

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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(March 2004)

PART 2

Footwork for strikers

Abstract

In part 1 we looked at “information processing” to give us a better understanding of what goes through our opponents mind, this in turn should help us better plan our offensive strategies. In part 2 we are going to look at the footwork used by strikers, in particular

- 1) Why we use footwork.
- 2) Some basic footwork down falls, which can lead to anticipation by your opponent.
- 3) A rear leg lunge and how it can be used to help to decrease the likelihood of anticipation by your opponent and increase the odds of landing clean strikes.

WHY WE USE FOOTWORK

When facing off against your opponent, a safety distance is usually maintained between you and you opponent, this safety distance designed to keep your opponent just out of striking range. If you were to strike your opponent or if your opponent were to strike you, footwork would be needed to bridge the gap, as well as bridging the gap, the appropriate footwork will also increase the impact of your strikes (see article “What do all martial arts have in common” sub heading “Our bodies mass and how it effects force application”). Footwork is also used to move your body out of the way of oncoming strikes, as well as keeping you mobile, making it harder for your opponent to strike you.

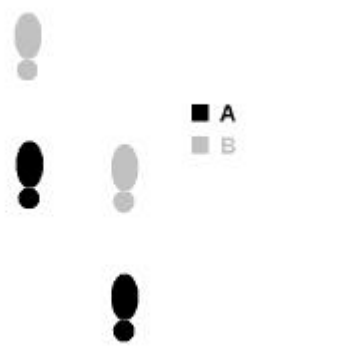
In this article we are going to look at the footwork that is used to bridge the gap between you and your opponent and/or increase striking power.

FOOTWORK VARIATIONS

The front lunge

The front lunge is designed to accelerate your body directly at your opponent when your opponent is standing in front of you.

Feet A assume position of feet B

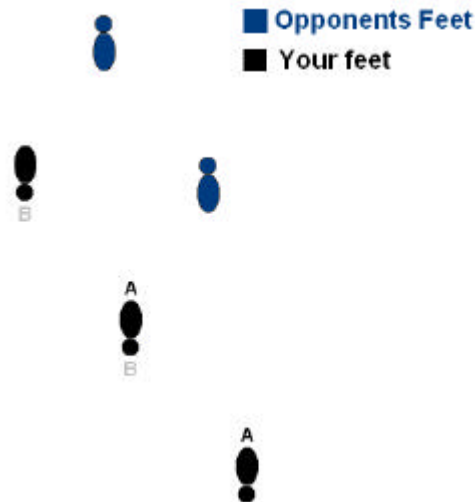


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The angle lunge

The angle lunge is designed to accelerate your body forwards and to the left of your opponent on approximately a 45-degree angle (when in an orthodox fighting stance). Initially your front foot is aligned with your opponent's centerline of gravity, after executing your angle lunge your rear leg is generally aligned with your opponent's centerline of gravity.

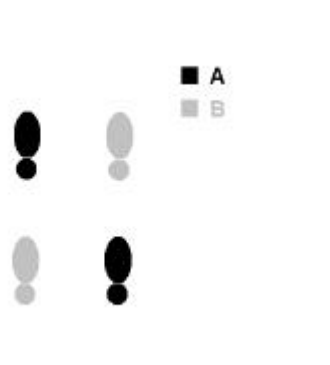
Feet A assume position of feet B



The switch

Keeping your body weight slightly forwards, the switch is designed to quickly change your fighting stance from "orthodox" to "southpaw". Switching offensively enables you to throw a powerful kick from your original lead leg.

Feet A assume position of feet B



The blitz

The blitz is designed to generate momentum before executing a front or an angle lunge.

A common down fall with an angle lunge, switch & blitz.

(Explanations are all executed from an orthodox-fighting stance)

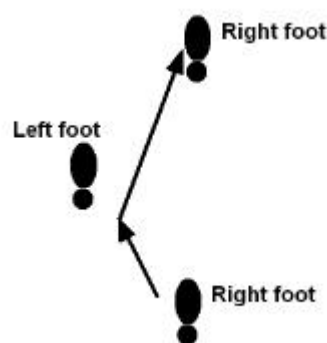
When executing an angle lunge, the drive off of the back foot pushes your body forwards and to the left of your opponent (approximately 45 degrees). The problem with this lunge is if you are pushing off of the back foot (right foot), the striking technique will be delivered with the right arm or leg. If your opponent's perception skills have developed enough, an angle lunge is a give away as to which side of the body your strike is coming from, this lessens the stress on your opponents "information processing skills".

When executing a switch, the change over in stance is designed to deliver a powerful kick or knee off of your original lead leg (left leg). Once again if your opponent's perception skills have developed enough, the switch is a give away as to which side of the body your strike is coming from, this lessens the stress on your opponents "information processing skills".

