



The 77 Most Common Boxing Mistakes



by Ritchie Yip

Acknowledgements

A heartfelt thanks to all of my beloved students. Thank you for allowing me to live my dream.
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Photography by Mark Mikita

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Introduction

If you're a beginner in Boxing and you're frustrated with how many times you're getting punched in the face when you're sparring; then this is going to save you months and months of aggravation, frustration and turmoil in the gym.

Boxing is so frustrating because it seems so simple- straight left, straight right, hook left, hook right- I mean, I child can do that right?

But there's so many things to remember, so many details that make the punches more effective, more powerful, and less open for counter punches.

It's so frustrating because it seems so simple but it's not easy at all.

I have been teaching Martial Arts professionally since 2004 and I find that my students are making the same mistakes again and again. To me, there is a clear pattern.

There are typical mistakes that virtually everyone makes!

Now imagine knowing all the trouble points before the problem even occurs, it's like having all the answers to the test before the test is even given to you. It's the magical cheat sheet with all the answers.

Imagine knowing what typically goes wrong and being able to pre-empt it.

It's like having a crystal ball where you can already see the mistakes that you're going to make and you can intercept it, and side step it before it even occurs.

Imagine being able to take control of your own skill development.

Imagine holding in your hands all the pitfalls that many beginners fall into. You'll now be able to cancel out these typical flaws and supercharge your development.

When you know these common mistakes, you'll be able to progress faster, become more skilful than ever, all in less time.

It's like the old saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Everyone makes mistakes and making mistakes is an inherent part of learning anything new.

Unfortunately, many people feel defeated by their inability to do something correctly.



There are numerous benefits that come from doing something that is challenging and difficult.

Through Boxing and through training Martial Arts, you will attain a high level of confidence and self esteem. By mastering feats of speed, power, and skill that were once seemingly impossible you will attain a higher sense of self belief.

You will achieve self discipline and conquer your physical fears and anxieties.

You will find a positive outlet for your aggression and your stress.

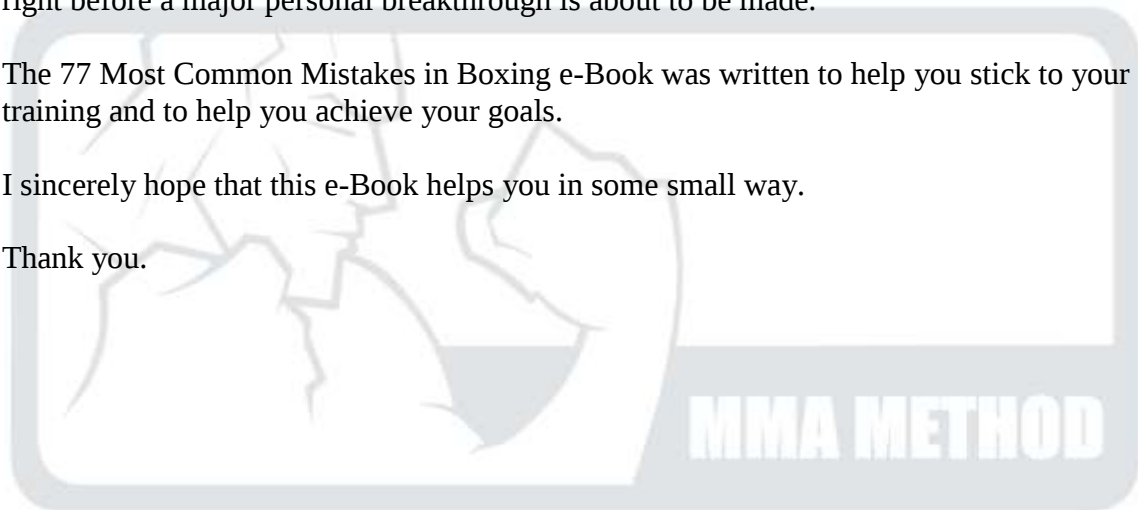
And because of the physical demands of Boxing and sparring, you will develop stronger cardio vascular endurance and muscular strength.

Boxing and Martial Arts have many benefits. Unfortunately, many people quit training right before a major personal breakthrough is about to be made.

The 77 Most Common Mistakes in Boxing e-Book was written to help you stick to your training and to help you achieve your goals.

I sincerely hope that this e-Book helps you in some small way.

Thank you.



MISTAKE 1- Low Shoulder Position

When people throw a punch, they'll often leave space between their shoulder and their chin, thus leaving their jaw open as a target for a counter attack.

The proper way to throw a punch, any punch, is to always have your shoulder meet your chin.



This is done with your chin down - your chin should always be down normally in your stance - and your shoulder coming up as you throw your punch.

Your shoulder can only come up if your shoulder and your arm are relaxed. If your shoulder is too stiff, not only will this impede the velocity of your punch, it will also make it difficult for your shoulder to pop up to meet your jaw.

As well, punching is like firing a gun.

Imagine firing a rifle, and you're trying to hit a far away target. How would you hold the rifle? You would probably have the rifle butted up to your shoulder and next to your chin so you could look straight down the barrel of the gun. This is the same idea with throwing punches.

Imagine your jab. You want to see your arm as the barrel of the rifle and you want to look straight down the barrel to ensure the accuracy of your shot. So bring your shoulder up to your chin and you'll increase the accuracy of your shot as well.





As well, bring your shoulder up to meet your chin with every punch and you'll be much more protected from counter attacks.



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MISTAKE 2- Pumping the Jab

A telegraph is a physical signal someone gives right before they are to launch an attack.



The most common telegraph for the Jab is a quick pulling down of the hand before the punch is launched.



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Launch the Jab directly from where it is. Do not pull down the hand first. Throw the Jab straight out.





Any indication of what you are going to do will make the punch easier to perceive, and thus counter attack.

When you develop the capacity to execute your Jab directly and non-telegraphically, you'll find your Jab to be more effective, it'll land more often and it will be more difficult to counter attack.

MISTAKE 3- Jab- Elbow Up and Out

Many people lift their elbow up to the side as they throw their Jab. This is a mistake and will make your Jab easier to perceive by your opponent.



Keep your elbow in as you throw your Jab and it will be more difficult for your training partner to see, and thus counter attack.

When your elbow comes up as you throw your Jab it will be easier for your training partner to catch it - it will look like a back hand tennis swing – and then throw a counter right hand after catching it.

As well, it will be easier for your training partner to throw an easy counter attack to your body. Since your elbow is up and out, there will be an open line of attack for the body shot. If you elbow is in as you throw the Jab, at least your training partner will have to go around the elbow and forearm to go for the body shot as the Jab is executed.

When human beings see movement that is lateral, it is easy to see. Like watching two people playing catch. It's easy to see the ball going from one person to the other person.



When movement is linear, it is much harder to perceive. It just looks like the object is getting bigger.

Therefore, human beings have eyes that view things like we are watching TV. When your elbows come up it is easy for your training partner to perceive the motion; however, if you keep your elbows in when you throw the Jab, to your training partner, it just looks like your fist is growing bigger as it is coming straight at him.

MISTAKE 4 - Jab: Not Protecting the Front of Your Face

The primary target for a counter attack to the Jab is the front of the face. This is because, due to the range, the front of your face is most vulnerable.



If the person were to throw a hook or a body shot as a counter, they would have to step in due to the nature of the punch.

Fighting is a numbers game. It is about high percentages.

There is a higher percentage chance of your training partner landing a counter attack to the front of your face than any other target; so, it makes sense to primarily guard the front of your face while still being mindful of his other options in available counter attack targets.



MISTAKE 5 - Hands Up, But Not Aware

Many people keep their hands up when they are close enough to get hit by their training partner's attacks. This is good, but many people are not "aware" of their training partner's attacks or counter attacks.

People think that just because their hands are up they are safe. This is wrong

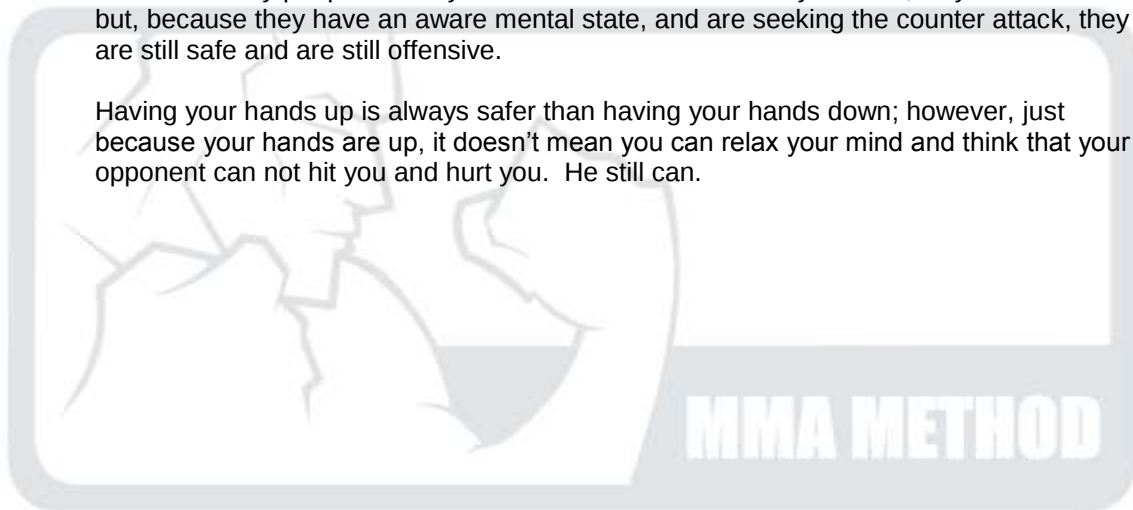
When someone punches you, it doesn't matter much if your hands are up or not. Your hand can ricochet back to your face from the force of the punch and it will still hurt.

What I'm addressing is a mental state.

Be mindful of your training partner's capacity to attack you and to counter attack you. Look to counter attack or re-counter everything he throws at you.

