

# The Ashley Ridge Spring Training Basic Information and Checklist Book

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From "The Ashley Ridge  
Warm-ups, Stretches and Basics Book"

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## “The Basic Stance”

Everything we ask you to do is based on a very simple foundation of ideas and concepts. All of the following body movements and marching basics will be based on a specific concept of proper Balance and Stance.

Always center your weight in a vertical plane from the head to the shoulders down through the hips all the way to the heels. The actual center of your body is located around your belly button. Keeping this region in your vertical plane will help improve your posture and balance.

After Warm-up and Stretching you will set up the Basics Block. This should be done efficiently so we can either introduce or review as much information as possible. Once you're set in your block, you will stand at "To The Ready". Standing in this position lets your instructors know that you're ready for the next phase of the rehearsal. This position is not given via *rhythmic command* but can be used at a variety of moment in a rehearsal or as a part of your pre-performance preparation. "Parade Rest" is very similar to "To The Ready" but with "Parade Rest" the position is achieved via *rhythmic command* and instead of heels together, they are shoulder width apart. A somewhat more relaxed position, it is generally considered a waiting position. In other words, the band may need to stand still for an extended period during a parade or while waiting to travel to a rehearsal/warm-up area at a performance. To keep the ensemble comfortable yet focused, the "Parade Rest" command/position may be used.

All of the basic foot positions will be described later but for now, 2<sup>nd</sup> position is with your feet a little more than shoulder width apart with your feet turned out to create a 60° angle. The turn out of the feet actually comes from the hip joint. The entire leg is turned out 30°, not just the feet. (*Even with your feet apart, your weight still needs to be centered from your head down through your heels.*)

Always think "Tall". For you to be at your tallest, all these parts need to be in alignment. Slouching or allowing your weight to be placed unevenly throughout the body not only looks poor but will also directly affect your ability to play well. Keep the chest out (expanded) but breathe from the stomach (diaphragmatic breathing).

Here is the Checkpoints list...

### “Attention” / (AKA, “Set”) / (1 count) “Band-Ten-Hut-4-Hut”

- Heels Together.
- Hips/Legs Turned out (Feet creating a 60° angle).
- Weight evenly distributed across the entire plane of the foot.
- Knees Straight (Not locked or hyper-extended/flexed).
- Hips directly above Heels (May feel slightly forward).
- Stomach in (Though free to expand).
- Chest Expanded.
- Shoulders Back, Down and Relaxed (Directly above Hips).
  - Arms: (No Instruments)
    - Upper Arms away from Body.
    - Forearms Parallel to Body creating a 120° Angle.
    - Elbows Relaxed but Locked in place.
    - Wrists Straight and Flat to the Front.
  - Hands: (No Instruments)
    - Right Hand in Fist; Thumb over Index Finger
    - Left Hand Wrapped around Right Hand; Fingers Together, Thumb on Knuckle of Right Hand.
    - Thumbs of both Hands Directly in front of the Nose
- Neck Fully Extended (Tall).
- Head up with Chin Parallel to the Ground
- Eyes focused

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**“Horns Up” / (1 count) “Band-Horns-Up-“Breathe”-Up”**

- Heels Together.
- Hips/Legs Turned out (Feet creating a 60° angle).
- Weight evenly distributed across the entire plane of the foot.
- Knees Straight (Not locked or hyper-extended/flexed).
- Hips directly above Heels (May feel slightly forward).
- Stomach in (Though free to expand).
- Chest Expanded.
- Shoulders Back, Down and Relaxed (Directly above Hips).
  - Arms: (No Instruments)
    - Upper Arms away from Body.
    - Forearms Parallel to Body creating a 120° Angle.
    - Elbows Relaxed but Locked in place.
    - Wrists Straight and Facing Upward.
  - Hands: (No Instruments)
    - Right Hand in Fist; Thumb over Index Finger
    - Left Hand Wrapped around Right Hand; Fingers Together, Thumb on Knuckle of Right Hand.
    - Thumbs of both Hands Directly in front of the Nose
- Neck Fully Extended (Tall).
- Head up with Chin Parallel to the Ground
- Eyes focused

**“Trail Arms” / (2 count) “Band-Trail-Arms-“Breathe”-1-2”**

(Identical to “Attention” or “Set” but with hands down to sides and elbows only slightly bent)

