

# Teaching Technique to Your Guard

*by Tim LeBlanc, Director, National Champion Klein High School Color Guard*

The "swish" of the silk and the "snap" of a firmly caught weapon are the sounds that any director/instructor dreams and fantasizes about. In order to have a strong and impressive group technique is a must.

Teaching and using technique should start at the audition and continue through out the entire school year. With most auditions being in May, that gives an instructor plenty of time before band camp to familiarize his/her students with the technique being used for his/her specific group. This also gives the students a chance to become familiar with each other. Being that the color guard / winter guard world is ever evolving to incorporate dance, it is not only important to have technique on equipment but also in dance. Having a well defined technique regiment can prove beneficial when it comes time for cleaning and preparing for your contests. Having your students doing the same thing at the same time is one thing, but having them approach a certain movement or phrase with the same technique and effort is another.

Going through the summer without seeing your students until band camp is usually not beneficial to you and your group. Meeting a couple times during the summer and having a technique regiment will prove very beneficial in the long run. As band camp approaches and it becomes time to teach your students their contest program, you will have a strong feel of the difficulty level your students can handle in order to be successful.

Once you reach the school year and the regular rehearsal season, continuing your specific technique regiment is very important to the success of your group. As the instructor you should use your time wisely in rehearsal to go over technique and the current show choreography. Without technique your choreography will not be on the level you might wish it to be. After all, your choreography should consist of parts of your technique exercises, but not limited to them, for there are many ways to interpret the music with choreography.

There are many places and resources that can be found and used if you are unsure of a specific technique you wish to use. There are a wide variety of interpretations of technique when it comes to handling equipment in the color guard world. Just be sure that you are clear when you decide on what you will teach.

The importance of technique through out the year is not only important for a successful show, but also for strength and discipline. Preparing the right technique regiment for your group may take time and effort, but in the long run will prove to be beneficial for your group.

Examples of everyday technique exercises:

## **For Flag:**

- \* 100 drop spins (both sides)
- \* figure 8 / carve exercise ( both sides)
- \* push - hit exercise (both sides)
- \* blue devils and red devils (both sides)
- \* slams
- \* tosses

## **For Rifle and Sabre:**

- \* 100 spins (both hands)
- \* start and stop exercise
- \* double time
- \* backhands
- \* flourish exercise
- \* tosses

## **For Dance:**

- \* stretches
- \* tendu exercise
- \* releve' and plie' exercise
- \* degage' exercise
- \* across the floors

## SOURCES FOR TECHNIQUE VIDEOS:

[www.wgi.org](http://www.wgi.org)  
[www.mccormicksnet.com](http://www.mccormicksnet.com)  
[www.bandshoppe.com](http://www.bandshoppe.com)

