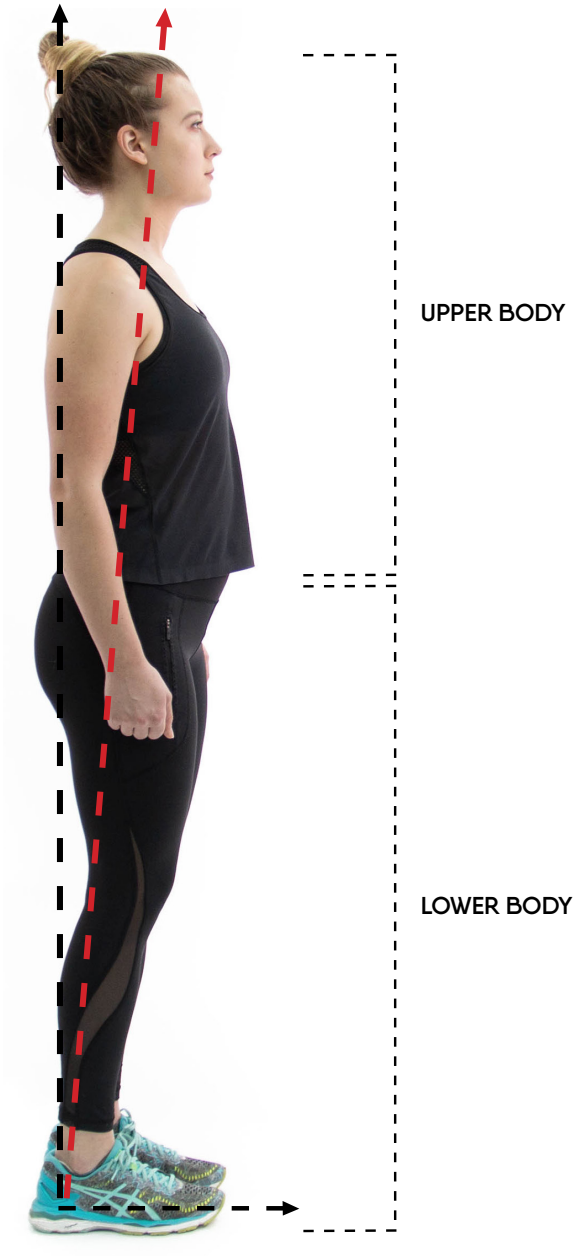
RELAXED SHOULDERS – Since marching drums connect to your body using a harness that sits on your shoulders, keeping them relaxed will help minimize movement of your instrument. This is essential to playing as you need a stable playing zone to play consistently.

ARCHED BACK – Posture is important when you march, so you don't want to be leaning forward or "slouched" over. You can prevent this lazy posture by arching your back slightly. Don't arch it so much that it is uncomfortable, but enough to where your chest is broad and fills up your carrier.

FEET TOGETHER, STRAIGHT LEGS, RELAXED KNEES – Stand with your feet together and legs straight, but do not lock the knees. You may need to stand at attention for long periods of time and locking your knees can lead to feeling dizzy, or even passing out.

60/40 RULE (WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION) – Think of the bottom of your feet as a platform. When you initiate movement for marching you have to move your body weight. If the weight is on your heels, it will be more difficult to move 100% of your weight all at once. So we recommend putting 60% of your body weight on the balls of your feet, and 40% of your body in the heels. Then when you take a step most of the weight is already prepped for movement.

** When doing the 60/40 rule, bend from the ankles, not the hips. This will maintain a good posture and create a straight line from your ankles to your head. You body will also be angled forward. As you march, this 60/40 rule will apply the entire way.*



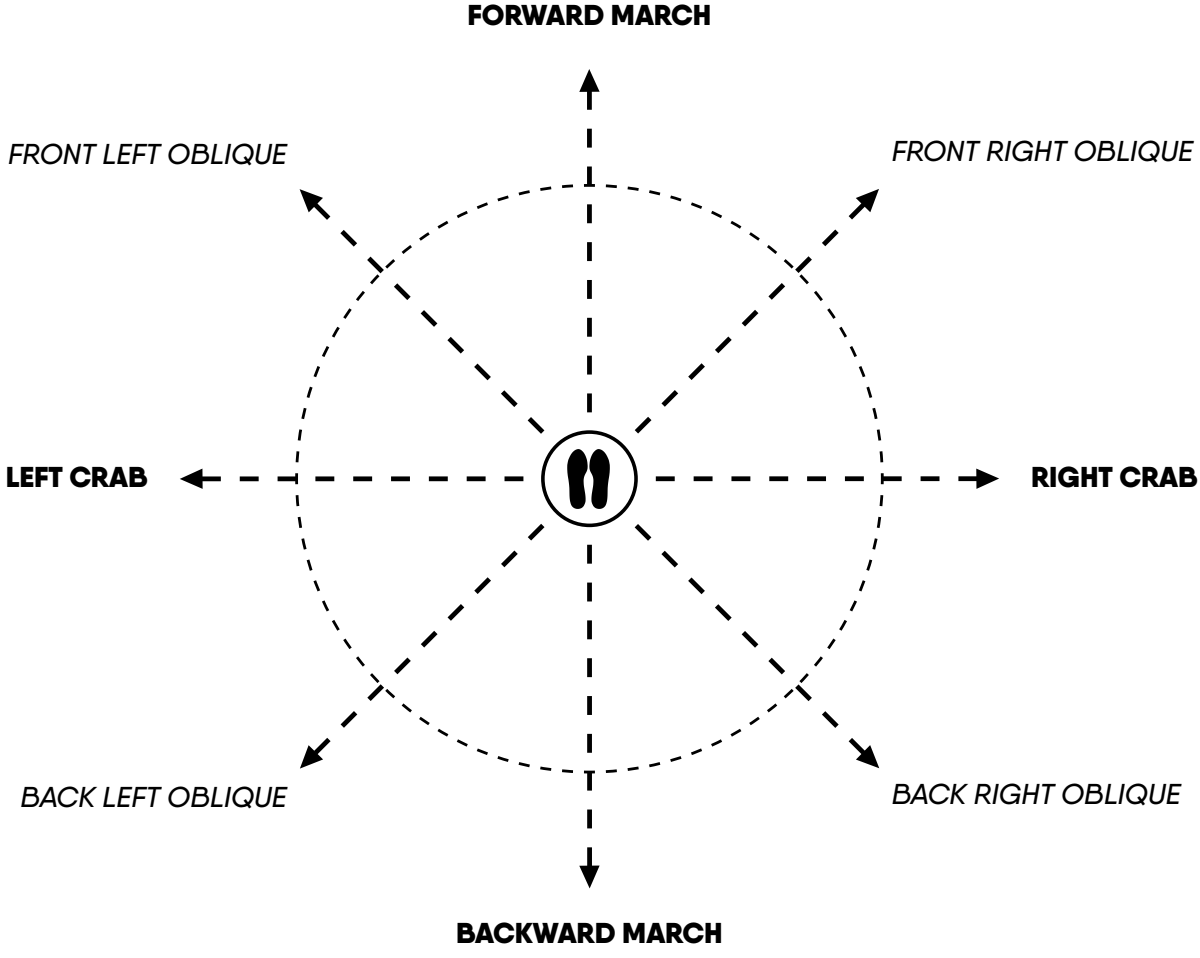
FOOT POSITIONS

When you are in Set Position, there are different foot positions you can use depending on your marching style. These foot positions are inspired by ballet and help you perform visual body movements during your show. The following positions have been slightly modified from ballet for the marching arts:

1ST POSITION – Heels together and toes at a 45 degree angle.		
2ND POSITION – Feet spread apart at shoulder width. (Feet still in 45 degree angle)		
3RD POSITION – One foot placed in front of the other so the heel meets the arch.		
4TH POSITION – Heel and arch are aligned, one foot is out in front of the other away from the body.		
5TH POSITION – Heel comes back in meeting the toe of the opposite foot.		
6TH POSITION – Feet Together with the inside of both feet touching.		

MARCHING DIRECTIONS

When you march, there are 8 main directions you will move. There are 4 RELATIVE DIRECTIONS (Forward, Backward, Left, and Right) and 4 OBLIQUE DIRECTIONS (Any direction that is not directly forward, backward, left or right). Use the diagram below to learn the different marching directions.



** When you move side to side (directly left or right) it is called "Crab Marching". This is because you are moving side to side, like a crab.*

MARCHING TECHNIQUES

In the marching arts, there are many different techniques for moving around the field. It is important to know what technique your ensemble uses and work towards perfecting that style. Some common techniques are called “Straight Leg”, “Bent Leg”, “Glide Step”, “High Step”, “Chair Step”, and “Jazz Run”. For the purpose of this book we will explain the “Straight Leg Technique” for all marching demonstrations.

STRAIGHT LEG TOES UP

Toes up is only used when marching directly forward.

STRAIGHT LEG TOES DOWN

Toes down is used for all marching directions. (You can use toes down technique in forward march as well.)

** Straight Leg Technique refers to the position of your legs while in motion. With bent leg technique, your knees bend to initiate movement, but with straight leg technique, your legs are straight to initiate movement. Your upper body posture will remain the same whether you’re on the move or standing still.*

SKI LINES

When you march in any direction there is a specific way your feet will move. This keeps your legs and body going in a straight line towards your destination. This imaginary track is called a “SKI LINE”. When you wear skis, your body will only go in the direction your skis are facing. So you want your legs to always move in the direction of your next destination. The rule with Ski Lines is that your feet will always face forward on the move. That way you are always facing the audience even if you are moving at an angle.

FORWARD & BACKWARD MARCH

Whether your feet are Toe Up (Forward March) or Toe Down (Backward March) your legs will move forward and backward in a straight line with toes straight forward.

YES

YES

NO

NO

CRAB MARCH

In a crab march, your feet will stay pointed forward but your legs will move side to side. The center of your body should stay balanced between the balls of your feet.

OBLIQUE MARCHING

With an oblique angle, your feet will stay pointing forward but your legs will move in the direction of the angle. The center of your body should stay balanced between the balls of your feet.

** When Crab Marching and Oblique Marching, your feet will spread apart slightly. The center of your foot will move down the ski line, and the center of your body will stay balanced between the feet.*

RELATIVE DIRECTIONS

Relative Directions move you forward, backwards, and side to side (Left and Right). There are no variable angles with these directions. You will always move in 90 degree angles with these four directions. Forward march uses a Toe Up technique, and all other directions use a toe down technique.