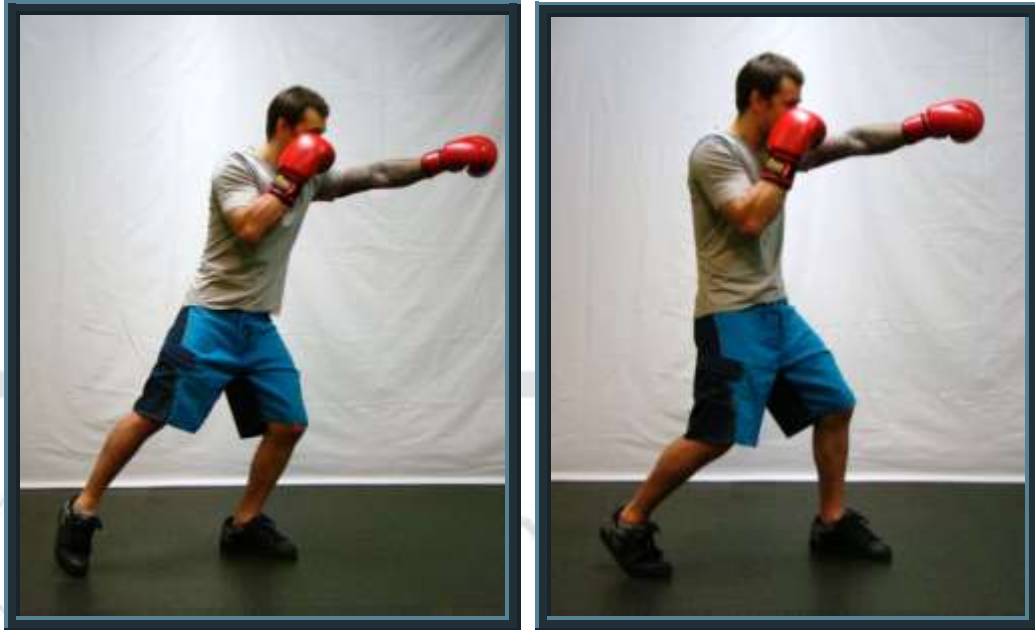
Note that many people actually have their hands down - Mayweather, Roy Jones Jr. - but, because they have an aware mental state, and are seeking the counter attack, they are still safe and are still offensive.

Having your hands up is always safer than having your hands down; however, just because your hands are up, it doesn't mean you can relax your mind and think that your opponent can not hit you and hurt you. He still can.



MISTAKE 6 - Jab: Off Balance

Many people launch their Jab by leaning forward and transferring most of their weight onto their lead foot. This is a mistake.



The Jab is mostly a probing tool and a weapon used to set up more powerful punches like the straight right. If your weight is too far forward, you'll lose power for the kill shot that your right hand was intended to be.

As well, because you throw more Jabs than any other punch, the chances of the Jab being counter attacked are very high.

Then, defending the counter attack when you are off balance becomes much more problematic. For example, head movement becomes much harder if more weight is on one foot than the other. Try doing a squat with one leg.

Furthermore, you'll get tired sooner. That is, if you are consistently leaning forward with the Jab, you'll have to then push off your lead foot to regain your balance. Doing this again and again will drain you and you'll become fatigued really quick.



MISTAKE 7 - Jab: Rotating

Many people rotate their hips and their shoulders when they throw the Jab. This is a mistake. They are rotating only to throw the Jab more emphatically.



If you rotate, your training partner will see it easier.

Remember, the jab is primarily a set up tool. If you rotate, it will be harder to launch your right hand because you'll have to battle the rotational momentum of your Jab to then throw the right hand.

You will also have a hard time throwing many jabs in a row due to the difficulty of the counter rotational force from your shoulders and hips turning.

When you throw your Jab, keep your shoulders and your hips perfectly still.

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MISTAKE 8 - Jab: Too Close

Many people try to throw a Jab in a shorter, mid-range distance. This can be done.



But the problem exists when people throw a conventional, long range jab; i.e., turning their hand so their pinky finger is up to the sky at the final moment of contact.

This may be appropriate at long range, but may cause injury when done at mid-range.

You will create an awkward “goose neck” position for your wrist and hand. When you make impact the oppositional force will go through your knuckles and blow past your wrist. Since your forearm is not directly behind your fist due to the goose neck position, you’ll most likely hurt your wrist.



The most that can come of this is hitting your training partner with the “door knocker” knuckles and your jab will look like a cat’s paw swatting at a house fly. This won’t cause too much damage to your opponent and will probably snap your wrist back, causing a sprain.

The proper way to execute a short jab is to keep your elbow in. Keep your elbow in front of your belly button the whole time and keep your fist in a “thumb up” position: make a fist, but if you were to open your hand up, the thumb would point to the sky.

It’s the same position if you were to do push-ups on your knuckles. Note how all the joints are fully supported in this manner; doing a push-up on your knuckles any other way would cause injury.

MISTAKE 9 - Jab: Always Stepping In

Many people always step in when they launch their jab. This is a mistake. If you can hit him right where you are, then just hit him.

Many people practice throwing the jab with a mandatory step forward thinking they need to increase power.

Or they have a misreading of their range: they will always step in with their jab regardless of how far away their training partner is.



If you are in range to land the jab without stepping in and you step in, you will stifle the development of force for your Jab.





Force is mass multiplied by acceleration. Acceleration is distance and time. The less distance you have the less acceleration you'll have. And thus, the less acceleration, the less force you'll have.

For example, sprint for 10 meters. Then sprint for 50 meters. You'll be running faster at 50 meters.

It's the same with your jab: throw a jab at a target 6 inches away and throw a jab at a target 60 inches away. You'll feel the difference in the force generation immediately.

As well, because you are stepping in, you will wind up throwing a long range jab within a short range distance, this will cause your wrist to goose neck and you'll most likely sprain your wrist.

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MISTAKE 10 - Low Jab: Not Dropping Your Hips

Throwing a low Jab to the body is a fantastic attack. The body is often an unprotected target and throwing a Low Jab to the body is a great, low risk way to set up further attacks to the head.

The problem occurs when people execute the low Jab without first dropping their hips.

The Low Jab is a straight punch and, like all straight punches, it is like firing a rifle. For a greater degree of accuracy, the rifle needs to be butted up against your chin and shoulder.



As well, the Jab will be more forceful. If you launch a Low Jab without dropping your hips, the fist will land at a downward angle and it will wind up as a glancing blow. The force will not go directly into his abdomen.

And lastly, you will be open for the counter right hand.

Your Jab going to the body invariably forces you to drop your left hand, thus opening up a direct line of attack for his straight right. Drop your hips, bury your chin into your shoulder and you'll be safer from his counter right.



MISTAKE 11 - Low Jab: Not Protecting Your Chin

When you go for a low Jab, you will always be open to a counter attack from above. Most typically, the counter will come in the form of an overhand right.



You need to be mindful of your training partner's ability to counter attack you at anytime.



Wrongly, many people launch the low left Jab with their right hand drifting away from them. They'll do this to either help balance themselves, or to generate more power, or because they are simply unaware of their hand placement and don't know any better.

The best thing to do when launching the low Jab is to put the knuckles of your right hand against your left jaw line.



Some people put their right hand on their right ear or temple. However, it is too awkward from this position to catch your opponent's most obvious counter attack, his overhand right.

Or sometimes people will put their right hand against their left temple. This is done because they are really intimidated by their training partner's counter right hand and they'll try and cover up entirely for it. Unfortunately, this way, it is nearly impossible to see anything that is coming at you, especially with the big gloves on. You are practically covering your eyes.

Again, the best practice is to have the knuckles of your right hand against your left chin.

MISTAKE 12 - Head Movement: Moving Too Much

Whenever you can get your opponent to miss their strike, it is a good thing.

However, the mistake that many people make is that they make their opponent miss by too much.



Remember, martial arts is all about efficiency - minimal effort, maximum benefit.

If you move your head too much when you slip or when you duck, you'll be open for his secondary attack. Then you've moved so much you'll probably be off balance and out of position to move your head again.

Furthermore, you'll be off balance or out of position to launch a counter attack. Even if you launch a counter attack, because of your off balanced position, it will not have sufficient power.

Finally, you will get tired faster. Moving your head across a large distance very rapidly is exceptionally exhausting.

A good boxer will make their opponent miss, but a great boxer will make their opponent just barely miss.



MISTAKE 13 - Head Movement: Moving Just Your Head and Not Your Hips

When people move their head to evade punches, a common flaw is that they'll only move their head and not their hips.



Sometime people will only move from their necks or they'll keep their hips still and move their head by bending and shifting their spine.

I don't recommend this.

Remember, it's not just slip; it's slip and hit.

It's not just duck; it's duck and hit.

You want to be able to simultaneously counter strike as you move your head to defend the shot.

Although it is unlikely you will throw a counter punch every time you move your head in defense, it's the concept of always staying in a ready position that is important.

You always want to be in a position to strike.

The way to maintain a strong striking position as you move your head is to move your hips as well. Head goes one way, hips go the other way.



MISTAKE 14 - Parry: Moving the Hand Too Much

A parry is a defensive manoeuvre used to deflect or redirect a strike. You can parry using your hand, your forearm, your wrist, even your shoulder.



When using your hand to execute the parry, the most common mistake is moving your hand too much.

Remember, fighting is all about efficiency. If I make him miss by a foot or by an inch, I've still made him miss.

The best way to look at parrying is to think of yourself like a pageant queen and you are waving at the crowd. All you are doing is slightly turning your hand, like you are screwing in a light bulb in a lamp on your living room ceiling.

This movement is the most efficient way to deflect the Jab or straight Right Hand.

Anything more may open you up for his secondary attacks or it may leave you vulnerable to his attempts to fake you out to draw your hand far away from your face.



MISTAKE 15 - Blocking: You Can Do It, but Only Once

Blocking is the least effective form of defense.



First off, throwing your forearm out to meet force with force in order to stop it causes you to draw your hands away from your head and torso.



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And since you are trying to halt the attack by throwing your forearm into his forearm, there is a strong likelihood that you'll bruise or injure yourself as you attempt the block.

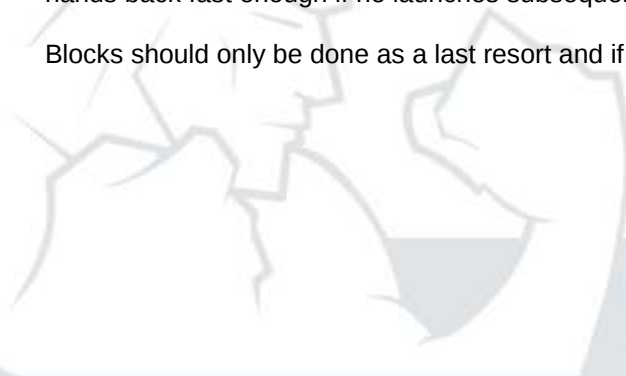


Now, blocking does work and it is natural to do (every person I've ever taught how to Box will block naturally; very few people move their head or adjust their distance without some coaching).



Unfortunately though, it opens you up for fakes and combination attacks. Due to the distance you create between your hands and your head, you'll never be able to get your hands back fast enough if he launches subsequent attacks to your face.

Blocks should only be done as a last resort and if there is nothing else you can do.



MMA METHOD



MISTAKE 16 - Jab: The Archer

When most people throw the Left Jab, they'll pull their right hand back. Even the pros will do this.

I call this mistake, "The Archer".



You will absolutely get more power with your Jab if you pull your right hand back, but you will also open your face up for an easy counter attack.

Instead, keep your right hand up by your mouth to defend yourself against any counter attacks as you throw your Jab. By doing so you'll become less susceptible to counter attacks.

