

# The Ohio State University Marching Band



## Marching Fundamentals

Revised 2019

MELLOPHONE

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## Written Reference Guide

A basic system of marching fundamentals is essential in providing consistency of terminology, movement, and musical execution in all field performances. The marching style of the band will only improve as each individual member improves. The performance level of the band is therefore dependent on the dedication of the individual member to mastering this system by thoroughly understanding and precisely executing every fundamental in an exemplary manner.

The following is a list of the marching fundamentals used by The Ohio State University Marching Band. This guide is designed as a reference for new candidates as they familiarize themselves with the marching system used within the band, and it is also meant to refresh the memories of veteran band members regarding the correct way to approach each fundamental.

It should be noted that fundamental movements such as the chair step, instrument position, and basic posture must be mastered before moving on to all other movements. Each performer must endeavor to execute all movements with snap, drive, and precision, avoiding anticipation (early starting) or hesitation (late starting).

### I. Fundamental Positions

#### A. Attention Position

1. *Basic Posture.* Stand tall with the shoulders back and relaxed, chin slightly raised, and eyes looking directly ahead in a “1000-yard stare.” Knees should not be locked, and there should be no talking or movement unless instructed.
2. Place the heels together with toes 45 degrees apart and the ball of each foot centered on the yard line (or designated position). The left hand hangs straight down with fingers and thumb together and extended, but relaxed.

#### B. At Ease Position

Use the same *Basic Posture* as in **Attention Position**. Place the feet 22.5 inches apart (roughly shoulder width), with the ball of each foot centered on the yard line (or designated position). Place the left hand in the small of the back with fingers and thumb together and extended, and the palm facing outward. Hold the instrument in **Carry Position**.

*Note: the **At Ease Position** may only be used when instruments are in **Carry Position**. Additionally, from this position, band members may only be called to **Attention Position** or ordered to fall out.*

### C. Instrument Carry Position

Hold the instrument with the right hand around the valve casings. The instrument should be against the body and parallel to the ground, with the mouthpiece approximately in line with the hip and the bell forward.

### D. Instrument Playing Position

Hold the instrument in a natural playing position parallel to the ground (no angle), with valves perpendicular to the ground. Hands and arms should be in a relaxed and comfortable position with elbows approximately shoulder-width apart.

### E. Chair Step

The chair step is the fundamental marching step of the band. Lift the leg with the thigh parallel to the ground and the lower leg at a right angle (perpendicular) to the ground. The toe should be pointed straight down. When a chair step begins any drill sequence, it should be prepared with a vocalized “up” on the count before the sequence begins. In the course of normal marching, the leg should reach its maximum height on the “&” of the beat.

### F. Stride Step

The stride step is a military-style “walking” step, and it should be executed without raising the knees and without any exaggerated toe point. Each step begins with a push from the ball of the back foot, followed by the placement of the heel of the forward foot on the ground. Roll slightly through each step, allowing the knees to bend naturally. The stride step is used in **6-to-5 Marching**, **6-to-5 Obliques**, and in specified **Adjusted Step** marching.

### G. Arm Swing

Bring the left arm sharply up, and use the left hand to cover the sternum (the chest brass on the uniform) for one full beat. Hold the hand with fingers and thumb together and extended, but relaxed, forming a slight “cup” over the sternum. After one count, return the arm to its original *Basic Posture* position for three counts. Complete one arm swing on count 1 of every four counts.

*Note: the **Arm Swing** is only used when instruments are in **Carry Position** and in conjunction with **Mark Time**, forward-facing **8-to-5 Marching**, **8-to-5 Obliques**, and – if specified – other situations in which a **Chair Step** is employed.*

### H. Horn Flash

Horn flashes are instantaneous movements that accompany changes in direction. During a horn flash with the instrument up, move the bell of the instrument upward approximately 90° (perpendicular to the ground), keeping the mouthpiece on the mouth and bending the neck. Return it to **Playing Position** facing in the new direction. Complete the movement as quickly and smoothly as possible while keeping the fingers on the valves. During a horn flash with the instrument down, raise the instrument up as close to perpendicular as possible, bending at the elbow, and

return it to **Carry Position**. In most cases, a horn flash occurs simultaneously with a pivot on the ball of the right foot. In marching sequences, horn flashes should be done only when the next fundamental begins with a **Chair Step** (not with a **Stride Step**).

