



# **GOLDEN EMPIRE**

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## **DRUM & BUGLE CORPS**

**Golden Empire Drum & Bugle Corps**  
2022 Baritone/Euphonium Audition Packet

**GOLDEN EMPIRE**



Dear Applicant,

Congratulations on taking your first step towards being a part of the **Golden Empire Drum & Bugle Corps** from Bakersfield College! I'm **very excited** that you want to join the corps, and I hope your audition experience is one that is informative, challenging, and ultimately positive!

What this packet IS:

The following packet will provide you with some **preliminary info** and/or **exercises** that will help you prepare for the workshop/auditions that will take place soon. Some of these exercises will be used all season, and others may only be used as supplemental material. You should **become familiar with the material** but be ready for additional info.

What this packet is NOT:

This packet is **not a comprehensive collection** of the technique program you will be learning this season. We will supplement this with more **advanced exercises** and of course a wealth of **additional training** throughout the season. We don't expect you to be able to perform this material perfectly when you audition. Drum corps is all about **working hard** to be the best we can be...and that is an ongoing process.

Next steps:

- Fill out the interest form at [geperformingarts.org/join](http://geperformingarts.org/join) if you haven't already.
- Review this packet and start to prepare for auditions.
- Check [geperformingarts.org](http://geperformingarts.org) and our social media channels for updates.
- Be ready to learn, work hard, and have fun!

Thanks again for taking the first step towards a **challenging** and **rewarding** experience! I look forward to meeting you soon. If you have any questions at all please contact me personally at [theasley@geperformingarts.org](mailto:theasley@geperformingarts.org) for more info.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Heasley".

Tim Heasley  
Director of Marching Arts Ensembles  
Bakersfield College

## Brass Staff Letter

Dear Brass Applicant,

Welcome! On behalf of the brass staff, I'd like to thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Golden Empire hornline. This packet contains an introduction to our technique program as well as an outline of our rehearsal expectations and procedures.

Drum and bugle corps is a very challenging and incredibly rewarding experience. We want you to know that it is our priority to help you develop into a stronger musician, artist, and person during your time with us. There are many expectations and responsibilities that will be placed upon you as a member of the hornline. Your determination to meet those challenges will be the foundation of our success.

Please review all of the information in this packet and familiarize yourself with the technique program and warm-up exercises. We will be going over this information at our rehearsals to establish our uniform brass ensemble sound.

We will be communicating with all prospective members through the BAND app. If you still have questions after reviewing this packet please do not hesitate to ask.

We are honored to have the opportunity to work with you and we are excited to return to the field to begin our next adventure!

Sincerely,

Natalie M. Salvatierra  
Brass Caption Head

## **Workshops and Auditions**

For 2022, our season will begin with a series of workshops designed to give you an overview of what it's like to be a member of Golden Empire. We will teach you about our approach to brass playing and take some time to get to know you. During these workshops, we will teach you the exercises that will be used in our audition process.

Please remember that in addition to your musical and visual skills, you are also being evaluated on your attitude, focus, self-discipline, and physical fitness. Throughout the workshops, we will identify things you can work on and see where your strengths are.

### **Auditions:**

All applicants for the 2022 brass section must submit a video interview/audition. If you do not have access to a brass instrument at home or school, we will conduct your audition during the workshops.

Please begin with a short introduction including your:

- Name
- Previous experience (school, alternate instruments, dance, sports, indoor, etc.)
- An interesting fact about you

Perform the following exercises:

- Exercise #1: Articulation Series (Tempo=96)
- Exercise #2: F Remington (Tempo=96)
- 2 note lip slur with box drill. ( Tempo = 132)

### **Instruments**

Golden Empire uses Jupiter Quantum Mk II marching brass as well as XO Professional trumpets. Marching brass instruments must be used for the moving and playing portion of the audition.

# Golden Empire

Baritone / Euphonium Audition

## Articulation Series

Musical score for Articulation Series, measures 1-7. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 96$ . The score consists of two staves of bass clef notes. Measure 1: eighth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 2: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 3: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 4: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 5: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 6: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 7: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note.

