

# TEACHING MARCHING TECHNIQUES

## ATTENTION POSITION

1. Heels together, toes pointing outward at a 45 degree angle from the center (First Position) The body is focused slightly forward with the weight primarily on the balls of the feet.
2. Knees slightly flexed, but not visibly so. Slight flex prevents hyperextension of the knee, facilitates blood flow, and reduces fatigue. "Locking" of the knees can cause fainting.
3. Lower abdominal muscles held in with shoulders down and relaxed. Ankle, hinge of the knee, hip, shoulder, and bone behind ear all vertically aligned ("Five Points of Alignment").
4. Chin elevated 10° (looking over the person in front of you). Promotes a look of confidence and permits proper breathing.
5. Utilize all aspects of Physical Projection.

## DRESS CENTER / LEFT / RIGHT

This command is always called at the attention position. Snap your head to the direction called. Quickly adjust dress, cover, distance and interval.

## READY FRONT

This command may only be given while at a dress. Snap your head to straight forward while making a short, accented hiss sound "SSS". There should be no need for further adjustments at this point.

**PEELING** - Peeling the foot off of the ground. Starting with the just the heel and moving towards the toe. The entire foot must NOT leave the ground at the same time.

**SQUEEZING** - As in a "tube of toothpaste". Imagine a tube of toothpaste under the foot. The foot should "squeeze" to the ground moving from heel to toe. The opposite of "peeling."

## FIRST STEP OF MARK TIME: "PEEL AND SQUEEZE"

1. Count 4 (check) feet remain planted on the ground. Avoid anticipation by NOT shifting body.
2. On the "e" of 4 the left knee pulls forward. "Peel" the foot off the ground from the heel towards the toe.
3. On the "and" of 4 the left heel is all the way up, the left toe clears the ground, the weight is on the right foot. Don't lean!
4. On the "da" of 4 the left foot changes directions and begins to "Squeeze" back to the ground in to parallel position. The weight is still on the right foot.
5. On count 1 (check) both feet are on the ground. Avoid any upper body movement.

USE THE COMMAND TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL SLOWLY: "Check Peel and Squeeze Check"

4 e & da 1

## SECOND STEP OF MARK TIME (and beyond): "PEEL AND PEEL / SQUEEZE AND SQUEEZE)

**Add this skill to the "Peel and Squeeze" exercise once it has been mastered.**

6. On the "e" of 1 the right knee pulls forward. "Peel" the foot off the ground from the heel towards the toe.
7. On the "and" of 1 the right heel is up, the right toe clears the ground, the weight is on the left foot. Don't lean!
8. On the "da" of 1 the right foot changes directions and begins to "Squeeze" back to the ground in to parallel position. The weight is still on the left foot.
9. On count 2 (check) both feet are on the ground in parallel position. Avoid any upper body movement.

USE THE COMMAND TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL SLOWLY: "Check Peel and Squeeze Check"

4 e & da 1

**SPIKING** - To isolate the back edge of the heel as the part of the foot that touches on the beat when marching forward. "Toes up" with flexed ankles. "Show the audience the bottom of your shoe." (also refers to the toe on Back Slides)

**FIRST STEP OF FORWARD MARCH: "PEEL AND SPIKE"**

1. Count 4 (check) feet remain planted on the ground. Avoid anticipation by NOT leaning into the move.
2. On the "e" of 4 the left knee pulls forward. "Peel" the foot off the ground from the heel towards the toe.
3. On the "and" of 4 the left toe leaves the ground, the weight is on the right foot. Don't lean!
4. On the "da" of 4 the left foot flexes at the ankle as the foot moves forward with the toes pointing upward. The weight is still on the right foot.
5. On count 1 the left heel touches "spikes" the ground. Ankles still flexed with "toes up!" The weight is still on the right foot.

USE THE COMMAND TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL SLOWLY: "Check Peel and Flex Spike"

4 e & da 1

**SECOND STEP OF FORWARD MARCH (and beyond): "SQUEEZE / PEEL AND SPIKE"**

Add this skill to the "Peel and Spike" exercise once it has been mastered.

6. On the "e" of count 1 the right knee pulls forward "peeling" the right foot as the left foot begins to "squeeze" the foot onto the ground from the heel to the toe. Think of "squeezing" a tube of toothpaste from the bottom of the tube with the left foot. This action begins the process of shifting the weight from the right foot to the left foot.
7. On the "and" of 1 the right toe leaves the ground and the right ankle "crosses" the left ankle. The weight shift is complete as the left foot is flat on the ground.
8. On the "da" of 1 the right foot flexes at the ankle as the foot moves forward. The weight is on the left foot.
9. On count two the right heel touches "spikes" the ground and the process repeats.

