

# Lesson 5

## Steps and Marching



### Key Terms

double time  
halt  
quick time  
rest  
steps

### What You Will Learn to Do

- Demonstrate correct marching technique on command

### Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, nonverbal, visual, and written techniques

### Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Describe how to execute marching movements from various commands
- Describe how to respond to halt commands
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

## Introduction

This lesson builds on the instruction regarding stationary movements. It describes the different **steps** used during drill. The two basic steps used in marching are the 30-inch step and the 15-inch step. Use combinations of these steps, facing movements, and rests to march alone or in groups.

### Basic Marching Information

The following basic marching information pertains to all marching movements, including the 30- and 15-inch steps.

- All marching movements executed from the “halt” are initiated from the “position of attention”.
- Except for “route step march” and “at ease march”, all marching movements are executed while marching at “attention”. Marching at “attention” is the combination of the “position of attention” and the procedures for the prescribed step executed simultaneously.
- When executed from the “halt”, all steps except “right step” begin with the left foot.
- For short-distance marching movements, the commander may designate the number of steps forward, backward, or sideward by giving the appropriate command: “**One step to the right (left), MARCH**” or “**Two steps backward (forward), MARCH**”. On the command of execution “**MARCH**”, step off with the appropriate foot, and halt automatically after completing the number of steps designated. Unless otherwise specified, when directed to execute steps forward, the steps will be 30-inch steps.
- All marching movements are executed in the cadence of “Quick Time” (120 steps per minute), except the 30-inch step, which may be executed in the cadence of 180 steps per minute on the command “**Double Time, MARCH**”.
- A step is the prescribed distance from one heel to the other heel of a marching soldier.
- All 15-inch steps are executed for a short distance only.

### Key Note Term

**steps** – a step is the prescribed distance from one heel to the other heel of a marching soldier

## The 30-inch Step

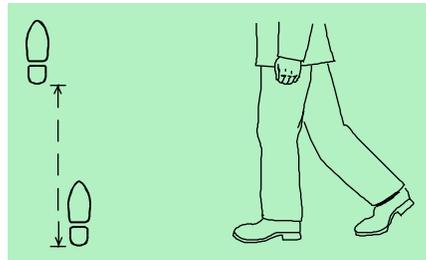
Historically, marching has been an essential infantry skill to efficiently move troops and effectively mass force on the battlefield. As an important part of drill and ceremony, marching remains pertinent today as an effective means of instilling order and discipline among the ranks. The 30-inch step is the standard stride for marching. The standard pace of march is 120-steps per minute, otherwise called “quick time.”

### Quick Time

The command to march forward from the halt is “forward, march.” This command automatically instructs you to use the 30-inch step. On the preparatory command “forward,” shift the weight of your body to your right foot, without noticeable movement. Then, on the command of execution “march,” step forward 30 inches with the left foot and continue marching with 30-inch steps. Keep your eyes and head forward, as shown in Figure 2.5.1.

Figure 2.5.1: The 30-inch step.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.



Swing your arms in a natural motion, without exaggeration, approximately nine inches to the front and six inches to the rear of the trouser seams. Keep your elbows straight, thumbs forward, and fingers curled in the same position as at attention so that the fingers just clear the trousers.

### The Halt

The command to **halt** marching is “squad (platoon, etc.), halt.” Your leader gives the preparatory command “squad (platoon, etc.),” as either foot strikes the marching surface as long as the drill leader gives the command of execution “halt” the next time that foot strikes the marching surface.

The halt requires two counts. After your leader commands “halt,” move the additional step (required after the command of execution) to bring the trailing foot alongside the lead foot. Then, assume the position of attention—this ends the movement.

### Rest Movements in Marching

**Rest** movements allow troops to conserve energy and revive while maintaining the momentum of the march.

#### At Ease, March

The drill leader gives the command “at ease, march” as either foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution “march,” you are no longer required to retain cadence; however, you must still remain silent and maintain the approximate interval and distance. You can only resume “**quick time, march**” or “route step, march” from this rest movement.

#### Route Step, March

You execute “route step, march” in exactly the same manner as you did “at ease, march” except that you may drink and/or talk. From this rest movement, you can only resume marching at attention on the command “quick time, march.”

#### Double Time

At the command “**double time, march,**” march in the cadence of 180 counts or steps per minute with a 30-inch step. You can respond to this command from the halt or while marching at quick time with a 30-inch step.

When at the halt, and your leader gives the preparatory command “double time,” shift the weight of your body to the right foot without noticeable movement. On the command of execution “march,” raise your forearms to a horizontal position,

#### Key Note Term

**halt** – command to bring moving formation to standstill

#### Key Note Terms

**rest** – relaxed form of march without a set cadence to conserve troops’ energy

**quick time** – standard marching pace at 120 steps per minute

#### Key Note Term

**double time** – fast marching pace at 180 steps per minute

with fingers and thumbs closed, palm down, and knuckles out. At the same time, step out with your left foot. March with 30-inch steps at the cadence of double time. Swing your arms to the front and rear, keeping your forearms horizontal.

When marching with a 30-inch step in the cadence of quick time (120 counts or steps per minute), a drill leader can give the command “double time, march,” when either foot strikes the marching surface. Then, on the command of execution “march,” take one more 30-inch step at quick time and step off with your trailing foot, double timing as previously described.