## II. In Place Movements

**A. Moving to Attention Position** – *Command: “band, atten-hut” / Response: “rest, 1, 2”*  
On “rest,” raise the left leg into a **Chair Step**. If moving from the **At Ease Position**, bring the left hand down to the side of the body, as in the **Attention Position**. On “1,” place the left foot next to the right as in the **Attention Position**, and kick the right leg out slightly at a 45° angle from the body. On “2,” return the right leg to **Attention Position**.

*Note: band members may be called to **Attention Position** from **At Ease Position** or **Attention Position**, with instruments in **Carry Position** or **Playing Position**.*

**B. Moving to At Ease Position** – *Command: “band, at ease” / Response: “rest, 1”*  
On “rest,” raise the left leg into a **Chair Step**. On “1,” place the left foot 22.5 inches to the left and move the left hand to the small of the back, as in the **At Ease Position**.

**C. Instruments Up** – *Command: “band, instruments up” / Response: “rest, 1, 2, 3”*  
Rest on “rest.” On “1,” extend the right arm up and forward, parallel to the ground with the instrument still held in the hand as in **Carry Position**. On “2,” bring the left hand up to grasp the instrument. On “3,” bring the instrument into **Playing Position**.

**D. Instruments Down** – *Command: “band, instruments down” / Response: “rest, down”*  
Rest on “rest.” On “down,” snap the instrument to **Carry Position** in a one smooth motion.

**E. Left Face** – *Command: “band, left face” / Response: “1, 2”*  
On “1,” pivot sharply on the heel of the left foot and the ball of the right foot 90° to the left. On “2,” snap the right foot next to the left, back to **Attention Position**.

**F. Right Face** – *Command: “band, right face” / Response: “1, 2”*  
On “1,” pivot sharply on the heel of the right foot and the ball of the left foot 90° to the right. On “2,” snap the left foot next the right, back to **Attention Position**.

**G. About Face** – *Command: “band, about face” / Response: “1, 2”*  
On “1,” place the ball of the right foot behind and slightly to the left of the left heel. On “2,” pivot on the ball of the right foot and the heel of the left foot 180° to the right, ending with both heels together in **Attention Position**.

*Note regarding facings (E, F, and G): the upper body moves as one unit, whether the instruments are in **Carry Position** or **Playing Position**. There is no **Horn Flash** and no extraneous arm or*

body movement when completing facings. In addition, facings may be given as cardinal directions (north, south, east, or west), and marchers must execute the proper facing for the direction given. For example, the command “band, north face,” with the band facing south, would require marchers to execute an **About Face**.

**H. Step Forward About Face** – Command: “band, step forward about face” / Response: “rest, 1, 2, 3”

On “rest,” raise the right leg into a **Chair Step**. On “1,” place the ball of the right foot 22.5 inches directly in front of the left. On “2,” pivot on the balls of both feet 180° to the left, executing a **Horn Flash**. On “3,” snap the right foot next to the left, back to **Attention Position**.

**I. Mark Time** – Response: “(up) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8”

Bring the left leg into a **Chair Step** and then place it back in its starting position (**Attention Position**) so that the left foot hits the ground on “1.” As the left foot hits, raise the right leg into a **Chair Step** (arriving on the “&” of 1), and bring it back down so that the right foot hits the ground on “2.” Repeat for the designated number of steps.

**J. Mark Time (training drill)** – Response: “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8”

When the **Mark Time** movement is first learned, it may be broken down as follows:

Count 1: raise the left heel off the ground, pointing the toe but keeping it on the ground

Count 2: raise the left leg into a **Chair Step**

Count 3: drop the left leg, returning the pointed toe to the ground with the heel still raised

Count 4: drop the left heel to the ground

Counts 5-8: repeat the first four counts with the right leg

*Note: breaking the **Mark Time** down in this manner can be beneficial in perfecting the **Chair Step**; it allows band members to focus on leg lift, toe point, and the proper motion of the step, which may be useful in eliminating a “bicycling” motion when marching forward.*

**K. Halt Kick (Down)** – Response: “halt, kick (down)”

This fundamental is used to end a sequence of drill. On the last count of the drill, place the right foot on the ground while raising the left leg into a **Chair Step**. On the “halt” (count 1), place the left foot on the ground next to the right, as in a **Mark Time**. On the “kick” (count 2), kick the right leg out slightly at a 45° angle from the body and return it to **Attention Position**. If the instrument is in **Playing Position**, a third count (or “down”) may be added to snap the instrument into **Carry Position**.

