

foot to the other—you may not even cover any distance—but it's footwork that will get you out of the way more rapidly.

Footwork is also invaluable from a strategic standpoint. Patterns in footwork can be used to lull your opponent into a false sense of security only to have you surprise him by breaking that pattern. It can be used to draw in an opponent or to set up a stop-hit. It can also exponentially increase your striking opportunities

by opening up angles and possibilities no matter where your weight is distributed.

The third component of the roots is "postures in relaying force," another way of saying body mechanics. For every technique, a specific sequence of events must occur to maximize force production. Adherence to this sequence means the difference between going through the motions and mastering the move. To the untrained eye, incorrect imitation may look perfectly

fine. In the coming months, I'll tell you how to distinguish poor technique from effective execution.

As you think about the three elements of JKD's roots, keep in mind the three underlying ingredients listed above: balance, economy of motion and efficiency. Whether you're in the stance, moving out of the way or relaying force, you must be balanced. If you're not balanced while in the on-guard position, you're not in the correct stance—even if it looks correct. It's also impossible to have balance if your footwork is faulty, and you won't be able to generate force in your punches and kicks without a stable foundation.

The other two underlying ingredients—economy of motion and efficiency—go hand in hand. When learning any punch or kick, ask yourself if you have sufficiently streamlined it. One reason, of course, goes back to the stance. The less you deviate from it, the more opportunities you'll have to launch additional offensives because you'll be in position to do so. Another reason is speed. The more quickly you move, the more force you'll produce. Remember that force equals mass times acceleration. And the more fat you trim off your techniques, the faster they'll be. This usually means eliminating bad habits like looping, telegraphing, dropping your hand after impact and winding up. And even when they've been corrected, it's a constant process of refining your technique. There's always room to improve.

As you explore basic and advanced JKD fighting methods, keep the aforementioned roots in mind. If you're unsure about a technique, ask yourself how performing it or applying it adheres to those roots. Use them as your guide, and you'll never go wrong. ✘

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