



# **Visual Packet 2022-23**

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# In-Person Audition Process Tips

The audition process will break down into two areas:

1. Ensemble Performance: In the ensemble environment, we will be looking for your musical mastery of the warm-up packet as well as your ability to blend, balance, and adapt. As we work through the technique program, specific explanations of approach will take place. Your ability to keep an open mind and incorporate new ways of doing things into your playing will be crucial.

2. Individual Evaluation: If you are asked to perform for an individual evaluation, you will perform exercises from this packet as well as other basic rudimental skills. Expect to receive immediate and detailed feedback from an instructor during your individual evaluation.

## More In-Person Audition Process Tips

- The success of your performance at the audition will be directly related to the level of preparation of the audition material.
- Use a mirror when you practice and record yourself with some type of electronic device. Listen critically to the recording and work to perfect your performance.
- Always use a metronome, or music with a steady tempo when practicing. Battery members must be able to mark time to all material.
- Keep in mind that you are always auditioning. Be professional!
- Be sure to ask questions if you are confused about anything you are being asked.
- Prepare yourself to be involved in a tedious and competitive process. Your ability to stay mentally engaged in the process throughout the audition will be crucial.
- Strive to give off a sense of confidence in your audition. Everything is a performance, from 8 on a hand to championships. Convince us you are comfortable with what you're doing.

## Posture

We strive for a tall, lean, and powerful presence in our posture. The spine should feel lengthened, the chest should be wide, and shoulders should be as broad as possible with a natural slope. The weight of your body should be primarily on the balls/platforms of your feet with the heels still making contact, but not as the primary source for weight distribution. **60% platform, 40% heel.**

### Foot Placement:

- First Position (Heels together, toes apart)
- The toes should be far enough apart to create a 90-degree angle between the feet.

## Body Alignment:

- Head slightly elevated approximately 10 degrees above parallel. Ears centered over shoulders.
- Shoulders relaxed and slightly back & centered over the hips
- Hips should be centered above the ankles
- Spine is extended/space between vertebrae/ LIFT UP!!
- Weight should be evenly distributed between both feet.
- If you look poor standing still you will look bad on the move! Go through these checklists every time you are set!!

## Marking Time

- Feet will remain in 1<sup>st</sup> position.
- The entire foot will come off the ground FLAT and will touch the ground FLAT.
- The foot will come off the ground no more than 1 inch or less. Just enough to feel time with movement in the feet.
- The knees will bend to achieve this motion as well as some movement in the upper body. This is normal.

## Forward Marching

Our forward technique will be a toe-down “straight leg” technique. Meaning that the legs will be straight on the downbeats. The length of your leg should extend through each step, and movement should be activated from the hips.

The articulation for time of the forward marching happens in the PLATFORM of the foot, in slight relevé.

The forward marching will be broken down into several parts. The push, the first step, the weight transfer, the crossing count, and the second step.

### Forward Push

The push from the right leg comes from the leg being completely engaged. The motion and energy come from the right platform being pushed off into the first step. The platform should stay low and the heel should be slightly higher. The right heel **MUST** remain low to the ground (the stationary heel should not come more than half an inch off of the ground) or the bend in the leg happens before the first step. The motivation of forward motion comes from your core, and the motion of straight leg should come from the hip joint, like a pendulum.

## Forward First Step

Time comes from the articulation of the platform. It is crucial for timing and visual clarity that the same part of the foot articulates on the downbeat. Both quads should be engaged at the downbeats and both legs should be straight. The weight of your body should be balanced on your platforms, 50/50. Again, it is crucial to make sure that your back heel does not come too high off of the ground.

## Forward Weight Transfer

As the weight transfer begins to happen (immediately after the downbeat of count 1), continue moving forward rolling down slightly on the left foot (heel does NOT touch the ground), and the back leg immediately starts to roll up as the leg pulls through to the next step. This will cause the knee to bend slightly. The front leg shape should still be straight.

## Forward Crossing Count

The crossing count, or when the feet are right next to each other, happens exactly on the “and” count. The traveling foot should now be traveling through the “and” count **relaxed**, as the foot passes through the “and” count point through the foot to straighten out the leg. This prepares the foot for solid shape on the next downbeat. The weight of your body on the crossing count should be completely on your forward foot but should still be straight up and down!! Additionally, the traveling leg will not be completely straight. There will be a slight knee bend to allow the foot to clear the ground. Continue to think about the length of the leg being very long as you travel forward.

## Forward Second step (through the crossing count)

The traveling foot should now be pointed and pushed forward. As it articulates, it hits with the platform, again with a long straight leg. On the stationary foot, the weight should transfer completely to the platform. Similar to the first step, the stationary heel should not come more than half an inch off of the ground. The higher the heel comes up, the more the leg bends!!