**“To The Ready” / (non-rhythmical)**

- Heels Together. (1<sup>st</sup> Position)
- Hips/Legs Turned out (Feet creating a 60° angle).
- Weight evenly distributed across the entire plane of the foot.
- Knees Straight (Not locked or hyper-extended/flexed).
- Hips directly above Heels (May feel slightly forward).
- Stomach in (Though free to expand).
- Chest Expanded.
- Shoulders Back, Down and Relaxed (Directly above Hips).
  - Arms:
    - Arms in Front of Body
    - Shoulders relaxed
  - Hands:
    - Right Hand: in Fist at Belt Buckle.
    - Left Hand: Over Right Hand
- Neck Fully Extended (Tall).
- Head up with Chin Parallel to the Ground
- Eyes focused

**“Parade Rest” / (2 count) “Band-Parade-Rest-“Breathe”-1-2”**

(Identical to “To The Ready” but with Heels shoulder width apart (2<sup>nd</sup> Position) - Head may be requested down and eyes may be requested closed)

Though it is important for the *Eyes* to remain focused while stationary, while in motion your *Eyes* should continually move to be fully aware of dress and/or cover points in forms.

This checklist will remain the same no matter what stage you're in. The only difference will be in the arm positions while holding your instruments. Those arm positions will be defined section by section.

Applying proper weight distribution/body alignment with proper breathing technique will help you look better, feel better, play better and help your overall performance abilities.

## Additional Foot Positions

In general, we will always start in 1<sup>st</sup> position. Moving from 1<sup>st</sup> to any other forward position, including Forward March, involves an initiation and resolve. Unless otherwise instructed, you always initiate moves from the toe, keeping the leg straight. Do NOT initiate movement from the knee. Use the extension of the toe to help maintain Center Balance

When Shifting weight into the various foot positions, we will first break it down into a Tondué to the Weight Shift with Heel down. We'll break the movement down into sub-divided counts then into one fluid move.

(All Positions with Legs turned out at hips and Feet at 120 angles)

- **1<sup>st</sup> Position** - Heels Together.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Position** - Heels Shoulder Width Apart.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Position** - Left Heel into Arch of Right Foot
- **4<sup>th</sup> Position** - Left foot out at a 45 Angle
- **Closed 4<sup>th</sup> Position** - Left foot in front of Right foot (Heels aligned).
- **5<sup>th</sup> Position** - Left Heel touching Right Toe. (Heels aligned)

## Additional Arm Positions

For the most part, you will be standing with your instruments in your hands. On occasion, you may be faced with body movements where the instruments won't be in your hand. This could be in stretching/warm-ups or maybe even in some places throughout the show. The basic arm positions generally relate directly to the foot positions though you may be asked to move to a position that does not correlate.

Below is a basic list of additional arm positions that may be used in body movements throughout the show or in the exercises which are to follow. Unless told otherwise, always keep wrists, elbows and shoulders relaxed. Elbows should be slightly bent and wrists should be straight with the forearm and simply considered an extension of the forearm. Hands are relaxed though some additional positions may be required.

Always make sure movements are deliberate yet smooth. Think of you doing the movements in water. Feel the resistance of the water and imagine the muscle control you need to move in it. That is the basic idea of fluidity of motion.

(All Positions with Elbows slightly bent and wrists straight with forearms)

- **Prep (Low 5<sup>th</sup>)** - Hands at Belt-line level & Shoulder width apart.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Position (Mid 5<sup>th</sup>)** - Both Hands at Lower Rib Cage level & Shoulder width apart.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Position** - Both Hands at Chest level with Arms extended to side
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Position** - Right Arm in 5<sup>th</sup> Position, Left Arm in 2<sup>nd</sup> Position  
*(Not generally used in our exercises)*
- **4<sup>th</sup> Position** - Right Arm in 5<sup>th</sup> Position, Left arm in 1<sup>st</sup> Position  
*(Not generally used in our exercises)*
- **5<sup>th</sup> Position** - Both Arms extended above Head, Hands slightly in front of body.

