



Marching Technique From Day 1

CLINICIANS:

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**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

Marching Technique From Day 1

Presented by Frank Troyka & Jason Schayot
Assisted by member of the L.V. Berkner High School Band
Texas Bandmasters Association Convention
Monday, July 22, 2013 • 2:45 PM • CC Exhibit Hall D

When is Day 1?

What do kids relate to with regard to pulse?

Start big and simple

- Get 'em moving right away.
- Move to music (that's what we do in marching band!)
- Physical conditioning as an integral part of the marching technique program
 - ♦ Mark time (old school, nice and high!)
 - ♦ "Step touch;" "Step knee;" "Hamstring curl;" "Heels to the front"
- The freshman "hard-wired" tempo
- On Day 1 (2, 3, 4...), everybody is right!

Layer skills

- Mark time in place; no specific parameters—just move!
- MT 8, FM 8; MT 8; BM 8; REPEAT (w/o concern for step-off technique)
 - ♦ FM: Articulate with "back edge of the heel"
 - ♦ BM: Articulate with "platform of the foot;" "push the world away"
- The significance of vocal reinforcement
- Introducing the straight leg step off
 - ♦ Seated, legs extended, feet together
 - ♦ Standing, lift the left big toe
 - ♦ Standing, push from the right sole (as opposed to platform)
 - ♦ Hips are headlights
- "We call this a slide" (yes, percussionists do it, too)

The pros and cons of "across the floors"

- High accountability; low participation
- Works well when space is limited (gym as opposed to a full practice field).
- Easy to feel "wrong" early on (exposure)
- Good for conserving strength on high-demand maneuvers (advanced technique)

Upper body orientation

- Two basic approaches
 - ♦ Hips 30, chest 60, shoulders 90 (what most students do naturally)
 - ♦ Hips 45, sternum 90 (usually cleaner in most scenarios)

Skills & Drills

- **IRON CROSS AND X-MEN**
PURPOSE: Isolate the first two steps in each of four directions with an emphasis on the style of the step off itself.
IRREGULARITY IN METHODOLOGY (Iron Cross only): In order to facilitate a step off from a halt to a right slide, a "prep" step is recommended on the count prior to the step off.
- **SAWTOOTH LEFT [RIGHT]**
PURPOSE: Introduce preps layered with upper body orientation home (prior to slides).
- **X-BOX**
PURPOSE: Combine SAWTOOTH LEFT & RIGHT into a single exercise.
- **STAIRSTEP LEFT [RIGHT]**
PURPOSE: Introduce prepared turns for slides.
Vary upper body positioning ("butterfly"/"airplane"/"zombie")
NOTE: Both stairstep drills can be combined by alternating the direction of travel on the slides.

Skills & Drills...

- **FORWARD MARCH BY THE NUMBERS**
PURPOSE: To aid in the understanding of the difference between a casual walk with a relaxed knee and the more extended style commonly known as "straight leg technique."
- **SLIDING BOX [COUNTERCLOCKWISE] WITH LIGHTHOUSE**
PURPOSE: Incorporate STAIRSTEP with change in upper body orientation.
- **SLIDING BOX [CLOCKWISE] WITH LIGHTHOUSE**
PURPOSE: Incorporate a backward march with all slides in the same basic pattern as the COUNTERCLOCKWISE box.
- **"72-B"**
PURPOSE: Combine preps, hip shifts, and changes in upper body orientation.

Things to consider...

- Eliminate unnecessary and non-essential exercises and commands.
- Be creative; don't limit yourself to any single approach, but...
- Keep things simple! The drill itself will often drive the exercises you create.
- All drills and exercises are to give the kids a vocabulary of movement by which they may make informed decisions about how to interpret the drill as they learn it. Modify EVERYTHING as needed to accommodate the demands of the show.
- Treat procedures as skills, chores, and work on them as you would any skill.
- There's more than one way to get the job done. Whatever your method,
 - ♦ think it through and be consistent;
 - ♦ front-load the season with information and active learning, but favor active learning;
 - ♦ find some way to address fundamentals daily, even if only for 3 minutes.

Online Videos

The videos listed below were created as a reference tool for the members of today's demonstration group. They are offered here as a professional courtesy and, as such, it is requested that they not be distributed nor reposted online. Thanks to Benjamin Underbrink for demonstrating the various skills and for agreeing to share these video recordings. Videos may be accessed via the QR code to the right.

- Videos 1, 2, & 3 Iron Cross complete (1); Breakdown (2, 3)
- Video 4 X-Men
- Videos 5 & 6 Sawtooth Left (5), Right (6)
- Video 7 Forward march by the numbers
- Video 8 Sliding Box with Lighthouse
- Videos 9 & 10 72-B complete (9); Breakdown (10)



Acknowledgements

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