Martial Arts Speed Drills by Sensei J. Richard Kirkham B.Sc.

One of my dedicated readers of my Step by Step Learn Internal Energy Strikes printable ebook wrote in and requested drills to improve the speed of his strikes, his reaction time and his reactions.

The first thing we have to look at is what is meant by speed pertaining to martial arts and self–defense.

Obviously the simplest definition would be the amount of time it takes to get from the point of origin to the destination. There are many factors though to consider when discussing actual striking speed though. What I will do is address each issue of striking speed and give you a drill to help improve that facet of striking speed.

Relaxation

The more relaxed you are the faster you are and the less energy you use. For this you simply need to read, if you are not right now, my printable ebook Step by Step Learn Internal Energy Strikes. That in itself, will help you to hit harder than you'd ever thought possible.

Telegraphing

Telegraphing is a term used usually to mean the drawing back of a striking limb before motion towards the target begins. We will extend the definition to mean any type of motion before movement of the striking limb begins towards the target. Don't go skimming past this now. People think I'm fast but I'm not. I just spent a long time learning not to waste motion and it does take a while.

So let's try this exercise:

1. Stand in front of a mirror, hands at your sides with your feet parallel with each other. In other words just stand there.

2. Concentrate on your fist.

3. Extend your fist out in front of you leading with the fist only.

4. Now begin increasing the speed.

5. If you see or preferably feel any body part move before your fist, continue at that speed until your fist is moving first.

6. Do this until you can move your fist full speed without any flinch, eye movement, or previously moved body part giving away the fact you are about to strike.
7. Thus far your non−striking hand has been at your side. You may now begin your exercise again, this time raising your hand to a defensive position as you strike. Follow steps one through six.

8. So far you have not moved your feet. You may now begin stepping forward as you punch. Be sure to do sets stepping forward with both left and right foot. Follow steps one through six.

This same exercise can be used for any strike or kick. Make sure you lead with the body part that is striking first and concentrate on steps one through six replacing your fist with foot, knee, elbow, etc..

If you think you can beat someone and depend on just one strike you're nuts or you watch too much TV. Continue with this exercise until you can feel what an economical punch and kick feels like. Don't be satisfied with almost got it or just get bored and move on. I'm not that fast, but people think I am because I've spent years trimming down movements until there is no or as little as possible (just to keep my ego in check) wasted motion or telegraphing. So take this exercise seriously.

When you are comfortable with several angles of arm and leg attacks, begin the same procedure with combinations.

Arm and Leg Speed

Can leg and arm speed actually be increased?

Yes they can, however, I will warn you, that I am a firm believer in emulating a situation as closely as possible, therefore you must be warned that any of these martial arts speed drills can cause damage to your joints. I suggest doing these martial arts speed drills only if you are 18 or older and have consulted a physician. If you decide to do these speed drills or any other of my drills you are solely responsible for any short term and or long term injuries.

Empty Handed Speed Drill

Pick a punch or a kick

Execute that punch or kick as fast as you can for one minute with one limb.

Your goal is to attempt to increase the number of repetitions in one minute

Switch limbs and repeat.

Keep your elbows or knees slightly bent to help avoid injury.

See my warning above.

I recommend choosing techniques from different angle of attack such as jab, hook, body punch, inside to outside knifehand strike, front kick, roundhouse kick, hook kick, back kick.

Now (and even more dangerous to your joints) Add one to 2 ½ pound held hand weights and 1 to 2 ½ pound ankle weights.

My self−proven theory is that the additional resistance will initiate support from agonistic muscle groups (improve coordination and power) and force the primary muscle group to work that much harder to maintain speed. As fatigue sets in to the primary muscle group, the agonistic muscle groups aid more in the workload increasing coordination and by increasing coordination increasing power via the formula for kinetic energy 1/2MV2 (that is half mass times velocity squared)

Reaction Time

Reaction time is the result of a learned reflex usually based on visual stimuli. A learned reflex is a motion done repetitively enough that the command for that motion is moved to a part of the brain closer to the brain stem. You'll witness the same phenomena from factory workers who work on an assembly line. As they repeat their task, they become faster at it. Reaction time is, basically, very specific to the visual stimuli though I have noted increase in overall reflex speed by working on reactions to specific visual stimuli such as slipping, ducking, blocking, and striking.