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MISTAKE 17 - Stance: Walking the Line

Draw a line that points to your opponent. A common mistake is that people will walk this line; meaning, they'll place both feet on this line.



This will make your stance too linear.

People feel they need to “walk the line” to defend themselves from straight punches.

Now, it's true that you are more open to straight attacks if you stand too square to your training partner and you'll be too open for the body shot, as well.

But, you'll be off balance if you “walk the line” and you try to move your head from side to side as you slip punches.

And you'll feel restricted in your movement as you launch a straight right - when you turn your hip, you'll feel an impingement on your lead left knee and hip.





Instead, straddle the line. Have one foot on one side of the line and one foot on the other side. You'll have more balance and it will facilitate greater rotation for your punches.



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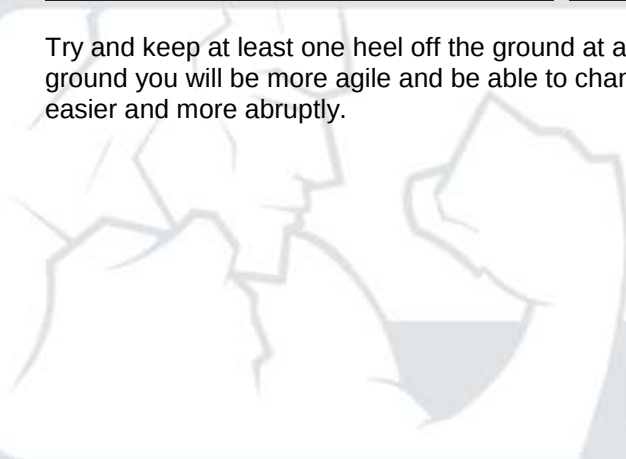


MISTAKE 18 - Stance: Heels Down

Many people box with their heels to the floor. Or when they move, they'll move like they're walking- heel, toe, heel, toe. This is a mistake.



Try and keep at least one heel off the ground at all times. By keeping your heels off the ground you will be more agile and be able to change directions with your feet faster, easier and more abruptly.



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MISTAKE 19 - Straight Right: Elbow Out and Up

Many people will bring their elbows up when they throw a straight right hand. This makes the punch easier to perceive by your opponent.



As well, it's easier to defend.

Keep your elbow in. Think of keeping your elbow in front of your belly button as you execute the punch.

A training partner can help keep your elbow in by holding a target up with his right hand while holding his left hand up by your right elbow. You should be able to strike the target with your right hand without running your elbow into his left hand.





It is natural to lift your elbow up as you throw the straight right. The straight right hand is very similar in movement to throwing a ball.

Almost everyone in the world has thrown a ball at some point in their lives, but few people have thrown a straight right hand properly.

Skill transference means taking a skill that you already possess and then relating it to a new unlearned skill that is similar.

So when executing a straight right, your brain will associate the movement with throwing a ball, thus bringing your elbow up and out. It's a completely understandable mistake but one that is important to correct.



MISTAKE 20 - Straight Right: Whipping Your Head

Many people feel the need to whip their head forward and to the left as they throw a straight right hand.



Doing this will pull your weight too far forward and throw you off balance, thus leaving you open to counter attacks and making it difficult for you to throw subsequent attacks.

Your accuracy will also be affected. Think of your straight right hand being a rifle. When you fire your straight right hand, you want your head still, just like you want your head still as you fire a rifle to maintain your aim.

Something almost guaranteed in Boxing is that your training partner will be moving his head. If your head is moving as well, then it'll compound the problem. Imagine running with a rifle and trying to hit a moving target at the same time.

Keep your head still as you throw the right hand and your accuracy will improve, you'll be able to defend counter attacks better and you'll be in better position to follow up with additional punches once the straight right lands.



MISTAKE 21- Straight Right: Not Turning Both Shoulders

When throwing the straight right hand, many people only bring their right shoulder forward.



This is a mistake. You need to also pull your left shoulder back.



This movement is called the Anterior/Posterior Sling. The Anterior/Posterior Sling is basically how the human body generates rotational force. One hand pulls back as the other hand drives forward.

Almost every sport or physical activity, from throwing a ball swinging a golf club, employs this principle.



You need to pull one shoulder back as you are driving the other shoulder forward.

Think of the steering wheel of a car. As one pulls down to turn the wheel, the other hand drives up.

To increase the power of your straight right hand, pull the left shoulder back as you drive the right shoulder forward. This is the reason so many fighters have such developed back muscles. (Look at pictures of Bruce Lee or photos of Roy Jones Jr.)

Many people think that Boxing is basically pushing and you need to only do pushing exercise to develop punching power.

The push from one shoulder is only one half of the power development. It is also the pulling force from the opposite shoulder. It is this opposition that creates powerful rotational forces.

MISTAKE 22 - Straight Right: Poor Heel Position

To facilitate rotation for the straight right hand you need to pick up your right heel.



If you just leave your right heel on the floor, you will not be able to rotate very much.

The problem that many people have is that they pick up the right heel only a bit. You need to fully pick up your heel and turn it.

Turn your right knee so that it points to your left knee. Drive the toes of your right foot into the ground and twist like you are squashing a bug or putting out a cigarette.



MISTAKE 23 - Straight Right: Too Much Weight Transfer

A common mistake when throwing a straight right hand is to transfer your weight too far forward.



This mistake is dangerous as you will be off balance.

When you execute the Straight Right you still want to be able to defend his counter attacks and you also want to be able to follow up with subsequent punches.

The proper weight transfer for the Straight Right hand is 10%. That's it.

When you throw the Jab, you want to have a fully balanced weight transfer. 50% of your weight on one foot and 50% of your weight on the other foot.

When you execute the right hand, transfer 10% of your weight forward. You'll now have 60% of your weight on the lead left foot and 40% of your weight on the rear right foot.



A 10% weight transfer forward will:

- I. Ensure sufficient power development for your Straight Right hand
- II. Allow you to maintain a high degree of balance to deal with counter attacks
- III. Create the proper body positioning to effectively throw further attacks after carrying out the Right Hand.

MISTAKE 24 - Eyes: Staring at the Hands

Many people are often confused over where to look when they box. Some people say to look at the eyes. Some say look at the elbows. Most people will naturally look at their opponent's hands.

You never want to look at the hands, the hands lie. He'll distract you with one hand and hit you with the other..

You want to look at the chest.

Draw a line from the corner of his hip to the corner of his shoulder and do this on the opposite shoulder to the opposite hip. You'll see an imaginary set of lines that make an X.

The lines will intersect in the middle of his chest right at the solar plexus, right where the rib cage meets.

Now, the secret is not to look directly at this point; but, about 2 inches in front of it. Doing so will make your opponent look fuzzy because you are seeing him with your peripheral vision.

Human beings have 2 types of vision

- *Central Vision.* (also called foveal vision) This is the type of vision you use when you read. Your vision is very narrow and focused.
- *Peripheral Vision.* Your peripheral vision allows you to see areas just outside the center of your gaze. Peripheral vision is good at perceiving motion.

You want to use your peripheral vision when you fight. Your reaction time is much faster when employing peripheral vision. As well, you'll be able to see everything: his hands, his feet, the environment.

As well, when you look at his chest you will naturally drop your chin. You won't even have to think about this component of your form.

If you stare at his eyes, you can't see his feet, if you are in close to mid range, even with your peripheral vision. His feet will often give you great telegraphs to use against him.

And if you're also doing kicks, seeing his feet is obviously important.

Think about looking at his chest: if he has a crest or emblem on his shirt, you want to see that there is something on his shirt, but you don't want to look so closely that you're able to read what it says.



MISTAKE 25 - Straight Right: Telegraph

Virtually every single person I've ever taught how to box telegraphs their straight right hand right before they throw it.



They'll throw their straight left jab perfectly - straight out and straight back while keeping their right hand glued to their mouth guard.



But when they throw a jab and straight right combo, they'll pull their right hand back first like they're loading it up, cocking it, pulling it back for extra power.





Doing so only sends your opponent a signal that you're going to throw the right and makes you easier to counter attack. Throw the right hand directly from where it is and it will be tougher for your training partner to perceive and thus counter attack.



MISTAKE 26 - Circular Retraction

Many people, when throwing straight punches, will retract their punches in a circular manner. This mistake only makes them susceptible to easy counter attacks.

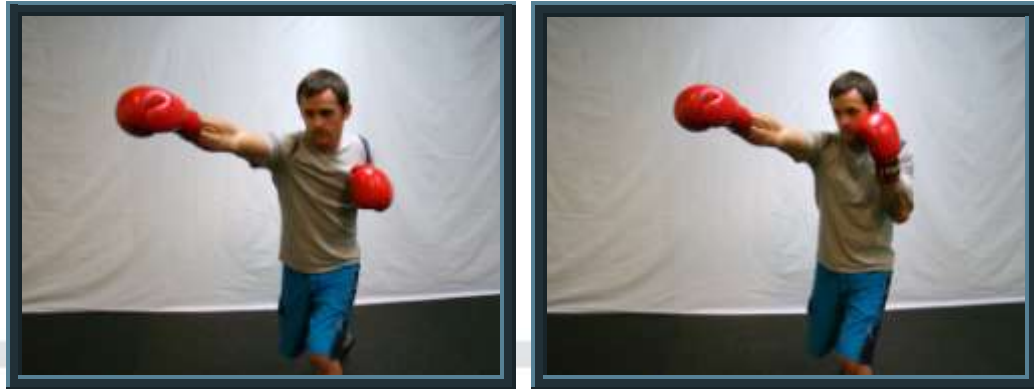


Straight punches go straight out and straight back. Do not throw your punches down like you are throwing a ball into the dirt.



MISTAKE 27 - Straight Right: Left Hand Position

When people throw a straight right hand, a common error is to pull the left hand back away from your face. You will get more power if you pull your left hand back as you throw a right hand.



Look at how you throw a ball: you draw your left hand back to amplify the rotational speed of your shoulders and thus you are able to throw a ball further.

With boxing too, you want to maximize the rotation of your shoulders by pulling your left shoulder back as your right shoulder drives forward; however, you still want to keep your left hand up by your mouth guard ready to receive any counter attacks your opponent may throw at you.

MISTAKE 28 - Not Being Aware of the Counter

The greatest mistake that my students make as they start to spar is that they are not mindful of the fact that their training partner can counter attack them.

When people learn to throw punches with proper form on a heavy bag or with focus mitt drills, they feel successful because no one is throwing punches back at them.

When they start sparring, they feel frustrated because they can not put their punches together in seamless combination. The combinations are interrupted by the counter attacks executed by their training partners.

When my students start sparring I always start them off with counter punching drills.

Not only to show them how to turn defense into offense with counter punches, but to also make them "counter proof"; meaning, they are able to deal with the counter punches their training partners throw at them and then re-counter the attacks so they can stay on the offensive.

