

STARTING A CLOGGING GROUP

Seminar by Kelli McChesney

This seminar is a general overview of the process of starting your own clogging group. Please keep in mind that the ideas mentioned during this session serve only as a guide; you can omit or add ideas as they suit your particular situation. I hope you enjoy the seminar, and feel free to ask me any questions you might have.

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Stage I: Primary Considerations and Requirements

☺ **What type of group do you want this to be?**

- Recreational class, clogging club, exhibition team, competition team, instruction experience w/ a studio, mini-workshop style class, or any combination of these

☺ **Is there enough interest in your area to make it worthwhile?**

- Recruit from family members, friends, colleagues, etc.
- Consider other town activities (soccer, cheerleading, etc.) and other clogging/dance clubs in your area

☺ **Are there halls available, and in your price range?**

- Need hall with hard floor (wood, tile, cement, no carpet) that taps won't damage
- Places to check: churches, recreation centers, YMCA, Boys/Girls Clubs, dance studios, local merchants, garages, etc.
- Is hall available when you need it, and at a reasonable fee?

☺ **Instruction: Will you teach, or will you hire another instructor to teach?**

- YOU: Be able to teach (clear, concise, explain steps so that people can learn), consider instructor training program (CCI program and/or program through state clogging association)
- ANOTHER: Interview your applicants, know that certifications are good but not always indicative of practical talent

☺ **Obtain dancer insurance**

- Available through clogging associations (like CLOG, Inc.), check with insurance companies
- If teaching through a studio, they may already have their own insurance

☺ **Obtain music licensing**

- BMI/ASCAP required to legally play music at paid classes, workshops, performances, etc.
- Available through CLOG, Inc. for approx. \$87 per year with CLOG membership

☺ **Obtain sound equipment**

- The basics: Variable speed CD/cassette/record player, microphone, speakers, amp

- ☺ **Build your music and cue-sheet collection**
 - Important!!! Choose for variety, age levels, routines you know/want to teach (challenging, but not frustrating), etc.

Stage II: Class Structure

- ☺ **Choose the day(s), time(s), and length(s) of your class(es).**
 - Weekdays after 6 p.m. recommended
 - Average 1 hour per week (recommend more for competition teams, less for children-only classes)
- ☺ **Choose the level(s) and class size(s) you want to offer.**
 - Consider ages, genders, abilities and disabilities
 - Offer separate classes for each level (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, etc.)
 - Avoid mixing levels if possible (easier on students and instructor)
- ☺ **Determine student fees.**
 - Be reasonable, but be able to cover your expenses (hall rental, handouts, etc.)
 - Consider family discounts, referral incentives, etc.
 - Will you require shoes and taps? If so, make vendors available and order immediately. Also offer alternatives (taps glued to tennis shoes, etc.).

Stage III: Getting Dancers

- ☺ **Advertising**
 - A few suggestions: word of mouth, newspaper, flyers, open house, "bring a friend", business cards, information table at performances, audience participation, performances, sponsors, etc.
- ☺ **Class registrations**
 - Recommend for keeping track of dancer contact info, attendance, etc.

Stage IV: Conducting Classes

- ☺ **Ice breakers**
 - Important for first-time meetings, make everyone feel comfortable (name tags, games, introductions, find a friend, easy non-clogging mixer, etc.)
- ☺ **Class management**
 - Start/end classes on time
 - Keep it fun/Variety

- Encourage and compliment
- Create policies and stick to them
- Be prepared for any situation
- Be professional, tactful, and prepared
- Get dancer input on music selections, compromise to meet all requests if possible
- Underpromise and overdeliver

☺ **Communication**

- Is KEY!!!
- Inform the group of your team goals, assist dancers with their clogging goals
- Keep entire group updated (newsletters, bulletin boards)
- Discourage gossip, eliminate favoritism

☺ **Offer handouts**

- Help with reading cue-sheets, notes, practice cassette or video tapes (no charge)

Stage V: Performing and Building Team Spirit

☺ **Costumes**

- Get group input, offer options to make individuals more comfortable (some females don't want to show their legs in a skirt, some males don't want to wear pink or purple, etc.)
- Choose something that makes most happy and that is modest and flattering
- Comfortable, washable, affordable, professional

☺ **Shows**

- Book shows well in advance and inform your group about these events
- Prepare ahead of time – both optional and mandatory practices
- Incorporate all dancers
- Discourage hotdogging
- Get your team parents involved, and don't forget to appreciate them

☺ **Team Spirit**

- Attend workshops together (group t-shirts, etc.)
- Allow group input on team decisions
- Host fundraisers and club parties

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Available for workshops!