

How to.... Hook

How to perform a hook (there are varieties front hand, back hand, shovel and classic).

A hook is performed by turning the core muscles and back, thereby swinging the arm, which is bent at an angle near or at 90 degrees, in a horizontal arc into the opponent. A hook is usually aimed at the chin, but it can also be used for body shots, especially to the liver. After impact the arm is returned quickly to the starting position. The power in a hook comes from the explosive rotation of the hips and shoulders allowing a large amount of bodyweight to be thrown behind the punch.

Classic Hook

The classic hook is thrown in a horizontal plane. At the finish of the punch, the left thumb is up, just as it was at the start of the punch. There is no twist of the fist as in delivering the left jab and cross. This is necessary for the proper protection of the hand. The forearm is rigid from the elbow to the knuckles, and does not bend at the wrist. This makes for greater punching power and pre-vents sprained wrists. The hook is thrown in a half arc to the opponent's chin, and with a complete follow-through motion for power. Hooking punches can be thrown by either the lead hand or the rear hand, but the term usually refers to a lead hook.



When throwing a hook, the puncher shifts his body weight to the rear, or supporting foot, allowing him to pivot his lead foot and torso, swinging his lead fist horizontally toward the opponent. Sometimes, depending on style and what feels comfortable to the individual, the lead foot is not pivoted, the pivoting increases the power of the punch, but leaves one lacking in options to follow up with, such as the right uppercut or right hook.

Shovel Hook

But the hook can also be thrown at a 45 degree angle (a "Mexican hook" or "shovel hook" or "hook to the ribs"), blending into the uppercut - practically halfway between the two, this punch is aimed at the rib cage (ideally just underneath). Hooks are not parried but rather bobbed/rolled or simply blocked with the fighting stance close to the head. This is very useful when aimed for the head or for the ribs or solar plexus, as the force from the hook tends to travel through a blocked head better than a jab. The left hook is generally favored by shorter and/or power-punching fighters. Most of the power comes from the legs and torso. Also, this punch requires impeccable balance, stability, speed and strength to be effective. As you can see from the photo at the finish of the punch, the left thumb has rotated to allow free movement of the arm and fist towards the ribs or liver.



Steps

Stand in your normal fighting stance then

Do the following simultaneously:

1. Plant your back (right) foot and keep it here.
2. Shift your left foot onto the toe and twist leftward as if you are stamping out a cigarette.
3. Lower your left arm and cock it at a ninety degree angle in a parallel plane to the floor.
4. Twist your torso to the left, can follow a double punch combination, twisting in on reverse punch.
5. Keep your right hand at the chin as a guard.

Then do the following simultaneously:

1. Starting with the legs, unwind your slightly twisted body while twisting your left foot on its toe to the right.
2. Use all of the force you can muster to unwind your torso.
3. Keep your chin down (always) and your head facing forward, ideally, your head will stay in the same place throughout the duration of the punch.
4. Keep your left arm locked at a 90-degree angle.
5. Strike your opponent squarely on the chin.
6. After the point of impact, your energy should be completely expended. Don't twist so much that you fall over. Maintain your balance.
7. Quickly twist back into your fighting stance. It will feel fluid and fast. You are very vulnerable to a straight right (a knockout punch) after you have thrown a left hook.
8. Remember not to "telegraph" the hook by dropping the left shoulder or by pulling the arm back before throwing the punch.

Defence against the classic hook.

The natural reaction seems to be to pull away or out from a left hook. This is absolutely the wrong thing to do. If the blocker moves in, the hook often ends harmlessly around his neck or is block by the hands in a good fighting stance. Another obvious defence is the use of your legs to maintain a kicking distance to prevent close in hand techniques like the hook.