

MUAY THAI - A LOOK AT THE BASICS

It may not be so obvious to the unskilled eye, but muay thai is a very technical sport. Pay attention to the details taught in class, and try to apply it during practice. Be meticulous and critical about your movements and always strive to refine it throughout your journey.



Muay thai utilizes 4 weapons: punches, elbows, knees, and kicks. Below we take a deeper look at each basic technique taught in our beginners program. Refer back to these notes as needed (you can also access this document in the Legacy Team App).

May your journey in Muay Thai be as rewarding as it was for me!
-Coach Bao

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1 / Fight Stance, Movement, Jab, Cross, Hook

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sujkacLT1T0> <-Youtube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pD6f5SI8Be4>

FIGHT STANCE AND MOVEMENT (FOOTWORK)

Proper footwork will ensure that you are always in the correct stance and have the right balance to throw and land strikes. This area of the game is often overlooked. You will find that once you have mastered your footwork, you can throw strikes with more precision and power. Beginner and experienced members alike, dedicate some time to drill your footwork at least once every 1-2 weeks.

DETAILS

- Stance: hips forward, feet shoulder width apart, back foot pointing at the 2 o'clock,
- The foot in the same direction that you are stepping moves first. For example, if you move to the left, the left foot moves first. If you move forward, the lead foot moves first
- Always return to your exact fight stance on your second step
- Land on the toes of your feet first (never land on your heels first).

JAB, CROSS, HOOK

The jab, cross, hook are the bread and butter of punching. Most fights are won just by mastering these few punches in conjunction with other basic muay thai techniques. Punching combos do not have to be complicated. For the first while of your muay thai career, focus on various punching combos consisting of these punches only; jab, cross, hook.

DETAILS

- Twist your hip and pivot the opposite foot on each punch to maximize power
- Keep the hand that is not punching connected to your face for extra defense
- Always bring your hands back to your face at equal speed
- Punch at chin level while looking straight ahead over your knuckles
- "Sit" slightly on your punches with knees bent. Do not lean too far forward
- Exhale on each punch
- With the jab and cross try turning your wrist over, so your palm is facing away from your body. Turning your hand over will narrow the width of your gloved hand and it may just slip past your opponent's guard for facial contact
- With the hook try different hand positions while maintaining a straight "locked" wrist.
- There are 2 positions your fist can be oriented: Vertical A (palm facing you) and Vertical B (hand turned so that your palm is facing the ground, good one to avoid injury but can be awkward for some)

SHADOW BOXING DRILLS

- 3 steps forward, jab, cross, 3 steps back, jab, cross
- 3 steps forward, cross, hook, cross, 3 steps back, cross, hook, cross
- 3 steps left, hook, cross, hook, 3 steps right, cross, hook, cross

COMBOS TO PRACTICE (don't get fancy, stick to the basic combos)

- jab, cross, hook
- cross, hook, cross
- cross, hook
- hook, cross



2 / Elbows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SncCsn2Ven0> <-Youtube video

Ahh, the dreaded elbows. One of the deadliest muay thai weapons as the elbow is not padded. In reality, you rarely see many elbow KOs. Although they do happen, elbows are more often used to stun and cut your opponent. Used in close quarter combat, elbow strikes can nullify an opponent's punching and clinch game if used properly.

DETAILS

- Similar to the punch, twisting and pivoting the hips with each strike
- Step into close range when throwing the elbow. Always take a step forward before throwing any elbow strikes on pads or during shadowboxing
- Both feet should be touching the ground with each strike, do not over-lean forward. This will make you vulnerable to counters
- Try to "verticalize" your elbow strikes so they may just slip past your opponent's guard

COMBOS TO PRACTICE

- Lead up elbow, rear side elbow
- rear side elbow, lead uppercut elbow, rear side elbow
- Rear up elbow, lead side elbow



3 / Push Kicks, Rear Low-Kicks

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ob0BG7sBWEc> <-Youtube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrJbGNV-H2Y>

PUSH KICKS

The longest ranged muay thai weapon, the push kick. This will be your first line of defense on an opponent trying to move in on you from afar. The push kick is a powerful control weapon that can frustrate and off balance an over-committed opponent. They also set you up for some nice follow-up strikes.

DETAILS

- Hips forward, bring your knee up to hip level, kick out
- Aim for solar plexus level
- Make contact with the balls of your foot

REAR LOW-KICKS

Low kicks can be used in the long and mid range. They are excellent weapons to end your punch combos with. Be wary that if you miss the timing with your low kick, you may be vulnerable to heavy counter punches.

DETAILS

- Rotate your hips and your shoulder over on the kick, lead foot pivots wide
- Step hard onto the lead foot (almost looks like a hop) when executing the kick to generate speed and power, your foot should turn roughly 90 degrees outwards on the step
- Make contact anywhere on your shins (this will depend on your distance from opponent)



4 / Rear and Lead Swing Kick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDPNXYpOCro&feature=youtu.be> <-Youtube video

Unlike many kicks from other martial arts that “snaps” at the knee, the swing kick generates all its power from full hip and body rotation. It is very similar to how one generates force from a baseball bat swing. It is mostly used in the long and mid range and is a great nullifier for aggressive short ranged fighters.

DETAILS

- Step onto the toes of your lead foot (toes pointing at the 10 o'clock for your left, or 2 o'clock for your right) and make sure to pivot more upon kicking
- Throw with your body and arms, at no point should you be “snapping” your kick at the knee
- Relax the leg, it should not be tense. You are throwing the kick with your body
- Make contact with the mid to higher part of your shin first. This is possible when you lead with your hips first and have your leg trail behind. Similar to a whip
- Exhale on each kick



5 / Rear and Lead Knee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xo9Y5uicYjA> <-Youtube video

Knees often account for most of the points scored in a fight in Thailand. Knee strikes can be thrown from medium to close range. They are most deadly when used in conjunction with a strong clinch game (a form of standup grappling). By having a strong clinch and knee arsenal, you will often dictate the pace of the fight.

DETAILS

- Hips squared and directed forward before executing the knee
- Push the knee out with the hips and making contact with the sharpest part of your knee
- Do not break the movement up in two parts. It is not up and out, but rather the knee should shoot outwards like a spear
- Arms move to the outside of the knee while not twisting at the hips, imagine you are turning a large steering wheel towards the knee you're throwing and "drive the bus", this simulates grabbing your opponent by the head and driving your knee into them as well as helping you learn your balance. Once your balance is found, you can practice keeping one or even both hands up to guard the head and throw as long a knee as possible, this can be very effective against top heavy punchers



6 / Basic Combos incorporating #1 to #5

You may think that you need to be creative and fancy with the combos, but don't. What actually works in fights and competitions has already been tried and tested by the professionals. It is critical for your long term progress to stick with the basics that you learn from Legacy and strive to perfect every aspect of it. Try to appreciate why the basics work by giving it some deep analysis, and ultimately through testing it in the ring.

Here is a list of 10 simple yet very effective combos.

1. Jab, rear swing kick
2. Cross, hook, cross, skip, lead swing kick (alt. jab, cross, lead swing kick)
3. Cross, lead hook, rear knee
4. Jab, cross, skip, lead knee
5. Right swing kick, lead push kick
6. Jab, cross, step in, rear side elbow
7. Jab, cross, hook, rear low kick
8. Jab, lead hook, rear low kick
9. Rear low kick, lead swing kick
10. Double lead swing kick



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