



# RISE

PERFORMING ARTS

2025 VISUAL TECHNIQUE PACKET

**Welcome and Audition Structure**.....pg 1-2

**Visual Philosophy**.....pg 3

- Internalizing time
- Spatial Awareness
- Vulnerability

**Foundations**.....pg 4-5

- Tension
- Points of Reference
- Posture
- Footing

**Movement Definitions**.....pg 6

- Breath
- Kinesphere
- Tendency
- Visual and Tactile Feedback

**Marching Definitions**.....pg 7-10

- Standby
- Mark Time
- Foot on Dot vs Center of Body
- Forward Marching
- Backward Marching
- Crabbing Technique

# Welcome

Welcome to the Rise Percussion 2025 audition process. You have taken the first step in the process of becoming a member of one of Colorado's only World Class Indoor Percussion groups. This manual will provide you with all of the information you will need in order to understand how Rise Percussion conducts its visual program. This manual will detail our visual philosophy, foundational concepts, as well as movement and marching definitions.

Our goals for the audition process are two-fold: first, we wish to provide you with an educational experience—we hope you gain valuable lessons in music and visual performance. Secondly, it is an evaluation. Auditionees will be offered a callback based on their performance in their music and visual auditions. The feedback you will receive from the music and visual staff at the audition will fall into one of three categories:

1. **We will offer you a contract for Rise.** This means we believe you will be a great addition to the Rise family and would like to offer you a spot in the ensemble.
2. **We will offer you a callback for Rise.** This means we need to see you again during the next audition weekend in order to make the final decision on whether you will be offered a contract with Rise.
3. **You will be invited to audition for Forge.** We believe that you have the skills to be a competitive auditionee for one of our other ensembles and invite you to audition for Forge.

The visual staff of Rise Percussion is eager to help you develop as a percussionist and as a performer and we look forward to evaluating your audition.

**For any questions regarding the content of this packet please email:**

Lucas Garner (Rise Percussion Visual Caption Head) - [Lucas@risearts.org](mailto:Lucas@risearts.org).

The 2025 Rise Percussion visual audition will consist of 3 main components:

- **An overall evaluation of your ability to receive and apply information**, as well as your ability to work well with your peers. This evaluation will take place continuously over the entire audition weekend.
- **A marching audition** consisting of any or all of the following elements: forward and backward marching as well as crabbing both while not playing and while playing exercises from the battery packet. Step sizes could range from 16-5 to 6-5 and tempi could range from 80-200 bpm, while wearing equipment. This portion of the audition will be used to evaluate your ability to march at a world class level. Auditionees will be evaluated on marching in a large group setting by the Rise visual staff.
- **The learning of a short piece of dance choreography** from a provided video, to music, which will be used to evaluate your ability to learn and perform basic movement concepts. This video audition piece must be learned at home and review time of this choreography will be given during the audition. Individual preparation is extremely important to your success in this portion of the audition process. Auditionees will be evaluated on this choreography in small groups by the Rise visual staff.

All auditionees will be given individualized feedback about both the marching and movement part of their audition. We invite you to internalize this feedback and make corrections throughout the audition process and the season. Feedback, whether it be from peers or instructors, is a gift that we all have to choose to continuously implement. We ask you to embrace this audition process as well as the feedback you're given in order to become a better performer.

All of the spots in Rise and Forge are available each year. NO ONE, regardless of experience, is guaranteed a spot. Returning members must demonstrate continued growth and development in order to be considered for membership.

The Rise Percussion visual staff understands that all auditionees come from different backgrounds and may have different levels of familiarity with the specific techniques that we use when marching or moving. Rest assured that you will not necessarily be evaluated on your specific adherence to our techniques, but rather your approach to movement. This underscores the importance of your visual portion of the audition. If you study this manual diligently and are prepared with the information, you have done everything that you can to have a successful audition.

# Visual Philosophy

The Rise Percussion visual philosophy is built upon 3 core tenets: internalizing time, spatial awareness, and vulnerability. These 3 principles drive everything that we do at Rise and our success is predicated on members being willing to try new things and embrace the approach.

