

The Basic Steps of Clogging

How to Get Started

Appalachian clogging is a rhythmic dance that accompanies the downbeat, or bass beat, of the music. Take a moment to listen to a hoe-down song and tap your feet or clap your hands to the downbeat of the music.

Starting with your left foot, begin stepping in place to the downbeat of the music. Don't march, just relax and step comfortably to the music as if you are a part of it. Now add a kick to your step. Keep stepping on the downbeat, but let your feet come out in front of you and kick forward before you step -- like a tin soldier. but less rigid.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| KICK | STEP | KICK | STEP | KICK | STEP | KICK | STEP |
| L | L | R | R | L | L | R | R |
| & | 1 | & | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 |

You're seeing this sequence as it would be written on a "Cue Sheet". A cue sheet is a diagram of the steps and timing of a step or dance. The words or abbreviations on the top line explain the foot movement, the L & R tell you on which foot you perform the movement, and the numbers along the bottom tell you on which beat of the music you will perform the step. We will learn more about cue sheets and movement notations as we go along. Cue sheets will become very important tools in remembering steps and learning new dances as you become more confident in your clogging.

Now kick forward with the left foot, then step in place three times, like the cue below describes:

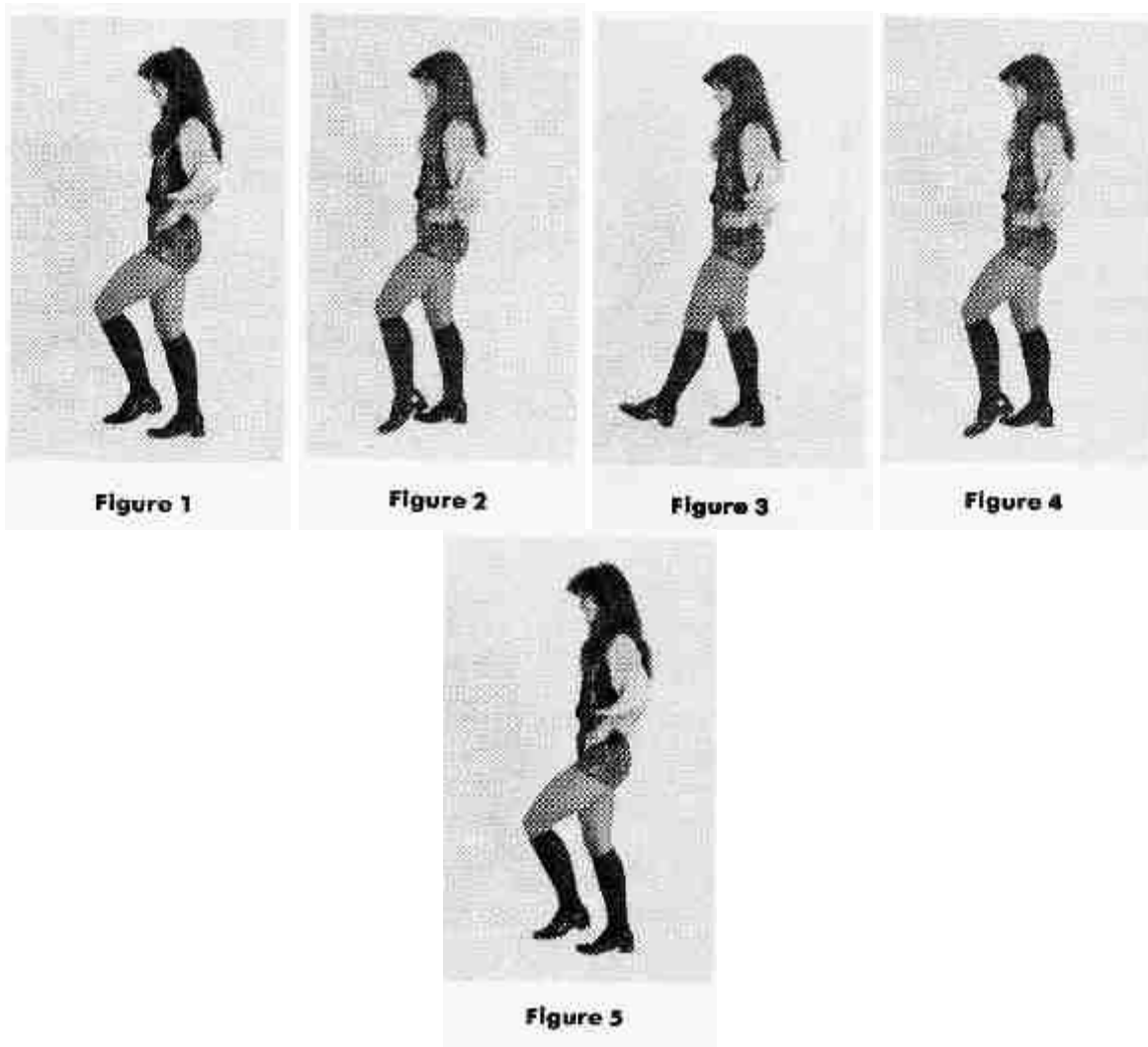
| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| KICK | STEP | STEP | STEP |
| L | L | R | L |
| & | 1 | & | 2 |

It's simple, just think KICK 1, 2, 3... Kick and three steps. Remember that the first STEP will occur on the downbeat -or bass beat - of the music. Practice the step a few times to get the feel of it, then try KICK 1,2,3 on the right foot. Now alternate feet and practice with some slow music with a steady beat. KICK 1.2.3... KICK 1.2.3... Relax and feel the music.