Musical score for Articulation Series, measures 8-14. The key signature changes to one sharp (F#) at measure 8. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 96$ . The score consists of two staves of bass clef notes. Measure 8: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 9: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 10: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 11: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 12: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 13: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note. Measure 14: sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note, sixteenth note.

## F Remington

$\text{♩} = 96$

Musical score for F Remington, measures 15-21. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 96$ . The score consists of two staves of bass clef notes. Measure 15: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 16: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 17: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 18: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 19: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 20: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 21: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note.

Musical score for F Remington, measures 27-33. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 96$ . The score consists of two staves of bass clef notes. Measure 27: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 28: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 29: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 30: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 31: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 32: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 33: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note.

## 2 Note Lip Slur with Box Drill

Musical score for 2 Note Lip Slur with Box Drill, measures 37-43. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 132$ . The score consists of two staves of bass clef notes. Measure 37: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 38: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 39: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 40: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 41: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 42: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 43: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note.

Musical score for 2 Note Lip Slur with Box Drill, measures 47-53. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 132$ . The score consists of two staves of bass clef notes. Measure 47: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 48: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 49: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 50: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 51: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 52: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note. Measure 53: eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note.

## Rehearsal Materials

Golden Empire hornline members are responsible for having the following materials at **ALL** rehearsals:

- **This packet:** Please have this packet with you at all rehearsals.
- **Backpack:** All items should be carried in a sturdy backpack.
- **Three-ring binder:** This contains all music handouts in organized clear sheet protectors. Any information you could possibly need should be in this binder.
- **Water jug:** Each member is required to have a **RED** water jug no smaller than 1 gallon. These jugs must be present at all rehearsals.
- **Black Gloves:** These must be worn when handling a corps owned instrument. It is important that your gloves remain in good condition and are replaced as necessary. Gloves that are dirty or contain holes are never acceptable.
- **Pencils:** Every member must have a pencil at all times. Notes should be taken at every rehearsal. **Write EVERYTHING down!**
- **Black towel:** The black towel is used to protect your instrument when placed on hard surfaces, especially when rehearsing outdoors.
- **Tuner/ Metronome:** Every person is required to have a tuner, metronome, or tuner- metronome combo. You may also use the Tonal Energy app on a cell phone.
- **\*\*Breathing tube:** A  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. PVC ball valve. This will be used for breathing exercises. This item can be purchased at most hardware stores. Please clean this tube regularly with soap and warm water.
- **\*\*Balloons:** 9-12 inch party balloons. Any color. You will need at least 10.

\*\*Not needed for workshops

## Rehearsal Attire

- **Clothing:** Clothing must allow for a full range of motion and engagement in athletic activity. Be prepared for physical training and/or movement at all rehearsals.
- **Hat:** This will be worn when rehearsing outdoors. Hats are required to provide sun protection for your head and face. Hats will be removed indoors.
- **Running Shoes / Cross trainers:** Movement will occur at all rehearsals and therefore athletic footwear is required at all times. Open-toed shoes are never acceptable.
- **Sunglasses:** Eye protection is highly recommended for outdoor rehearsals.
- **Sun protection:** We highly recommend using some form of sunscreen for your skin and specifically for your lips.

### Mouthpieces

In order to achieve the most uniform section sounds, we have recommended specific mouthpieces for the brass team. You are **NOT** required to purchase a new mouthpiece to audition. The mouthpieces in **bold** are what we recommend for new brass musicians. Our baritones accept both large and small shank mouthpieces. Our euphoniums accept large shank mouthpieces only.

Trumpet: Hammond 5ML /**Bach 3C** or 4ML /Bach 1-1/2C

Mellophone: **Hammond** 5mp or **6mp**, **Yamaha 14f4**

Baritone: Hammond 12ML/ **Schilke 51**

Euphonium: Hammond 12XL / **Schilke 51D**

Tuba: Hammond 30XL / **Conn Helleberg**

## **Listening skills:**

As a performer in the brass ensemble, you will have many listening responsibilities to ensure our collective success.

- Individual (listen to your own sound)
- Trio (listen to and blend with the people immediately around you)
- Section and Ensemble (Listen for balance, shape, style, blend, and timbre.)