## **INTERNALIZING TIME**

The pageantry activity is full of personal responsibilities, both to ourselves and to others around us. The responsibility we have to ourselves is to understand and internalize tempo—to communicate musical and visual ideas to the audience in sync with our fellow performers. Time is the basis for all music and performance and as performers, we need to feel time and tempo in our bones to a point that we do not need to think about it. The way we experience time and tempo is personal and intimate. Being able to truly feel the space between our notes and our steps is how we can effectively communicate with the rest of our ensemble.

## **SPATIAL AWARENESS**

The indoor activity is an inherently intimate performance with your audience. Our creative concepts are expressed through sound and sight and for those to be communicated clearly, we must understand our place in the bigger picture. Being aware of, and adjusting to, the space around us to create a more cohesive picture to communicate an idea is essential. Indoor percussion is a group activity at heart and excellence on the individual level can only take us so far. Understanding how we, as individual performers, fit into the overall idea being communicated to the audience, in every second of the show, is the responsibility we have to the rest of the ensemble.

## **VULNERABILITY**

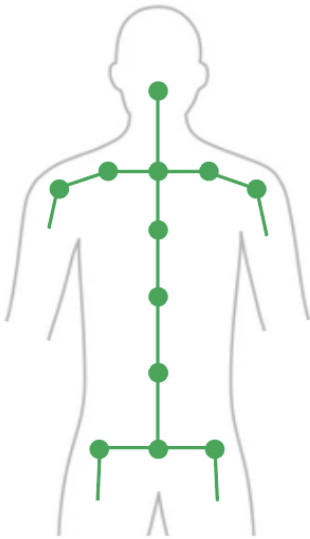
At Rise, we encourage members to celebrate their bodies through mindful movement. Movement is a medium of self-expression, unique to every body. It complements and visually expresses your musicianship. This activity is a space for you to express yourself and to feel safe doing so. Approaching new ideas and concepts with open arms is how we flourish as performers. As an organization, we strive to create a safe space for all members to express themselves and feel like they can be vulnerable and try new things. Indoor percussion is an extremely intimate activity and as we learn to tap into emotionality and incorporate it into our performance, we have an intrinsic responsibility to use that passion and emotion to connect with our audience. We ask our members to fully commit to embracing new ideas and performing them to their fullest potential. Without this, we can never push the activity forward.

***Only when we all commit to approaching performance from these tenets  
can Rise Percussion succeed more than it ever has before.***

# Foundations

## TENSION

Tension is the enemy of efficient movement. The more unnecessary tension there is in the body, the less precision our bodies can play and move with. Give yourself permission to fill up the space around you in the way your body wants. When drumming we are often focusing on how our elbows, wrists, and fingers are working. We invite you to extend that same awareness to the rest of your body.

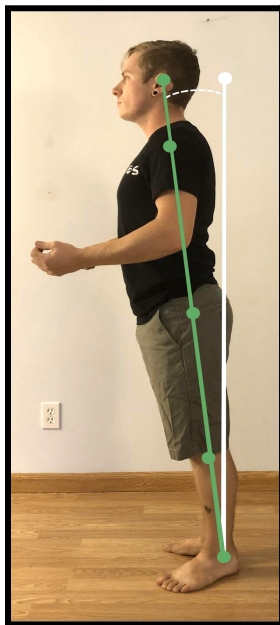


## POINTS OF REFERENCE

We will identify many points throughout your body and explore the possible range of motion for each. Choreography will be taught and cleaned to these points, often referring to a major joint or muscle. There are 12 major points located throughout your torso. Muscular awareness and calculated engagement allow us to influence posture and shaping. This is key to unlearning tension throughout your body, and instead, unlocking a wide movement vocabulary.

