

2019-2020

MIDWAY BAND

MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

POSTURE

Strive for a tall, lean, and powerful presence in our posture. The spine should feel lengthened, the chest should be wide, and shoulders should be as broad as possible with a natural slope. While holding your instrument, your shoulder blades should be engaged, and they should be pulling together. The pectoral muscles (or, your pecs) should NOT be engaged to hold the instrument! The weight of your body should be primarily on your platforms with the heels still making contact, but not as the primary source for weight distribution (60% platform, 40% heel).

PHAT FIRST

We will refer to our feet position at attention as "Phat First." Start with your feet in parallel first position, turn both feet out at 22.5 degree angles (so there is 45 degrees between both feet). You can also use your fist to measure the distance between the arches of your feet.

FORWARD MARCHING

Our forward technique will be a "straight leg" technique. Meaning that the legs will be straight on the downbeats. The length of your leg should extend through each step, and movement should be activated from the hips.

The articulation for time of the forward marching happens on the EDGE of the heel, with toes flexed and high.

The forward marching will be broken down into several parts. The push, the first step, the weight transfer, the crossing count, and the second step.



Push:

The push from the right leg comes from the leg being completely engaged. The motion and energy comes from the right platform being pushed off into the first step. The left heel should stay low, and the toes should immediately start flexing. The right heel **MUST** remain low to the ground (the stationary heel should not come more than half an inch off of the ground) or the bend in the leg happens before the first step. The motivation of forward motion comes from your core, and the motion of straight leg should come from the hip joint, like a pendulum.



First Step:

Time comes from the articulation of the edge of the heel. It is crucial for timing and visual clarity that the **EDGE** of the heel articulates on the downbeat. Both quads should be engaged at the downbeats and both legs should be straight. The weight of your body should be balanced on your front heel, and your back platform. Again, it is crucial to make sure that your back heel does not come too high off of the ground. **LOW** heels, **HIGH** toes!!



Weight Transfer:

As the weight transfer begins to happen (immediately after the downbeat of count 1), the front foot starts to roll through, and the back leg immediately starts to flex as the leg pulls through to the next step. This will allow the knee to remain unbent, and for the shape of the leg to be straight as well. The traveling leg should be pushing down through the heel, and should remain a long straight line, coming out from the hip like a pendulum.



Crossing Count:

The crossing count, or when the feet are right next to each other, happens exactly on the "and" count. The traveling foot should now be traveling through the "and" count FLEXED, creating the correct leg shape, and preparing the foot for solid shape on the next downbeat. The weight of your body on the crossing count should be completely on your forward foot, but should still be straight up and down!! Additionally, the traveling leg will not be completely straight. There will be a slight knee bend to allow the foot to clear the ground. Continue to think about the length of the leg being very long as you travel forward.



Second step (through the crossing count):

The traveling foot should now be flexed, and pushed forward. As it articulates, it hits with the edge of the heel, again with a long straight leg. On the stationary foot, the weight should transfer completely to the platform. Similar to the first step, the stationary heel should not come more than half an inch off of the ground. The higher the heel comes up, the more the leg bends!!

BACKWARD MARCHING

Our backward technique will also be a "straight leg" technique. The articulation of the beat happens on the entire platform of the foot. The heel should remain at a comfortable relevè (about an inch) to maintain control and stability in both the leg shape and the upper body carriage. While marching you should be thinking about pointing the front foot as you pull from the back leg. In addition, think about stretching the heel towards the ground.



Push:

The push comes from the same place as the forward march. The right quad should be completely engaged, and the push comes from the right platform. As the left foot extends out, the right heel comes slightly off the ground so only the platform of the foot remains down. The left foot should slightly flex (toes should never be above parallel in the backwards march) to clear the ground as it moves back.



First Step:

The platform of the foot articulates on the beat, and the weight transfers half to that foot. For the downbeat, the weight of your body should be balanced between both feet on both platforms, and the platforms of your feet should be an even height off the ground!!



Weight Transfer/Crossing Count:

Your weight for the crossing count should be completely over the back (stationary) leg. The weight transfer begins to happen immediately after the downbeat. When moving, every step is initiated by a push from the front foot (energy should remain through the front platform!!). NEVER REACH BACK, PUSH OFF! As the front leg pulls through, the weight of the foot stays on the platform. HEELS NEVER TOUCH THE GROUND DURING THE BACKWARDS MARCH! The traveling foot should slightly flex as it travels through the crossing count so the leg shape stays straight. Both legs should continue to be straight at this point.



Post Crossing Count:

The foot should remain to be slightly flexed as it begins to travel behind the body, with energy pushing down towards the ground. This will ensure that the leg stays straight!



Second Step (Through the crossing count):

As the foot continues behind the body and through the crossing count, the foot stays flexed and the heel stays low to the ground so the foot can articulate completely on the platform! At this point, your body weight should be completely between both platforms, and heel height for both feet should be even again!

Halting and Direction Changes

Halting: The halt always happens with the platform of the foot. The platform should be turned out as it articulates, and the weight should be primarily on the balls of the feet to ensure that the entire body stops in time.

Change of Directions: split the difference between the directions, always a place of the foot on the platform, NEVER on the heel!! The platform, quad, and abs should all be flexed in order to push the body into the new direction.