FORWARD MARCH		
BACKWARD MARCH		
LEFT CRAB		
RIGHT CRAB		

OBLIQUE DIRECTIONS

Oblique Directions are the most common in the marching activity. These techniques are used in any direction that is not directly forward, backward, left, or right. This means there are multiple variables in the angles you can move. Regardless of which direction you're moving, your feet will face directly forward as your legs move in the ski line.

FRONT LEFT OBLIQUE		
BACK LEFT OBLIQUE		
FRONT RIGHT OBLIQUE		
BACK RIGHT OBLIQUE		

FORWARD MARCH

DIRECTION – Forward March allows you to move directly forward in the direction you're facing.

FIRST STEP – Shift your body weight into the ball of your right foot and push your entire body forward extending your left foot out in front of you, flexed, with a straight leg and the toe up.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the ball of the back foot and the heel of the front foot.

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, roll the front foot from heel to toe through the center of the foot. When the front foot is rolling, the back leg will swing forward from the hips (foot flexed) and land on the heel.

TEMPO – Within each step, the heel is the part of the foot that makes contact right on the beat and the back foot comes forward and crosses the planted foot on the "AND" count.

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
HEEL	CROSS	HEEL	CROSS	HEEL	CROSS	HEEL	CROSS

STEP-OFF DISCLAIMER – *With every direction in this book you can step off (first step) with either the left or right foot. This depends on your personal preference and marching technique.*

FORWARD MARCH

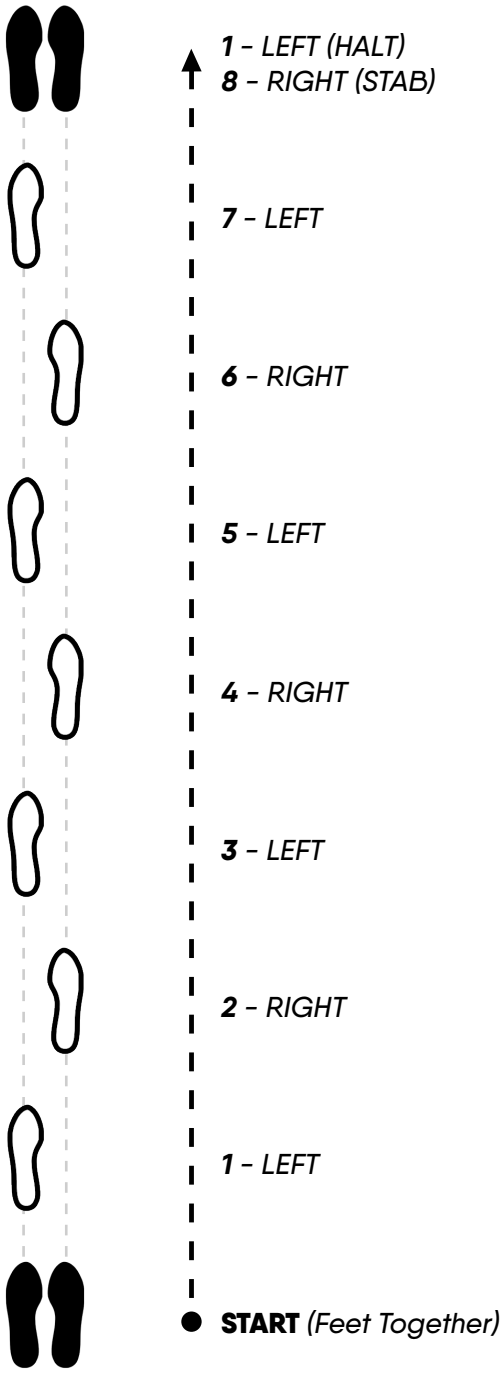
STAB & HALT – The "STAB" helps you stop in place, and the "HALT" is when you finish a move bringing your final foot back into Set Position.

STOP MOMENTUM – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the "STAB".

CONSISTENT STEP SIZE – Always take a consistent step size between both feet from Point A to Point B.

ROLL STEP – Every step you do will roll through from heel to toe.

SET POSITION – Always start and end in set position unless stated otherwise for your performance.



BACKWARD MARCH

DIRECTION – Backward March allows you to move directly backward in the opposite direction you're facing.

FIRST STEP – Shift your body weight into the ball of your right foot and push your entire body weight backward extending your left foot back behind you with the toe down.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, use the front foot to push yourself back while the leg in transition swings backward from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot.

TEMPO – With each step, the ball of the foot is what hits the ground on the beat. Then the front foot swings backward and crosses the planted foot on the "AND" count.

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
FOOT	CROSS	FOOT	CROSS	FOOT	CROSS	FOOT	CROSS

CROSSING ON THE "AND" COUNT – *With every direction in this book, you will always plant your foot on the downbeat and cross the feet on the "AND" count. Every direction will plant on the balls of the feet except for forward march where it is the heel.*

BACKWARD MARCH

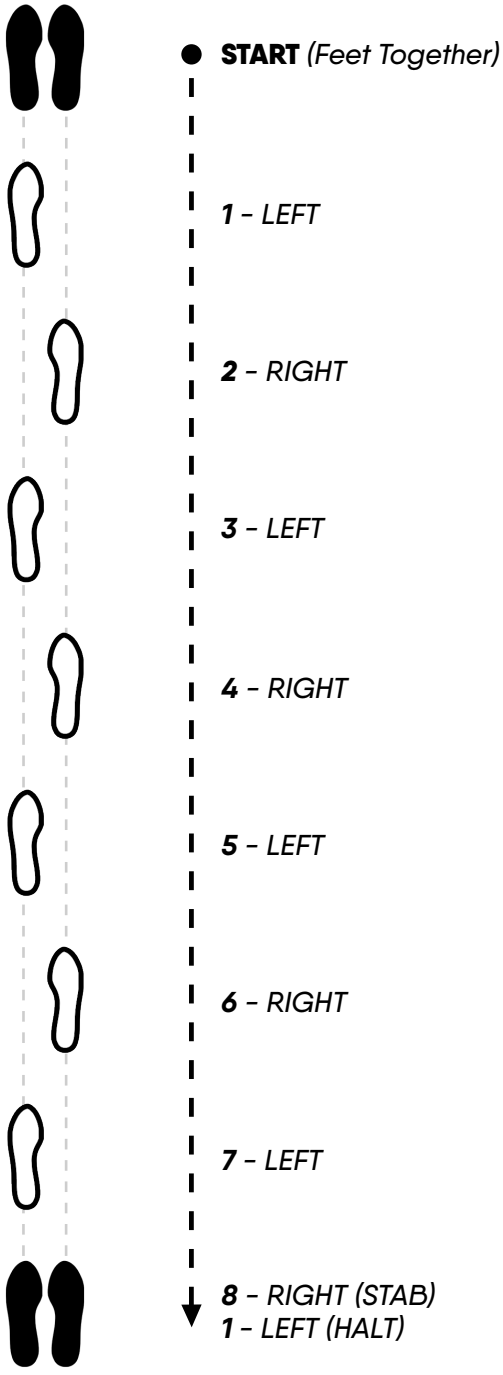
SET POSITION – Start in set position. Even though you are moving backward, you will still use the 60/40 rule.

TOE DOWN – Every step you do will be up on the platforms of the feet.

CONSISTENT STEP SIZE – Always take a consistent step size between both feet from Point A to Point B.

STOP MOMENTUM – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the "STAB".

STAB & HALT – The "STAB" helps you stop in place, and the "HALT" is when you finish a move bringing your final foot back into Set Position.



LEFT CRAB

DIRECTION – Left Crab allows you to move directly left as your body stays facing forward.

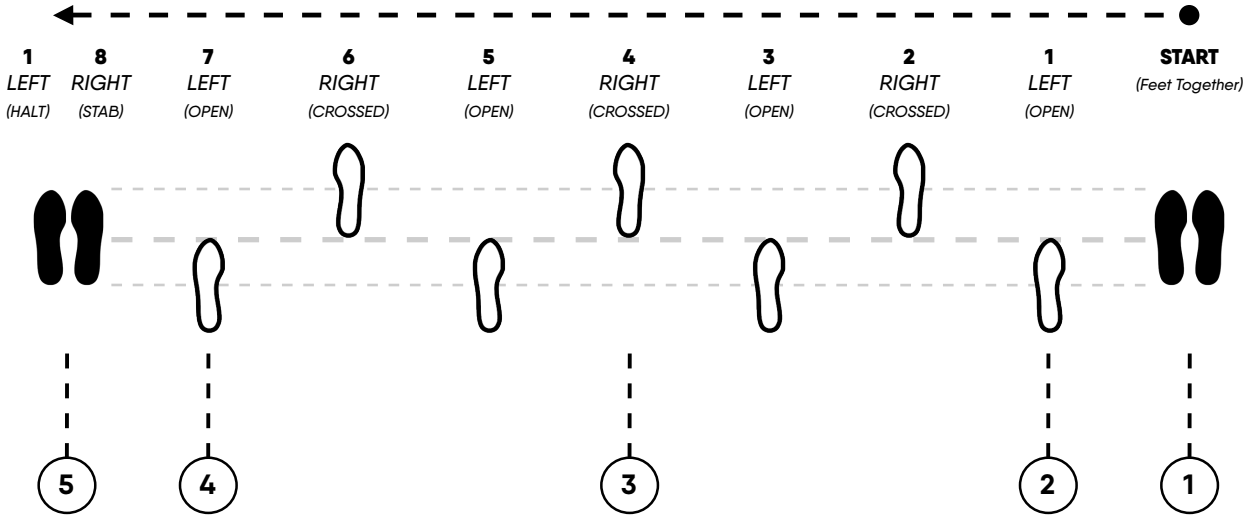
CROSS STEP – In the crab march you have an open step and a crossed step. When moving left, the right leg will always cross in front of the left. (Feet will still stay pointed forward.)

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, the planted foot pushes your body sideways as the leg in transition swings from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot. Make sure both feet stay in the Crab March ski line.

LEFT CRAB TIP – *When you cross your right leg over, the tendency will be to turn and face that direction. Avoid this by pulling the right shoulder back and keep your hips parallel to your chest on the move. If you don't, your drum will face in the direction of movement instead of straight forward.*

LEFT CRAB



1. **SET POSITION** – Start in set position. Even though you are moving sideways, you will still use the 60/40 rule.

2. **TOE DOWN** – Balance yourself on the balls of your feet.