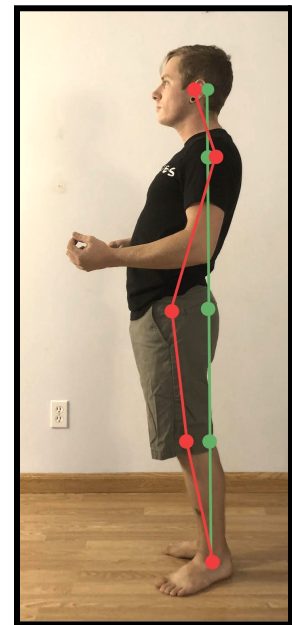
## POSTURE

When we begin to think about our posture, we can incorporate some of these points of reference. There are 5 foundational points of posture: the crown of the head, shoulders, hips, knees, and ankles. We also stand with our weight 60% in our toes and 40% in our



heels, creating the sensation of our weight being over our shoelaces. The ideal posture aligns all 5 of these points with weight properly distributed 60/40 over the shoelaces. The figures to the left and right show the difference between perfect and poor posture.

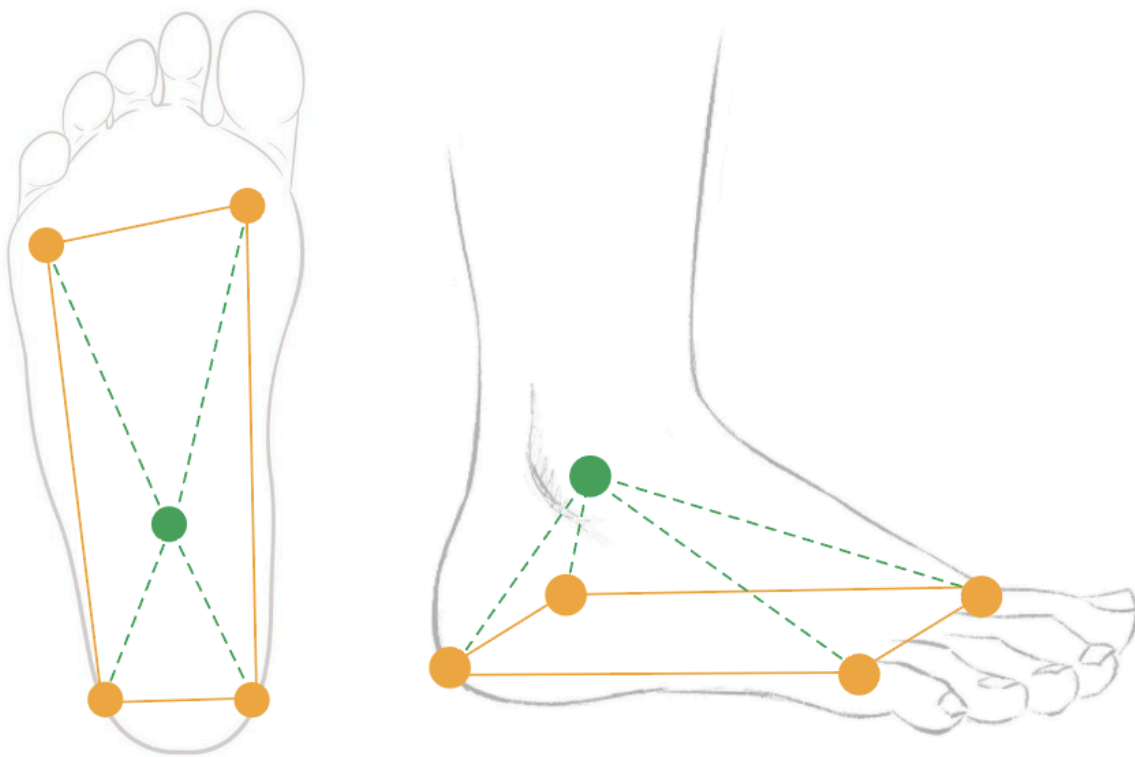
Not every person's perfect posture will feel the same, but it should all evoke the same emotion from the viewer—of commanding their attention. This is the goal of our definition of posture—to give the performer the permission and ability to fill up space in the way they need to create a presence that is the most commanding of an audience's attention.