## **Breathing:**

Proper breathing is essential for the success of the brass ensemble. We incorporate breathing exercises and patterns into our daily routine. To maintain a consistent approach, we keep the following in mind at all times:

- Take a full breath whenever possible
- Air **NEVER** stops. It is always moving either in or out
- Exhale and release stale air as often as you can
- Air should be warm, dark, and relaxed.
- Air should fill the bottom quadrants first
- Breathe down and out and then fill up

## **Air Speed:**

There is a difference in the speed of air based on the range that is being played. The speed of the air motivates the speed of the vibration that is created:

- Faster air for higher notes
- Slower air for lower notes

## **Air Volume:**

While we always aim to support our sound with our air, there is a difference in the amount of air flowing into the horn when the player changes volumes:

- More air volume for louder dynamics / Less air volume for softer dynamics

## **Stagger Breathing:**

Stagger breathing is a technique that is used to create a wall of consistent and balanced sound. The basic rules of stagger breathing are:

- When you breathe, take a full breath
- The breath must be in time
- When you breathe, leave a note out rather than playing a partial note value
- Sneak in and sneak out of the sound texture
- Never breathe on a barline
- Never breathe between phrases
- Do not breathe at the same time as the other members of your trio
- If you have assigned breathing counts, you **must** use them

## **Releases:**

The mechanism to release a note is initiated by reversing the direction of the air. A clear and resonant ensemble release can be achieved through the simple act of breathing together.

- Breathe in through the corners of the embouchure to release
- Maintain your air speed all the way to the breath
- **Stay relaxed!** Avoid tension in the embouchure or throat

## **Rehearsal movement and posture:**

- Maintain a lifted posture and hold your horn correctly whenever you play
- To perform a step out, take two steps in any direction and then two steps back to the original position and mark time.
- Marking time is an active process. Always prioritize the timing of your feet
- Perform all body movement/horn manuals
- Again, you will be expected to **hold your instrument correctly at all times.** This may require a certain amount of physical conditioning which should occur on your own time.

**Always look great. Always sound great.**

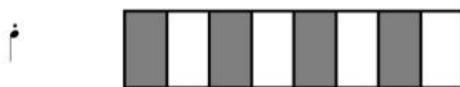
**Articulation:** It is vital that we all commit to a uniform method of articulation. This definition must remain the same even while volume, tempo, or range are pushed to extremes.

- Proper air support must be present in order to clearly articulate a note
- Start every note with a “**dAH**” sound
- Strike at the point where the gums meet the upper front teeth

### Articulation / Style Chart



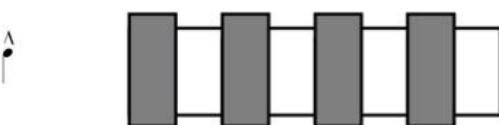
**Tenuto (connected)** - There is no decay and the notes touch.  
“Full duration, full tone.”



**Staccato (detached)** - There is no decay and the tone length is 1/2 the value of the note.  
“Equal tone, equal space”.



**Accented (emphasis)** - The beginning of the note is slightly louder, there is a slight decay, and the notes touch.      “**Dah**”



**Marcato (rooftop accent)** - The beginning of the note is slightly louder, there is no decay, and the tone length is 1/2 the value of the note.  
“ Louder tone, equal space”.

## **Health and Fitness:**

### **This activity is physically demanding.**

You should be making every effort to be as physically prepared and healthy as possible. We encourage you to evaluate your habits including your diet and physical conditioning program to make sure you are setting yourself up for the highest levels of success.

Injury prevention begins with an excellent off-season conditioning program. You will need to increase your cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, and total body strength. Don't wait. Start Now. Keep a record of what you do and monitor your progress. You will be expected to perform at a high level as both a musician and an athlete. Train accordingly.

### **Assignments between camps:**

Once you receive a contract, you will be expected to complete weekly check-in assignments on the BAND app. These assignments will include videos of various exercises or responding to questions that will help you get to know the other members of the section.

### **Other considerations:**

- We want you to be successful and have an amazing drum corps experience. Every task, assignment, definition, or correction that you are given is meant to help achieve that goal.
- Be a good teammate.
- Be tolerant of others and strict with yourself. Focus on holding yourself to the highest possible standard at all times.
- Be prepared. Know what you are required to have, know, and do before every rehearsal.
- Respond to feedback and do your best to immediately implement any required adjustments or corrections.
- Have a great time! Drum corps is a life-changing experience. We will work hard, learn a lot, and have fun doing it.