A lot of people just throw punches and combination punches without paying attention to the counter attack and therefore leave themselves open.



MISTAKE 29 - Always Stepping Forward With Their Punches

If you can hit him right where you are standing, then you don't need to step in.

If you can't hit him, then, step in.

People often neglect keeping their distance when they attack and they'll always step in to punch no matter how far or how close they are.

There is a misconception that if you step in with the punch, the punch will be more powerful. While this is true, it doesn't cancel out the fact that if you are already in the perfect range, and you're still stepping in, then you'll wind up stifling the power development for your punch.

Force is mass multiplied by acceleration. And acceleration is the change in velocity over a set period of time.

The greater the change in velocity will reflect a greater amount of acceleration and thus a greater amount of force.

Run as fast as you for 10 feet. Then for 30 feet. You'll be running much faster at 30 feet than 10. The more distance you have, the more acceleration you'll have.

And it's the same thing with punching. The more distance you have for your strike, the more acceleration you'll achieve and thus, the more force you'll have for your strike.

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MISTAKE 30 - Hooks: Elbows Too Low

The conventional way of executing a hook is to have your forearm parallel to the ground. When you are executing the hook, at the moment of impact the elbow ought to be at the same level as the hand.



A common mistake when throwing a hook is to keep your elbow too low. The elbow should - at least - be at the same height as your hand at the moment of impact.

Remember, most people will be hiding their chin behind their shoulder. To get to the chin with a hook, you'll have to get up and over the shoulder; so, it may be necessary to pick your elbow up higher than your hand.

As well, you'll save yourself from injury. If you keep your elbow lower than your hand, you'll wind up throwing a hammer strike with the base of your hand. Not only could you hurt your wrist, but it will put strain on your shoulder as you are forcing it to turn in an unnatural way.

Finally, you will not have much power with your hook.

Seeing how force is generated by mass and acceleration, with the hammer strike, you are using only the mass of the hand to create the force for you hook.

If you lift the elbow, the mass will be of your hand *and* your forearm. This is significant because the forearm is made up of 2 big bones, the ulna and the radius.

Lift the elbow up higher than the level of your hand for the hook and your hook will be more powerful, more accurate, and it will save your shoulders.

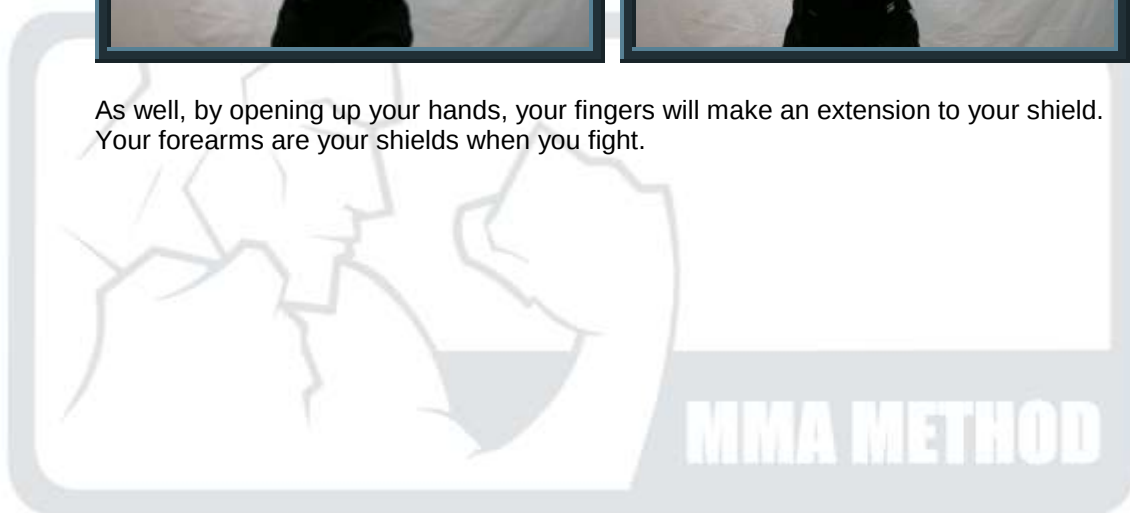


MISTAKE 31 - Hooks: Not Covering Fully

When you cover up for hooks, it's important to open your hands up and place your palms against your temples. If you make a fist, you will wind up getting your own knuckles pounded into your temples as your opponent hits you.



As well, by opening up your hands, your fingers will make an extension to your shield. Your forearms are your shields when you fight.



MISTAKE 32- Hooks: No Weight Transfer

When most people throw hooks, especially left hooks, they do not transfer their weight.



Weight transfer will enhance power development and aid in facilitating hip rotation – a necessary component in power generation for the hook.

The weight transfer is a mere 10% of your weight onto the opposite leg. If you are throwing a left hook, and presuming you are starting with a balanced stance where 50 % of our weight is on your left foot and 50% of your weight is on your right foot, lean 10% of your weight onto your right leg. So then, 40 % of your total weight is on your left foot and 60 % of your total weight is on your right foot.



MISTAKE 33- Hooks: Palm Down or Thumb Up

There is rampant confusion over whether to throw the hook with the fist in a thumb up position (if you were to take your fist as you execute the hook and open up your hand the thumb would point to the sky) or the palm down position (if you were to open up your fist at the moment of impact for the hook, your palm would face the floor).

The answer is that the tool should augment to fit the target. The mistake is for someone to throw a hook in a thumb up position always, regardless of the target or body positioning.



If you have a clear opening to the jaw line of your opponent, use the palm down position for the fist. You will make contact on his jaw with as many knuckles of your fist as possible.





On most men, the mandible, or lower jaw, sticks out farther than the upper jaw, the maxilla. If you have a thumb up position as you strike his jaw, you may break your pinkie finger knuckle or ring finger knuckle since it will only be one of these knuckles that will make first contact.

By using the palm down position, more of the force will be spread out amongst your knuckles, typically the last 3 knuckles- the pinkie, ring finger and middle finger knuckles - and you'll save yourself a broken hand.

Now, if you have an opponent that is all covered up, you can still get inside if you throw your hook past his head and then rake in with a chopping hook behind his forearm nailing him directly on the ear or on the temple.



This works best with a thumb up position. The fist is narrower and can slide in behind the forearm cover. If you have a palm down version of a fist with this attack you'll probably



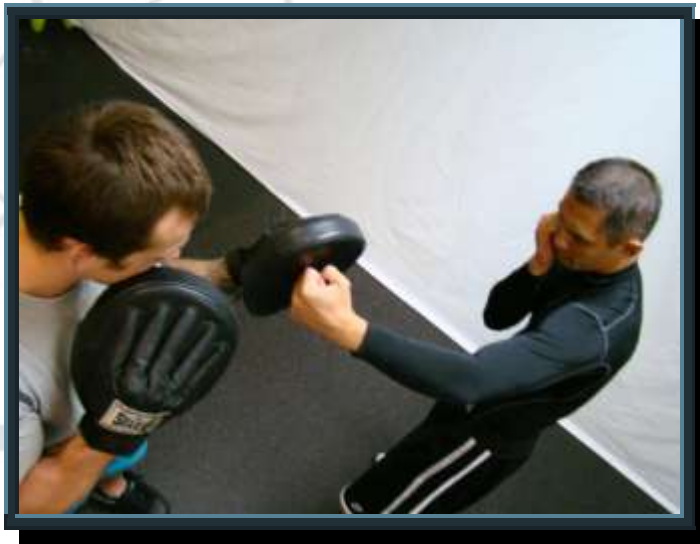
still get in and be able to hit him, but it will be with the knuckle of your thumb or with the knuckle of your index finger. Punching in this manner will most likely cause you to break your hand.

MISTAKE 34- Hooks: Too Big and Looping or Too Close and Chopping

When you throw a hook, you want to hug a big tree. This is the perfect degree of bend for your elbows.

That is, the angle of your elbow when you launch a Hook ought to be a bit more than 90 degrees.

A common mistake is that people throw the Hook with the elbow extended too far - this creates a big wide hook that is too easily perceived by your opponent.



As well, you'll wind up hitting the target with your door knocker knuckles (the knuckles you knock on a door with) instead of the primary knuckles of your fist. This will probably snap your wrists back and could potentially cause a wrist injury.

In addition, many people bend their elbows too much and have their fist too close to their body when they throw Hooks.





Because of the rotational nature of the Hook, if thrown with the hand too close to the body and with too much flexion in the elbow, it will be like choking up too high on the handle of a bat, rather than gripping the bat at the tail end: you won't generate as much power. The longer the lever, the greater the resultant velocity of the end of the bat. With too much flexion in the elbow - it looks like you are hugging a really narrow, skinny tree - you won't have as much leverage to generate the subsequent velocity of the punch.

Again, the ideal degree of flexion in your elbow when throwing a hook is about 90 degrees.

MISTAKE 35- Hooks: Not Doing the Nunchuck

Why is the nunchuck (a martial arts weapon made famous by Bruce Lee - it basically looks like two little sticks joined together in the middle by a little bit of chain) more devastating than just a normal stick and how does this relate to a left hook in Boxing?





Well, it's called the conservation of angular momentum. This principle refers to momentum remaining at a constant rate as an object rotates around a pivot point even if the length of the lever, in this case the arm, were to change. To maintain the same degree of angular momentum the velocity increases as the arm shortens.

This is why figure skaters suddenly spin faster as they pull their arms in.

And this is the reason why, if you close your hook up just a little bit at the end by pulling your hand in and flexing your elbow, you will generate far more velocity for your hook with very little additional effort.

The mistake here is that many people do not pull their hand in and rake in at the last moment for their hooks.

MISTAKE 36- Hooks: Wrong Range

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In Boxing, there are 3 ranges:

Long Range - Straight left, straight right, full extension of the arm at the moment of impact.

Mid Range - hooks, upper cuts, short rights and short lefts. If I were to slip a straight left and my head was at his elbow during the full extension of his arm, I'm now in mid range.

Close Range - shoulder to shoulder boxing, clinching. I can hit the *body* with hooks and uppercuts, but I would need to back up to generate enough power to properly attack the head.

Many people are not aware of these distance changes during a fight and attempt to launch a hook at a long range with out first stepping into mid range. Understand that hooks are a mid or a close range tool.

You will probably wind up hitting him with your door knocker knuckles if you launch a hook from long range.



MISTAKE 37- Hooks: Not Covering the Body

When many people launch hooks, they are familiar with covering their head with their other hand in case their training partner launches a counter hook.

But, many people fail to cover up their rib cage as well.



You need to connect your elbow to your hip and your hand to your temple and cover up the entire one side of your body as you launch a hook. You want to cover up the entire side, not just the head, not just the body - people typically only do one or the other.