Reaction Time for Blocking and Evading

1.This is easy.

2. Get a partner

3. Stand normal or in a particular stance
4. Have your partner slowly but economically execute a prechosen strike at you.

5. Block or evade the attacking technique with your prechosen method. No countering. You are working only on reaction time. Focus only on the block or evasive movement.
6. As your partner continues with the same attack you will begin to notice cues such as shoulder movements, eye movements, hip movements etc.. Feel free to mention these to your partner to help out both you and your partner, but those movements will eventually also increase your reaction time.
7. Now have your partner increase his or her speed to a point where you are slightly uncomfortable. Please be careful and use proper safety equipment. If you are afraid you will get hurt do not do this. Accept responsibility for your own actions.
8. Increase speed until your partner is going full speed or a speed your partner is certain he or she will not hurt you or until the set number of repetitions has been met. Try not to switch sides for a long time, but do an equal number on each side.

9. Now change your stance and repeat steps one through nine.

10. Now change the angle of attack with the same technique. Being a realistic self–defense instructor, I want you to be just as comfortable defending from behind you and to the side of you as in front of you. Don't skip this part. The same attack from a different side or from behind can feel quite different. Repeat steps one through 10.

Slipping and Ducking Drills

See my printable ebook Bringing The Martial Artist Out From Within for slipping and ducking drills.

Continuous Blocking Drill

See my printable ebook Bringing The Martial Artist Out From Within for Continuous Blocking Drill.

Offense Defense

See my printable ebook Bringing The Martial Artist Out From Within for Offense Defense.

Continuous Blocking Drill

See my printable ebook Bringing The Martial Artist Out From Within for Continuous Blocking Drill

Meet Fred

Along time ago (at least longer than I like to think) I built a human shaped practice dummy whom I called Fred. Here's what I used.

Mechanics one piece jump suit

Bib overalls

Judo gi

A spare box of old clothes

Three broom sticks which you could replace with schedule 40 PVC pipe if you want it a little tougher

Now I probably could have rigged a volley ball for the head but I didn't do that.

For what I have in mind take a piece of PVC pipe and melt one arm length end until it will simulate one arm being down at the dummy's side (nono the stuffed one)

Sow or duct tape the legs closed

Place the bent PVC pipe through the arms

Sow or duct tape the arms closed

Run the other two pieces of PVC through the legs

Attach them with duct tape or anything that is not pointy where they intersect.

Stuff some of the old clothes in the jump suit till it will retain a human shape.

Be sure to stuff clothes around the PVC or you might hurt your hands or feet.

Put the bib overalls over the jump suit.

Pad up the buttons to avoid an owee

Stuff more clothes in the jump suit until it's packed in tight.

Put the Judo top over the dummy's arms (yes the one stuffed with clothes)

Now you can either rig a way to put a head on (let me know how you do it) or hook it up to the ceiling or a pipe as I did.

I must admit hitting Fred in the groin full contact with rising front kicks was a great stress relieving experience after a hard day's work and knowing Fred was not actually feeling any pain.

Reaction Time With Strikes and Your Striking Dummy Fred

You can use your home made Fred striking dummy for lots of martial arts drills, but we are working on reaction time so here's what I want you to do:

Choose a striking technique.

Now spin Fred slowly.

Close your eyes.

Open your eyes.

See the opening and strike it.

Repeat until the set number of repetitions are completed.

Switch feet and repeat

Choose a new technique and repeat the procedure.

Now do two techniques and repeat the procedure.

Now instead of choosing a striking technique react to the opening with an appropriate technique for that opening following the same procedure above.

Now instead of choosing a striking technique react to the opening with at least two striking techniques for those openings created (notice the plural on openings do not strike in the same spot twice use high and low low and high to force your attacker to move his or her arms a great deal attempting to block) following the same procedure above.