## About “The Block”: Alignment, Cover and Dress

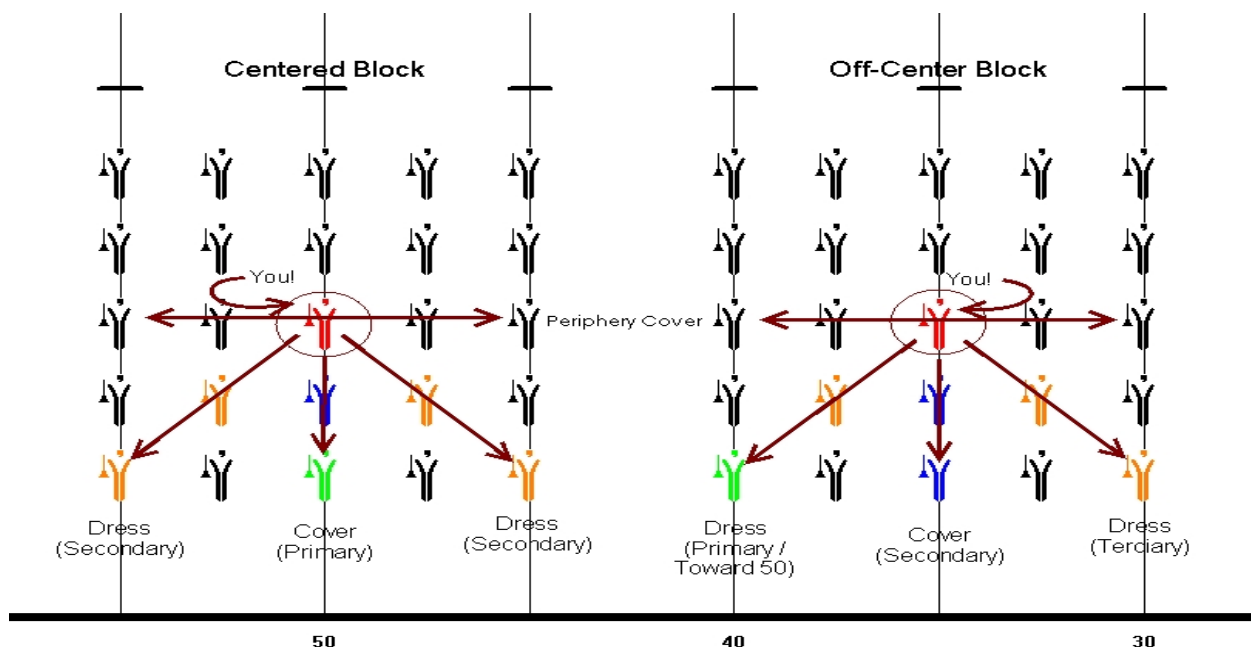
“The Block” is the formation we will use in Stretching, Running, Body/Movement and Basics. “The Block” consists of Band Members standing in Columns and Files at a 4 Step interval, or what we’ll call a “4x4 Block”. This means the interval (Standard 8 to 5, 22.5 inch steps) from front to back and from left to right. To maintain proper Block Alignment, you must understand “Cover and Dress”. While standing in a Block, your “Cover Point” is your forward most Alignment Checkpoint and your “Dress Point” is any forward Angle through which the Block can be aligned. In a perfectly Square Block, you will also have a periphery “Cover Point”. This is the alignment directly perpendicular to you (Left and/or Right). These Checkpoints are determined by the direction your head is facing.

When Covering or Dressing a Line or Block, align yourself directly behind the person in front of you so you can’t see the person in front of them. This holds true for angles as well. The trick to proper Cover & Dress is, first Cover, adjust Left or Right, Then Dress, adjust Forward or Backward while staying Covered Down the line.

There are 3 degrees of importance of the Checkpoints. In the Basics Block, your Cover and Periphery are your Primary Checkpoint; your 45° angle is your Secondary. The 3<sup>rd</sup> degree comes in when a block is not a perfectly grid aligned block.

The Basics Block will almost always be a perfect grid aligned block but in the show you may have blocks aligned to different angles and intervals. The same principles apply there as well though your Primary Checkpoint, or your Cover, may be at an angle which is directed toward the Judges Box. The easiest way to think of it is, your Primary Checkpoint creates a “T” and your Secondary creates a “V”. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree are sub-angles between the Primary and Secondary Checkpoints.