Hunch your back, slouch, crunch over so your elbow reaches your hip as your hand stays on your head. Give him as few options to counter attack as possible.



MISTAKE 38- The Body Shot: Not Setting It Up

A body shot is always dangerous because you can be countered by a powerful overhand punch.



People typically attack the body by going directly for the target. This works, but there is 3 different ways to attack the body and this is only one of them.

The first way is the aforementioned direct shot. This means that I see an opening and I drop my elevation and strike the body. Typically, you have to be very fast and explosive to execute this type of an attack.

The second way is to set it up. Divert their attention high and then go low to the body. For example, high left jab, high right hand, low jab to the body.

The final way to go to the body is as a counter attack. As your training partner goes for a high jab, you slip his jab and throw a jab of your own to his rib cage.



MISTAKE 39- Hooks: Not Turning the Heel

When it comes to proper form for the hook, one of the most common flaws is not turning your left heel when you throw a left hook and the same for a right hook.



Heel rotation is important to facilitate hip rotation which powers the hook.

If someone keeps their heel to the ground they are only hitting with the power generated by turning their shoulders.

When executing a hook you want to take advantage of the powerful leg muscles and the rotating force of the hips.

Lift your heel, rotate your hips and watch the power of your hips blow through the roof.



MISTAKE 40- Upper Cuts: Not Turning the Heel

Many people fail to turn the heel as they execute the upper cut.



If you throw a right upper cut, you need to turn your right heel.

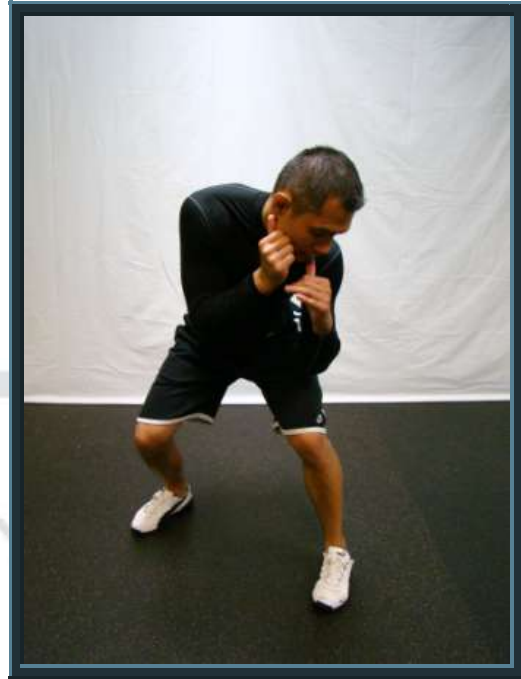
People fail to realize that not only are you using your legs and your back to generate the upward force of the upper cut, this force development is also assisted by hip and shoulder rotation.

Turn your heel to facilitate hip rotation and you'll improve the power of your uppercut.



MISTAKE 41- Upper Cuts: Loading Up

Many people make the common mistake of loading up their hand by bringing their fist down to their hip before executing the upper cut.



This is a very dangerous error as it opens you up for a counter hook.

And at the very least it will show your training partner that you are about to launch the upper cut and he'll easily defend it.

Remember if you want the punch to land, you have to make the punch invisible. The upper cut is a very short punch. Power is developed in a very short and tight amount of space. About 6 inches.



MISTAKE 42- Upper Cuts: Not Punching With the Legs

Many people execute the upper cut without first dropping their hips to load up the legs. This is a mistake.



You need to power the upward motion of the upper cut with your legs and with your back.

As well, you need to get underneath the target to properly place the uppercut.

Finally, if you are just dropping your hand, this telegraphs the uppercut and leaves you open for an easy hook counter.

Keep your hands up to your face and bend your knees to lower your elevation. Now you'll have power and the proper position to launch your upper cut.



MISTAKE 43- Head Movement: Eyes Down

A common mistake as people move their head to evade punches, whether slipping, ducking or weaving, is to look to the floor.



This mistake will make you more open to counter attacks.

You need to maintain your focus up at his chest as you move your head to make him miss.

You should always expect your training partner to launch additional punches and try to hit you as you are slipping. So, after you've made his straight right hand miss with a well timed slip, expect him to counter attack your slip with a well timed left hook.

By keeping your eyes up you'll be able to see the counter hook and defend it.

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MISTAKE 44- The Washing Machine

When people throw combination punches with multiple punches that require hip rotation they will do what I call the “washing machine”.

This common mistake occurs as people attempt to turn both heels at the same time.



Remember, with each punch requiring rotation - and all punches do except for the jab - there is a planted foot and a power foot.

The planted foot has the heel to the ground. The power foot has the heel up off the ground to facilitate rotation.



If you leave your heel on the ground as you try and rotate, there is too much friction between your shoe and the floor and you'll probably sprain your knee if you forcefully try to rotate over.

So one heel down and one heel up. The mistake is when you try to turn both heels at the same time.

You will most certainly be off balance.



MISTAKE 45- Stance: Feet Too Far Apart

People will often have their feet too far apart or their feet too close.

The best way to check if the distance between your feet is sound is to get into your stance and bring your rear, right knee to the floor.

If your right knee touches your left ankle, then that is the perfect distance for your feet.



If your feet are too close together, you will lose balance and punching power. If your feet are too far apart, you will lose mobility.



MISTAKE 46- Only Using Singular Direct Attacks

Whenever people start sparring, they typically attack using only singular attacks in a direct manner. No fakes. No combination attacks.

Just a jab and then they dance away.

Maybe a big power shot, like an overhand right, and then dart out of range again.

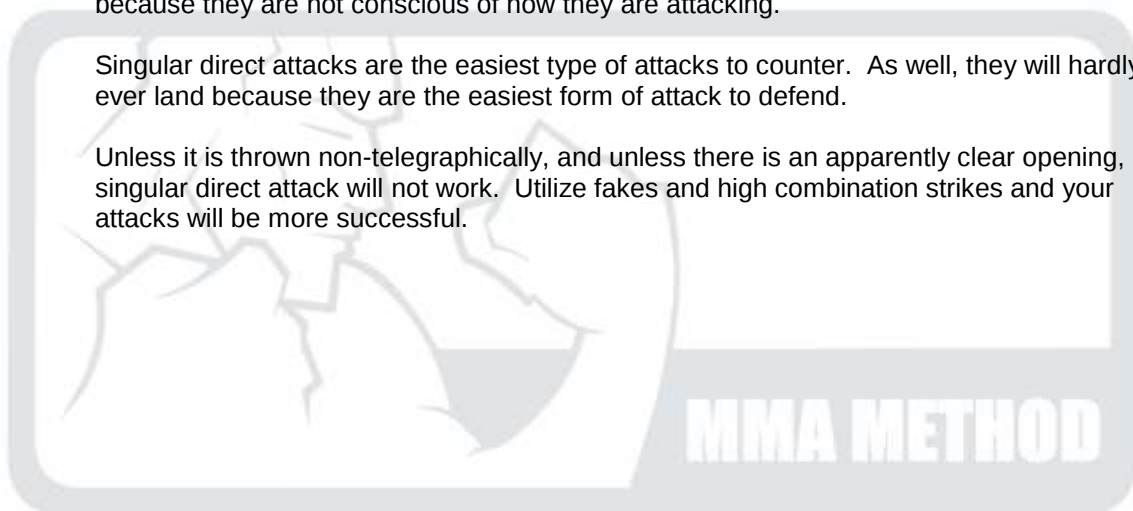
This is a mistake.

Singular direct attacks have their place. Maybe to gauge and to figure out your opponent or to bait a counter attack so you can re-counter it.

For the most part, people do not understand this. They attack in a singular manner because they are not conscious of how they are attacking.

Singular direct attacks are the easiest type of attacks to counter. As well, they will hardly ever land because they are the easiest form of attack to defend.

Unless it is thrown non-telegraphically, and unless there is an apparently clear opening, a singular direct attack will not work. Utilize fakes and high combination strikes and your attacks will be more successful.



MISTAKE 47- Singular Counters

Many people, when they counter attack, go for just the one punch. When they score with it, they back out and do not follow up. This is a mistake.



If you can counter attack him and it lands, he is now at a moment of vulnerability. Follow up your counter attack. Maintain the offensive momentum. Throw a logical combination dictated by your distance, your body positioning and his body positioning, and attack, attack, attack.

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MISTAKE 48- Not Using Proper Counter Timing

Counter timing is *when* to hit back when he tries to hit you. Many people try to counter attack. This is a good thing. But many people do not see that there are 3 different moments in time to counter attack:



Before, during, and after.

Before the punch is thrown. This is the conception of the punch. Counter punching at this moment is typically done as an attack on a telegraph. As your opponent draws his right hand back to telegraph his right overhand punch, hit him right away before his right hand even starts to move forward. This is what I call Timing # 3.

During the punch. As his arm extends for the punch, it is a fantastic moment to counter attack. Because his arm is out and extended, the whole one side of his body is open, as is the one side of his face. During the punch, people are not thinking defense. It is all about attack. They are most open to counter attacks at this moment. I call this Timing #2.

After the punch. This is the retraction of the punch. This is the most typical moment that people counter attack. People will see a punch coming at them, they'll defend it *and then* they'll counter it. By the time they try and counter it, the punch is in its retraction stage. This is called Timing #1 because it is the most commonly used type of counter timing.

A counter puncher needs to understand that there are 3 moments in time in which to counter attack. You need to understand it, you need to control it, and you need to use the right type of counter timing for the right person. The mistake is that many people just try and hit back, and hit back blindly, and they do not use the 3 phases Counter Timing to their advantage. Typically, when people throw counter attacks blindly, they will wind up throwing the counter during the retraction of the strike (timing #1).



MISTAKE 49- Jab: Just Hitting With It

People, typically, only use the jab to hit with. That's it. And that's fine. The jab is an attacking tool. However, the jab can also be used for many other things.



There's an acronym that I use to describe the purpose of the jab. I call it Jab ADDA - Attack, Distance, Distance, Ask.

Attack - means to simply hit him with your jab. Punch him in the face. If the opportunity is there, if he is not protecting himself, then just hit him. Mindlessly punching people with the jab is what 90% of people do when they start to spar.

Distance - The jab can be used to gauge distance. To see how far away your opponent is. Sometimes it is hard to tell just by looking. Throw out your jab to see if you can hit him. You are trying to gauge the distance to see if you need to step in or not with your second punch.

Distance - You are also using your jab to keep the distance. Sometimes you'll have people who will charge right into you. They'll want to get in close. Maybe they have no sense of distance and they are always coming forward with their attacks. Throw the jab out right into their face. The jab will slow them down, make them hesitate, or cause them to stop coming forward all together.