# Baritone / Euphonium



## Brass technique program

All exercises go down 3 half steps and back up

5 Count Air / Tones

A musical staff in bass clef and 4/4 time. It shows a sequence of notes: a single note followed by a rest, then two notes separated by a vertical bar line. The first note is labeled 'In' above the staff, and the second note is labeled 'Out' below the staff. This pattern repeats once more before a double bar line.

8 Count Air / Tones

9 Count Air / Tones

13 Count Air / Tones

17 Count Air / Tones

Three musical staves in bass clef and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes and rests. The first staff has a single note followed by a rest, then two notes separated by a vertical bar line. The second staff has a single note followed by a rest, then three notes separated by a vertical bar line. The third staff has a single note followed by a rest, then four notes separated by a vertical bar line. All three staves end with a double bar line.

2 Note Lip Slur

3 Note Lip Slur

4 Note Lip Slur

Three musical staves in bass clef and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes. The first staff has two notes connected by a single curved line. The second staff has three notes connected by a single curved line. The third staff has four notes connected by a single curved line. All three staves end with a double bar line.

Quarters Low

Eighths Low

Two musical staves in bass clef and 4/4 time. The first staff contains quarter notes connected by a single curved line. The second staff contains eighth notes connected by a single curved line. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Quarters High

Eighths High

Two musical staves in bass clef and 4/4 time. The first staff contains quarter notes connected by a single curved line. The second staff contains eighth notes connected by a single curved line. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Zorro

Octave Slur

Two musical staves in bass clef and 4/4 time. The first staff contains quarter notes connected by a single curved line. The second staff contains eighth notes connected by a single curved line. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Velocity Lip Slur

A single musical staff in bass clef and 4/4 time. It shows a sequence of notes connected by a single curved line. The notes are played with varying dynamics, indicated by the slurs. The staff ends with a double bar line.

8 Staccato Eighth Notes

Double Tongue 1

Double Tongue 2

Three musical staves in bass clef and 4/4 time. The first staff contains eight staccato eighth notes. The second staff shows a continuous double tongue pattern. The third staff shows another continuous double tongue pattern. All three staves end with a double bar line.

Triple Tongue 1

A single musical staff in bass clef and 4/4 time. It shows a continuous triple tongue pattern. The staff ends with a double bar line.

Chromatic "Spatula"

A musical score for a bassoon or similar instrument. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 3. The second staff begins at measure 6 with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 3. Both staves feature a continuous sequence of sixteenth-note patterns involving chromatic slides and slurs.

F Remington

A musical score for a bassoon or similar instrument. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 3. The second staff begins at measure 6 with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 3. The music features sustained notes with grace notes and slurs.

Bb Remington

A musical score for a bassoon or similar instrument. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 3. The second staff begins at measure 6 with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 3. The music features sustained notes with grace notes and slurs.

Stagger Breathing

A musical score for a bassoon or similar instrument. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of f. The second staff begins at measure 6 with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of p. The music features sustained notes with grace notes and slurs.

Articulation Series

A musical score for a bassoon or similar instrument. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of f. The second staff begins at measure 6 with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of p. The music features sustained notes with grace notes and slurs.

Tuning sequence

A musical score for a bassoon or similar instrument. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of f. The second staff begins at measure 6 with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat, and a dynamic of p. The music features sustained notes with grace notes and slurs.

## Golden Empire Visual Technique Primer

This section of the packet will be giving a cursory introduction to the visual themes and ideas you will be working on at Golden Empire. We will go over concepts such as:

- General Theory and Approach to Visual Mastery
- Basic Horn Positions/Upper Body Responsibilities
- Marching Technique/Lower Body Responsibilities

Note that each topic will be expanded upon throughout the course of your training. Please be sure to connect each new idea learned to these fundamental ideas to build a complete working knowledge of your visual responsibilities.

### General Theory and Approach to Visual Mastery

In general when moving across the field, we want to portray **strength** and **mastery**. More specifically we want to move with **deliberate**, **supported** motion, while at the same time not showing any difficulty in doing so.