When the Block is in motion, keep these Checkpoints in alignment. It is important to make adjustments over 2 or 3 steps rather than all at once. Remember that there will be people Covering and Dressing to you as well. Sudden adjustments will draw more attention to the misalignment.



## “Marching Basics/Fundamentals”

We will begin every process or sequence from Square One, first reviewing Checkpoints, then Applying Checkpoints in Sequence. Moving sequences may be done in a variety of step-sizes starting with the standard 8 to 5 down to 32 to 5 and up to 4 to 5 step-sizes

### **Mark Time** (Mark-Time-Mark-*Breathe* &)

By command or count-off. Count 4 (Minus 1) is when motion is initiated. Breathe in while lifting the Left Heel no more than 1 inch off the ground. Heel is up on the “&” count with the knee slightly bent and returned back to flat/knee straight on Count 1. The on Count 1, The Right Heel motion is initiated and is up on the “&” of 1. This sequence repeats until the command of “Halt” is given. The verbal command of “Corps <space> Halt”, as with all commands, is initiated on the Left foot (Counts 1 and 3). Count 4 of the command sequence, the right foot flattens and remains so while the Left foot continues to and stops 1 count later (Count 1 in 4/4 time).

- The “Minus 1” Count
- The “&” Count
- Count 1
- “&” of 1 Count
- Sequence
- Halt

### **Step One** (Forward <space> March-*Breathe*)/(Backward <space> March-*Breathe*)

By command or count-off. By command, a Forward or Backward March will only happen after a Mark Time Sequence. The process is similar to the “Halt” command except for the Left foot doesn’t stop on Count 1. On Count 4 of the command sequence there is a momentary pause. On the “&” of Count 4, the Left foot initiates motion as in the Tondué Exercise.

The Difference is, in a Forward March, the Left Toe is lifted, not pointed; The foot is now straight forward, not Turned Out. The Leg remains straight while Heel glides slightly above the ground. The initiation of the step comes from the Right Toe with tension/release in the Left Hip. Use the Right Toe to propel you forward, not upward. Squeeze the Buttocks on count 4 to create the tension needed. The Feet move in “Ski Parallel”, with the Toes always pointing in the direction of travel with the Legs crossing on the “&” counts. Think of your feet in skis as you do this movement. To allow your weight to remain centered, the back leg will be slightly bent with that heel being off the ground. Your Center will now be evenly placed between both Left Heel and Right Toe.

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In a Backward March, the Left Heel pulls the leg back with the Toe slightly off the ground. The leg remains straight. Initiation of the movement starts on the "&" of Count 4 and comes from the Right Toe with tension/release in the Left Hip. The Right Toe pushes your Center backward to Count 1 where Both Feet are Extended (Heels ALWAYS off the ground). Just like in the Forward March, Squeeze on count 4. Feet switch to Ski Parallel though now the Heels point in your direction of travel. Knees do not bend. Think "Tall", staying on the Balls of your Feet. Your Center remains evenly placed between both Left and Right Toes.

A "Halt" is derived from the Tondue Exercises. After the verbal command of "Corps <space> Halt", the right foot performs a Closed 4<sup>th</sup> Tondue in Forward March, or a Rear Tondue in Backwards March on Count 4 then your Center Shifts into 1<sup>st</sup> Position, or Close, on Count 1.

Change of Direction. Forward to Backward change is the same sequence as the "Halt" except you will not Close on Count 1. On the Tondue, you are already in the first Step of a Backward March so you will freeze motion till Count 1, then you will follow the Backward March instructions. Backward to Forward is also the same as the "Halt" but on Count 1 your Left Foot re-initiates with Heel Down as in the Forward March instructions. Remember to BREATHE!

#### **Forward March**

- One Step Drill
  - The "Minus 1" Count
  - The "&" Count
  - Count "1"
  - Close
- Two Step Drill
- Four Step Drill With Tondue (Post)
  - Count "4", Tondue
  - Count "&" of "4"
  - Close

#### **Backward March**

(See Forward March Breakdowns)

#### **Change Of Direction**

- Forward March to Backward March
  - Count "0", Tondue
  - Count "Plus 1"
- Backward March to Forward March
  - Count "0", Rear Tondue
  - The "&" Count
  - Count "Plus 1"

## Sequencing

Sequencing will be achieved by several different processes, The process we'll utilize the most will be in "The Block" though on occasion we will use a process that's called "Across The Floors".