3. **CONSISTENT STEP SIZE** – Always take a consistent step size between both feet from Point A to Point B.

4. **STOP MOMENTUM** – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the “STAB”.

5. **STAB & HALT** – The “STAB” here is a crossed step (right over left) so the left foot has to come around the right foot into set position for the “HALT”.

RIGHT CRAB

DIRECTION – Right Crab allows you to move directly right as your body stays flat to the front.

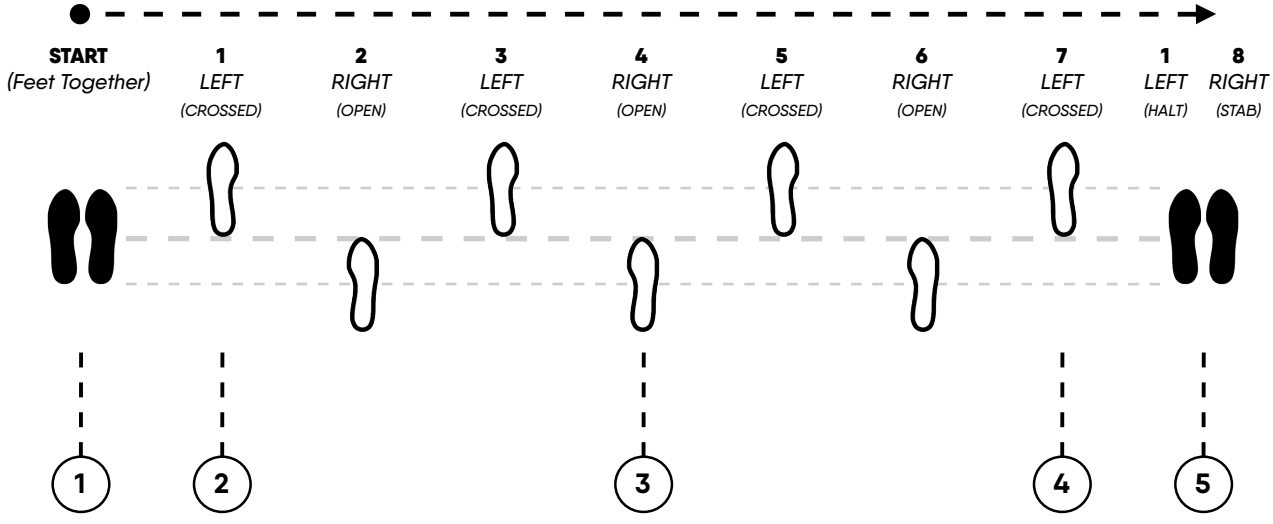
CROSS STEP – In the crab march you have an open step and a crossed step. When moving right, the left leg will always cross in front of the right. Feet will still stay pointed forward.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, the planted foot pushes your body sideways as the leg in transition swings from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot. Make sure both feet stay in the Crab March ski line.

RIGHT CRAB TIP – *When you cross your left leg over, the tendency will be to turn and face that direction. Avoid this by pulling the left shoulder back and keep your hips parallel to your chest on the move. If you don't, your drum will face in the direction of movement instead of straight forward.*

RIGHT CRAB



1. **SET POSITION** – Start in set position. Even though you are moving sideways, you will still use the 60/40 rule.

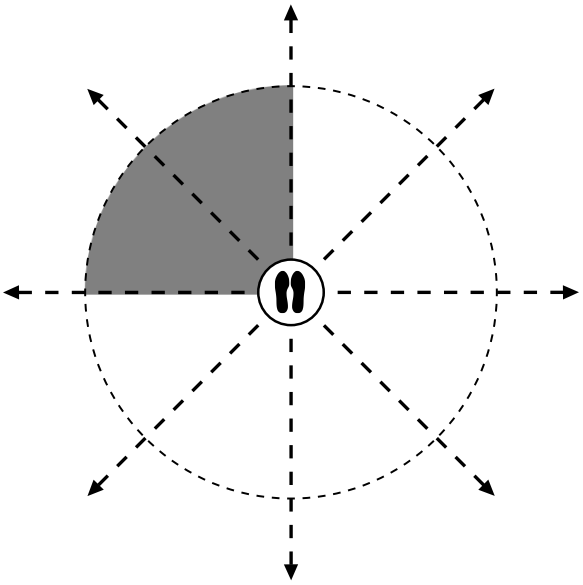
2. **CROSSED STEP** – Your first step here is a crossed step meaning you will need to push with more energy to get around the right leg and into a good first step.

3. **CONSISTENT STEP SIZE** – Always take a consistent step size between both feet from Point A to Point B.

4. **STOP MOMENTUM** – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the “STAB”.

5. **STAB & HALT** – The “STAB” here happens as an open step. So the right foot is planted first on the outside and the left foot comes straight into the “HALT”.

FRONT LEFT OBLIQUE



DIRECTION – Front Left Oblique allows you to move at any angle that is in the font left quadrant of motion.

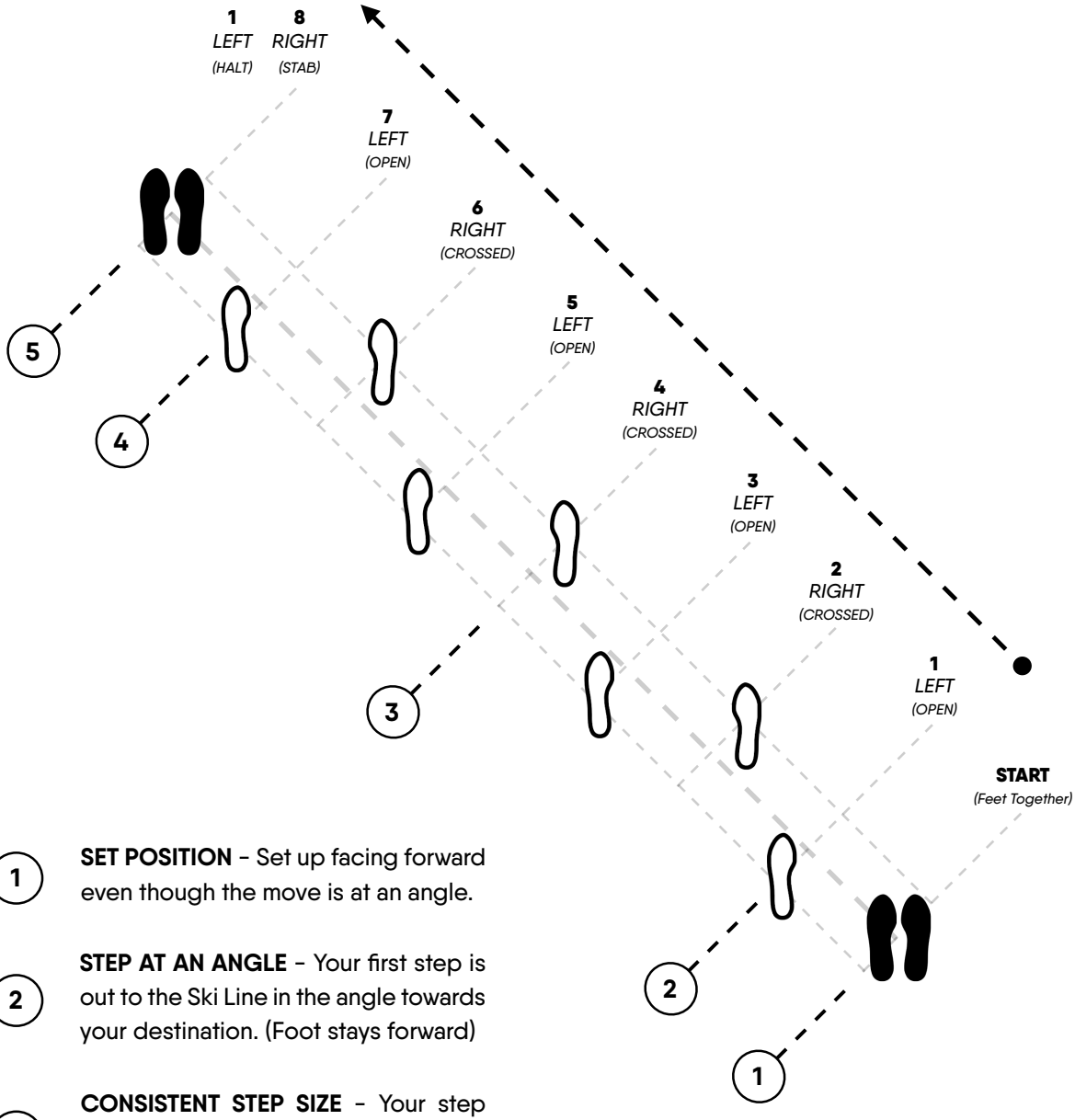
ANGLED SKI LINE – Your body and toes will always face forward, but your legs and center of your feet will move on a ski line in the angle towards your destination.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, the planted foot pushes your body at an angle as the leg in transition swings from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot.

FRONT LEFT OBLIQUE TIP – *The tendency in this move will be to make your chest parallel to the angle of movement (Like a crab march). Avoid this by pulling the left shoulder back and keep your hips straight forward as you move at an angle towards your destination.*

FRONT LEFT OBLIQUE



1. **SET POSITION** – Set up facing forward even though the move is at an angle.

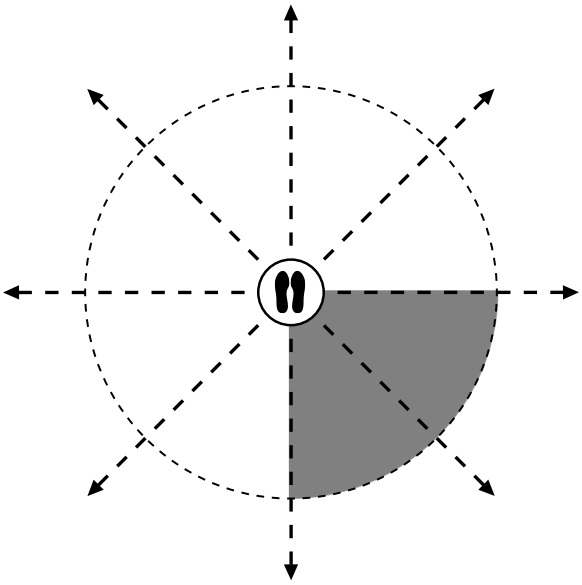
2. **STEP AT AN ANGLE** – Your first step is out to the Ski Line in the angle towards your destination. (Foot stays forward)

3. **CONSISTENT STEP SIZE** – Your step sizes should be equal down the angle, not side to side.

