

Student Fencing Guide

By Alfred Louie

Objective: The objective of fencing is to hit your opponent and not get hit.

Philosophy: To realize this objective, I rely on fencing principles, styles and skills. As a result I hope to build successful fencers' of character, honor, integrity and respect. The fundamental objective of fencing isn't to win as many medals as you can or physical dominance over your opponents. However, the objective is to grow as a human being with a level of conscience, compassion and creativity. This will be brought out through the combat experience. I hope to transcend to you my level of understanding that has benefited me in school, career and life.

Principles:

- I) Based on Force (**F**)=mass (**m**) * acceleration (**a**), is acceleration between states (static and/or dynamic) directly related to fencing power. Since you cannot change your mass or the weapon's mass. You can only increase your acceleration by efficiency. Consequently, increasing your strength.

- II) Efficient fencing is comprised on energy management, strategy and execution
 - a) Energy management is doing the action using the least amount of energy and ease that will realize your objective.
 - b) Strategy minimizes unnecessary actions. It allows a fencer think of the most efficient action to realize the objective. In addition, strategy will increase probability of success.
 - c) Execution is doing the action in less time and with minimum energy. Simultaneously, allowing the fencer to be in a position to strategize or execute the next action without jeopardy. Actions that do not gain you a point and results in you losing a point are not efficient.

- III) The process to realize the objective is by:
 - a) **Observation:** Know your own abilities as well as your opponents. Decipher body language and style to anticipate your opponent's strategy. Be aware of timing, distances, cues, positioning.
 - b) **Strategy:** Based on your observation develop the best and efficient strategy for offensive and defense. Be creative.
 - c) **Execution:** Based on your observation and strategy execute your ideas. Observation and strategy does not fulfill your objective. However execution without the two will be inefficient.

Style: Most commonly taught in introductory fencing are American and French techniques. People say there isn't a distinguishable style in modern fencing. I believe that is not so much as a technique but a philosophical and principal related style. The student should learn as many styles as possible. Thus enabling the student to identify any opponent's style and knowing its advantages and disadvantages. My style is a mesh of French, Italian and Russian. It is a good idea to have thorough understanding of the different styles. It is a key to development in creating a unique style and technique that best fits the student's physical abilities and mental character.

Lesson Outline

Beginner: The goal of this stage to develop solid and efficient execution of the “high-line” box zones. It will also develop observation skills. This method is based on classical fencing forms of engagement.

- I) Execution confidence and efficiency
- II) Execution based on cues and signals. Learning to decipher elementary body and blade language.
- III) Fundamentals include awareness, form and relaxation

Intermediate: The goal of this stage is develop strategic thinking as well as combinations of elementary actions. Thus increasing the fencer’s offensive and defensive ranges.

- I) “Low-line” box actions
- II) 2nd intention actions
- III) Compound actions (offensive and defensive)
- IV) Counter –attacks, preparation, fleche-ing

Advance: The goal of this stage is to develop a fencing rhythm, sense of style, timing and distance. In addition explore more modern fencing techniques.

- I) “Outside” the box actions
- II) Flicking (front, back and side)
- III) In-fighting (prieme, angulation, grip change)
- IV) Absence of blade (high line and low line potentials)
- V) Tempo (fast, slow and matching tempos)
- VI) Execution strength (invincible execution of elementary offensive and defense)

Expert: The goal of this stage is to streamline everything above and become more efficient. At this stage, the body is at a level of execution that if can do what the mind thinks. This is where the mental and psychological dueling begins.

- I) Psychological warfare
- II) Archetype identification and profiling
- III) Intimidation
- IV) Illusion of weakness and false security
- V) Understanding cycles, vibrations, and auras.
- VI) Communication
- VII) Ability to play different roles, characters and personalities