Do not open and close your eyes in a rhythm or the same opening will always appear.

Fred may hit back so you may want eye protection, mouth piece, and a cup and supporter.

Also for improvement on focus and timing see my section on Building Your Own Sparring Partner in my ebook Bringing The Martial Artist Out From Within and my ebook Solo Martial Arts Drills

More on Reaction Time Partner Drill

Equipment Needed

Partner

Safety equipment for striking

Safety equipment for being struck

Procedure for Partner Striking Reaction Time Drill One

1. Stand in the stance of your choice.
2. Close your eyes.
3. While your eyes are closed your partner will assume a stance in or slightly out of your striking range

4. Your partner will give a predetermined signal such as snapping fingers, stomping foot. I prefer this over a verbal signal as it may aid you in reacting to a sound.
5. At the predetermined signal you will open your eyes.
6. Look for an opening based on your partner's stance.
7. Determine the best single striking technique to execute.
8. Execute your striking technique as quickly as possible but still ensure your partner's safety.
9. If you did not react instantly when you opened your eyes repeat steps one through eight with the same position and distance. Empty your mind. Although you know it is the same position you are still opening your eyes and reacting as quickly as possible upon first sight of the body position of your partner and therefore still improving visual reaction time and visual targeting.
10. Repeat steps one through nine having your partner change stances.
11. Continue until the predetermined number of repetitions has been achieved.
12. Now you change stances.
13. Repeat steps one through eleven.
14. Your partner now assumes stances at various body angles including behind you.
15. Repeat steps one through thirteen.
16. Your partner now simulates body positions from various strikes. Be certain proper distance for these strikes is kept.
17. Repeat steps one through thirteen.
18. Now react with two techniques
19. Repeat steps one through 17.

Reaction Time One Step Sparring Variation

See my ebook Bringing The Martial Artist Out From Within for a complete explanation of One Step Sparring

Follow my variation of one step sparring for realistic practice.

When your partner attacks with the technique of his or her choice react instantly.

If you notice any pauses whatsoever in your counter−attacks, repeat the same attack and counter−attack until there are NO pauses.

There is no end to variations and this mini−ebook will continue to grow. Although I have quoted other sources for some of the martial arts drills, this printable ebook is in and of itself a great training source. Thus far, with my readers support adding my link and even joining my partnership program free of charge, I have been able to offer free upgrades and free email consultations with my printable electronic books.

I'm Sensei J. Richard Kirkham B.Sc. and I thank you for your support.

Martial Arts Ebooks

Solo Martial Arts Drills for Training in Martial Arts by Yourself by Sensei J. Richard Kirkham B.Sc.

If you're like me, it's hard to find a martial arts training partner when you need one, but we still need to practice, to improve, to forge our bodies into weapons of defense for ourselves and our loved ones.

Review on line Solo Martial Arts Drills for Training in Martial Arts by Yourself by Sensei J. Richard Kirkham B.Sc.

Order on line on sale Solo Martial Arts Drills for only $9.00 with FREE upgrades and FREE email consultations. This price will soon go up to $19.00

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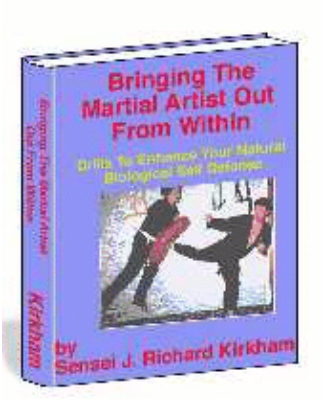
Bringing the Martial Artist Out From Within Self−Defense Drills to Enhance Your Own Biological Self−Defense Abilities



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What's that you already hit hard? Can you ever hit hard enough? What's that you don't think the book will help? You think you know everything about proper technique and physics already? Assumption will get you killed

Review on line **Step by Step Learn Internal Energy Strikes plus a bonus section Taking Strikes and Coming Back for More by Sensei J. Richard Kirkham B.Sc.**

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