## Backwards Marching

Our backward technique will also be a “modified straight leg” technique. The articulation of the beat happens on the entire platform of the foot. The heel should remain at a comfortable relevè (about an inch) to maintain control and stability in both the leg shape and the upper body carriage. While marching you should be thinking about pointing the front foot as you pull from the back leg. In addition, think about stretching the heel towards the ground.

- Derived from the same basic concept as forward technique, having straight legs on the beat.
- Pulse is felt on the platform instead of the heel.
- Heels are off the ground at all times.
- Motion is initiated from the right platform pushing the body center backwards

### Backwards Push

The push comes from the same place as the forward march. The right quad should be completely engaged, and the push comes from the right platform. As the left foot extends out, the right heel comes slightly off the ground so only the platform of the foot remains down. The left foot should slightly flex (toes should never be above parallel in the backwards march) to clear the ground as it moves back.

### Backwards First Step

The platform of the foot articulates on the beat, and the weight transfers half to that foot. For the downbeat, the weight of your body should be balanced between both feet on both platforms, and the platforms of your feet should be an even height off the ground!!

- When on both platforms make sure to have weight distributed evenly.
- Do not lean to gain momentum/Do not tightrope walk, your feet should be in the same ski line (NordicTrack)

### Backwards Weight Transfer/Crossing Count

Your weight for the crossing count should be completely over the back (stationary) leg. The weight transfer begins to happen immediately after the downbeat. When moving, every step is initiated by a push from the front foot (energy should remain through the front platform!!). NEVER REACH BACK, PUSH OFF! As the front leg pulls

through, the weight of the foot stays on the platform. HEELS NEVER TOUCH THE GROUND DURING THE BACKWARDS MARCH! The traveling foot should slightly flex as it travels through the crossing count, so the leg shape stays straight. Both legs should continue to be straight at this point.

### **Backwards Post Crossing Count**

The foot should remain to be slightly flexed as it begins to travel behind the body, with energy pushing down towards the ground. This will ensure that the leg stays straight!

### **Backwards Second Step (Through the crossing count)**

As the foot continues behind the body and through the crossing count, the foot stays flexed, and the heel stays low to the ground so the foot can articulate completely on the platform! At this point, your body weight should be completely between both platforms, and heel height for both feet should be even again!

## **Closing**

Closing: The close always happens with the platform of the foot. The platform should be turned out as it articulates, and the weight should be primarily on the balls of the feet to ensure that the entire body stops in time.

- Beat 4 or 8 or whatever beat you need to close on, “place” your right foot in the outward 45 position and close on beat 1 closing your left heel to your right heel in the outward 45 position (FIRST POSITION).
- Closing or halting should be done in the same way as forward marching placing and closing, lowering one’s body from the elevated platforms in one continuous smooth motion.

## Visual Exercises:

1. **Meditation/Stretch:** Upper and Lower Body
2. **Work Out:** Burpees, Squats, Scissor Kicks, Mountain Climbers, Planks, etc.
3. **Hindu/ "S" Curve/ Relevè:** Equal, even motion over space and time
4. **6 Points of Posture:** Ankles, Knees, Hips, Rib Cage, Shoulders, and Ears at 60/40
5. **Position:** Parallel, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> while keeping 60/40
6. **Plie – Demi/Grande:** Focus on maintaining posture
7. **High Mark Time:** Balance, control, timing, and breathing. Slow then Fast
8. **Pointe Exercise:** Focus on maintaining the length of the leg and moving from the hip. Work to maintain posture (top four points of alignment) throughout. The hip and ankle work in conjunction
9. **50/50 Exercise:** All motion is based upon "50/50" weight distribution. Applies leg motion learned in pointe exercise, while layering in new responsibility of weight transfer. Results in accomplishing "one step forward" and "one step backward"
10. **2-Step Step-Out:** Applies all previously discussed movement concepts in a very short exercise. Helps to create a more realistic performance scenario. Use step outs as often as possible, especially during "off the field" rehearsals. Recreate performance scenarios as closely as possible, as often as possible
11. Practice these exercises in a variety of directions and tempos. Forward, Backward, Left, and Right

## Marching Exercises:

1. **8 and 8:** 8 forward, 8 mark-time (Can change to any amount)
2. **Zig Zag:** forward 8, Left 8, Forward 8, Right 8
3. **8 and 4:** Move 8, Hold 4 (Can change to any amount)
4. **12 and 4:** Left 12, Hold 4, Right 12, Hold 4
5. **8-6-4-2:** Forward 8, Backward 8, Fwd 6, Bwd 6, and so on...
6. **Figure 8:** standard, F-L-B-R and so on...
7. **Circle Drill:** standard, expand, retract, expand, spin, retract
8. **Asterisk:** make all of the angles correct \*

(Crabbing and Diagonals use the same approach)

All of this may seem overwhelming at first but trust us, little by little you will learn everything and be just fine.

We are excited to get started!