

ADVANCED FENCING CLASS



Essentials of Fencing Technique:

1. Mental Preparation
2. Physical Preparation
3. Technical Actions
 - a. Footwork
 - b. Blade Work
4. Strategy
5. Tactical Actions
6. Terminology

3. TECHNICAL ACTIONS

Technical preparation includes but is not restricted to: Footwork and Blade Work. Both of these serve what can be called the fundamental fencing actions:

1. Attack

- a. Attack which can be generally defined as the initial offensive action made by extending the sword arm and weapon while continuously threatening the valid target of the opponent. Attacks can be either:
 1. Simple (one move) actions
 2. Compound (multiple move) actions

2. Parry

- a. Parry – which can be defined as a block of the attack, made with the strength of the fencer’s blade.
 - i. Simple parries
 1. are done in one tempo and terminate the action of the offending blade
 - ii. Circular parries
 1. describe the tip of the defending blade as it passes from one parry back to the same parry with a circular motion

3. Riposte

- a. Riposte is an offensive hitting action made immediately after a parry of the opponent’s attack. Ripostes can be:
 - i. Direct
 1. Straight hit
 - ii. Indirect
 1. Hit with a disengage

4. Counter Parry

- a. Is a parry of a riposte that is the parrying of an incoming riposte action

5. Counter Riposte

- a. Is a riposte that is an attack that follows a parry of the opponent's riposte.

6. Counter-attack

- a. Is an offensive action made against the right-of-way, or in response to the opponent's attack. In short it is an attack into an attack.

7. Counter-time

- a. Is an attack that responds to the opponent's counter-attack, typically a riposte following the parry of the counter-attack or in other words an attack into a counter-attack. Any "second intention actions" are considered as counter-time.

A. FOOTWORK

1. On Guard Position

- a. A proper On Guard Position is when a fencer places the center of balance of his/her body weight evenly over both feet. Classically the feet are at right angles to each other.

2. Advance & Retreat

The spacing between the feet established in the on guard position is to be maintained as advances and retreats are executed and completed. That spacing should not exceed shoulder width and not be less than the length of the fencer's foot size times 1.5. In advancing and retreating the beginning distance between feet should at least approximate foot spacing upon completion.

- a. Advance

- i. On the advance the front foot leads followed by the back foot. The front foot starts with the toe then the heel. Then the advanced landing on the heel being followed by the back foot landing flat, the toe of the front foot lowers and touches the fencing strip – both front toe and back foot lands in the same time.

- b. Retreat

- i. On the retreat the back foot leads followed by the front foot. The whole back foot reaches back for the retreat then front foot follows to complete the retreat.

3. Crossover

- a. Crossover forward

- i. In the crossover forward the back foot is brought in front of the leading foot by shifting weight and balance and then what was the leading foot moves forward and reestablishes its original placement in the front.
- b. Crossover backward
 - i. In the crossover backward the leading foot passes behind the back foot by shifting weight and balance and then the back foot moves back and reestablishes its original position.

4. Check Step

The Check Step or the Check is an effective way to confuse the tactical thinking of an opponent.

- a. Advance Check Step
 - i. The fencer takes a half step forward moving only the front foot, visibly indicating and advance then quickly takes a full step back.
- b. Retreat Check Step
 - i. On the Retreat Check Step the rear foot takes a half step backward while not moving the front foot, visibly indicating a retreat then quickly changing direction with a full step forward.

5. Gaining on the Lunge

It refers to setting up a lunge by deceptively gaining ground before actually executing the lunge. In this the back foot is carefully brought up to and touches the front foot without the opponent noticing the action, then a full lunge follows. This usually gains at least two to three feet on the reach of the lunge. Generally it is a highly effective deceptive move!

6. Jump

- a. The Jump Forward
 - i. Is really a Jump Forward with the main force of the forward momentum being generated by the front foot with a forward pointing toe kicking ahead while both front and back feet arrive in the same time onto the strip.
- b. The Jump Backward
 - i. Is really a reverse jump with the main force of the backward momentum being generated by the back foot with the backward kicking action.

7. The Jump Lunge (ballestra)

Although not as frequently used as it should be is also an essential footwork. The fundamental focus of the jump lunge must be forward acceleration rather than elevation. The main force of the forward momentum is generated by the front foot with a forward kicking action. The jump lunge if properly executed is both an effective and mentally disruptive way for an attacker to quickly close distance.

8. The Lunge

If at proper distance the lunge is the quickest and most effective direct attack mechanism available to the fencer.

a. Simple

i. Consists of three rhythm series:

1. The point is started – a direct extension of the arm in a direct line to the opponent's target.
2. The front foot lead by the toe lifts slightly and followed by a strong kick forward as the back leg acting as a piston thrust the body forward and locks straight resting the back foot slightly on the edge of the sole of the shoe. The kicking action of the front foot acts as a weight redistribution forward and the pushing action of the back leg provides most of the physical strength.
3. The non-armed hand is thrown back coming to rest parallel to (but not resting on) the back leg as a counter balance to the forward momentum of the body as a whole.

9. The Flash Attack

The word literally means arrow or flight of the arrow. The flash attack is best executed by executing a thrust by extending the sword arm and weapon challenging the opponent's line of target while at the same time swinging the back leg around the front leg. As this is being done the weight of the body (leading with the head) is thrown off balance forward. The back leg continues until it is well in front of the front leg. As it comes down on the fencing strip the offending blade strikes the opponent's target.

Footwork should always be coordinated with blade work. In the simplest form there should be one blade action for each footwork action (even if the only thing being accomplished is a simple presentation of a blade). On a higher level two or even three blade actions coordinate per one foot action.