Fencing Lesson I: Fencing Footwork

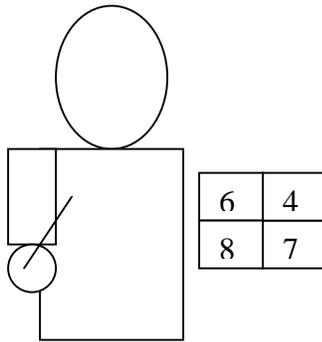
Footwork

- On guard stance:** Start on an “L” heel to heel. Then take one step out (Shoulder width or wider). Squat down so you legs are bended. Make sure you front knee is directly over your ankle and your rear knee is pointing in the same line as the rear foot. Front leg is in line with the front foot. Pointing in the same direction. Balance yourself. Make sure you center of gravity is between your legs. Butt in. Back straight. Shoulders level and relaxed. Fencing arm’s elbow is approximately a “horn’s” distance away. Rear arm down and away from your body. Look straight ahead. On guard in 6 line.
- Simultaneous Advance:** Small advances. Minimize the height you are lifting your foot in order to make an advance. Work on increasing the acceleration between 2 advances. Do not rock your body. Remain at the same height as the on guard. Do not rise up and down when making your advance. Maintain the same distance between your feet as in your on guard after you completed your advance.
- Retreat:** Back leg first and followed by the front leg. Work on increasing the acceleration between 2 retreats. Do not rock your body. Remain at the same height as in on guard. Do not rise up and down when making your retreat. Maintain the same distance between your feet as in your on guard after you completed your retreat.
- Short Lunge:** Land as soon as possible. Land softly. Simultaneous extension. Do not hang in the air.
- ¾ Lunge:** Land as soon as possible. Simultaneous extension. Do not hang in the air.
- Full Lunge:** Hit before you feet hits the ground.
- Advance lunge:** Short advance, ¾ lunge. Minimize the time between advance and lunge. Immediately lunge after you a completed an advance.
- Lunge forward recovery:** After a standard lunge, recover by moving your rear foot back into on guard position.
- La pel:** Use your front foot and make a solid tap with the ball of your foot. Do not kick up. Make it short and sharp.
- La pel lunge:**
- Ballestra lunge:**
- Small advance ballestra lunge:** Small advance and then “Jump”. Once you completed your ballista, immediately ¾ lunge.
- La pel ballista lunge:** La pel then “Jump” lunge. Once you completed your ballista, immediately ¾ lunge.
- Patinando lunge:** Half advance. Stomp with your rear foot and lunge.
- Advance Patinando lunge:**
- Fleche:** Lean on your front leg and push off with your front leg. Cross over with your rear leg. Hit before you land with your rear leg.
- Advance fleche:** Small advance and FLECHE!
- Retreat fleche:** Retreat and FLECHE!
- ¾ Lunge forward recovery fleche:** ¾ lunge; forward recovery; and FLECHE! Maintain small height when forward recovering.
- Jump back:** Jump back to avoid the attack
- Side step:** Side out with your back leg to avoid the attack
- Side lunge:** Lunge to the side at a 20-30 degree angle.

Fencing Lesson II: Handwork

Handwork

- On guard thrust:** Relax your arms and shoulder. Smooth extension into the target. Keep your arm “broken”. Do not raise your hand too much when you extend. Angulate your wrist.
- Advance thrust:** Simultaneous advance and extend.
- ¾ lunge thrust:** Simultaneous thrust lunge
- Advance ¾ lunge thrust:** Small advance and immediate lunge.
- Full lunge thrust:** Full leg and arm extension. Use your momentum to “bounce” yourself back to on guard.
- Advance full lunge thrust:** Small advance and full extension and lunge.
- Engagement:** Engage the blade and be sure you are “inside”
- Disengagement:** Disengage with a circle as small as a quarter. Return back to the same position you were originally at.
- Beat:** Small and sharp. Try to minimize the movement of the blade. Beat at the middle or top of the blade.
- Counter beat:** Disengage and beat the blade.
- Faint:** A short thrust. Do not extend all the way. Faint approximately 1-2 inches from the blade.



Fencing Lesson III: High line Offense

High line Offense (with an advance, with a lunge, with an advance lunge, la pel lunge; ballista lunge; patinando lunge, advance fleche)

4 line Attack

- Straight attack
- Beat 4; Hit 4 attack
- Disengage 4; hit 4 attack
- Double disengage 4; hit 4 attack
- Beat 4; disengage 4; hit 4 attack
- Beat 4; double disengage 4; hit 4 attack
- Faint 4; hit 6 attack
- Faint 4; Faint 6; hit 4 attack (1-2)
- Beat 4; 1-2; hit 4 attack

6 line Attack

- Straight attack
- Beat 6; hit 6 attack
- Disengage 6; hit 6 attack
- Double disengage 6; hit 6 attack
- Beat 6; disengage 6; hit 6 attack
- Beat 6; double disengage 6; hit 6 attack
- Beat 6; disengage 6; hit 6 attack
- Faint 6 hit 4 attack
- Faint 6 Faint 4 hit 6 attack (1-2)
- Beat 6; 1-2; hit 6 attack

Fencing Lesson IV: High line defense

High line defense (1 retreat, 2 retreats) in Italian and French Method

4-line parry (On guard on 6)

- Parry 4; riposte
- Parry 4; faint 4; hit 6 riposte
- Parry 4; faint 1-2; hit 4 riposte
- Parry 4; disengage 4; hit 4 riposte
- Parry 4; double disengage 4; hit 4 riposte
- Parry 4; Pull back; hit 4 riposte

6-line parry

- Parry 6; riposte (On guard on 6)
- Parry 6; faint 6; hit 4 riposte
- Parry 6; faint 1-2; hit 6 riposte
- Parry 6; disengage 6; hit 6 riposte
- Parry 6; double disengage 6; hit 6 riposte
- Parry 6; Pull back; hit 6 riposte