4. **STOP MOMENTUM** – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the "STAB".

5. **STAB & HALT** – The "STAB" here happens as a crossed step. So the right foot plants and the left foot comes around into the "HALT".

BACK RIGHT OBLIQUE



DIRECTION – Back Right Oblique allows you to move at any angle that is in the back right quadrant of motion.

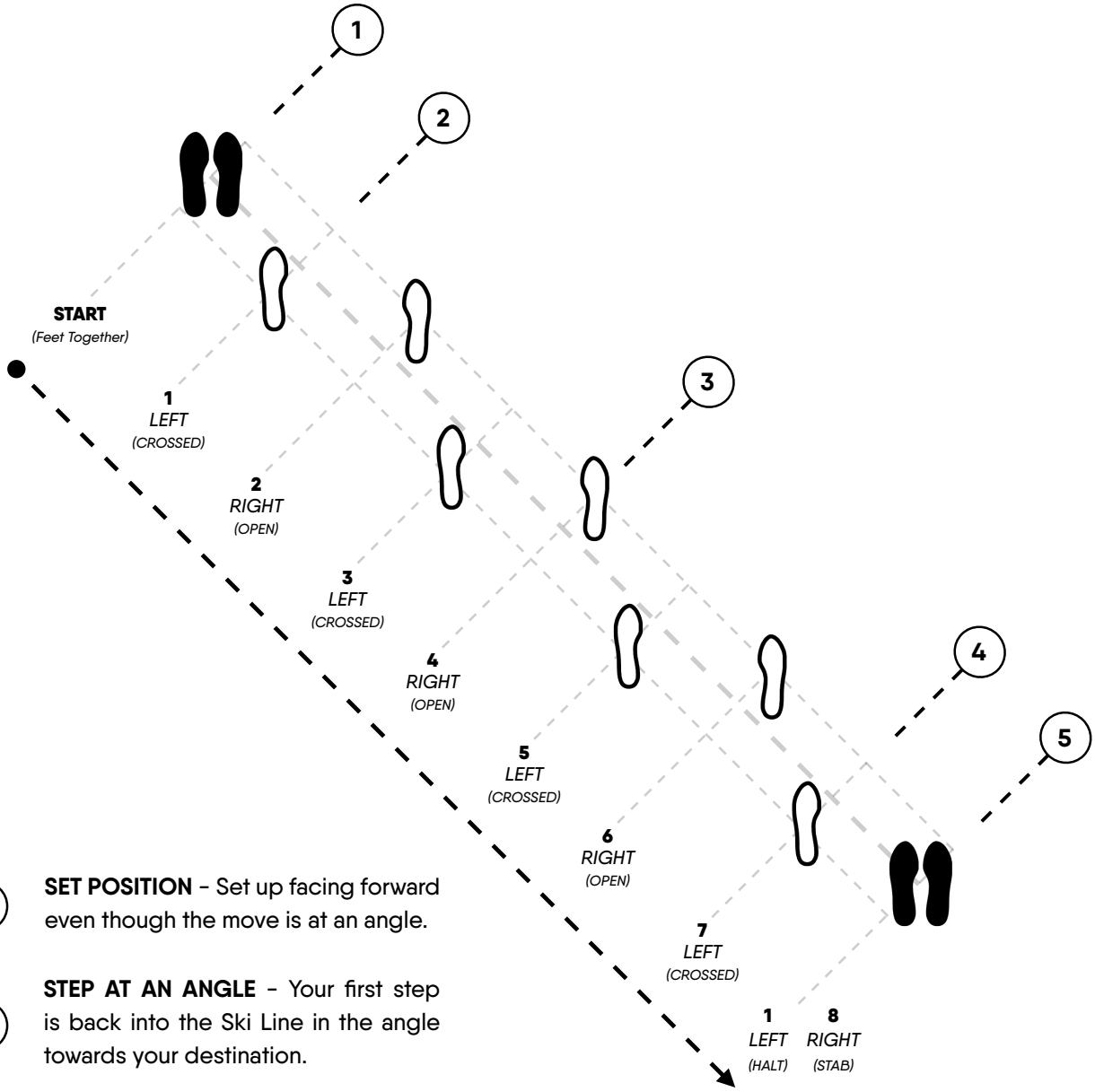
ANGLED SKI LINE – Your body and toes will always face forward, but your legs and center of your feet will move on a ski line in the angle towards your destination.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, the planted foot pushes your body at an angle as the leg in transition swings from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot.

BACK RIGHT OBLIQUE TIP – *This move follows all of the same principles of the Front Left Oblique move. That way you march consistently back and forth through the Fronts Left and Back Right quadrants of motion.*

BACK RIGHT OBLIQUE



1 **SET POSITION** – Set up facing forward even though the move is at an angle.

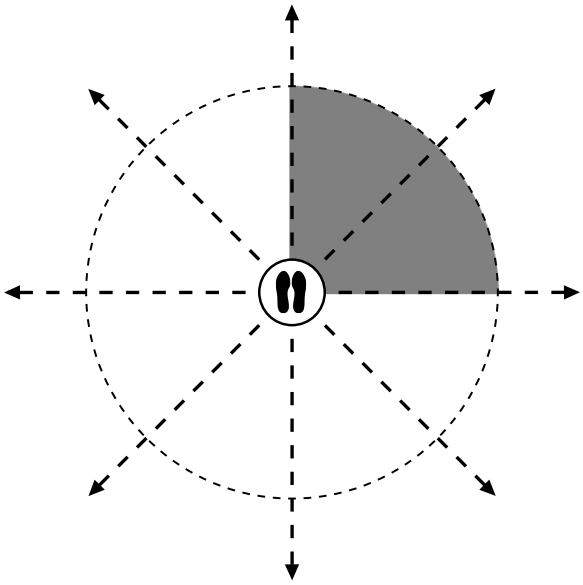
2 **STEP AT AN ANGLE** – Your first step is back into the Ski Line in the angle towards your destination.

3 **CONSISTENT STEP SIZE** – Your step sizes should be equal down the angle, not side to side.

4 **STOP MOMENTUM** – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the "STAB".

5 **STAB & HALT** – The "STAB" here happens as an open step. So the right foot plants and the left foot comes straight into the "HALT".

FRONT RIGHT OBLIQUE



DIRECTION – Front Right Oblique allows you to move at any angle that is in the font right quadrant of motion.

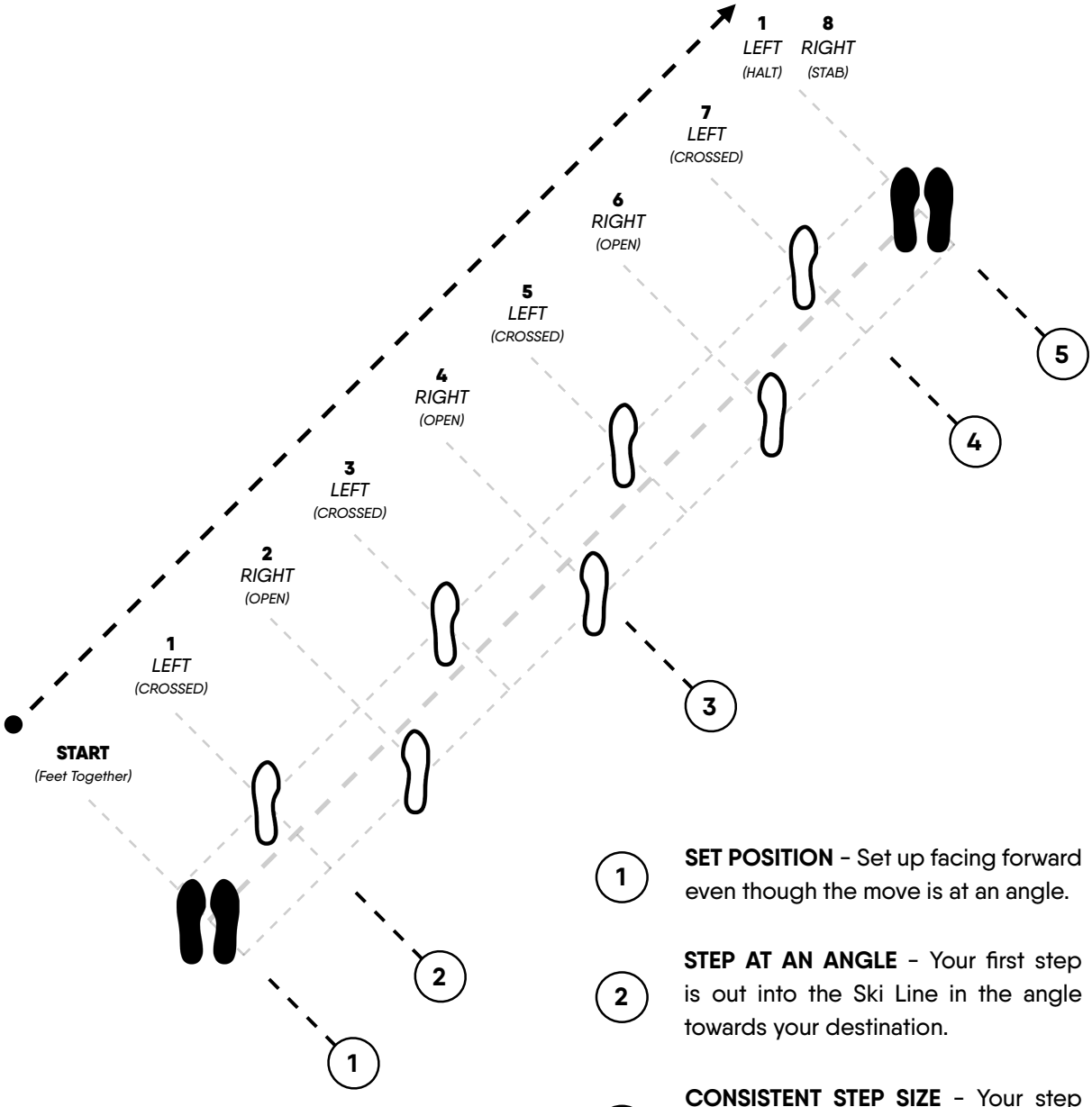
ANGLED SKI LINE – Your body and toes will always face forward, but your legs and center of your feet will move on a ski line in the angle towards your destination.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, the planted foot pushes your body at an angle as the leg in transition swings from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot.