**L. Hats Off**

A hats off is a complex ending to a sequence of drill and may only be given after a **Halt Kick Down**. The count sequence (and response) is as follows: *halt kick down, 2,*

*hats, 2, off, 2, 3, 4, down, 2, 3, 4, up, 2, 3, 4, on, 2, down, 2, followed by 1, 2, 3 or O-HI-O.*

1. On “down” (after the **Halt Kick**), snap the instrument down into **Carry Position** while still holding it with both the right and left hands. Hold for count 2.
2. On “hats,” grasp the hat with the right hand at the plume holder, keeping the plume between the first two fingers. Hold the instrument in position with the left hand. Hold for count 2.
3. On “off,” remove the hat and extend the right arm 45° up and 45° to the right. Hold for counts 2, 3, and 4.
4. On “down,” bow at the waist, keeping the back straight and parallel to the ground, and holding the right arm across the body to the outside of the left knee. The instrument moves with the bow, ending with the bell pointed down. Hold for counts, 2, 3, and 4.
5. On “up,” return to the upright position with the right arm extended (as in instruction 3.) Hold for 2, 3, and 4.
6. On “on,” replace the hat securely on the head with the right hand still grasping it. Hold for count 2.
7. On “down,” drop the right hand to grasp the instrument as in **Carry Position**.
8. On “2,” place the left hand back at the side as in **Attention Position**.
9. The sequence may end by either executing an **Instruments Up** and saying “1, 2, 3” or by remaining in position and saying “O-HI-O.”

### III. Marching Steps

**A. 8-to-5 Marching** – Response: “(up) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8”

Using the **Chair Step** (unless a **Stride Step** is specified), take eight 22.5-inch steps for every five yards – the first step with the left leg and the eighth with the right. The fourth step should fall halfway between the yard lines, and the ball of the right foot should hit the yard line on the final step. If marching with a **Chair Step** and the instrument in **Carry Position**, an **Arm Swing** is used.

**B. 6-to-5 Marching** – Response: “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6”

Utilizing the **Stride Step**, take six 30-inch steps for every five yards – the first step with the left leg and the last step with the right. The third step should fall halfway between the yard lines, and the ball of the right foot should hit the yard line on the final step.

*Note: as previously stated, there is no **Horn Flash** accompanying a change of direction into a **Stride Step**. Additionally, no special transition is needed when changing from a **Chair Step** to a **Stride Step**. However, when transitioning out of a **Stride Step**, the left leg returns to a **Chair Step** on the “&” of the last beat, and the marcher may verbalize the “up” to emphasize the transition.*

**C. Adjusted Step** – Response: varied, depending on the number of counts

An adjusted step is a non-standard step size, given as any even number of steps for every five yards (4 to 5, 10 to 5, 12 to 5, etc.). As with **8-to-5** and **6-to-5 Marching**, all

step sizes are equal, and the first step is taken by the left leg and the last by the right. Adjusted step marching is assumed to be executed using a **Chair Step**, unless a **Stride Step** is specified.

D. **Obliques** – *Response: varied, depending on the number of counts*

This fundamental is performed as a forward march at a 45° angle to the original path, either to the right or to the left. The change of direction occurs on the last count before the first step of the oblique.

1. **8-to-5 Obliques.** Using a **Chair Step**, take 12 (approximately 22.5-inch) steps between yard lines, with the sixth step exactly halfway between yard lines and the twelfth step with the ball of the right foot on the yard line. A **Horn Flash** should accompany the directional change into the oblique, and an **Arm Swing** should be used with instruments in **Carry Position**.
2. **6-to-5 Obliques.** Using a **Stride Step**, take 8 (approximately 30-inch) steps between yard lines, with the fourth step exactly halfway between yard lines and the eighth step ending with the ball of the right foot on the yard line. As previously stated, there is no **Horn Flash** accompanying a change of direction into a **Stride Step**.

E. **Backward Marching** – *Response: “(up) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8”*

Backward marching is always done with a **Chair Step**. To start, raise the left leg, and place the ball of the left foot directly behind the body (22.5 inches when using an 8 to 5 step). Repeat with the right leg. The heels of each foot should only lightly contact the ground (or not at all at faster tempos) during a backward march.