## FOOTING

Our feet are the way that we connect with the Earth. They are the second most complex appendage and in the percussion world, our feet do so much for us. Our feet carry us from dot to dot and help express the emotion of our show. The way we understand how to use our feet with intention, and stand with intention is essential to success in the marching arts.

When standing, we can break down the balance in our feet into 4 points: the ball of the foot below the big toe, the ball of the foot below the pinky toe, and the inner and outer heel. Notice in the figure below how the left side of the image shows how the 4 points connect to each other and how they all ground us through our lowest point of alignment, the ankle. Understanding our feet and where our weight is distributed in them is the foundation of our posture, movement, and expression, and provides the basis for our 5 posture points of alignment.



# Movement Definitions

## **BREATH**

Breathing brings life to the shapes we create with our body. Someone who is used to having a hunched back and rounded shoulders can learn the novel feeling of a lifted heart and rolled back shoulders. We save new information to our muscle memory by consciously breathing, and ultimately relaxing, into a foreign posture. We train our breathing muscles to support us in new positions. Breath is often choreographed, which helps influence timing and expression.

## **KINESPHERE**

The kinesphere is the sphere around your body. The edges are determined by your unique reach and full range of motion. Imagine standing in a starfish pose at the center of a hamster ball. By reaching your fingertips out as far as possible, you define the edges of this sphere. The more energy that you can extend through your limbs, the larger your hamster ball seems to grow. We will also define planes within your kinesphere and reference them as pathways for movement (imagine slicing your hamster ball in half with airplane arms).

## **TENDENCY**

Be honest with yourself. As you explore your body's potential range of motion, observe how your muscles tend to behave. Do you tend to round your shoulders forward? Do you tend to hold your breath when you feel nervous? Compare your notes to the information that you are being asked to achieve. This establishes your unique pathway towards visual excellence. With this, you will develop an internal dialogue for proactive and continued improvement.

## **VISUAL AND TACTILE FEEDBACK**

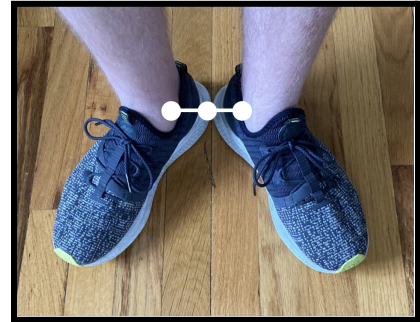
We use tools such as mirrors and video recordings to observe our tendencies. While it is helpful to receive written or verbal feedback, we must connect our perception to the physical feeling.



# Marching Definitions

## STANDBY POSITION

When we are standing still, we stand with our heels together and our toes apart, creating an angle of roughly 60 degrees between our toes. When standing still, we define the point that is on our dot as the midpoint of a line drawn between our inner ankle bones, shown in the figure to the right.



## MARK TIME

When marking time as a percussionist, we lift our whole foot off the ground at a time, starting with the right foot. The whole foot travels an inch or less upwards and comes back down in time with the metronome. The space for this movement to occur comes from the hips moving side to side in opposition of which leg is moving, creating space underneath the stationary leg's hip.

## FOOT ON DOT VS CENTER OF BODY

At Rise Percussion, any "dot" that we have, whether it be 8 steps forward in an exercise, or your final set of the show, will be defined as "foot on dot" meaning your inner ankle bone will be directly over the dot. A dot can be defined as any destination position on the floor, whether it be in an exercise or drill. Foot on dot is defined by your inner ankle bone on your final step being directly over the dot. Center of body is defined by your center of mass being directly over your dot. Center of body means that both of your feet should be equidistant from your dot and essentially your sternum should be directly over your dot. There will be instances in the drill that require foot on the dot as well as center of body. These two techniques are demonstrated in the figures below.



