

# Understanding Terminology and Step Notation

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The National Clogging and Hoe-down Council adopted the "Eight Basic Movements" of clogging on May 13, 1978 as a means of standardizing teaching methods, cueing and step notation. These standards were soon adopted as well by the Clogging Leaders of Georgia (now known as C.L.O.G., Inc.) and throughout the years much has been done to further standardize the way in which clogging teachers teach, cue and abbreviate step descriptions. Sheila Popwell, the former editor of the Flop-Eared Mule and a renowned clogging innovator, did much to popularize the Basic Steps and Terminology, which is still widely accepted today. Through a column known as "Clogmunication", Kevin Sellow of Alabama also has done much to help provide a forum through which standardization could be discussed and developed.

For the sake of understanding, "Clogmunication " divided the understanding of movements between "Traditional Clogging" movements and "Contemporary Clogging" movements. Later, Buck Dance Terms were added to further describe movements.

## Traditional Clogging Terminology

All traditional clogging steps are made up of some combination of the following basic movements. The movements themselves fall into two groups -Toe Movements and Heel Movements. Each Toe Movement occurs on an upbeat of the music and is followed by a Heel Movement that occurs on the downbeat of the music. There are no silent or syncopated beats in Traditional Clogging. The heel keeps the rhythm of the dance. Anytime the heel is sounded, the knee is flexed and then straightened on the following upbeat, resulting in the characteristic up and down motion of the dancer's body. The word "click" is used in the descriptions below to indicate that a tap has contacted the floor. All clicks should have a sharp, clear sound, not scuffed or muffled.

## **HEEL MOVEMENTS**

**These fall on the downbeat (or bass beat) of the music**

### **HEEL**

The weight of the body is already on the ball of the foot when the HEEL movement is done. Snap the heel down, producing a sharp click, and flex the knee downward, distributing the body weight along the entire length of the foot.

### **STEP**

Place the entire foot flat on the floor, producing a click with the toe tap and the heel tap at the same time and transferring the body weight along the full length of the foot while flexing the knee downward.

### **SLIDE**

A down and forward counterpart of the up and back motion of the DRAG (see TOE MOVEMENTS). With the foot flat on the floor and the knee straight, roll your weight up onto the ball of the foot, letting your knee begin to go slack. As the weight of your body begins to drop forward and down, let the instinctive tightening of your thigh muscles save you from a fall by sliding your foot forward (about the length of your foot) and then letting your heel snap down, producing the click and redistributing your weight along the whole length of your foot. At the end of the SLIDE the knee will be in a flexed position. (Also can be done with both feet on the floor in the same manner.)

## **TOE MOVEMENTS**

**These fall on the upbeat of the music**

### **TOE**

The ball of the foot produces a click while the heel remains out of contact with the floor. TOE implies that the body weight has been transferred to the ball of the foot. The knee should be basically straight.

### **DOUBLE TOE**

Two clicks are produced in the space of one upbeat of music. The ball of the foot strikes the floor during the forward motion of a short kick and the knee straightens (ankle is relaxed and foot angles downward). The knee bends upward immediately and the same foot swings backward with the ball of the foot striking the floor again in the same spot. The heel should not touch the floor. The two motions of the foot are considered to be one movement with no hesitation between them. Normally, the clicks occur slightly in front of the body, but they may be done in other directions as well.

### **ROCK**

A click is produced by transferring the weight onto the ball of the foot slightly behind the body's center of gravity. The knee is in a flexed position at first, causing the body's weight to "rock" back slightly as the center of gravity changes. The opposite foot is always lifted off the floor during a ROCK. The heel of the foot doing the ROCK does not touch the floor, but the knee does straighten.

## **BRUSH**

The foot is allowed to swing from the knee with a pendulum action. The ball of the foot produces a click by striking the floor and continuing in the direction of the swing (which may be to the front, to the rear, or crossing in front or in back of the opposite leg). Movement comes from the hip and the knee joint, and the knee of the BRUSHing foot always bends upward following the click (at the same time as the following heel movement).

## **DRAG**

The foot is flat on the floor and the knee is flexed when the DRAG begins. With a springing motion that moves the weight of the body up and back, straighten the knee, allowing momentum to lift your heel slightly off the floor and drag your foot back about half the length of the foot. The weight is distributed along the length of the foot at the end of the movement and there is no distinctive click. (This can also be done with both feet on the floor in the same manner.)

NOTE: Much of what is considered to be "traditional" clog dance styling depends on the part of Appalachia the definitions come from, but the following points are frequently raised:

- Smooth flowing motions with a constant DRAG-SLIDE incorporated into the footwork- no head bobbing, no arm waving, and no jumpy or jerky body actions.
- Feet no more than 6 to 8 inches off the floor- no one but the floor should see the bottom of your clog shoes.
- No silent or syncopated beats - toe movements are executed on upbeats and heel movements on downbeats.

## **Links for more clogging information:**

<a href="http://www.ncca-inc.com">www.ncca-inc.com</a>	Northern California Cloggers Association website
<a href="http://www.sccaclogger.com">www.sccaclogger.com</a>	Southern California Cloggers Association website
<a href="http://www.clogdancing.com">www.clogdancing.com</a>	Overall clogging resource
<a href="http://www.doubletoe.com">www.doubletoe.com</a>	Website for the Double Toe Times clogging publication
<a href="http://www.clog.org">www.clog.org</a>	Website for the national clogging organization C. L. O. G.