



# the jeet kune do source

## BACK TO BASICS

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**B**efore we can get into the specifics of jeet kune do, we need to examine the underlying principles of the art. Bruce Lee referred to them as the "roots of JKD." They serve as guidelines for just about every technique in the JKD arsenal. So as we delve into the technical side of things in the coming months, keep these points—these roots—in mind:

The three "physical ingredients" that Lee listed are:

- on-guard positioning,
- footwork and movement, and
- postures in relaying force.

He also listed "underlying ingredients," some of which include:

- balance,
- economy of form and
- efficient mechanics.

Let's discuss them individually. First is the on-guard position. Before you can do anything, you must be able to stand correctly. A lot of research and development went into the JKD stance, the specifics of which will be covered in future columns. For now, though, it's important to remember that the stance was designed to maximize power, efficiency and safety.

Always maintain the stance. It keeps you in correct alignment with your opponent so you'll be in position to launch an offensive or evade and counter. If

you're out of position, you'll never find your target. Therefore, all JKD techniques are designed to deviate as little as possible from the stance. This is the reason kicks and punches from the lead side are used more than techniques from the rear side. It's also why the accompanying footwork for each technique and combination is determined by its effectiveness at returning you to the stance.

Which brings us to ingredient No. 2: footwork and movement. The importance of footwork cannot be stressed enough. As Lee said, "The quality of a man's technique depends on what he does with his feet." Many people mistakenly dismiss footwork as merely a transport system. True, it does get you to the target, but it's also the first step—no pun intended—in throwing a good punch or kick.

As in any sport, power is generated from the ground up. Even if you're not covering any ground, your footwork determines how you transfer weight into any given technique. Your feet must be in correct position so your legs will be in position. Your legs must be in position so your torso will be in position. Your torso must be in position so your shoulder will be in position. And your shoulder must be in position so your fist can connect with the target with all the force of your body weight behind it.

Footwork is also key when it comes to evasion. You can weave and slip punches more quickly if your upper body does half the movement and your feet do the other half. If you're depending only on your upper body, you place all the stress on one muscle group. If you divvy up that stress, you'll be much faster. Again, it may be a very subtle shift in weight from one

*Jeet kune do's on-guard position is designed to facilitate kicking and punching while keeping the martial artist safe from attack.*



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