Ask - The jab is also a probing tool. You are asking questions with your jab and you are waiting to see their response or answer. When you throw the jab, do they defend? If so, how are they defending? Are they counter attacking? Is there a pattern to how they are counter attacking? How are they emotionally responding to your jab? Are they angry? Are they nervous? Or are they super relaxed? As you ask questions with your jab, you are probing to gather information to use in formulating your attack strategy.



MISTAKE 50- Fakes: Letting Him Touch Your Hand

The faking process has 3 parts.

The first part is the fake. The movement that looks like a real attack but is only used to trigger a defensive response from your opponent, typically a defensive move like a block or parry.

The second part is the disengagement. Pulling your hand away as soon as you've triggered the defensive response from your training partner. When the person moves to block the fake, he'll open himself up. Now you'll have an open opportunity for a real attack.

The third part is the real attack. Now that your training partner has attempted to defend your fake or false attack, he is now open for a real attack.

The problem occurs with the time between the first phase of the fake and the second phase.

Most people will make their fake too long. Too long meaning they'll leave their hand out to bait the block or parry for an extended period of time and the block will touch their hand.

If you let the block touch your hand, the fake has worked but the real attack will fail.

You need to trigger the block with the fake but before he is able to touch your hand with the block, you need to stop moving the faking hand and launch a real attack. Otherwise, the real attack will not land.

If his hand touches your hand during the fake, he will have enough time to bring his hand back up to defend the real attack.



MISTAKE 51- Mimicking Your Opponent

We often fall into the trap of mimicking our opponent. This is a flaw.

As an instructor, I see it all the time: when one guy gets hit with a hard right hand, in just a few seconds you'll see a right hand from the other guy. This is a trap we all fall into.



If I get hit with a left hook, an internal dialogue goes off and says, "Oh yeah?! I'm going to hit you with a left hook of my own and it's going to be harder and faster than yours and you aren't going to be able to take it as well as I do."

This is silly, but this is what we all do.

If your training partner or opponent understands this, then you'll be susceptible to an easy counter attack because he'll be waiting for your retaliation



MISTAKE 52- Not Breathing

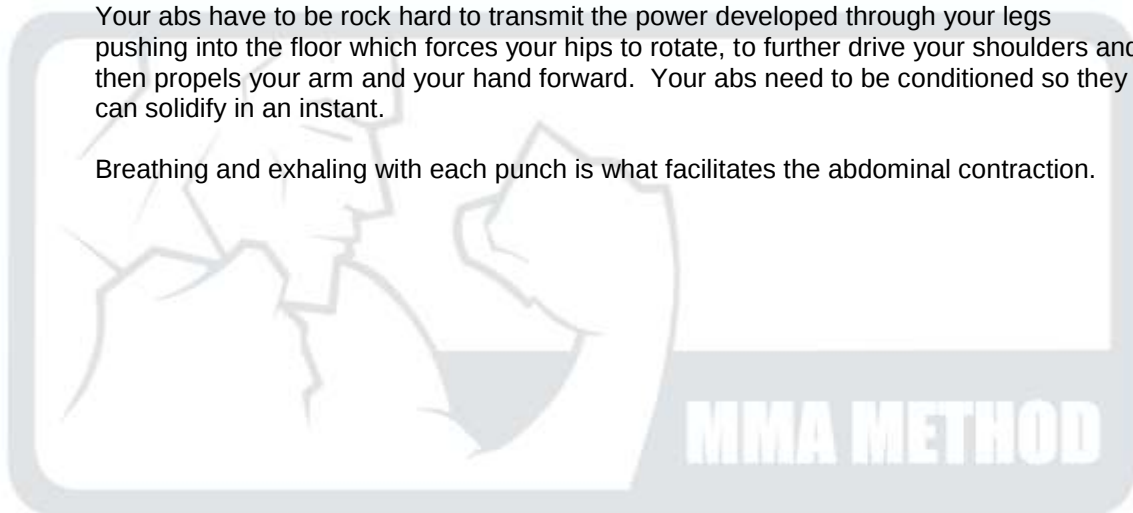
Many people fail to exhale with each punch. This is a mistake. You need to exhale with each punch. Not only will it extend your endurance - you will suffer an oxygen deficit if you hold your breath through a high number punching combination - but it will also enhance your punching power.

When you exhale for each punch you want to tighten your abs as well. Contract your abdominal muscles with each breath. This is important because your abs complete the chain of force from the floor to your legs to your hips, through your abs into your shoulders and then into your arm and fist. This kinetic pathway is the secret to punching power.

If your abs are loose and relaxed, you will only be punching with your shoulders and your arms. Still a powerful punch, but it will not have the maximum devastation that we as martial artists strive for.

Your abs have to be rock hard to transmit the power developed through your legs pushing into the floor which forces your hips to rotate, to further drive your shoulders and then propels your arm and your hand forward. Your abs need to be conditioned so they can solidify in an instant.

Breathing and exhaling with each punch is what facilitates the abdominal contraction.



MISTAKE 53- Exhaling: Always Making a Sound

A common mistake is that people feel they need to make a sound each time they exhale with a punch.

This is a mistake commonly made as people try and mimic professional fighters on pay-per-view.

The only reason I tell my students to make a sound each time they breathe is so that I know they are exhaling with each punch. Breathing out loudly is really more for the coach than it is for the athlete.

You can absolutely exhale with each punch without making a noise and it will not affect your punching power. *

If fact, it's better for you not to make a sound as you exhale with each punch because the audible signal of each breath is information your training partner can use to decipher your punching patterns.

For instance, if you are breathing out for singular attacks and I can hear you exhale with each punch, but when you throw combination punches I only hear you exhale on your last punch, that means you are holding your breath throughout the combination and you're only exhaling once at the end of the combo.

As a tactic, I'll drop my hands a bit to let you fire high number combinations at me. I'll do everything I can to stay safe. Granted, this is a risky tactic because I could get hit; however, I believe this will pay off with you tiring quickly because you are not breathing properly. It's like you are sprinting and holding your breath.

Another way to take advantage of this breathing pattern is to counter attack you only when I hear you exhale with the punch. If I don't hear a sound attached to your first strike, I know to expect a follow up punch immediately and I'll prepare my self to defend the combination. If I do hear a sound with the first punch, I know it's a singular attack and I can counter attack with ease knowing I won't walk into a one of your secondary attacks.

So, the sound you make as you exhale is more for the coach to know that you are breathing properly as you are throwing punches. That's it. It has no significance in relation to performance.

When sparring, keep your breathing quiet, so you do not give your opponent any further hints as to what you're going to do.



MISTAKE 54- Poor Posture: #1 Most Important Thing.

Fighting is all about maintaining your posture and trying to take away your opponent's posture.



Posture - having your knees slightly bent and keeping your head directly over your feet - is the universal “ready” position in virtually every sport.

Whether you are guarding someone in Basketball, or receiving a serve in tennis, or snowboarding - if you are standing and if you need to be athletic, this is the posture you need to maintain.

In fighting I, as your opponent or training partner, want to take you out of this posture, to get you to cower, to bend over and cover up, to turn away from me. From here your attacks will be weak, easily defended and non-threatening.



Conversely, I always want to keep my posture. As I am defending and countering, as I am moving in and out of range, I always want to keep my posture.

With my posture strong and intact, I can fire my punches. I am quicker, more responsive and more agile.

Watch videos of yourself sparring. Ask yourself, is my head too far back when I defend his punch? Is my head too far forward when I charge in to attack?

If you are out of posture, you have to do 2 things to fire an attack. One, get back into posture and two, fire the attack.

You have to “get set” and then “go”. When you fight we want to already be set up in good posture so that at anytime you can “go”.



MISTAKE 55- Getting Hit

Many people feel that is okay to get hit and that receiving repetitive trauma to the head is a natural and acceptable part of Boxing.

Understand that receiving repeated blows to the head is extremely dangerous.

Boxing is about hitting people to the head and to the torso. The sport of Boxing is the process of engendering fatigue, exhaustion and injury to your opponent.

Boxing is attempting to dismantle your opponent's will to continue and part of this means disabling his central command center- his head.

Possible results from receiving repeated blows to the head:

Detached Retina. The retina is the back of the eye ball that converts what we see into useful information for the brain. Rips and tears in the retina occur when force is exerted on or around the eye. This is the injury that caused Sugar Ray Leonard to retire from Boxing.

Intercranial Hemorrhages. This is a ruptured blood vessel within the skull. Blood pouring into the skull creates pressure against the brain; and thus, compresses and destroys brain tissue. Intercranial Hemorrhages are caused by the brain crashing against the inside of the skull. Most fatalities in the Boxing ring are from Intercranial Hemorrhages and from their resulting complications.

Concussions. A concussion is a temporary impairment of brain function. A severe concussion is a knock out (a loss of consciousness). A moderate concussion is a loss of balance and a minor concussion is being dizzy and confused. Concussions can cause axons (cords that join brain cells) to become twisted, damaged and torn; thus, disrupted communication between brain cells.

Dementia Pugilistica. More commonly known as "Punch Drunk", it is a syndrome found in 17% of retired professional boxers. It is signified by slurred speech and a loss of coordination and is the result of cumulative trauma to the head.

Cavum Septum Pellucidum. The human brain has two large halves. Repeated blows to the head slowly causes a cave like space to grow between the two halves of the brain. This space between the two parts of your brain can cause slurred speech, reduced motor control, and muscular weakness.

Sparring is an essential component to learning how to Box. There are multiple ways to train in order to functionalize your Boxing skills. There are many different sparring methods and doing a full power sparring session is just one way.

When training a dangerous Martial Art such as Boxing, you want to attain the skill without allowing the learning process to injure and destroy you at the same time.

There are numerous drills students can do to learn proper timing and distancing while still maintaining a high level of safety.



MISTAKE 56- Thinking That Making Mistakes is Always Wrong

You can make any mistake: you can drop your hands, throw a sloppy jab and bring your elbow up, or you can throw big wide looping hooks.

You can make any mistake as long as it is done by conscious choice.

For example, you throw a jab with the elbow out in the hope your training partner will see it and counter attack, so that you can then re-counter his counter attack.

As long as it is purposeful and you are using it as a set up for your attack, you can make any mistake, technical flaw, or postural error that you like.



MISTAKE 57- Chin Up

A common problem is that people keep their chin up when they spar. You need to keep your chin down.



Keeping your chin down protects your nose. If you get hit, you want to minimize the amount of damage you take on. By keeping your chin down, your nose will be further protected as the bridge of your nose will be vertical to the ground. When you keep your chin up, the point of your nose sticks straight out and the bridge of your nose is on a slant. Because the profile of your nose is so pronounced at this angle, your nose will surely break if you get hit straight on.



As well, your chin is further protected if you keep it down. The reason you want to protect your chin is that your chin acts like a lever and when it gets hit, it turns your head like a spinning top. Your brain sloshes around inside your skull and smacks against one side, bounces off, and smacks against the other side. This could lead to a concussion, which is basically a bruise on the brain. By tucking your chin in as you fight, if you get hit, the lever is then much shorter. Your chin is closer to the pivot point, your spine. And thus, it is much more difficult to turn your head via your chin if your chin is tucked.