Body lines should be **fully extended**, and there should be a sense of **fluidity** in moving from point A to point B, without any extra unnecessary tension.

We must also show a sense of **consistency**, making each move just as important as the last. Every move should feel on purpose, with energy persisting through and beyond its completion.

Most visual concepts taught will fall under these categories, but also be prepared for that character to shift and change for certain special scenarios such as body work or character movement.

### Basic Horn Positions/Upper Body Responsibilities

The upper body should always be in mind while marching and playing, as it becomes very difficult to properly play with poor posture.

Your feet, hips, shoulders, and head should always be in alignment. That is, you should be able to draw a straight line from the center of your weight (between your feet) to your head while marching and playing. The common tendency is for the shoulders to droop behind the center of weight and hips. To compensate for this, the lower back and abs should be engaged to support your spine and keep the shoulders perfectly over the center of weight.

To avoid interference with playing, the shoulder and neck muscles should always be **relaxed**.

### -Pistol/Standby-

"Pistol", or "Standby" is the default at attention position you will maintain during rehearsal. We want to adopt a strong, open posture, showing care for body alignment as well as encouraging long length in the spine. We prefer this particular stance to show **deliberate** engagement in rehearsal and to normalize good habits with body carriage and posture.



- Default position when you're not playing/moving.
- Lead pipe straight up and down with the pointer finger in the pinky ring.
- Tall posture, open chest.
- Engaged arms, left hand in fist.
- Attention is towards the person giving instruction/information.

Note that Pistol is not a "Relaxed" position. While you are in Pistol position, your attention is clearly and obviously on the person giving information, whether it be an instructor, section leader, or drum major. There should be no extraneous movement during this position as the mind and body should be actively engaged in rehearsal. Developing this discipline is a key factor in maintaining consistency in approach. More consistency in approach equals better reps more often, and less mental errors such as missing instructions and reps without a clear focus.

A chance to relax will normally be given in between reps, so it is encouraged that each member practice their patience and discipline till that happens.

### **-Set/Carry-**

The standard “Set” or “Carry” position is the default position for marching when not playing. As a general rule we want to take up **as much space as possible** with the chest and arms while maintaining a **strong yet relaxed** presence. The horn should appear to be suspended effortlessly in place with the arms while marching. Doing this will require a concerted effort of upper body and core strength.



- Level elbows, straight wrists.
- Mouthpiece eye level.
- Fingertips on valve caps.
- Enough space between the palms and the instrument to fit a tennis ball.
- Lead pipe is perpendicular with the ground.

With the instrument now being carried in front of the body, we must maintain correct posture alignment and length in the spine. A **common tendency** for the body is to want to “balance” the total mass being supported over your feet, resulting in brass players **leaning back** to compensate for the weight of the horn. We address this by **extending** the legs through the ground, and **engaging the glutes and core muscles** to support the spine to reach up into the sky. As a result of maintaining your instrument in front of a vertical spine you should **feel** as if the center of weight is in front of your body.

### **-Playing Position-**

When the horns are up in a playing position, we want to maintain the same **strong and relaxed** energy we execute the carry position with. Continue to provide lower body support with the glutes and core muscles, while maintaining strong arms to support the horn with relaxed shoulders to reduce tension in your sound.



- Maintain body alignment and long spine.
- Level elbows.
- Leadpipe 5 degrees above level to encourage lifted presence.
- Open hands, as little metal to skin contact as possible..
- Fingers on top of valve caps.
- Relaxed shoulders and neck.
- Engaged legs and core.

Many problems in the sound are a result of poor posture support or tension in the neck and shoulders so a focus on visual excellence is **necessary** for success in all performance aspects.. Check in often with your achievement of the qualities outlined in this primer to develop good habits. Those with heavier instruments must devote more time to holding the horn outside of normal practice to develop the muscle strength and endurance needed to stay relaxed.

