

Wellness Warriors: Kickboxing

Learn how to kick and punch to improve strength and power

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Tips:

- Keep eye contact
- To have power in kicking, you should exhale when you extend your leg
- Keep your body upright as much as possible
- In a front kick, hit with the ball of your foot
- In a side kick, hit with the blade of your foot
- Always keep your guard up! You wouldn't want to be hit in the face or anywhere else!

Safety:

- Remember to snap back the kicking leg as it can be grabbed by the opponent
- Don't kick with your toes, as this can cause damage
- Kicks require extensive training in order to both be effective and to keep you from hurting yourself, so don't try to use these in actual combat unless you've had training
- Be careful with your knees when using kicks
- Never lock your knees when kicking

Front Kick

1. Stand in a fighting stance.

*Your hands can be in a guard position or relaxed. For a kick, your hands are (obviously) less important.

2. Raise your kicking-leg's knee so your thigh is parallel to the ground, about hip/waist level. This is called chambering. Breathe in as you do this.
3. Kick your leg, snapping/pushing it forward quickly. With a front kick you can use the ball of your foot or your instep as a striking surface. As you kick, rapidly release the air in your lungs. Doing so will ensure that if you are doing kicking drills, you don't forget to breathe (which is easier to forget than it sounds!). Remember, breath in when you contract, breath out when you expand. This also will relax your body, allowing for proper technique, because holding air in means your muscles are too tense, and you are trying to control your kick too much, which weakens the kick, slows it down and will tire you out faster.
4. Unsnap your leg so your thigh is once again parallel to the ground.
5. Set your leg back on the ground.

6. Variations in execution include height, power, speed, and whether or not you return your foot to the ground.

Side Kick

1. Stand in a fighting stance
2. Bring your back leg up so your knee is near your chest, and your foot is somewhere near your hips (early on, don't worry about bringing it up quite this high, but the goal is to have the sole of your foot facing down, and the outside ("knife side") of your foot facing your target). This is sometimes called the "cocked position" because you are ready to fire.
3. Kick your leg such that your kicking foot will draw a straight line from the cocked position to its destination. Kick with the heel of your foot, or if you are more advanced, the knife side of your foot. As you kick, rotate on the ball of your foot so that your heel ends pointed toward your target.
4. Return to the cocked position. Simultaneously rotate back to your starting position on the ball of your foot.
5. Return your foot to the ground.

Roundhouse Kick

1. Stand in a fighting stance
2. Bring the leg up as if you were to do a side kick.
3. Kick with a rapid snapping motion. You will your shin or top of your foot. Remember to always kick through your target. To do this properly, it is very important that you turn your hips into the kick because it is all in the hips! This is the cocked position
4. Return to the cocked position
5. Set your leg down rapidly, as soon as you've delivered your full force to the target.

*If done properly, you should be able to throw your body into your kick without throwing your weight off center and losing balance. It will also be smooth in execution, not as robotic as the steps make it out to be.

Rear Kick:

1. Begin in your basic fighting/guarding stance with your weight on your non-kicking leg.

2. Look over your kicking shoulder as you lift your kicking knee to your chest.
3. With your ankle bent, drive your right heel straight toward your target using your body weight to add power to your attack.
4. Finish with your right leg now in front and assume a fighting/guarding stance.

General Tips on Punching:

- Learn what a punch is. The power of a punch doesn't come from your hand or arm. To punch hard, you must punch with your entire body. This involves your legs, your hips, your shoulders, your arm and finally, your fist.
- Crank your hips as you load up for the punch. As you throw the punch, your hips will turn. This is the power in your punch. The more your hips whip around, the more powerful your punch.
- Cock your shoulders for the punch. Twist them back like your hips, and draw your punching arm back. Tighten your punching hand into a tight fist--the tighter the better. Be sure your thumb is outside of your fingers.
- Focus on your target. Don't guess at your impact point. You should zero in on a specific spot where you want your punch to land. If you punch wildly, you could hurt yourself.
- Unleash your punch. It starts from your feet, which should be solidly planted on the ground. Power should launch from your back foot. Push off the ground as you rotate your hips and shoulders toward your target. Extend your forward in a straight line from your shoulder. Your fist should meet its target at the precise moment your arm, shoulders and hips are fully extended. Keep your wrist straight, and hit the mark with the two knuckles closest to your thumb. They are the toughest bones in your hand.
- Build your strength. A perfect punch involves many of your body's muscles, so a full-body workout is beneficial. Your back and hips are especially important. Any strength exercises that emphasize your core will help you punch harder.

Jab:

1. Hold your hand up high with your elbow in close to your body.
2. Push off your back foot like a pitcher.
3. Step forward and extend your arm straight out at your target.
4. Rotate your fist over (thumb turns inward) as you reach full extension.

Cross:

1. Start in a boxer's stance: Stand at an angle to your opponent, with your lead foot forward, your lead hand protecting your face, and your non-lead hand further back, protecting your chin.

Keep your arms close to your sides to protect your body. Stand on the balls of your feet, with your weight on your back foot.

2. Rotate your non-lead shoulder forward while bringing your non-lead hand across your body in a straight line. Rotate your hips in the same direction as the punch, and pivot on your back foot, as if stubbing out a cigarette. As you pivot, transfer your weight from your back foot to your lead foot, executing a powerful, quick turn.
3. As you are punching, retract your lead hand, tucking it against your face to protect your chin.
4. Aim to land the punch. At the end of the punch, rotate your fist so that your palm is facing down as your hand strikes the target.
5. As soon as you throw the cross, retract the striking hand, and return immediately to your initial stance. Prepare to defend yourself—a punch is likely on its way.

Hook:

1. Take a proper boxing stance, both feet planted.
2. Keep a high guard: both hands lined up a bit outside of your eyes and a few inches away from your face. In this way you can also defend a punch being thrown at you.
3. Twist your body to your dominant foot side and rotate your front foot as if you are squishing a bug. Simultaneously rotate your upper body as well.
4. Keep the hook in somewhat close because if it is put out too far, your opponent can easily block it and you are wide open for a punch to the face.

Upper-cut:

1. Hold your arm close to your body.
2. Keep your elbow bent, low, and in tight.
3. Close your hand tightly and curl your wrist inward.
4. Step into your punch.
5. Snap your shoulder forward and up.