You can experiment with this. VERY CAREFULLY, push and pull on your chin and on the top of your head with the chin down and then with the chin up. DO THIS VERY CAREFULLY. You'll find that your neck is much stronger and much more stable with your chin down.

MISTAKE 58- Thinking That All Punches in a Combination Need to Land

A common illusion is that people think that all of their punches in a combination need to land. This is only possible if you have a completely exhausted opponent who can not keep his hands up and who can not move out of the way.

Because of heavy bag training and due to focus mitt training, we have a tendency to believe that all of our punches will land perfectly each time. This is actually very rare. Training on heavy bags and doing focus mitt drills are fantastic for attaining proper form, perfecting accuracy, correcting distance, and for building stamina. Unfortunately, heavy bag training and focus mitt training provide an unrealistic sensation for the athlete where every punch of every combo lands perfectly. You get a knockout each time. The truth is, when you start sparring, very few punches actually land.

A combination attack is a finely orchestrated tactic where typically it is the final punch of the combo that lands on target. The first punch of a combination will be a false attack.

A false attack is a type of fake attack. A false attack looks like a real punch and is fully executed as a normal punch, but it purposefully falls short of the target. You are purposefully too far away when you launch a false attack. You would use a false attack to disguise your advancing step so that you are in range for your second and third punches.

As well, people will evade, block, and parry most punches; so, most of your punches will not land on target.

It is important to shadow box, not only because it helps you perfect your form, but also because it helps you get used to missing your target.



MISTAKE 59- Thinking that Singular Attacks are Easy to Land

A single attack means that I'm going to throw a single punch without trying to disguise it in any way.

The irony of the singular attack is that although it is the easiest to execute it is the most difficult type of attack to land successfully.

To land a singular attack successfully, you need excellent timing, great accuracy, a keen awareness of your opponent and a precise measure of your distance. As well as great speed and a strong defense of his countering attempts.

This is because singular attacks are the easiest type of attack to defend and thus, they are the easiest type of attack to counter.

Singular attacks - people think they are the most simple, but, really, they are the most complex. Landing singular attacks - sometimes this is called "pot shooting" - is a demonstration of an expert boxer.

MISTAKE 60- Thinking There is Only One Way to Do Something

I have had 5 different people teach me how to box and each one of them has taught me how to throw the jab differently. They are all right. None of them are wrong.

There is only correct technique applied to a specific problem. In other words, use the right tool for the right job.

For every technique in martial arts, there will be a dozen variations on how to execute it. It is important for the practitioner to keep an open mind and understand the benefits and the disadvantages of each method.

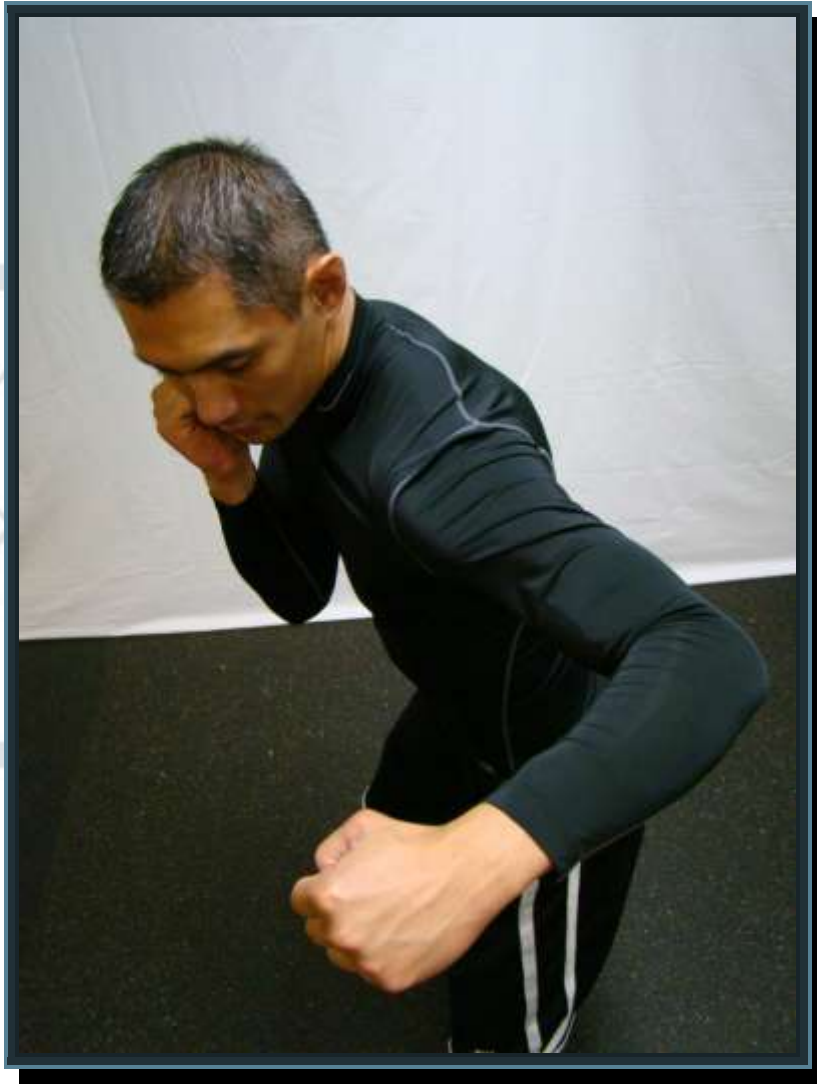
Having different tools in your tool box keeps your game unpredictable and adaptable. Do not dismiss a new way of doing something just because it is different than what your original instructor taught you.



MISTAKE 61- Hooks: Shoulder Leading the Hand

Many people throw hooks with their shoulder leading their hand. This is a very dangerous, and unfortunately, very common mistake.

If you throw a hook with your shoulder leading your hand, you will undoubtedly injure your shoulder over time. And become a person who “used to” study martial arts.



Stand up and pretend to hug a big tree. This is the perfect position for your shoulder when you throw a hook.

Feel how your shoulders are fully protected with the pectoral muscles and the anterior deltoid muscles of the front of the shoulder. See how your shoulder is behind your hand.



Now from the tree hugging position, pull your hands back like you are now trying to hug the side of a building. See how your shoulder comes forward and your shoulder is now leading your hand.

This shoulder position is how most people throw a hook. Note how your hands can not go back any further. Note also how your shoulders are at their maximum range of motion here.

If you were to apply force to your hand right now, and were to try and hit something, the oppositional force from the impact would shoot your hand straight back and would stretch out your shoulder joint which could potentially injure your shoulder.

Hug a tree when you throw your hook. Keep your hand leading ahead of your shoulder during the rotation.



MISTAKE 62- Fist Not Directly In Front of Your Forearm

Do a push up on your knuckles. This is the perfect position for your fist as you punch.

Note how your last 3 knuckles, your middle finger knuckle, your ring finger knuckle and your pinkie finger knuckle line up directly in front of your forearm. When many people punch, they wind up applying force to the wrong parts of the fist which can cause injury.



Regardless of whether it's a hook, upper cut or straight punch you're throwing, make sure your fist is directly in front of your forearm.

MISTAKE 63- Thinking Pessimistically

In martial arts, as in life, everything is an opportunity. You are either creating your own opportunities with strategies and tactics or you are recognizing the opportunities directly before you.

If he is only defending then this allows you to create your own opportunity and set him up with a tactful combination attack that will create an opening for a final finishing blow.

If he is attacking you, the opportunity to counter attack him is right in the open for you.

It's like in Star Trek, when the Enterprise fires its Photon torpedoes, they have to drop their shields the moment they fire.

When someone launches a punch to you, they will open up one side of their face and one side of their body to extend their arm for the strike.

Unfortunately, people do not see the opportunity; they only see the problem that is their partner's strike.



MISTAKE 64- Competing With Your Training Partner

If you want something in life, give it away. If you want love and respect offer love and respect to those around you and it will come back to you.

If you want a perfect left hook, teach it to a class mate that is less developed than you and you will have a deeper understanding of the technique.

As you teach it to them, you will teach it to yourself a second time. Through the questions they will ask you, it will force you to dig deeper through your knowledge of the technique to answer them.

Many people are too fearful of teaching others what they know because they are scared that they will use the information against them and make them look weak or insignificant.

This is a common disease in most martial arts academies.

I teach so I can get better. I teach my students all of my attacks so they can counter me. And from their counters I learn to make my attacks better and less perceivable.

My students are my training partners. Many of my students are better than me in skill and expertise only because I teach them openly and sincerely. I want all of my training partners to be better than me, know more than me, and to teach me.

Imagine how good I would be if I were training everyday with people who surpassed me in knowledge and skill. My role as Head Instructor would only be to lead, to be the hub of the wheel, to offer direction to the team.

If you want something in life give it away. Teach to learn and teach to improve.

MISTAKE 65- Hitting Too Hard When Sparring

People tend to hit too hard when sparring.

How hard should you launch your attacks? The right answer at my school is, "as hard enough as it takes for him to defend it."

I call this the "motivational force".

It's just enough force for you to motivate him to defend.

If you are throwing your jab at 20% power and he still defends it, then great. Fantastic. You can set him up and counter attack him with a jab thrown at 20% power.

If you launch a jab at 20% power and he lets you rattle it off of his forehead, then he's not concerned enough. So turn it up a bit.

Everyone is different. And thus, you need to augment your power output for each person. Guys weighing 300lbs should be able to spar with 135lb guys and have a



tactical, interactive sparring session filled with fakes, counter attacks, cunning tactics and innovative combination punches.

Martial arts is all about control. Control of yourself. Control of your movements and your power output. Control of your arms and legs to move in a specific way at a specific time.

Unfortunately, people see martial arts as a way to control and manipulate someone else. This common falsehood only depletes the true value of studying martial arts.

Spar with control and execute your punches only with enough force to motivate your training partner to defend and the pure brilliance and creative magic inherent in martial arts will come alive for you.

MISTAKE 66- Not Changing Your Game

Always give him something different.

A common mistake is that people do the same thing again and again.

Often this is out of habit- it's what they've always done. They do it because that's all they know - the only answer to the hook is to block it. They discover what works for them and they want to keep on using what works. Other times, we are completely unaware that we are doing the same things again and again.

Habits, in life and in fighting, are sometimes unconscious. This is where we need our training partners, to see our habits and tell us verbally or non-verbally – i.e., sparring - about our habits and how we are acting predictably.

In martial arts we look for patterns to set up our attacks. If our opponent always blocks the hook, we can fake the hook to bait the block and then throw a real attack down the middle where there is now an opening.