FRONT RIGHT OBLIQUE TIP – *The tendency in this move will be to make your chest parallel to the angle of movement (Like a crab march). Avoid this by pulling the right shoulder back and keep your hips straight forward as you move at an angle towards your destination.*

FRONT RIGHT OBLIQUE



1 **SET POSITION** – Set up facing forward even though the move is at an angle.

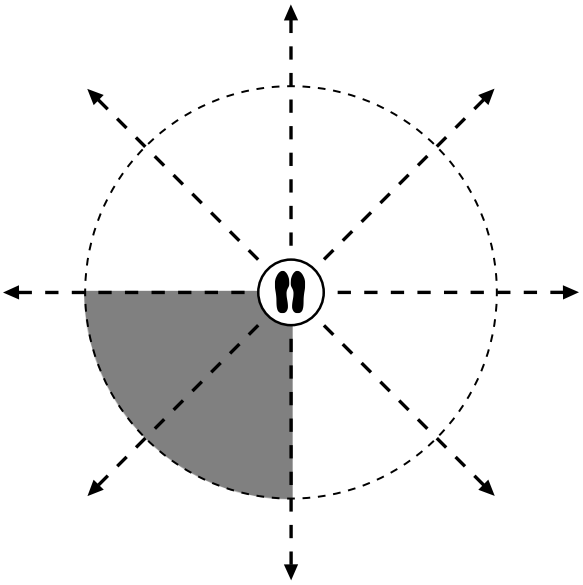
2 **STEP AT AN ANGLE** – Your first step is out into the Ski Line in the angle towards your destination.

3 **CONSISTENT STEP SIZE** – Your step sizes should be equal down the angle, not side to side.

4 **STOP MOMENTUM** – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the "STAB".

5 **STAB & HALT** – The "STAB" here happens as an open step. So the right foot plants and the left foot comes straight into the "HALT".

BACK LEFT OBLIQUE



DIRECTION – Back Left Oblique allows you to move at any angle that is in the back left quadrant of motion.

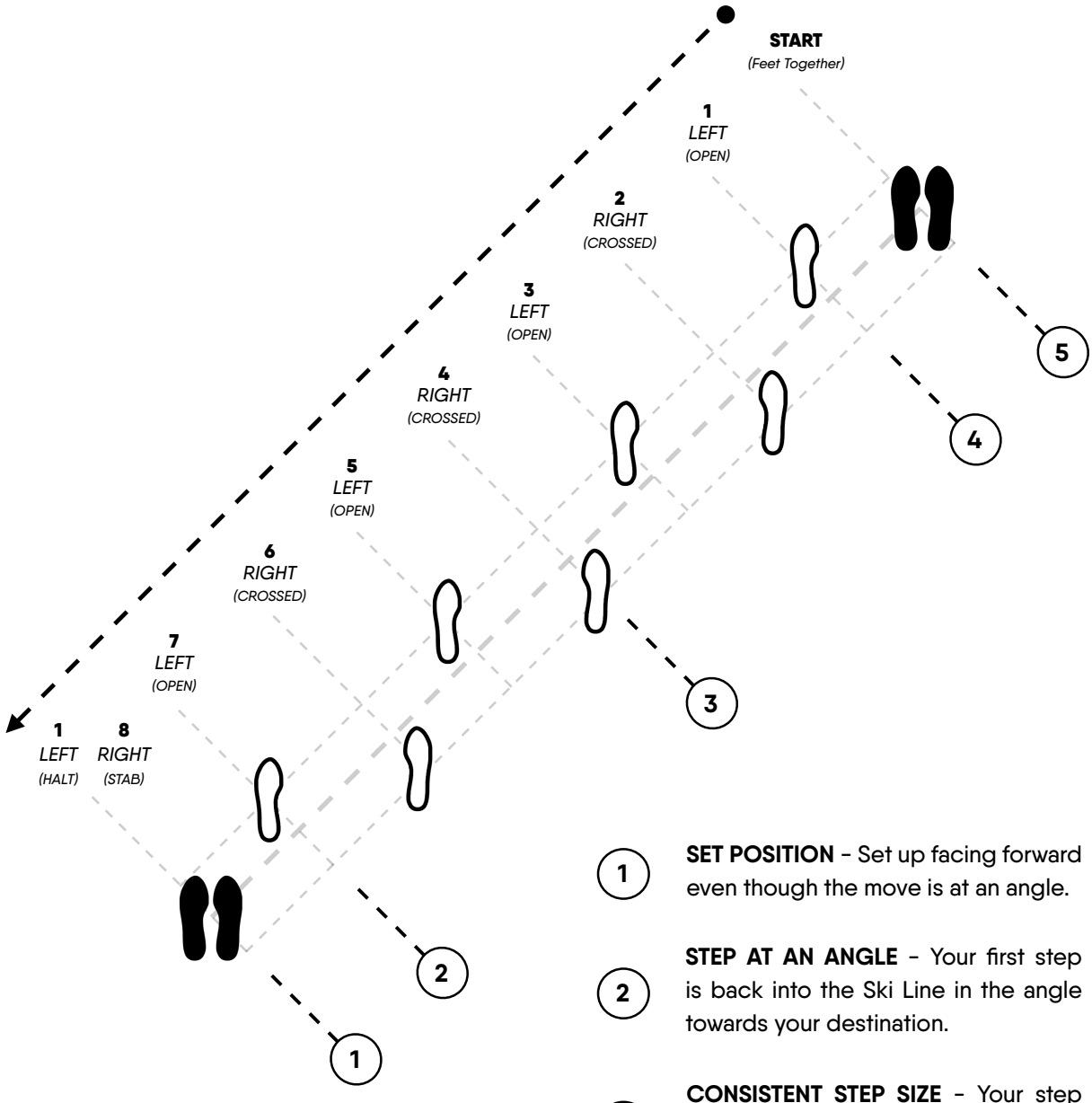
ANGLED SKI LINE – Your body and toes will always face forward, but your legs and center of your feet will move on a ski line in the angle towards your destination.

BALANCE – Your body weight should be evenly distributed between the balls of the feet. Push up like a calf raise but don't over extend. You want full connection between the ball of the foot and the ground. (Not up on your toes)

FOLLOW THROUGH – As you go from step to step, the planted foot pushes your body at an angle as the leg in transition swings from the hips and lands on the ball of the foot.

BACK LEFT OBLIQUE TIP – *This move follows all of the same principles of the Front Right Oblique move. That way you march consistently back and forth through the Fronts Right and Back Left quadrants of motion.*

BACK LEFT OBLIQUE



1 **SET POSITION** – Set up facing forward even though the move is at an angle.

2 **STEP AT AN ANGLE** – Your first step is back into the Ski Line in the angle towards your destination.

3 **CONSISTENT STEP SIZE** – Your step sizes should be equal down the angle, not side to side.

4 **STOP MOMENTUM** – The second to last step is used to help slow momentum into the "STAB".

5 **STAB & HALT** – The "STAB" here happens as a crossed step. So the right foot plants and the left foot comes around and into the "HALT".

THE FIELD

THE BIG PICTURE

THE ARENA

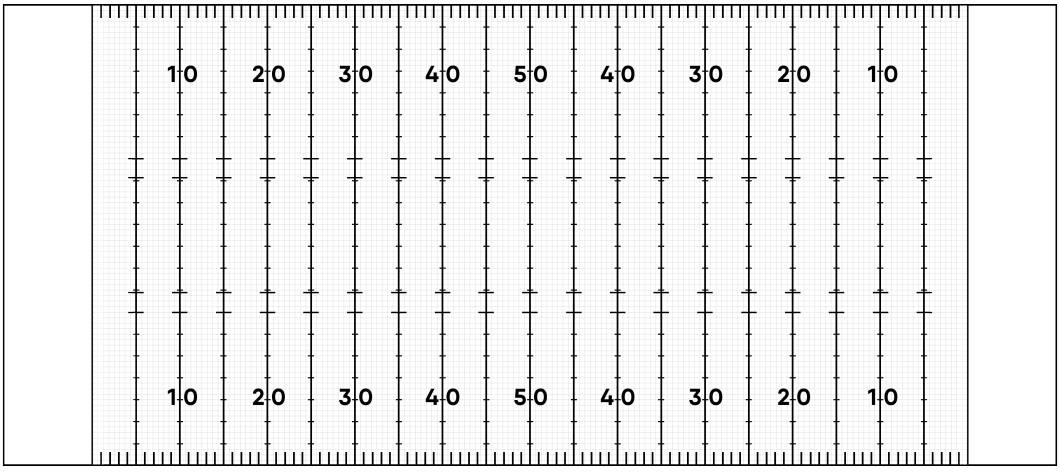
Competitive marching ensembles typically rehearse and perform on an American football field. There are many different sub-genres of marching band, such as “Indoor Drumline” where some ensembles use a 3’ X 3’ grid system to navigate the field, but for the purpose of this book we will explain “Outdoor Marching Band” guidelines which occur on a football field.

GETTING STARTED

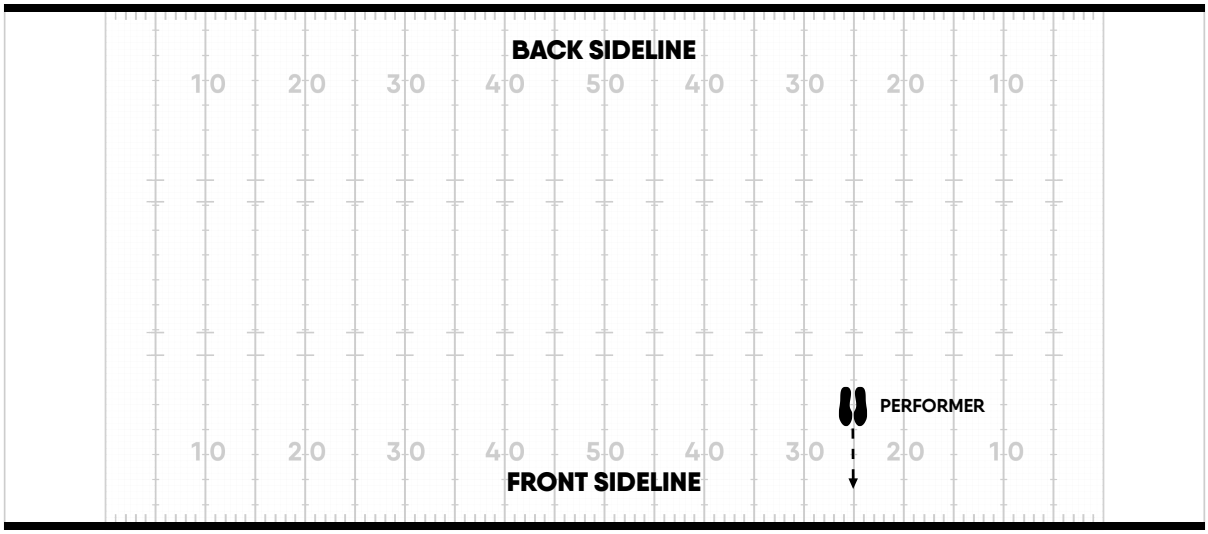
We have explained many details about the body and how to move, but now all of that information is applied to the marching field. Below is a picture of a football field. There are a lot of small details you should know about your marching arena, but don’t be intimidated! Each line has a purpose and we are going to break down each part so you know exactly how to use the field to your advantage.