## Marching Technique/Lower Body Responsibilities

### **-Forward Marching-**

Going forwards, the default marching technique will be **toe-down** straight leg marching. Toe-down technique has multiple applications outside of marching and playing, and is the default method of moving around the field in several scenarios including:

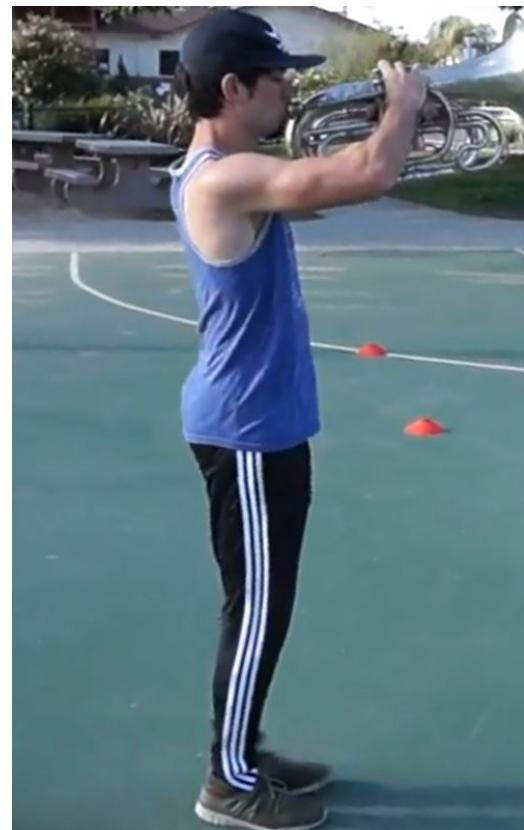
- Extended step sizes.
- Flutter runs.
- Dance work and visuals.

As the activity develops, these methods of movement are used more and more often and in response to this demand, more time should be devoted to the toe down technique in order to execute it fluidly and masterfully.

In short, **the more we do it, the better we'll get.**

### **-Toe-Down-**

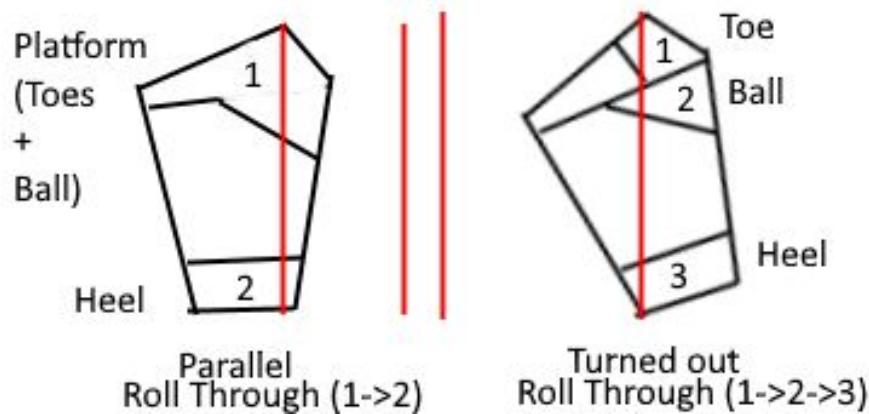
The toe-down technique consists of the **fluid** motion between a straight leg extension through the big toe on the downbeat, and a straight leg low heel picture on the upbeat. The legs stay turned out, and the front foot rolls to the heel on the upbeat to accept the weight over the foot.



### -Turning Out and Rolling Down-

When going toe-down forwards, we roll the foot down in 3 parts. The big toe makes contact first. The weight of the body then rolls down to the ball of the foot (the big fleshy part), and finally the heel of the foot makes contact with the ground. This allows us to **slowly accept** the weight of the body, which **reduces** the amount of shock each step produces.

The turnout of the leg helps encourage this process by **engaging the glutes** to give the leg greater support and by making the pathway of the weight across the foot slightly longer allowing the foot to **more easily accept the weight** in multiple sections instead of all at once. **If we don't turn out the legs**, the foot tends to land on the platform instead of the toe, which leaves the foot in 2 parts (platform and heel) rather than the desired 3, making it **much harder** to roll down smoothly.



### -Benefits of Toe-Down in Normal Marching-

The toe-down technique is in general more complicated than most standard toe-up techniques, but **there are many benefits** to adapting it as a standard marching and playing technique.

This includes:

- Easier extended strides (6 to 5 and bigger).
- Transitions easily to jazz runs.
- Enables quicker feet on faster tempos.
- Meshes well aesthetically with straight leg backwards technique.
- Toe-ball-heel motion and leg engagement provides greater impact control.