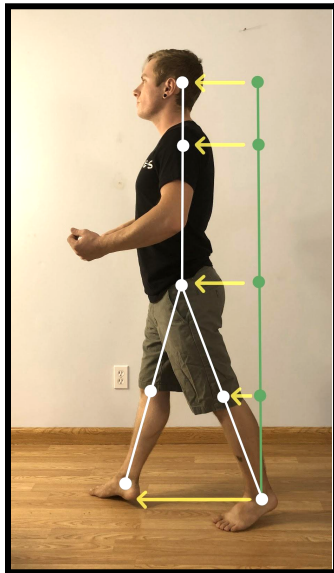
← Foot on Dot

Center of Body →

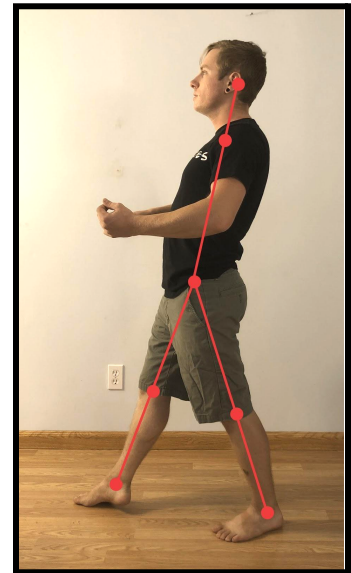


## FORWARD MARCHING

When moving forward, backward, or any other direction, the most important part of every step comes from the trailing foot. In the case of the forward march, it comes from the back foot. **The most important part of this step is the push.** Pushing from, in this case, the back foot's platform, will propel your body forward while keeping the 5 points aligned. This is shown correctly below and to the left, and incorrectly below and to the right. These pushes should be done on the eighth note before the step at and below 132 bpm. Above 132 bpm, the full beat before the step is used to initiate the step.

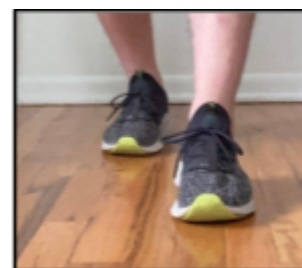


When we take our first forward step, we push from the left platform and our right foot's platform strikes the ground first, also shown in the figure to the left. This is what we call toe down technique because the toes are down when they first strike the ground. When the right leg moves forward, it stays straight and the vertical space needed to accommodate that movement comes from the lifting of the weight out of the hips. When marching in any direction, our heels do not touch the ground. Pushing through our trailing foot's platform creates this without even thinking about it.



Halfway between a beat, commonly known as the 'and' count, your legs should both be next to each other and perfectly straight. As tempi increase, a slight bend will and must naturally occur to accommodate the faster motion.

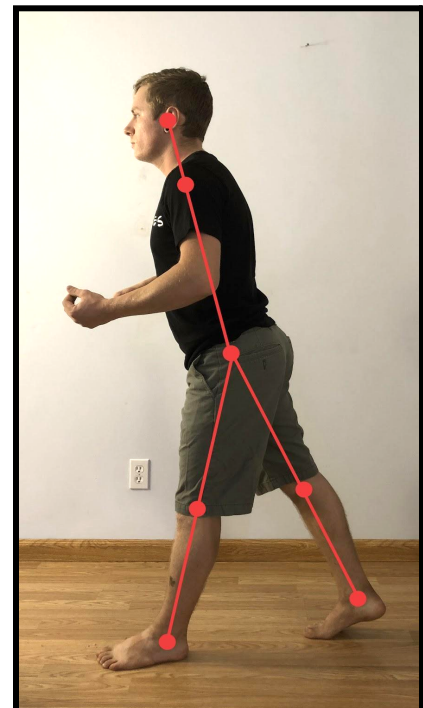
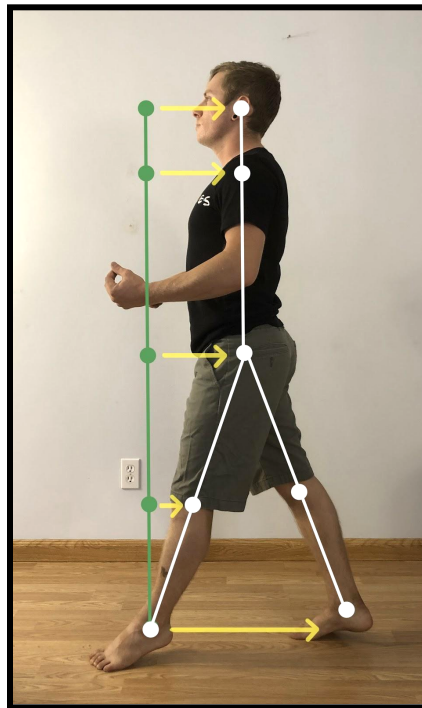
***At Rise Percussion we march with a natural turnout in all directions except for straight backward. All forward marching and crabbing is done in natural turnout.***