STEP SIZES

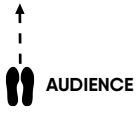
Football fields are measured in yards. Every yard line is 5 yards, but in the marching arts everything is measured by “steps”. The most common step is called “8-to-5” and divides 5 yards into 8 steps. This results in 8 steps per yard line. *(An 8-to-5 step is 22.5 inches)*

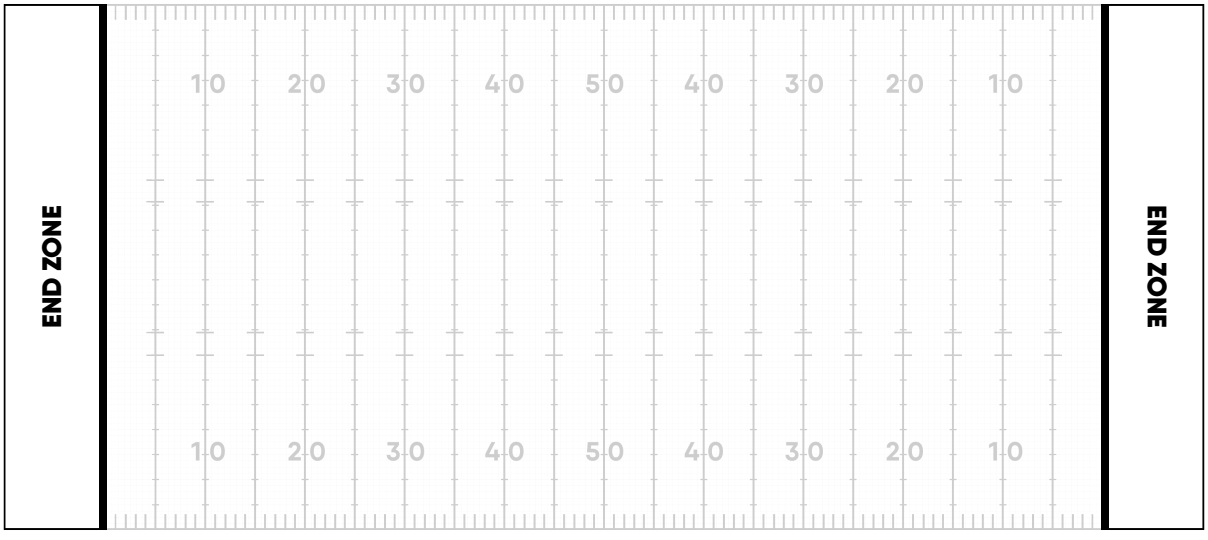


FIELD BASICS



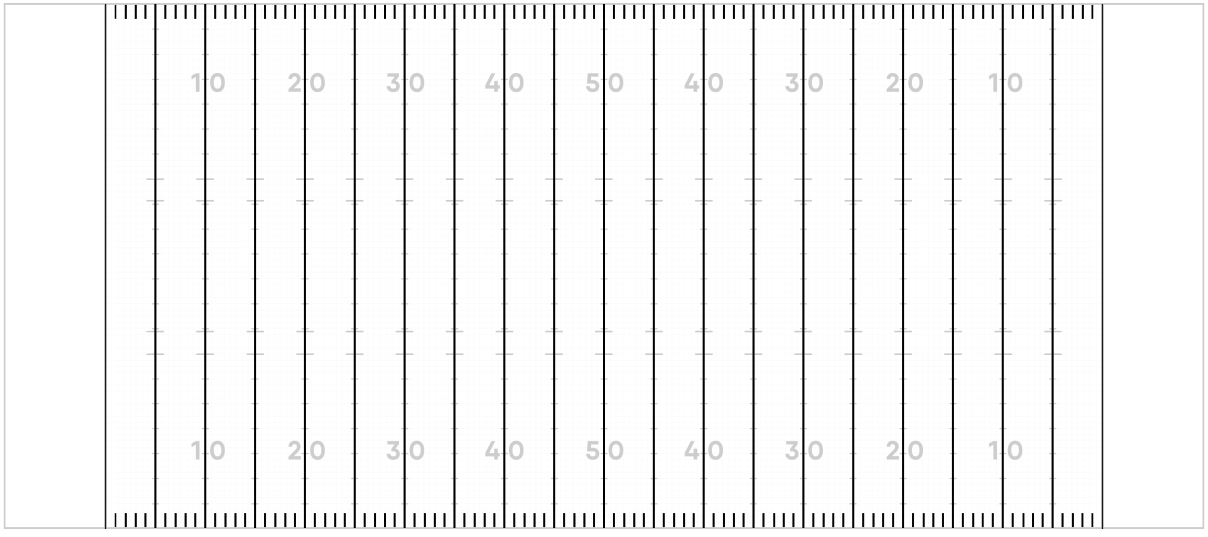
SIDELINES – The very front of the field is known as the "FRONT SIDELINE". The audience sits facing the Front Side Line to watch your show. The "BACK SIDELINE" is on the opposite side of the field.



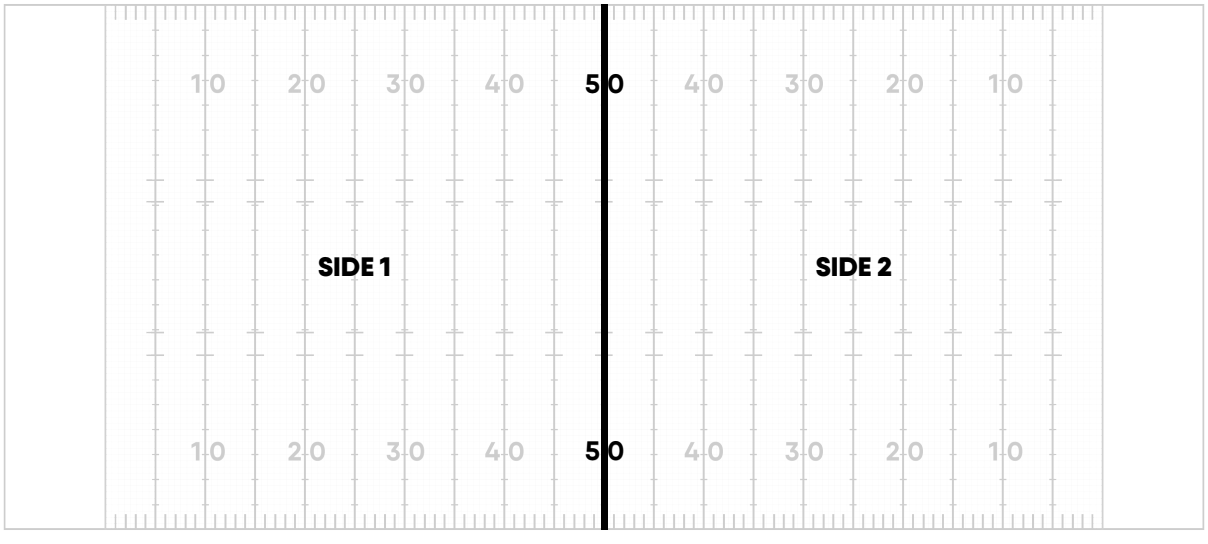


END ZONES – The outer edges of the field are called the "END ZONES". Typically marching ensembles will stage in the end zone while the show happens inside the bounds of the end zones and side lines.

YARD LINES

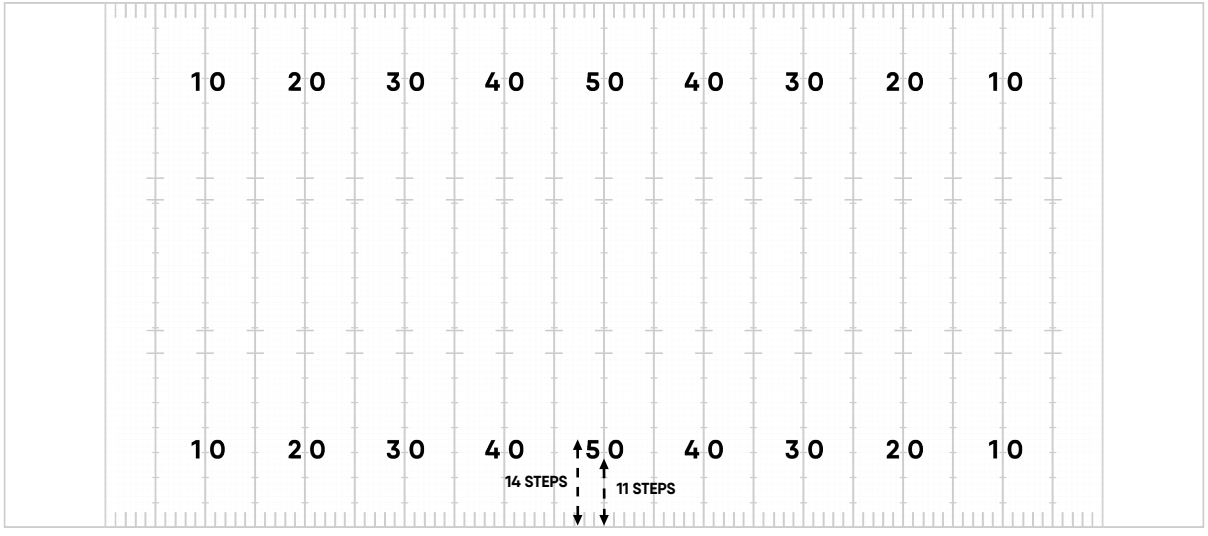


YARD LINES – "YARD LINES" are lines painted every yard the entire length of the field. Short yard lines occur every yard and are painted close to the front and back sidelines. Long yard lines extend across the field and are painted every 5 yards. These lines act as a reference as you march during your show.