F. **Lateral Slide** – *Response: “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8”*

A lateral slide is used to redirect movement while maintaining the direction of the sound. On the last count of the previous move, pivot on the ball of the right foot 90° to the left or right (as in a **Left Flank** or **Right Flank**), keeping the upper body facing the same direction as before. Travel continues in the new direction. On the last count of the slide (usually count 8), flank the lower body back in the direction of the upper body.

G. **Horn Slide** – *Response: “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8”*

A horn slide is used to redirect the sound of the band toward the stands. On the last count of the previous move, execute a **Horn Flash** to the left or right (as in a **Left Flank** or **Right Flank**), keeping the lower body facing the same direction as before. Travel continues in the direction of the lower body. On the last count of the slide (usually count 8), flank the upper body (with **Horn Flash**) back in the direction of the lower body.

*Note: all slides (F and G) are accomplished through a natural “twisting” of the upper body position. The legs and feet remain focused in one direction, the head and instrument 90° from that position, and the hips and waist roughly 45° between the two.*

- H. Side Steps and Step Sides** – Response: “side step, side step” or “step side, step side” (when done in pairs)
- 1. Side Steps.** Side steps are 2-count left shift movements. Lift the left leg into a **Chair Step**, then place it 22.5 inches to the left on count 1 (“side”). As the left foot touches the ground, raise the right leg into a **Chair Step**, and place it next to the left on count 2 (“step”). Side-steps are usually, but not always, done in pairs.
  - 2. Step Sides.** Step sides are 2-count right shift movements. **Mark Time** one step with the left leg on count 1 (“step”). As the left foot touches the ground, raise the right leg into a **Chair Step** and place it 22.5 inches to the right on count 2 (“side”). Step-sides are usually, but not always, done in pairs.
- I. Step Kicks** – Response: “step, kick, step, kick...”
- Step kicks are 8-to-5 movements performed in half time. Raise the left leg into a **Chair Step**, then place it 22.5 inches forward on count 1 (“step”). As the left foot touches the ground, raise the right leg into a **Chair Step**, and on count 2 (“kick”), thrust the knee down and extend the foot four inches above the ground with the leg straight. Do not use a swinging motion with the lower leg on the “kick.” On count 3 (“step”), place the right foot on the ground (22.5 inches forward), and raise the left leg into a **Chair Step**. On count 4 (“kick”), thrust the knee down and extend the foot as before. Repeat for the required number of counts (usually 16 counts / 8 step-kicks). After completing the last step kick with the left leg, it should immediately return to a **Chair Step** position (on the “&” of the beat and with a verbalization of “up”) in preparation for the next move.

#### IV. Turns

**A. Left and Right Flanks**

A flank is a 90° turn of the entire body to the left or right with a sharp pivot on the ball of the right foot. A **Horn Flash** should accompany the change of direction as long as the pivot leads into a **Chair Step** fundamental.

*Note: in some drills, a “box of lefts” or a “box of rights” may be given. In these cases, band members should march forward 8 steps at an 8-to-5 step, flank in the designated direction, march 8 steps forward, flank again, march 8 steps forward, flank a third and final time, and end by marching 8 more steps forward – thus outlining a square or box.*

**B. To the Rear (TTR or Regular TTR)**

A TTR is a 180° turn to the left with a sharp pivot on the ball of the right foot. A **Horn Flash** should accompany the change of direction as long as the pivot leads into a **Chair Step** fundamental.

**C. Box TTR** – Response: “box, T, T, R”

The Box TTR is a TTR that takes place over four counts, with a **Chair Step** used on each count. On count 1 (“Box”), move the left leg 22.5 inches to the left (as in a **Side Step**). On count 2 (“T”), the marcher places the ball of the right foot 22.5 inches in



front of the left and pivots sharply (as in a **Regular TTR**) 180° to the left, using a **Horn Flash**. On count 3 (“T”), the left leg again steps to the left 22.5 inches, and on count 4 (“R”), the right foot steps forward (with the ball of the foot on the yard line) 22.5 inches, completing the movement.

#### D. Slide TTR

The slide to the rear can be performed on count 2, 4, or 6. It is accomplished by executing a **Regular TTR** on the designated count and marching backward after the turn (using a **Backward March** step) for the remaining counts up to count 8.