"Across The Floors" is a process that can be done on a lined practice field but is generally used when space is reduced. In this process, instead of all basics sequences and routines being done as an ensemble, each sequence will be done row by Row (or file by file). Each Row or File will be set at a 4 Step interval with each subsequent Row basically waiting in line.

In general, the lateral space needed to set up an effective "Across The Floor" process is 32 Steps (20 yards). It's also advisable to give an additional 4-8 steps beyond these 32 steps to allow for preparation of each subsequent Row. The 32 step basics execution area allows for enough room to achieve enough movement space as well as enough space to correct or adjust possible execution issues in small and extended steps alike.

The sequences are generally done in 8 or 12 count segments. This means every 8 or 12 counts a new Row begins the sequence, though occasionally a sequence may need additional counts to allow for stop and go movement as well as possible change of direction.

The best thing about "Across The Floors" is that they can be done inside with limited space, in a gym or even wide hallway as well as outside in an unlined parking lot or field. This means that there is never a reason not to do some form of basics routines.

### "Across The Floors"

Some sequences may need to be abbreviated to fit for the space. Unless otherwise noted, Horns always move to the "Horns Up" position on Count 7, 2 counts prior to the initiation of each sequence and down to 1<sup>st</sup> Position on the resolve. Utilize your Cover and Dress techniques throughout as well.

#### **Forward or Backward Sequences (Marching)**

Sequence #1 / "8's" (Across and Return)

- Forward 32 cts

*Each Subsequent Row wait 8 counts*

Sequence #2 / "8's & 4's" (Across and Return)

- Forward 8 cts, Mark Time or Halt 4 cts, Forward 8 cts etc)

*Each Subsequent Row waits 12 counts*

Sequence #3a / " Right Slide" Sequence (Across)

- Left Hip turn 4 cts (90 )
- Right Slide 32 cts

Sequence #3b / "Left Slide" Sequence (Return)

- Right Hip Turn 4 cts (90 )
- Right Slide 32 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 12 counts*

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Sequence #4 / "Hip Turn" Sequence (Across and Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Stationary Left Hip Turn 4 cts (90 )
- Right Slide 8 cts
- Stationary Right Hip Turn 4 cts (180 )
- Left Slide 8 cts
- Stationary Left Hip Turn 4 cts (180 )
- Right Slide 8 cts
- Stationary Right Hip Turn 2 cts (90 )

*Each Subsequent Row waits 12 counts*

(Repeat above starting Backward)

Sequence #5a / "Left Hip Pivot" Sequence (Across)

- Forward 8 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Right Slide 8 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Back Left Slide 8 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Back March 8 cts

Sequence #5b / "Right Hip Pivot" Sequence (Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Left Slide 8 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Back Right Slide 8 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Back March 8 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 8 counts*

Sequence #6a / Advanced "Left Hip Pivot" Sequence (Across)

- Forward 8 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Right Slide 4 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Back Left Slide 4 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Back March 4 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Back Left Slide 4 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Forward Right Slide 4 cts
- Left Hip Pivot to Forward March 4 cts

Sequence #6b / Advanced "Right Hip Pivot" Sequence (Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Left Slide 4 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Back Right Slide 4 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Back March 4 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Back Right Slide 4 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Forward Left Slide 4 cts
- Right Hip Pivot to Forward March 4 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 8 counts*

(Repeat above starting Backward)

**Change of Direction Sequences (Marching)**

Sequence #7 / "CoD 8's & 8's" (Across and Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Backward 8 cts
- Forward 8 cts etc...

*Each Subsequent Row waits 16 counts*

Sequence #8 / "CoD 8's & 4's" (Across and Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Backward 4 cts
- Forward 8 cts etc...

