

Basic Conducting Principles

Posture – Your singers imitate your posture! Make sure to use correct singing stance while directing. Use the same elements of correct posture as you have taught the singer. Avoid using tension to indicate volume or tempo. They will follow your lead! Keep you body parts/joints stable – don't give them anything to look at that doesn't have meaning in the deliver of the phrase. Facial “posture” must be appropriate for expressive singing and correct vocal techniques as well. Keep your face lifted and relaxed. Make sure to avoid over-enunciation when mouthing the words.

Preparatory Beat – This is the beat given just before the vocal entrance and is the beat on which the singers breathe. If the entrance is on the downbeat, then the preparatory beat is the upbeat. If the entrance is on the up-beat (a pick-up), the preceding beat is the preparatory beat. The tempo is usually established with the preparatory beat.

Ictus – This is where the downbeat “lands” in front of your body, usually somewhere between the chest and the beltline. Your hands hits an imaginary plane and immediately bounces off, much like bouncing a ball.

Attacks & Releases - Keep the two middle fingers together to prevent the wrist from being limp. “Soft” or floppy wrists cause synchronization issues. Keep the hand open with strength – the chorus sound will also be more open and strong. Give releases with a wrist movement or slight hand movements to bring clean releases that are more likely to stay open on the breath.

Ballad Directing – Most barbershop ballads are delivered in an ad lib style (rubato). Although a meter is still implied, a smoother, more fluid style of directing is needed to enhance the style and lyrical message.

Uptune Directing – Beat patterns can be helpful with establishing tempo and at tempo changes in the song (i.e. Ritards and Accelerandos). Keep in mind that many times less directing is more helpful and will aid in eliminating choppiness and holes in the sound.

Dynamics – Simply, the larger the gesture, the louder the volume, and vice versa. Consistency with your gestures and communicating your movement's purposes are very important.

Non-Verbal Communication – We communicate with our singers in many other ways than our hands and arms. Eye contact, expression, mouth shape, mouthing the words, knees bending, etc. will influence their sound, both positively and negatively. Simplicity is of utmost importance. Less is more and empowers your singers.

Things to Avoid – Cueing choreography moves, “whiplash” body movements (moving body parts will distract), mouthing the words, constant knee bending (or any constant, repetitive movement), ANY motion that does not have a specific purpose.

Conducting Principles

Posture/Attitude/Stance

Preparatory Beat

Basic Beat Patterns

Ictus

Attacks & Releases

Non-Dominant Hand

1. Dynamics
2. Cues
3. Special Emphasis

Dynamics

Ballad & Uptune Directing

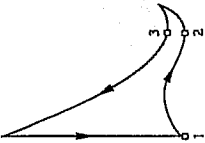
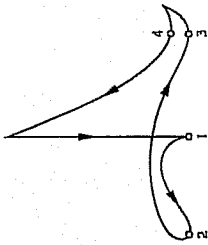
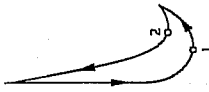
Non-Verbal Communication

Things to Avoid

CONDUCTING PATTERNS

Music directors help people sing together. They do this by showing the beat of a hymn through arm movements that follow certain patterns. The patterns are based on the number of beats per measure as shown by the top number of the time signature. The four beat patterns that are the most common in conducting are the three-beat pattern, the four-beat pattern, the two-beat pattern, and the six-beat pattern.

Note: Every beat pattern illustration in this manual has small numbered circles that show where the beats actually occur in the pattern. Bounce your hand lightly at the circles to emphasize each beat. You will need to move slightly faster in some parts of the pattern than in others so that the beats keep a steady rhythm.

Time signature	Number of beats per measure	Beat pattern
$\frac{3}{4}$	3	
$\frac{4}{4}$	4	
$\frac{2}{4}$	2	
$\frac{6}{8}$	6	