While the technique may take a little longer to pick up than others, the benefits and flexibility provided become well worth the effort.

### -Toe-Up-

When going forwards smaller than an 8 to 5 stride we will be also making use of the straight leg toe-up technique. Smaller distances make the roll required for toe-down difficult to achieve, so by flexing the foot instead of pointing, we're able to move at smaller step sizes more comfortably. In this case, the feet will be parallel to each other, and the **heel** of the front foot will make contact on the downbeat. The front foot will then roll from heel to toe to push off into the next step.



With both of these techniques, there is a roll through and a fluidity emphasized through their definitions. As the weight is pushed off the back leg and passes over the front leg, the foot should **gradually** come into contact with the ground. A **common tendency** especially at faster tempos is to slap the ground with the **whole** foot. The impact caused by this poor foot articulation can create a difficult playing environment as well as extra stress on the knees.

The best defense against this tendency is to ensure proper **length and support** from the back leg that **persists** all the way until the exact moment the front foot touches the ground. If the back foot disengages any sooner, the front leg won't be prepared to support the body, creating a jarring impact upon contact.

After the back foot disengages, the back heel should be **extended towards the ground** as soon as possible to hit the straight leg checkpoint on the upbeat. Failure to hit this checkpoint is the most common discrepancy in person to person uniformity of technique.

## -Backwards Marching-

On backwards motion, we use a **straight leg, no roll technique**. In both forward techniques, the last part of the foot to make contact with the ground when pushing off is the toe. This allows the calf muscle to aid in the control of the leg and give extra push to the next step. If we were to roll through to the heel going backwards, we would lose that calf muscle control, as the toe would lose pressure with the ground. Because of this, going backwards, the **platform** will be the **only** point of contact the foot has with the ground at all times.

On each downbeat of the backwards technique, both legs are **extended**, and the weight passes from the platform of the front foot to the platform of the back foot. On the upbeat, the front heel passes through **low** to extend the leg into a **straight** line, without making contact with the ground in order to prevent transferring the weight of the body too early. **In contrast to toe-down forwards technique**, we keep the feet **parallel** to encourage landing on the platform and to discourage rolling through. At **no** point do the heels touch the ground.



Between both checkpoints of the technique, the feet move horizontally across the ground. The biggest tendency will be to pick up the front foot into the air when moving it back, touching the ground with the tip of the toe rather than the platform of the foot. This encourages a roll through which causes the body to bounce. To correct this, keep both legs **extended** 100% of the time.

## **- General Approach to Marching-**

The goal of every definition in the marching technique is to create a **stable** platform to perform your best musically while maintaining a high degree of visual **uniformity** from person to person. Qualitatively, we want to embody a **controlled relaxed strength**, using the **exact** right amount of energy for each required motion.

As you practice marching you can qualitatively assess your achievement of the technique by paying attention to how each motion feels.

Ask yourself:

- Does each step feel **supported**?
- Do you feel **relaxed**?
- Is the body in alignment while being as **tall** as possible?
- Would it be **easy to play** well while marching?
- Does the motion feel **smooth and efficient**?

If the answer to any of those questions are “no”, identify if all definitions of the technique are being met. If they are, continue to focus on fine tuning naturalizing the motions, and making each transition between checkpoints feel in control and **deliberate**.

## **-Technique Demonstration-**

At the end of this primer will be a link to a demonstration of a simple Plus-drill exercise. The best tool for a marching performer to develop is a sense of visual awareness. Many complicated thoughts and ideas of movement can be learned through perception and attention to detail. If you can clearly explain what you’re seeing you have a much better chance of learning it yourself. Challenge yourself to learn the exercise by watching and make notes of as many intricacies as you can. Try to come up with both qualitative and quantitative examples.

Quantitative:

- Definitions of foot placements/angles.
- Exercise structure.
- Definitions of leg shape.
- Approach to transitions.

Qualitative:

- Descriptive ideas of body lines and posture.
- Type of motion, how does it feel?
- Awareness of effort being used.
- Performance qualities.

**Plus Drill Exercise:** <https://youtu.be/VkfhsE0ALp4>