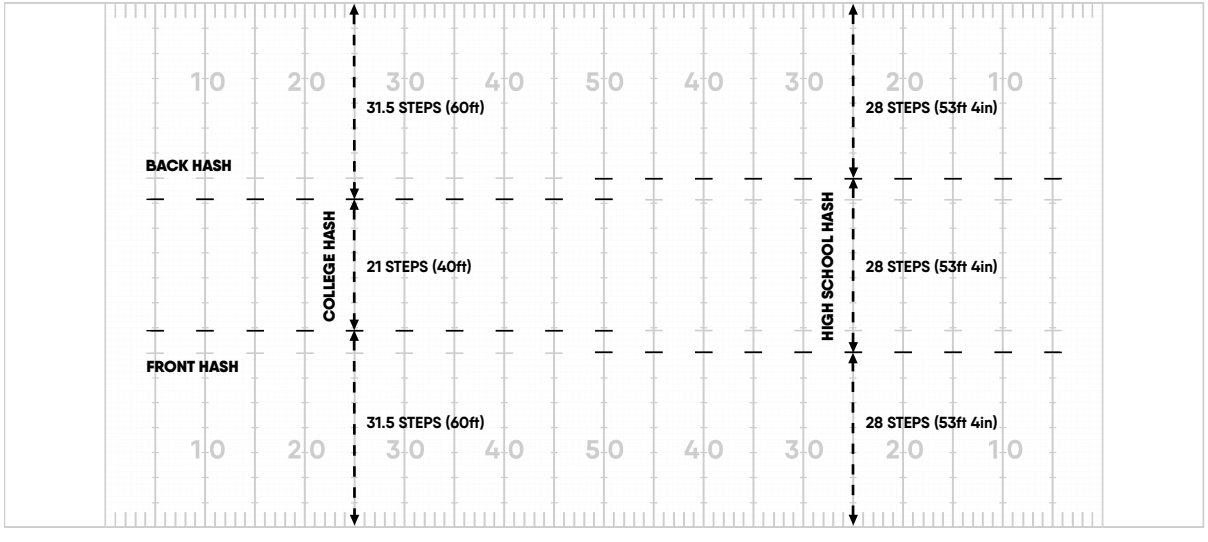


50 YARD LINE – The "50 YARD LINE" is the center line of the arena and splits the field into 2 parts: SIDE 1 and SIDE 2. Both sides are equal and have the same field markings. Since these two sides are so similar, naming each side helps you find your drill coordinates. (SIDE 1: 40 Yard line vs SIDE 2: 40 Yard Line)

YARD LINE NUMBERS & HASH MARKS

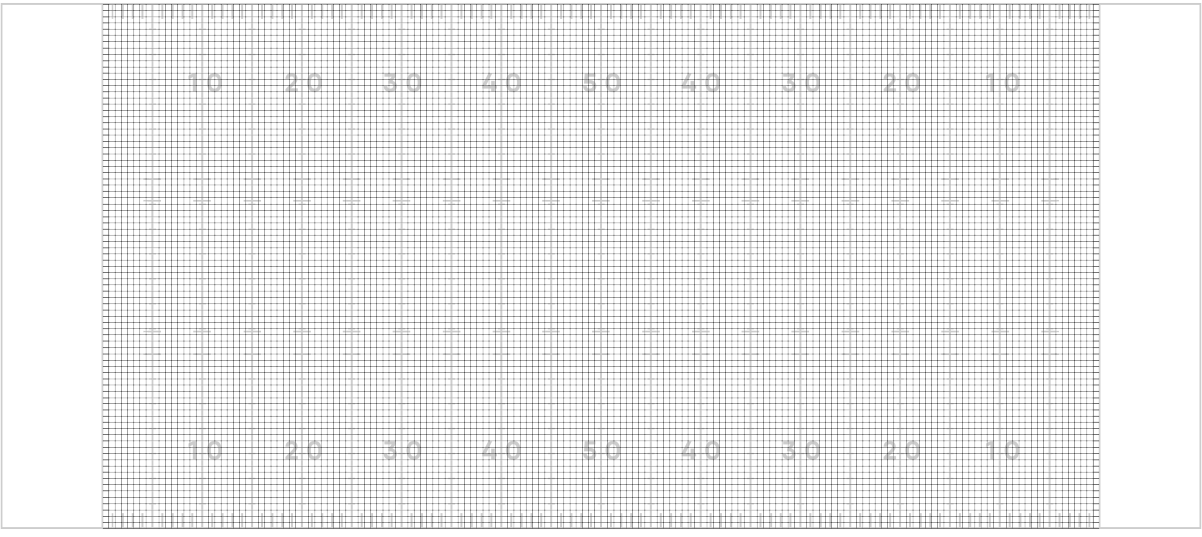


YARD LINE NUMBERS – The big white numbers on the field help you know which yard line you're on, but also act as visual checkpoints as you march around the field. Each set of numbers are often 11 (bottom of the numbers) and 14 (top of the numbers) steps from the sideline.

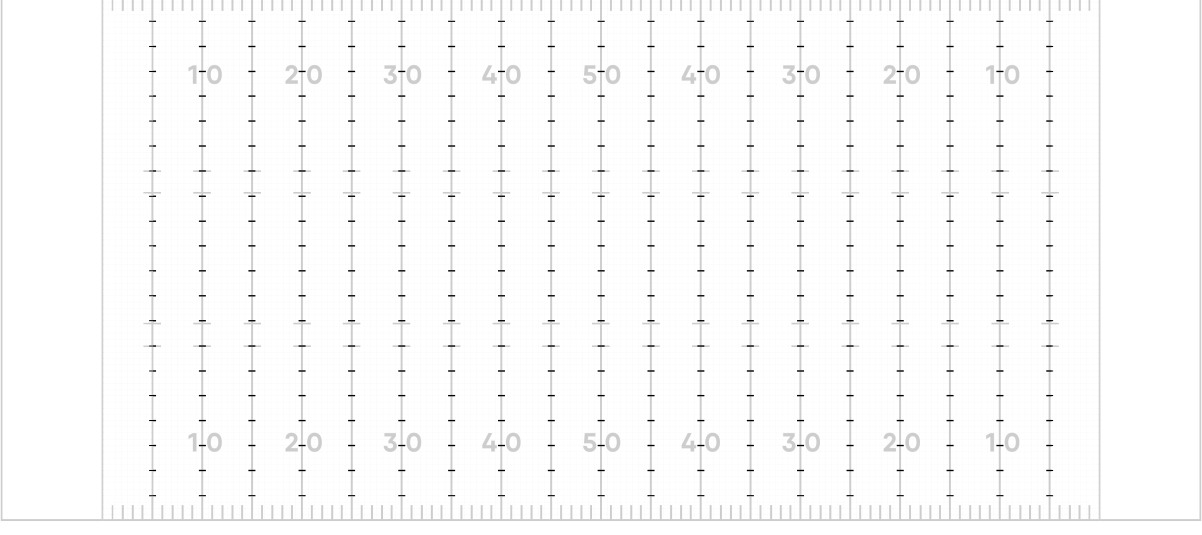


HASH MARKS – "HASH MARKS" are painted across mid-field from end zone to end zone and act as a reference for marching around the field. There are two hash distances. College Hashes are 31.5 steps (60 feet) from the sideline, and High School Hashes are 28 steps (53 feet 4 inches) from the sideline.

8-TO-5 GRID & TICK MARKS



"8-to-5" GRID - Since all marching is based on 8 steps per yard line, the entire field can be divided up by steps. This grid is not actually painted on the field, but it is implied and is often seen in your marching drill sheets.



TICK MARKS - Painting an 8-to-5 grid on the field would be a lot of work, but there is a lot of distance between the hash and the sidelines. In a rehearsal setting (especially when setting drill) it is best to paint "TICK MARKS" every 4 steps to help performers find their dot and reference field positions quickly.

THE DRILL

DRILL BASICS

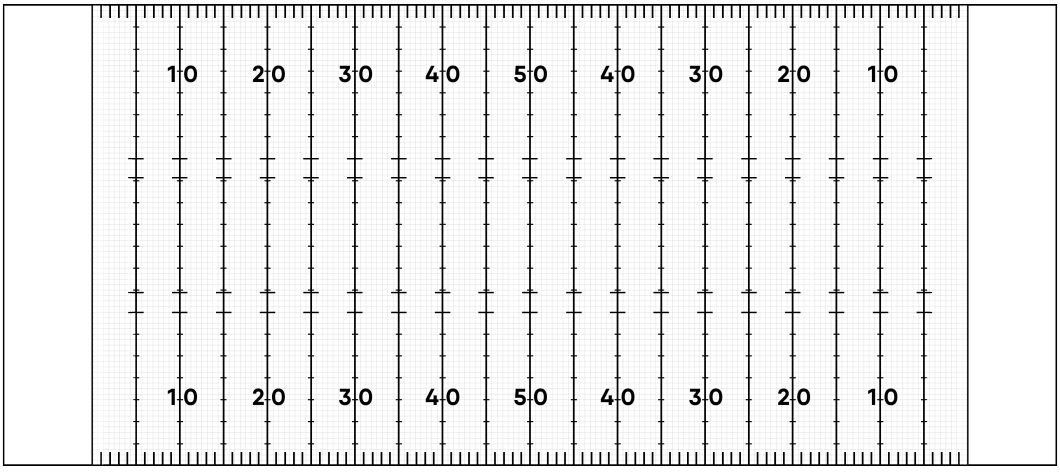
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DRILL

Now you know about marching technique and field basics, but how does everyone know where to go? If you have seen a marching band show before, you know that the performers march around and create formations that resemble geometric shapes and sometimes they spell out words or pictures. This is all done through a specific form of communication.