When executing a blitz, the drive off of the back foot (right foot) sets up momentum, which is then carried over to our front or angle lunge. Whether blitzing into a front lunge or blitzing into an angle lunge the result is the same, If you drive off of the right foot the strike will come from the right side of your body. Once again if your opponent's perception skills have developed enough, the blitz is a give away as to which side of the body your strike is coming from, this lessens the stress on your opponents "information processing skills".

As strikers, what can we do to stop telegraphing which side of the body our strikes are coming from and how can we take a more random approach to our footwork which should in turn put more pressure on our opponents information processing skills and help increase the odds of landing clean strikes?

THE REAR LEG ANGLE LUNGE



A rear leg angle lunge is designed to initially project your body weight towards your left foot then with a quick change of direction you project your body weight to your right. Your initial drive off of your right foot places your body weight directly over your left foot (your right foot travels 2/3 the distance between its starting point and your left foot). Once your body weight is over your left foot, you then drive off of your left foot projecting your body weight forwards and to the right (approximately 45 degrees).

Our rear leg angle lunge when used on its own is just like our regular angle lunge, the difference being our regular angle lunge projects your body weight forwards and to the left where our rear leg angle lunge projects your body weight forwards and to the right. Our rear leg angle lunge really comes into its own when it is properly mastered and incorporated with our regular footwork allowing us to strike competently off of both sides of the body, with minimal telegraphing.

EXAMPLES OF HOW TO INCORPORATE OUR REAR LEG ANGLE LUNGE INTO OUR REGULAR FOOTWORK

Angle lunge/outside thigh kick

Our regular angle lunge projects our body weight forwards and to the left of our opponent (approximately 45 degrees), setting us up for a right leg outside thigh kick.

Angle lunge/rear leg lunge/inside thigh kick

We start off with a regular lunge with the intention of throwing a right leg outside thigh kick, if our opponent perceives it to be a right leg outside thigh kick and starts executing a roll check, we then change direction as soon as our body weight is over our left leg projecting our body weight to the right (approximately 45 degrees), then striking our opponents inside thigh with our left leg

Switch/inside thigh kick

Our switch changes our stance from orthodox to southpaw with our body weight slightly forwards, as soon as we are grounded and stable, our body weight should be over our right leg, now we can quickly deliver an inside thigh kick with the left leg.

Switch/rear leg lunge/outside thigh kick

We start off switching our stance with the intentions of throwing an inside thigh kick, if our opponent perceives our strike to be an inside thigh kick and starts executing a cross check, we then start bringing our left leg towards our right leg then project our body weight towards our opponent and to the left (approximately 45 degrees) delivering an outside thigh kick with our right leg.

Blitz/outside thigh kick

Our blitz generates momentum, which then accelerates our body into our angle lunge resulting in a greater force of impact for our right leg outside thigh kick.

Blitz/rear leg angle lunge/inside thigh kick

We start off with a blitz with the intention of striking our opponent with a right leg outside thigh kick. We raise our right foot and plant it, driving our body forwards and to the left of our opponent (approximately 45 degrees), if our opponent perceives our strike to be an outside thigh kick and starts to execute a roll check, we then change direction as soon as our body weight is over our left leg projecting our body weight forwards and to the right (approximately 45 degrees), striking our opponents inside thigh with our left leg.

In the above examples we used an inside and an outside thigh kick to put together some realistic and effective combinations which should give you a better understanding of a rear leg angle lunge and how to incorporate it with our regular footwork. Although leg kicks were used to help explain the above examples, the principles will be the same for all strikes that have been set up with the above mentioned footwork.

Now when we use footwork to set up our strikes we can competently strike off of both sides of our body with minimal telegraphing of our intended strikes, this more random approach not only puts more pressure on our opponents perception skills, it has also in effect doubled our striking combinations.

There are 3 effective ways of incorporating a rear leg angle lunge into our regular footwork.

- 1) We can use our rear leg angle lunge in the same way that is described in the above combinations. Your opponent perceives your intentions, offers a defense, you perceive their defense and switch to a rear leg angle lunge striking with the opposite leg (to do this effectively your skill development has to be of a reasonable standard).
- 2) We can use our regular footwork when striking until our opponent starts to get comfortable about what they perceive and then start to anticipate (e.g. starting to check competently and striking off of the check). Once they start to anticipate we then use our regular footwork as a fake to set up our rear leg angle lunge and our intended strike.
- 3) We can use our rear leg angle lunge along with our regular footwork to take a random approach right from the word go as we did in skill development part 1. This will,
 - A) Make it harder for your opponent to anticipate.
 - B) Increase the pressure on our opponent's perception skills, resulting in less time for our opponent's decision making and movement execution skills.

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