USE THIS COMMAND TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL SLOWLY (preceded with "Peel and Spike"):

"Spike Squeeze Cross Flex Spike, Peel Cross Flex Spike" repeat... (Squeeze and Peel are interchangeable)

1 e & da 2 e & da 3

**BACK SLIDE (preparation)**

1. Count 4 (check) feet remain planted on the ground. Avoid anticipation by NOT leaning into the move.
2. On the "e" of 4: still no motion!
3. On the "and" of 4: still no motion!
4. On the "da" of 4 the left foot pulls back, flexing at the ankle. Push down on the right toe, while peeling the right heel up. The weight is on the right toe.
5. On count 1 the left toe touches "spikes" the ground. Ankles still flexed with both "heels up!" The weight is equal on both toes. (Be as tall as possible)

USE THE COMMAND TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL SLOWLY: "Check e and Flex Spike"

4 e & da 1

**SECOND STEP OF BACK SLIDE (and beyond): "toe SPIKE AND SPIKE"**

Add this skill to the Back Slide "Peel and Spike" exercise once it has been mastered.

6. On the "e" of count 1 the right foot begins to move backwards initiating the weight shift while keeping "heels up."
8. On the "and" of 1 the right ankle "crosses" the left ankle. The weight shift is complete but the left heel must remain off of the ground.
9. On the "da" of 1 the right foot continues to moves backwards. The weight is still on the left foot.
10. On count two the right toe touches "spikes" the ground and the process repeats.

USE THIS COMMAND TO PRACTICE THIS SKILL SLOWLY (preceded with Back Slide):

"Spike Cross Spike Cross Spike" repeat... (notice - there is no "peel" or "flex")

1 e & da 2 e & da 3

**FLANKS (RIGHT / LEFT)** – During a forward march (see Forward March info above) place the right foot at a 45° angle toward the new direction of marching. **Do not pivot.** On count one of the new direction, your upper body should be facing the new direction of marching

**SLIDES (RIGHT / LEFT)** - Exactly the same as Flanks, except you rotate the torso 45° (bellybutton) at the hips and 45° in the shoulders (90% total). The angle of the elbows, wrist, neck and instrument **MUST** be the same as in Forward Marching.

### **CHANGE OF DIRECTION (“Toe Touch”)**

For Forward to Backslide / Right Slide to Left Slides (and vice versa). On the entire count preceding the direction change (usually an “even” count) both feet “Freeze” with the leading toe **ONLY** touching the ground. The “Freeze” is held through the next count (usually an “odd” count). On the next count (usually an “even” count) the right foot initiates the next move. Think of a four count forward move to a backslide like this: 1,2,3, HALT, FREEZE, 2, 3, 4. This aids in stopping the forward motion and permits a smooth transfer of energy from forward to backward.

### **DOT (YOUR DRILL COORDINATE)**

A DOT is an absolute position on the field. It contains X and Y coordinates. These values are measured in 8-5 steps (8 steps in 5 yards—22.5”/step) from common points (PICK POINTS) on the field such as yard lines, sidelines, and hashes. To use these coordinates, remember that “INSIDE” always means towards the center and “OUTSIDE” always means away from the center. For instance, if your coordinate reads “8 inside front hash,” that means go towards the back hash. If your coordinate reads “8 outside 35,” that means go towards the goal posts. It is important to remember that your dot is just a reference and that great marching does not require one to ‘nail’ the dot. TEACH BY THE DOTS, CLEAN BY THE FORM. The most important thing is to stay in the form. “Always be halfway in between, side to side, front to back.”

### **TYPES OF FORMS**

LINEAR – Straight lines, may my diagonals

CURVILINEAR – Curved lines – circles, arcs

SYMMETRICAL – same on side one as side two, or a form which has ½ of its form as a mirror image

ASYMMETRICAL – not symmetrical

CONVEX – an arc which resembles a “smile” from the audience’s perspective.

CONCAVE – an arc which resembles a “frown” from the audience’s perspective.

COMPOUND CURVE (FRENCH CURVE) and curvilinear form with both convex and concave elements

BLOCK – a series of linear forms forming regular spacings and alignments.