Always do something different. Change your stance, lower your hands (yes, you can drop your hands), cover, block, throw a soft meaningless jab and then snap one out.

Always change things up. Never be predictable.



MISTAKE 67- Fakes: Not Selling It

The mistake people make with fakes is that they just throw the fake out hoping their opponent will buy it and then they launch their real attack. Most of the time, the guy doesn't buy the fake and the real attack is easily defended.

Faking is like selling.

You have to give the guy a taste of it first. When you go to buy a car, the salesman wants to give you a taste of the car, "Go ahead, take it for the test drive." He wants you feel as if you already own the car. When you buy a shirt, the salesman wants you to try on the shirt. He wants you to feel as if you already own the shirt.

Once you've had a taste of it, the chances of you buying it are much higher.

Of course, sales people will tell you of how people walk in right off the street and they'll buy a car straight away, no test drive. And this is true for fighting as well, you can throw out a fake, straight up and the person will buy it. But this is rare.

To enhance your success rate with fakes give him a taste first. Give him a taste of the real attack before you fake it.

Throw a real jab, get him to parry it. Throw him another real jab, he'll parry it again. Now fake the jab, he'll parry it, and before his hand touches your hand, change the jab into a hook to the side of his face that is now open due to his parry attempt on your fake attack.

If you just throw out the fake right away, with no real attacks to give him a taste of, he may not parry it, he may not be intimidated enough.

MISTAKE 68 – Thinking that Speed is Just Moving Fast

Speed is not just being able to move your hand as fast as possible. In fact, movement speed has a minimal effect on fighting. To illustrate, if you gathered 50 people in a room, ranging from college athletes to small children and measured their hand speed, there would not be a discernable difference between the fastest person and the slowest person.

Speed, or Response Time, is made up of 3 components (and this is true for all sports-football, basketball, hockey - not just fighting):

Stimulus Recognition - identifying a left hook, seeing a football in the air.

Decision Making - making the decision to block the left hook, making the decision to run 30 feet to catch the football.

Movement Time - doing the physical movement of blocking the hook, physically sprinting for the ball.



When people think of speed, they think only of movement time - the time between the initiation of the movement and the completion of the movement. They focus solely on the physical act of doing the movement. Because of this, many athletes will focus on doing hand clapping push-ups and jumping on and off boxes to make themselves faster.

While this is important, it is only *one* aspect of the response time formula. Response time is measured from the onset of the initiation of the stimulus up until the completion of the movement.

Reaction time is the time it takes your brain to see the stimulus and then decide what to do. Reaction Time is the amalgamation of the first 2 components of the speed tripod.

Response time is the combined time of your brain and your muscles reacting. Response time is the combination of reaction time and movement time.

To really become “faster” you need to work on 3 things- seeing it, choosing it, doing it

MISTAKE 69- Having Weak Abdominal Muscles

Your abs are the # 1 most important muscle group for punching power.

What I'm referring to is all the muscles from your rib cage to your hips. From your six pack (rectus abdominus), to the muscles of your ribs (intercostals), and your sides (obliques), to your back (erector spinae), to the muscle that stabilizes your spine (transverse abdominus).

Your abs need to be like concrete and your shoulders and your hips need to move as a single solid unit. Your abs complete the chain of force from the floor to your legs to your hips, through your abs into your shoulders and then into your arm and fist. This kinetic pathway is the secret to punching power

MISTAKE 70- Closing Your Eyes

Most beginners understandably close their eyes when punches come flying at their face. However, you want to get used to seeing punches coming at you and you want to learn to keep your eyes open as naturally as possible. Blinking each time a punch comes at you will make you completely vulnerable to attack.

It is no surprise that we close our eyes when punches come at us. Closing our eyes whenever movement is detected is genetically ingrained in us through evolution. It has kept us safe for thousands of years.

A great way to get used to seeing punches is to hold focus mitts for a training partner. Holding focus mitts is a safe and easy way to get accustomed to having things fly towards your face.



MISTAKE 71- Thinking That Safe Distance Only Refers to His Reach

A common misconception is that people believe they are safe when they are outside of a person's reach.

There are actually a few factors that need to be taken into account when referring to safe distance. They are:

His speed - If he is blistering fast and you cannot see his punches, you'll need to move back further away from him. This will give you more time to deal with his attacks.

Your observational skills- If you are new to boxing and you have a difficult time perceiving punches, then it would be wise to move back further away from him to give you more time to see his attacks.

His footwork- If he is exceptionally agile and can change directions with his feet really quickly and he can charge forward smoothly and briskly, then you'll have to stay further away from him or else you get caught with an attack.

Being outside of the full extension of his longest tool (his jab or straight right) doesn't necessarily mean you're safe. Also include his speed, his footwork and your ability to perceive punches when factoring in safe distance.

MISTAKE 72- Just Stepping Into Range

When you are just out of range to hit your opponent and you decide to bridge the gap to get closer to him so your punches can land, a common error many people make is that they do not throw a punch, to distract their opponent, as they are advancing.

If you walk directly into range, your opponent will simply hit you. When you close the gap, you need to lead with fire power. Make it so that he is occupied by your jab and he'll never see you stepping in.

The jab will just be a false attack. The jab's not going to land, you're too far away, but he may not know that. The jab, therefore, is a diversionary tactic so that you can get in closer and achieve the proper distance to land your real attack.



MISTAKE 73- Staying in Within His Range

You want to be in range to hit your training partner only when you are attacking or when you are counter attacking. If you are not attacking or counter attacking your opponent, then you are staying safely out of range or you are tying him up in close range.

If you stay within range for him to hit you with his long range tools - his jab or his straight right - or if you are playing around in midrange - upper cuts, hooks - it makes no difference how good your defences are or how fast your parrying is, you are going to get hit.

It is far too dangerous to be within his range. You want to be just out of distance so you have as much time as possible to defend his attacks, and yet close enough so that you can attack with a single step.

MISTAKE 74- Putting Too Much Emphasis on Defense

People see martial arts as either offensive techniques or defensive techniques. Take the term "self defense". This is a complete misnomer when it comes to learning how to fight.

Fighting, martial arts, is all about offense.

It is either offense or counter offense, that's it. Defense is simply a component of counter attacking. Understand that it is block and attack, not just block. It is cover and attack, not just cover. Being purely defensive will get you killed.

MISTAKE 75- Not Looking For Patterns

As martial artists we are always looking for patterns. Patterns and habits in ourselves so that we can dissolve them and patterns in our opponents so that we can take advantage of them.

Patterns enable us to predict the future. If your opponent throws a jab at you and you defend with the exact same manoeuvre in the exact same way each time, then it's only a matter of time before he figures out a way to counter your defense.

If your training partner always throw a 3 punch combo consisting of a jab, a straight right, and a left hook, to the exact same targets with the exact same tempo and with the exact same speed and degree of force, then it will become easy to counter attack him; but, first you need to recognize the pattern.

Always look for repetitive actions in your training partners. These are opportunities for you to capitalize on.



MISTAKE 76- Moving Back Too Much While Defending

People often step back far too much when defending a punch. This mistake will create a lost opportunity to counter attack immediately.

When stepping back to defend a strike, it is important that you step back just enough to make your opponent miss. You want to create enough distance so that you make him miss, but not so much distance that you are too far away to hit him immediately with a counter attack.



Due to the great distance created by the long defensive step back, you'll now have to take a long step forward in order to counter attack him. This long step will take more time and your opponent will have brought his hands back up to his face to cover and the opportunity will have been lost entirely. You want to retreat with a short enough step so that you can quickly return fire after you've made him miss.



MISTAKE 77- Combination: Each Punch Thrown With 100% Power

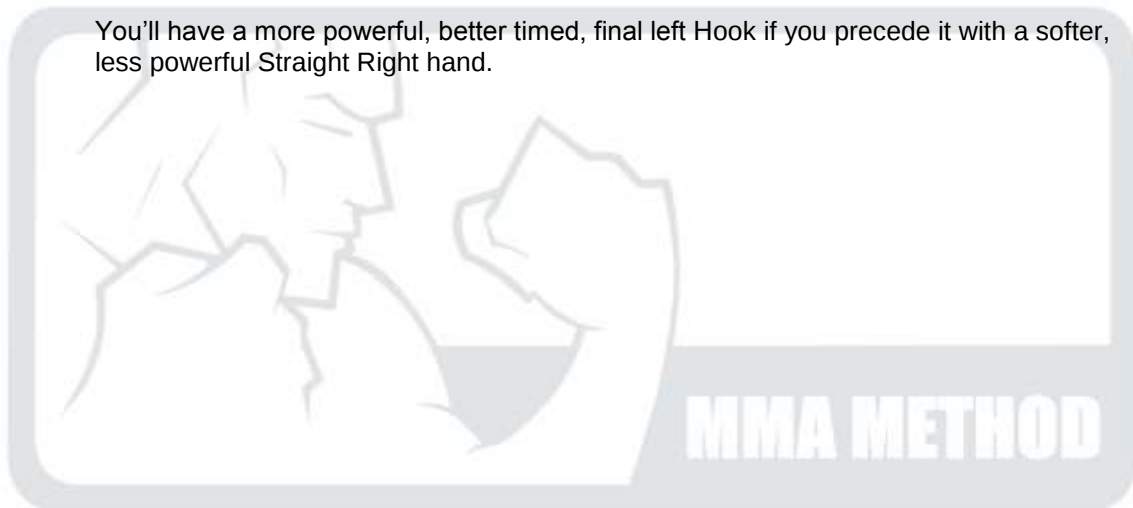
A common mistake is to think that you need to throw with full power for each punch in a multiple punch combination. Ultimately, this will make for a less than successful combination attack.

Typically, in a combination attack, it is only the last punch in the combination that is meant to land; and thus, it is the last punch that is meant to have full power.

All the other punches are merely diversionary motions thrown as a part of an overall strategy to leave your opponent open for a final finishing blow.

Let's take the example of a straight left - straight right - straight left combo. If you first throw a super forceful right hand, you'll have problems reversing the rotational momentum of your shoulders and hips to throw a powerful left Hook.

You'll have a more powerful, better timed, final left Hook if you precede it with a softer, less powerful Straight Right hand.



About the Author



Ritchie Yip is a professional martial arts instructor and is the owner of the Infighting Mixed Martial Arts Academy located in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has been studying martial arts since 1997.

Ritchie has trained under such highly esteemed professionals as:

- **Lhamsuren “Lhama” Naidan**, the Mongolian 2000 Olympic team wrestling coach and a current coach for the SFU Wrestling Team
- Former Commonwealth Title Holder And former IBO Title holder **Tony “Kid Fire” Pep**
- National Level Boxing Coach **Peter Hogg**
- Ritchie has studied under world renown martial arts expert **Mark Mikita** since 1998
- Ritchie is a high ranking student of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, having earned his Brown Belt from **Mike Lee** in April of 2008.