*Each Subsequent Row waits 12 counts*

(Repeat above adding Hip Pivots on Direction Changes)

### **Float Turns Sequences (Marching)**

Sequence #9a / "Left Float Turn" 8's & 4's (Across and Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Left Float Turn 4 cts
- Backward 8 cts
- Left Float Turn 4 cts
- Forward 8 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 8 counts*

Sequence #9b / "Right Float Turn" 8's & 4's (Across and Return)

- Forward 8 cts
- Right Float Turn 4 cts
- Backward 8 cts
- Right Float Turn 4 cts
- Forward 8 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 8 counts*

Sequence #10a / Advanced "Left Float Turn" 4's & 2's (Across and Return)

- Forward 4 cts
- Left Float Turn 2 cts
- Backward 4 cts
- Left Float Turn 2 cts
- Forward 4 cts
- Left Float Turn 2 cts
- Backward 4 cts
- Left Float Turn 2 cts
- Forward 4 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 8 counts*

Sequence 10b / Advanced "Right Float Turn" 4's & 2's (Across and Return)

- Forward 4 cts
- Right Float Turn 2 cts
- Backward 4 cts
- Right Float Turn 2 cts
- Forward 4 cts
- Right Float Turn 2 cts
- Backward 4 cts
- Right Float Turn 2 cts
- Forward 4 cts

*Each Subsequent Row waits 8 counts*

"Across The Floors" will also be augmented with Jazz-Walk and Jazz-Run sequences though the actual addition and sequence of those will depend on the content of which in the show itself. Jazz-walks and Jazz-runs can be interchanged with any of the above motion sequences but Jazz-runs are basically an extended step-size where Jazz-walks are a totally unique style of moving in itself.

All of the above sequences can also be done in "The Block". The only difference with doing these in "The Block" is that the ensemble will move together, not in separate rows.

For most rehearsals, these sequences will be done in "The Block" unless we're trying to spot check individuals or, as stated before, have limited space. Pre-performance Basics warm-up will more than likely be as "Across The Floors" though since space may be somewhat limited.

**Monday: (No Instruments)/Full Ensemble?**

4:45 - 4:50	Explain Goals for the Day and the Week.
4:50 - 5:05	Stretch
5:05 - 5:15	Basic Stance
5:15 - 5:45	Explain and sequence 1 <sup>st</sup> Position, "To The Ready", "Parade Rest"/ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Position, "Attention" & "Trail Arms"- Define pulse & tempo (subdivision) as well as explain Rhythmic Commands
5:45 - 5:55	Warm-Down (Grounded Stretches)

**Tuesday: (W/Instruments)**

4:45 - 4:50	Explain Goals for the Day.
4:50 - 5:00	Stretch
5:00 - 5:15	Introduce Strengthening Exercises
5:15 - 5:30	Review Monday's Lessons
5:30 - 5:50	Introduce Instruments. (Possibly introduce all basic Foot Positions)
5:50 - 5:55	Warm-Down

**Wednesday: (W/Instruments)**

4:45 - 4:50	Explain Goals for the Day.
4:50 - 5:00	Stretch
5:00 - 5:15	Strengthening
5:15 - 5:30	Review Tuesday's Lessons
5:30 - 5:50	Introduce Movement - Mark Time/One Step/Forward March/Tondué Halt / Closed 4 <sup>th</sup> position
5:50 - 5:55	Warm-Down

**Thursday: (W/Instruments)**

4:45 - 4:50	Explain Goals for the Day.
4:50 - 5:00	Stretch
5:00 - 5:15	Strengthening
5:15 - 5:30	Review Wednesday's Lessons
5:30 - 5:50	Introduce Movement - One Step/Backward March/Hip Turns/Change of Direction / Rear
5:50 - 5:55	Warm-Down

**Friday: (W/Instruments)**

4:45 - 4:50	Explain Goals for the Day.
4:50 - 5:00	Stretch
5:00 - 5:15	Strengthening
5:15 - 5:30	Review Thursday's Lessons
5:30 - 5:50	Sequences #1-3, #7-8.
5:50 - 5:55	Warm-Down

If given more time...

Monday: Will extend the "Explanation and Sequence" section

Tuesday: Will extend Instrument Introduction and possibly introduce Mark Time and One Step

Wednesday: Will take a little more time to review then Introduce Forward March & Tondué Halt

Thursday: Will take more time introducing Backward March, Hip Turns & Change of Direction

Friday: Will extend Review but Introduce same sequences.

\*Additional Arm and Foot Positions may not be discussed