To resume marching with a 30-inch step at the quick time cadence, your leader gives the command “quick time, march.” The leader gives this command as either foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution “march,” take two more 30-inch steps at double time, lower your arms to your sides, and resume marching with a 30-inch step at the quick time cadence.

## The 15-inch Step (Half Step)

The 15-inch step was designed to slow a formation’s advance to facilitate positioning on the battlefield as well as the parade field. The 15-inch step facilitates corrective maneuvers to keep a formation together in the advent of uneven terrain or a turn. Historically, tight formations were the primary means for concentrating force. Today, a tight formation is another demonstration of effective leadership and discipline

### Forward Step

To march with a 15-inch step from the halt, the command is “half step, march.” On the preparatory command “half step,” shift the weight of your body to your right foot without noticeable movement. Then, on the command of execution “march,” step forward 15 inches with your left foot and continue marching with 15-inch steps, as shown in Figure 2.5.2. Your arms should swing as they do when you march with a 30-inch step.

To change from a 30-inch step to a 15-inch step while marching, the command is “half step, march.” Your leader may give this command as either foot strikes the marching surface. Then, on the command of execution “march,” take one more 30-inch step and begin marching with a 15-inch step. Your arms should swing as they do when you march with a 30-inch step.

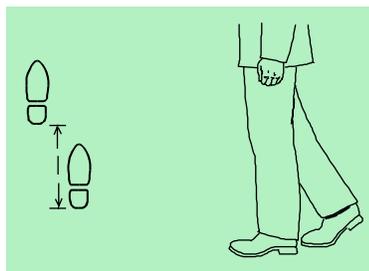


Figure 2.5.2: The 15-inch step.

Courtesy of CACI and the US Army.

To direct you to resume marching with a 30-inch step, the leader commands, “forward, march” as either foot strikes the marching surface. Then, on the command of execution “march,” take one more 15-inch step and begin marching with a 30-inch step.

To halt while marching at the half step, use the same procedures described in the 30-inch step. This step again has two counts.

It is important to note that while marching forward using the half step, the basic commands that your leader can give are “mark time, march,” “forward, march,” and “halt.”

### ***Right/Left Step***

To march to the right or left with a 15-inch step, the command is “right (left) step, march.” You perform the command only while at the halt. On the preparatory command “right (left) step,” shift the weight of your body, without noticeable movement, onto the left (right) foot.

To execute right-step march, on the command of execution “march,” bend your right knee slightly and raise your right foot only high enough to allow freedom of movement. Place your right foot 15 inches to the right of your left foot, and then move your left foot (keeping the left leg straight) alongside your right foot as in the position of attention. Continue this movement, keeping your arms as they are in the position of attention. Reverse this procedure to perform left-step march.

To halt when executing right- or left-step march, your leader commands “squad (platoon, etc.), halt.” This movement has two counts. The leader gives the preparatory command when both heels are together. On the command of execution “halt,” take one more step with your lead foot, then place the trailing foot alongside it, resuming the position of attention.

### ***Backward Step***

To direct you to march backward with a 15-inch step, your leader gives the command “backward, march.” You perform the command only while you are at the halt. On the preparatory command “backward,” shift the weight of your body, without noticeable movement, onto your right foot. Then, on the command of execution “march,” take a 15-inch step backward with your left foot and continue marching backward with 15-inch steps. Let your arms swing naturally. To halt from backward march is a two count movement. This halt is basically the same as from the 30-inch step.

## ***Changing Step in Marching***

Your drill leader may command “change step, march” when the right foot strikes the marching surface. On the command of execution “march,” take one more step with the left foot, then in one count place the right toe near the heel of the left foot and step off with the left foot. Let your arms swing naturally.

If you are marching in a formation and you notice that you are not leading with the correct foot, you should change step on your own automatically.

## Marching in Place

The command for marching in place is “mark time, march.” Your leader gives this command as either foot strikes the marching surface, from a 30-inch or 15-inch forward marching step. On the command of execution “march,” take one more step, bring the trailing foot alongside the lead foot, and begin to march in place.

To begin marching in a 30-inch step from marching in place, your leader commands “forward, march.” On the command of execution “march,” take one more step in place then step off with a 30-inch step. Follow these same procedures if your leader commands “half step, march” except step off with a 15-inch step.

### Drill Tips

The following tips can help you when you're commanding or performing drills.

- When at a halt, start all marching movements from the position of attention.
- Except for “route step, march” and “at ease, march,” execute all marching movements while “marching at attention.” Marching at attention is the combination of the position of attention and the procedures for the prescribed step executed simultaneously.
- When executed from the halt, all steps except “close interval, march,” “right step march,” and “about face” begin with your left foot.
- Unless otherwise specified, use 30-inch steps for marching forward.
- Execute all marching movements in the quick time cadence except for the command “double time, march.”
- Execute all 15-inch step movements for a short distance only.

Keep in mind that marching is a five-step process:

1. Preparatory command step
2. Intermediate or thinking step
3. Command of execution step
4. Additional step after the command of execution
5. Execution of movement

### *Conclusion*

This lesson covered the basic steps and marching. You learned about the 30-inch step, the 15-inch step, changing step in marching, and marching in place.

The following lesson covers squad drills. In this lesson, you will learn the basics of squad formations and how to march the squad, with tips for conducting a proper drill.

### *Lesson Review*

1. What is the standard size march step?
2. What is the advantage of rest moves while marching?
3. What is the difference between a quick-time and double-time march?
4. What is the correct command sequence for calling a formation to halt?