

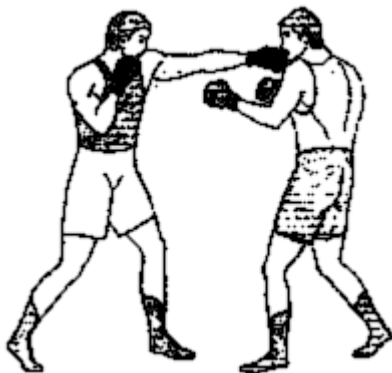
How to.... Jab

How to Jab (there are different jabs, speed and power)

Besides the fighting stance, the jab is the very first movement that you learn in Northern Freestyle. The basic aspect of a proper jab is having your weight behind the punch. Anything less and you'll simply be arm punching with no body weight, which serves absolutely no purpose. The best way to learn is to get the basics right from day one.

A jab is one of the four main punches used in Northern Freestyle. Several variations of the jab exist, but every jab shares these characteristics: while in a fighting stance, the lead fist is thrown straight ahead and the arm is fully extended. It is an overhand punch, which means at the moment of impact, the fist is held in a horizontal orientation with the palm facing the ground.

From fighting stance the right elbow remains tucked inward and the right hand is protecting the chin. All of the power from the jab is from the body and waist. This simple punch can be most effective because of its speed. Once you are facing the target, make sure your guard is tight, aiming with the forearm. Then push from the waist and shoulder, keeping a tight fist. Immediately after, return to fighting stance.



It is important that your left foot is pointing directly at the target and your jab is sent directly over the lead foot. The left foot should be pointed directly at the opponent for proper balance, weight transference and execution.

After throwing the jab, your hand has to immediately come straight back and in a straight line to your face to protect the jaw and into fighting stance. You cannot drop your hand when retracting your hand from the jab; otherwise your opponent will follow that lowered hand in and then come right over the top of your lowered hand with a straight right and score a point, or in contact work knock you out.

Uses for the jab

Defence

A jab is an integral part of defence. Its speed and power of execution and reach can keep the opponent at a distance, preventing them from charging in. Defensive jabs can be employed while moving backwards.

Speed Jab

This jab gives you high mobility and is often used with the intention of scoring points. When sparring use this variation of the jab when you want to preserve the mobility and balance of your stance.

Power Jab

Power can be added to a jab if it is thrown with a slide forward. The drawback to this technique is that it takes you out of your fighting stance, committing you to the punch rather more than the speed jab. A "pivot jab" is the most powerful jab, one in which the weight shifts almost entirely to the lead foot, which pivots to put the mass of the body behind the punch. If you jab from the hip, rather than from a tight guard, will add power to the jab, but at the expense of speed and increase your vulnerability to counter punching or kicking.

Jab to the Body

Jabbing to the body is relatively unusual, because it increases your vulnerability to counterpunching or kicking. Typically, to hit your opponent you have to bend at the waist to jab to the midsection of your opponent in an attempt at getting the opponent to drop his guard. It is impractical to put the body weight behind this punch, so power is limited.

Jab Combinations

Jabs are often doubled up in an attempt at to get your partner to drop their guard.

"Jabbing on the fly" is a point-scoring manoeuvre that employs a quick series of speed jabs thrown by a circling fighter.

Most combinations start with a jab as a way of closing the distance and finding the proper range. In this context, the jab is referred to as a "set-up jab".

Many fighters end their combinations with a jab that is designed to stifle counterpunches and allows you to withdraw safely.

Things to be mindful of when doing the jab

1. Make sure your hand always comes back to fighting stance to protect the jaw,
2. Tuck your elbows in to protect yourself from kicks and punches.
3. When you throw the jab it's common to let the right hand drop low, do not let this happen, keep your back hand up at all times.
4. Keep the toes pointed directly at the target.
5. Lean slightly forward to get your body weight behind the punch.
6. Practice this slowly to begin with. Just concentrate on getting the technical aspects right.
7. Practice in front of a full size mirror so you can keep an eye on what you are doing wrong and make adjustments.

A good jab can set your combination up and allow you to score with either back hand punches or kicks.