

Highland Dance

Basic Positions and Movements

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Basic Positions of Hands

1st Position

Both hands rest on the hips with the backs of the hands to the front, the knuckles facing the body with the wrists straight, and the elbows pointed directly to the side.



2nd Position

One arm is placed as in first position, the other is raised at the side, with the arm and wrist slightly curved, the hand slightly above and forward from the head-line, the palm turned inwards. In this position, the raised arm is always on the side opposite to the working leg.



3rd Position

Both arms are placed as described for the raised arm in second position the palms facing inwards towards each other.

Note

Hands in 2nd and 3rd position are to represent a stag. The thumb touches the joint of the middle finger with the other fingers straight to represent the antlers.



Basic Position of Feet

1st Position

Heels are together with feet turned out making a 90-degree angle. Don't allow children to turn out too much as this can damage their knees



2nd Position

One leg is extended to the side with the foot in line with the heel of the supporting foot. Keep your weight on the supporting leg.



3rd Position

The working foot, which may be placed on the toe, ball or heel, touches the arch of the supporting foot with the knee turned out.



Basic Movements

Pas De Basque

Prepare by extending the right leg to the side. Spring to that side, joining the feet together with the left foot in front on the ball of the foot, then beat the ball of the right foot at the back. At the same time, sharply extend the left foot to repeat the movement.

Count 1 & 2, 3 & 4

High Cuts

Jump from 2 feet and, simultaneously on landing, take the right foot to the back of the supporting leg. The inside of the foot should be touching the leg below the supporting knee. The right leg should be turned out to the side. Repeat by hopping onto the right leg and place the left foot below the right knee. Usually done multiple times. This movement is done on the spot and does not travel but can be done moving in a circle.

Toe – Heel

Jump from 2 feet. On landing, point the working foot in 3rd position, then hop and on landing, place the heel of the working foot in the 3rd position. This movement occupies two beats of music.

The toe and heel must touch the ground lightly and the working foot holds your weight.

Spring Points

Jump from 2 feet and land all weight on your supporting leg. The other leg is pointed out directly in front of you. It should not have any weight resting on it and the toe should be pointed. Repeat by springing onto the other foot.

Shedding

4 counts

Count 1 - Jump from two feet, pointing the working foot in second position.

Count 2 - Hop, taking the working foot to the back of the supporting leg, below the knee.

Count 3. Hop, moving the foot around to the front of the supporting leg (still below the knee).

Count 4 Hop, moving the foot back round to the back.

Repeat on the other leg.

Second position of the arms is usually used during this movement, the raised arm being on the side opposite to the working foot.

Helpful Hint:

Repeating “Side, Behind, Front, Behind” helps keep the pace and reminds children where to place foot.

This movement can also be done in a turn. One shedding movement done round in a circle.

Suggested Lesson

Theme	Highland Dancing	
Curricular Areas	Expressive Arts	
CfE Outcomes	EXA 2-10a	I have taken part in dance from a range of styles and cultures, demonstrating my awareness of the dance features.
	EXA 2-08a	I can explore and choose movements to create and present dance, developing my skills and techniques.
	EXA 1-11a & 2-11a	I can respond to the experience of dance by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others' work.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can demonstrate some of the basic movements of Highland dance. • I can create a short routine which includes highland dance movements. 	
Lesson Ideas	<p>Go through positions of the hands and feet.</p> <p>Consolidate learning by playing 'Scottish Scramble' (a Highland dance version of Traffic Lights). Instead of shouting a colour, shout a position of hands/feet or both.</p> <p>Go over the basic movements individually with the class.</p> <p>Consolidate movements with the example routine.</p> <p>Split children into groups and have each group make up a short routine to the music.</p> <p>Have each group perform their routine.</p> <p>Peer Assess each routine.</p>	
Extensions	<p>Look into Highland Dances - i.e. Highland Fling, Sword dance, Seann Triubhas</p> <p>Learn some ceilidh dances (Scottish Country Dances)</p> <p>Compare Highland and Scottish Country Dance</p>	

Example Routine

Suggested music - 500 Miles by the Proclaimers

Intro

Wait for 16 counts.

Verse 1

8 x shedding

16 x toe heels

Chorus

8 x pas de basque

16 x high cuts

Verse 2

8 x shedding

16 x toe heels

Chorus

8 x pas de basque

16 x high cuts

Bridge

4 x spring points

4 x high cuts

(repeat x4)

Dance does not last the whole song



Suggested Music

Examples of music to practise to:

500 Miles

The Proclaimers

Wake Me Up

Red Hot Chilli Pipers

Everybody Dance Now

Red Hot Chilli Pipers

Ye Cannae Shove Your Granny Aff the Bus

Twinkle Trax

Wee Kirkcudbright Centipede

Alex Sutherland Singers

Olympic Reel

Natalie MacMaster