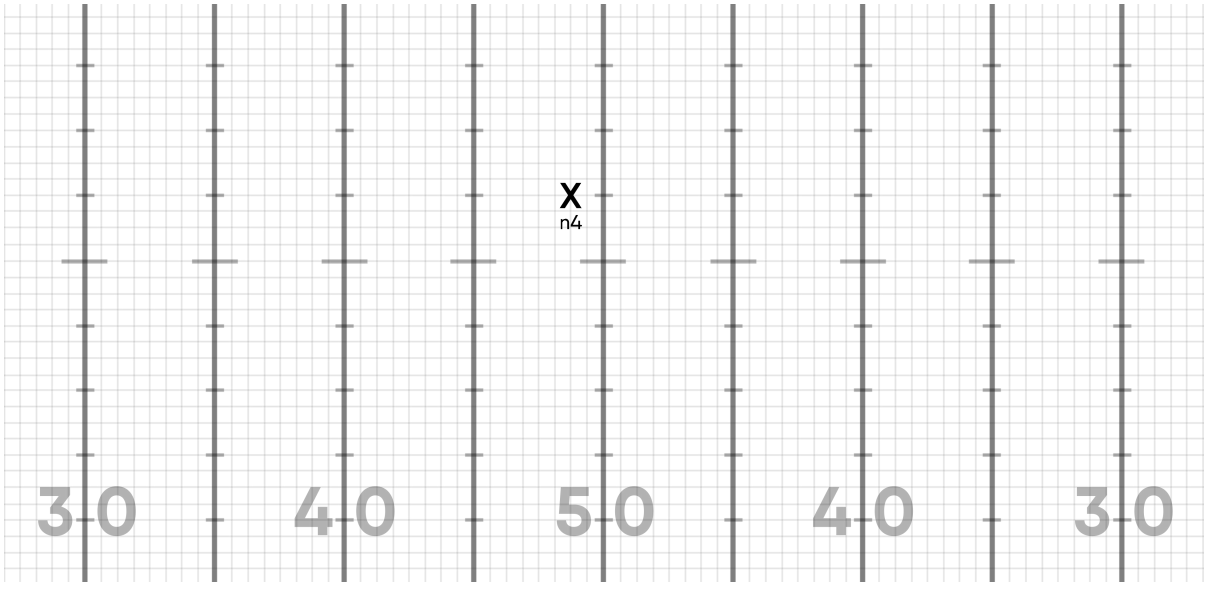
When a musician is writing show music, they write on staff lines and measures, but when a drill designer writes for a show, they use a format called “DRILL CHARTS”. Marching Drill formations are specific movements of an ensemble that creates geometric pictures on the field. A “Drill Chart” tells the performers how to go from one drill formation to the next.

YOUR ROLE IN THE PROCESS

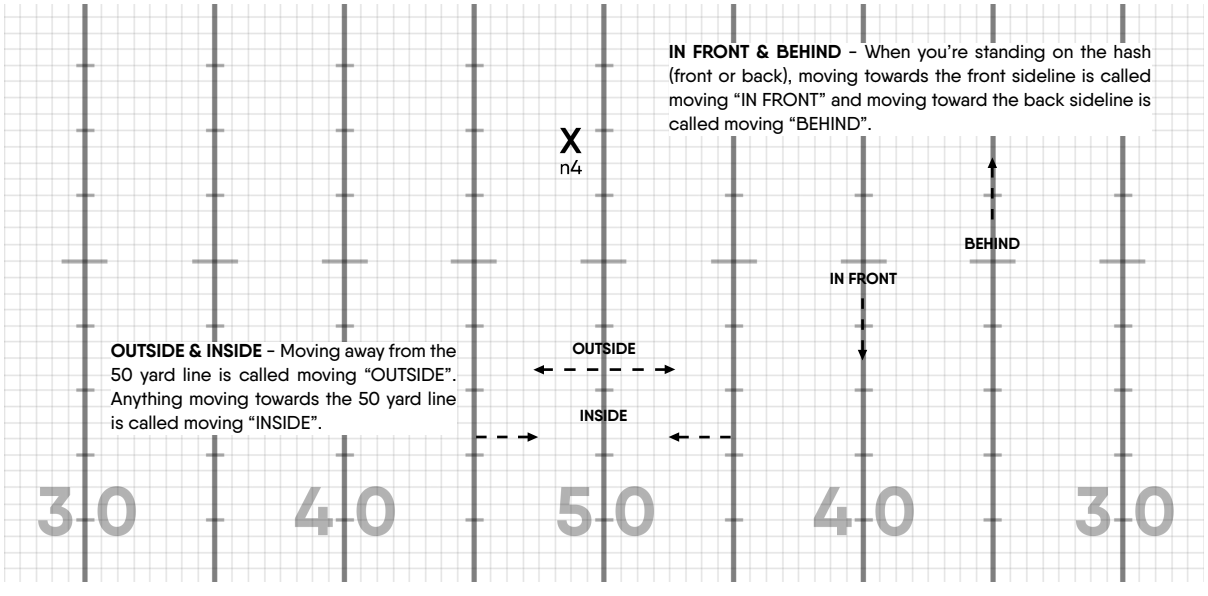
Once you get onto the field you will receive a drill chart or abbreviated drill chart called a “Dot Card”. It is your job to know how to navigate the field and read the drill. If everyone in the ensemble follows the drill coordinates in order the audience will be able to see the drill formations move continuously. This creates visually appealing marching maneuvers and is the core of any marching arts performance.



YOUR "DOT"

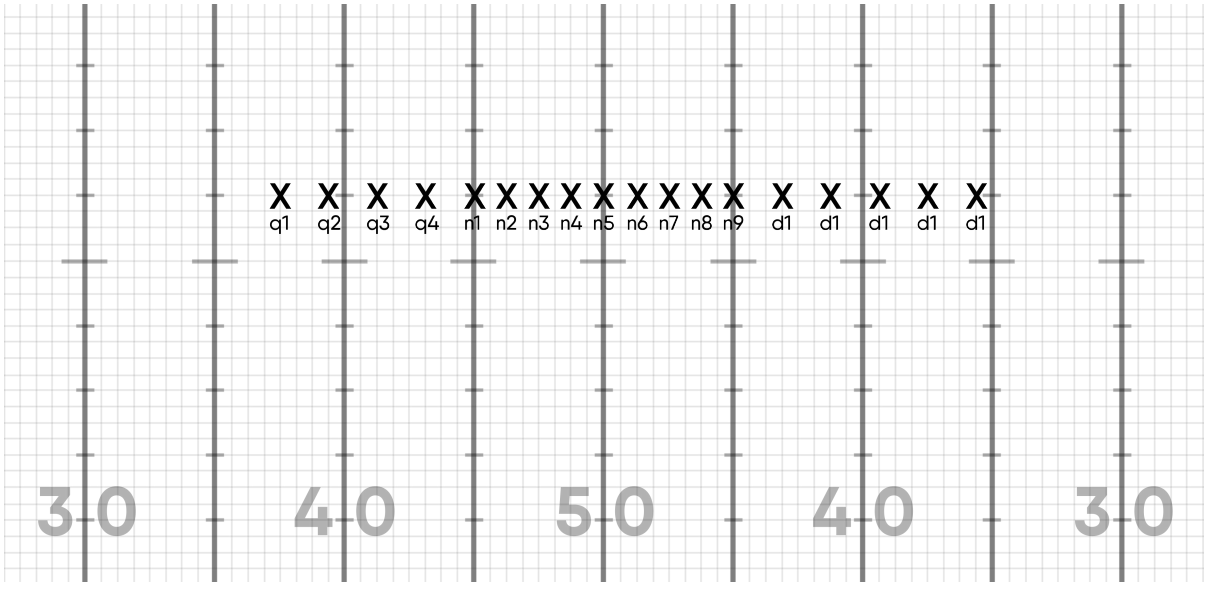


DOT - Your "DOT" is your specific coordinate/position within the drill. For example, the dot above is 2 steps outside the 50 yard line (SIDE 1), and 4 steps behind the Front Hash. (n4 = Snare #4)

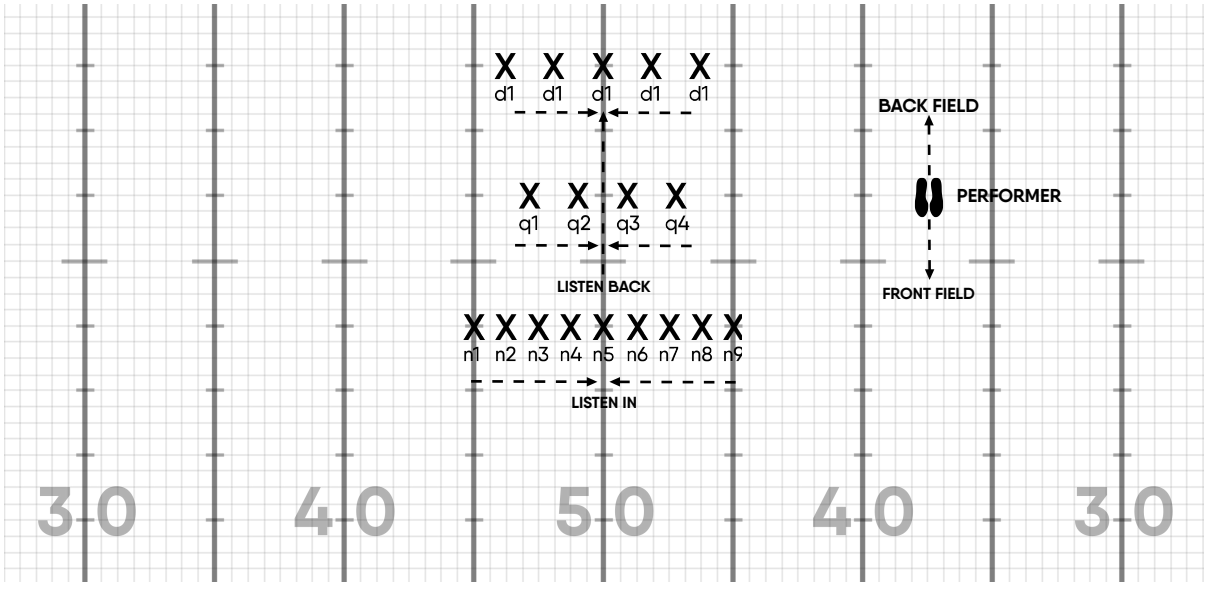


READING YOUR DOT - When reading the drill, (or Dot Card) the rules above help you read your coordinates for each dot so you know exactly where to go.

THE FORM



THE FORM – When everyone stands on their dot, it creates a shape on the field called “THE FORM”. As you march from dot to dot the form either moves or changes shape.



LISTEN IN & LISTEN BACK – When you march around the field there are a variety of details that affect your performance. A general rule when listening in a form is to listen in towards the center of the form, and listen back to the back of the field. If you listen forward you will hear a delay and play out of time.

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