You've just learned the beginning of the BASIC STEP of clogging!

The Double-Toe

The double-toe sound is what will really make you feel like you're clogging. It's really pretty simple. To perform the step in slow motion, stand on the right foot, then extend the left leg forward with the knee slightly bent (Figure 1). Using only the toe of the shoe, tap the floor once as the foot is swept slightly forward, shown in the sequence of Figures 1, 2 and 3. Tap the floor once again as the foot is swept back to the starting position, shown in Figures 4 and 5.



Tapping should be done with the sweep, and not at the ends of the sweep. **Never use the heel when doing a double-toe.** Keep the foot pointed down to avoid tapping the heel. When doing this step, try to move the thigh as little as possible, and swing only the calf of the leg. In other words, the position of the leg on which the double-toe is

done should be forward and extended at all times. Do not swing the whole leg back and forth.

Now, in actual dancing, you want to “throw” the tapping leg forward using the hip muscles: the upper leg extends forward with the lower leg relaxed and the toe pointed downward. The centrifugal force will then cause the lower leg to extend with the kick, which is low enough to allow the toe to touch (tap) the floor. After the leg has reached full extension (straight leg), the lower leg is pulled back with the thigh still slightly extended, and the toe again brushes the floor making the second tap sound. I've heard people explain the double- toe sound as "kicking a rock" or "getting the gum off of your shoe".

Let's go back to the KICK STEP that you already know. As you do this, your foot comes forward with the kick and then steps down. We're going to turn this kick into a double-toe.

Standing on your right foot, relax your left toe and bring your foot forward - letting your toe brush the floor as it goes forward and making a sound. Now let your toe fall back to the floor, making a second sound. This is a DOUBLE-TOE. Brush, Fall = Double-Toe. Now that your foot has done a double-toe, step on the left foot and get your right foot free. Repeat the same action on your right foot. Brush the toe forward and let it fall, then step. You've just done a DOUBLE-TOE STEP.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| DOUBLE- TOE | STEP | DOUBLE- TOE | STEP |
| L | L | R | R |
| &a | 1 | &a | 2 |

Now try it with the music. A good way to get started is to go back to the KICK STEP, KICK STEP. Keep going and establish the beat. Now as you kick out, relax your toe and let it brush the floor as you kick and bring it back. This will allow you to double-toe in place of the kick.

The Basic Step

Now that you've learned the Double-Toe Step, let's add two more steps to it:

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| DOUBLE- TOE | STEP | STEP | STEP |
| L | L | R | L |
| &a | 1 | & | 2 |

A great way to work into this is to return to **KICK 1, 2, 3** and slowly add the double-toe in place of the kick.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Now let's learn how to style the step. Get up on the balls of your feet. Step with your left foot, then put your right foot back just a little and rock your weight back onto it, then step on your left foot again.

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| STEP | ROCK | STEP |
| L | R | L |
| 1 | & | 2 |

The STEP ROCK STEP is the same as the three steps in **KICK 1, 2, 3**

The big leap... put it all together!

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| DOUBLE- TOE | STEP | ROCK | STEP |
| L | L | R | L |
| &a | 1 | & | 2 |

Try alternating feet. You are now doing the BASIC STEP of clogging!

Remember, if you're having trouble, always go back to the simplest form and build on it. Start with a **KICK 1, 2, 3** then add the DOUBLE- TOE in place of the kick, ROCK back on the 2nd step of 1,2,3 and you've got it!

More Basics, Clogging Terminology, And More Stuff to Confuse and Challenge You!

Now that you are beginning to feel comfortable with the **BASIC STEP**, let's use the foot movements you already know to learn a **TRIPLE** and a **FANCY DOUBLE**.

First, let's learn a few abbreviations to make things easier.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| The abbreviation in clogging for a DOUBLE-TOE is: | DT or just D |
| The abbreviation in clogging for a STEP is: | S |
| The abbreviation in clogging for a ROCK is: | R |

Let's take a little test... Knowing what you do about the BASIC STEP of clogging, think of what the abbreviation for DOUBLE- TOE STEP ROCK STEP would be.

Scroll down to check the answer.

V
V
V
V
V

V
V
V

If you thought **DT S R S** or **DS R S** then you're exactly right!

When a DOUBLE- TOE and STEP are done together, they are often abbreviated as **DTS** or even **DS**.

The TRIPLE and FANCY DOUBLE

Now, using the abbreviations we've just learned, to follow are the cues for a **TRIPLE** and a **FANCY DOUBLE**.

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Triple | DS | DS | DS | R | S | |
| | L | R | L | R | L | |
| | &1 | &2 | &3 | & | 4 | |
| Fancy Double | DS | DS | R | S | R | S |
| | L | R | L | R | L | R |
| | &1 | &2 | & | 3 | & | 4 |

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Directional Abbreviations

Directional abbreviations follow a step notation in abbreviation form and gives the direction in which the foot movement is to take place. It is usually placed in parentheses just after the movement, i.e.

S (XIF)

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| FRONT | (F) |
| BACK | (B) |
| ACROSS IN FRONT | (XIF) |
| ACROSS IN BACK | (XIB) |
| OUT TO THE SIDE | (OTS) |

Here are some more steps to try:

CHAIN ROCK

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DS | R | S | R | S | R | S |
| L | R | L | R | L | R | L |
| &1 | & | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 |

CLOGOVER VINE

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---|---|
| DS | DS(XIF) | DS | DS(XIB) | DS | DS(XIF) | DS | R | S |
| L | R | L | R | L | R | L | R | L |
| &1 | &2 | &3 | &4 | &5 | &6 | &7 | & | 8 |