#### E. Step Turn – Response: “up, step, turn”

Step turns are used to turn in a new direction from a stationary position. On “up,” raise the left leg into a **Chair Step**. On “step,” **Mark Time** one step with the left foot, bringing the right leg into a **Chair Step**. On “turn,” bring the right leg down and pivot the required direction on the ball of the right foot, using a **Horn Flash** if the next step is a **Chair Step**.

#### F. Slow Turn – Response: varied, depending on the number of counts

Using a **Chair Step**, gradually turn the feet and body right or left while **Marking Time**. (A slow turn to the right will necessitate a single **Mark Time** step with the left foot prior to turning the feet.) A slow turn can be done over any even number of counts and any number of degrees (usually multiples of 90°).

### V. Traditional OSUMB Movements

#### A. Hang On Sloopy: Step and Swing

The step and swing accompanies the playing of *Hang On Sloopy*.

1. *Sloopy Step*. Hold for the first 8 counts (drum intro), bringing the left leg up into a **Chair Step** on count 8. On count 1 (after the intro), place the left foot in its original position. On count 2, raise the right leg into a **Chair Step** with the left knee slightly bent and the right knee positioned slightly to the left across the body. On count 3, place the right foot in its original position, and on count 4, raise the left leg into a **Chair Step** with the right knee slightly bent and the left knee positioned slightly to the right across the body. On the last beat of the music, both legs return to **Attention Position**.
2. *Sloopy Swing*. Hold for the first 8 counts (drum intro). On count 1 (after the intro), raise the instrument up and toward the left shoulder along an upside-down “U” path. On count 2, return the instrument to parallel, angled toward the left shoulder and in line with the right knee. On count 3, move the instrument back up and to the right in an upside-down “U” shape, and bring it to rest – parallel to the ground, angled toward the right shoulder, and in line with the left knee – on count 4. Repeat the upside-down “U” shape, landing at the ends of the “U” on counts 2 and 4 throughout. At the end of the song, slide the instrument back to center on the final note, rest for one count, and then on the vocalization “Yeah!” extend the

right arm in a straight line, 45° above parallel and directly to the right. The instrument should be held with the right hand (as in **Playing Position**), keeping the bottoms of the valves down and resting on the arm. The bell should point directly forward.

## B. Ramp Entrance (Conversion Step and Slow Step)

1. *Conversion Step.* At the conclusion of the ramp cadences, during which the band members **Mark Time** facing either east or west, an 8-count conversion step is performed to turn the entire band to the south. During the **Mark Time**, a modified **Carry Position** is used. Hold the instrument around the lead pipe with the first two fingers covering the second and third valves. The instrument should be parallel to the ground with the bell pointed at the hip and the tops of the valves pointed to the ground. The right arm should be naturally angled away from the body to accommodate the instrument position, but straight at the elbow.
  - a. Counts 1 and 2: **Mark Time** 2 steps.
  - b. Count 3: from a **Chair Step**, take one 22.5-inch step with the left leg toward the east sideline (if facing east, step forward; if facing west, step back).
  - c. Count 4: pivot sharply on the balls of both feet to face south.
  - d. Count 5: bring the left foot in to meet the right while bringing the right arm up (straight, as in an **Instruments Up**) with the instrument perpendicular to the ground and the mouthpiece pointed down.
  - e. Count 6: Rotate the instrument a half turn clockwise so that the mouthpiece is pointed directly up. (The left hand remains at the side of the body.)
  - f. Count 7: Bring the instrument into **Playing Position** in one smooth motion.
  - g. Count 8: Lift the left leg into a full **Chair Step**, and prepare to **Mark Time** for the entire introduction to *Buckeye Battle Cry*.
2. *Slow Step.* During the verse of *Buckeye Battle Cry*, a half-time **Mark Time** is used, with the feet hitting the ground on count 1 (left foot) and count 3 (right foot). Each step is a full **Chair Step** where the thigh reaches parallel more quickly than normal (typically arriving on the “&” of 1 and the “&” of 3), but in a smooth motion. It may help to think “up, up, up..” throughout the Slow Step.

## C. Script Ohio Crossovers

Snap the instrument down into a “protected” **Carry Position** two counts before your foot enters the crossover, then bring the instrument back up to **Playing Position** two counts after exiting the crossover. When traveling north to south (or vice versa) through a crossover, the down and up will each occur when the left foot hits the ground. When traveling east to west (or vice versa), the down and up will occur on the right foot. Always prepare your crossover by looking ahead and seeing the spot through which you will pass.