## BACKWARD MARCHING

As defined earlier, the most important part of every step comes from a push from the trailing foot. In backwards marching, your points of alignment and balance are maintained by a firm push from your trailing front foot during each step. This push from the front foot is how we achieve and maintain the most important facet of the backwards march—low heels.

Having low heels allows us to keep our center of mass directly between our feet and our points of alignment vertically aligned. The most consistent tendency in backwards marching is to not take big enough steps towards our new dot. Imagining that push from the trailing foot motivating and propelling your motion backwards is the remedy to this.



In the figure above and to the right, the performer has not originated their motion from their front foot and has caused their weight to be too far forward as well as their step not being large enough. The performer in the figure above and to the left has used their front foot to push them towards their next dot, in which their center of mass is directly between their feet, as well as their hips, shoulders and crown of the head are all vertically aligned. Also notice that when all of these things fall into place for the performer on the left, a low heel height is the only possible way for the body to exist. Low heel height and a firm push from the front foot are the keys to achieving a perfect backwards technique.

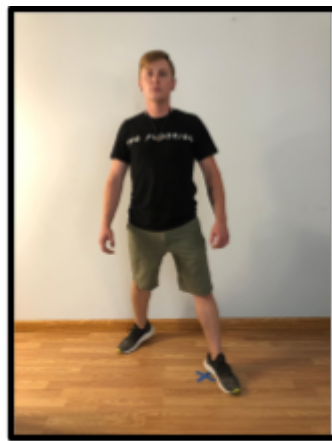
## CRABBING TECHNIQUE

Crabbing is the technique that we use to move across the floor. Crabbing includes any direction that is not straight forwards or straight backwards. This means all obliques (angled moves) and horizontal moves will be done with crabbing technique.

The first step will again initiate on the eighth note before the step at and below 132 bpm. Above 132 bpm, the full beat before the step is used to initiate. There will be a natural turnout in all directions (unless advised otherwise by a staff member). To clarify, this means there will be a natural turnout in all obliques, horizontals, and straight forward marching, but feet will be parallel when marching straight backwards. See below for examples of the first step in each 45° oblique.



Forward right oblique



Backward right oblique



Forward left oblique



Forward right oblique

When crabbing, whichever lateral (horizontal) direction you are moving on the floor is the foot that leads your motion and will be defined as your leading leg. The trailing leg will always cross either in front or behind your leading leg depending on your direction of travel. If you are traveling forward in any way, your trailing leg will cross in front of your leading leg and if you are traveling backward in any way, your trailing leg will cross behind your leading leg. Both feet keep a turnout in all crabbing situations. Both the open and the crossover steps should be the same size and cover the same distance (as opposed to the open step being larger and the crossover step being smaller).

The hips must be square to the front, regardless of direction, and must be maintained on every step. Shoulders should be in alignment with the hips as well, showing a large presence to the audience. This will ensure that drums stay flat and uniform across a section. Height should also always be maintained while crabbing by keeping the hips high and the legs long. Some knee bend will occur, but there should be no significant height change in any of the directions.