

# The Ohio State University Marching Band



## Marching Fundamentals

Revised 2019

SOUSAPHONE

# The Ohio State University Marching Band Marching Fundamentals

## 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.

*Note: from the **At Ease Position**, band members may only be called to **Attention Position** or ordered to fall out.*

#### C. Instrument Playing/Carry Position

Hold the instrument so that it rests on the left shoulder and the bell is perpendicular to the ground and facing straight ahead. Place the right thumb through the thumb ring with the fingers resting on the valves, and keep the right elbow above the tubing of

the instrument. Place the left hand on the body of the instrument, just above where the valve tubing meets the larger tubing of the horn, keeping the left elbow relaxed and at a comfortable angle. The left hand will remain on the instrument for all marching fundamentals, except if the **Instruments Down** command is given, or if the player is in the **At Ease Position**. The player's mouth must be on the mouthpiece at all times (except during a **Hats Off**). The lower tubing of the horn should not rest on the player's body.

#### **D. Instruments Down Position**

The instrument is held almost identically to the **Playing/Carry** Position, but the left hand hangs down at the side of the body with fingers and thumb together and extended, and relaxed. This position is only used when the **Instruments Down** command is given.

#### **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. Horn Flash**

Horn flashes are instantaneous movements that accompany certain changes in direction. During a horn flash, move the bell of the instrument upward approximately 30°, keeping the mouth on the mouthpiece. Return it to **Playing/Carry Position** facing in the new direction. Complete the movement as quickly and smoothly as possible while keeping the fingers on the valves. 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**). A horn flash is only executed during certain turns to the right.

## **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 to the instrument, as in the **Playing/Carry** 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**.*

- 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 left arm straight out to the left, parallel to the ground, with the palm facing up, and the thumb and fingers together and extended. On “2,” bend the left arm at the elbow to make a 90° angle, with the palm facing the body. On “3,” bring the left arm and hand back to the instrument as in **Playing/Carry Position**.
- D. Instruments Down** – *Command: “band, instruments down” / Response: “rest, down”*  
Rest on “rest.” On “down,” snap the left hand into **Instruments Down Position**.
- 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**.
- 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. On “3,” snap the right foot next to the left, back to **Attention Position**.

*Note regarding facings (E, F, G, and H): on all facings, the upper body moves as one unit. There is no **Horn Flash** and no extraneous arm or body movement. 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**.*

**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 a “halt, kick, down” command is given, the player will perform the halt kick as described and will rest on the “down” (count 3). The left hand remains on the sousaphone.

**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**), extend the right arm and hand (fingers straight and together) downward at a 45° angle, with the palm facing down. 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 head to the right as needed to avoid the sousaphone bell. Hold for count 2.
3. On “off,” remove the hat and extend the right arm 45° up and 45° to the right. (The left hand may be moved upward on the instrument towards the bracing for extra support on the next movement.) Hold for counts 2, 3, and 4.

4. On “down,” bow at the waist, moving the right arm down and back with the elbow straight throughout, and ending with the arm straight behind the body and angled upward at 45°. At the same time, bring the bell of the instrument to the outside of the right knee so that it is facing directly behind you. The right leg should remain straight, and the left knee should bend naturally. 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 at the thumb ring and valves as in **Playing/Carry Position**. Hold for count 2
8. 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.

**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 a *right* oblique or when coming out of a *left* oblique (if the next fundamental utilizes a **Chair Step**).
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**, but it should be utilized when coming out of a *left* oblique (if the next fundamental utilizes a **Chair 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** (if turning to the right), 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), turn the upper body (with **Horn Flash** if the turn is to the right) 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 on a *right* flank 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.

**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. 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. A **Horn Flash** is used in executing this fundamental if the turn is to the *right* at any angle and 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 45° to the front. The right hand should have fingers and thumb together and extended with the palm facing up.

**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.
  - 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 extending the left arm outward to start an **Instruments Up**.
  - e. Counts 6 and 7: Continue the **Instruments Up** with no movement in the feet.
  - f. 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. At the same time, the player leans backward at about a 30° angle and turns the instrument approximately 15° right of center when on the left foot and 15° left of center when on the right foot. The horn swing is a fluid motion that continues throughout the slow step. The last slow step (beats 3 and 4 of the last measure of the verse), is subdivided into two counts: “in” and “up.” On “in” (when the right foot takes its last slow step), the player snaps the horn back to center while still leaning backward. On “up” (beat 4), the player lifts the horn upward slightly (10°). On the first step of the *Buckeye Battle Cry* chorus, the player snaps the horn and body “down” to normal **Playing/Carry Position**.

### C. Script Ohio Crossovers

Always prepare your crossover by looking ahead and seeing the spot through which you will pass. Ensure two-step spacing between you and the person and front of you, and maintain good 8-to-5 during the crossover. Other band members will put their instruments down through crossovers, but sousaphones must maintain normal **Playing/Carry Position**.