

This key comes directly from three-time Olympic fencing gold-medalist Aldo Nadi. In Lee's posthumously published personal notes, he almost directly quotes from Nadi: "The left heel is the spark plug, or better still the piston, of the whole fencing machine."

In a future column, I'll take you through a test that will help you feel the importance of the raised left heel, but for now, remember that it allows for springiness, maximum storage of potential energy, greater mobility and

increased shock absorption.

It's important to get a feel for the degree to which you raise your heel. If you come up too far, your center of gravity will be too high, causing you to lose leverage in your punches. You'll also lose mobility. In both cases, movement and leverage are compromised because you'll have nowhere from which to spring. The idea is that all your potential energy is chambered in the arch of your left foot. In one of my favorite passages from Nadi's *On*

Fencing, he describes this chambering:

"Raising the left heel ever so little, you cock the leg, ready to pull the trigger and go into action. You take full advantage of one of the mightiest springs in all creation, the arch of the foot, which in the lunge releases its tremendous power through the pressure exerted on the ground by the ball of the foot itself."

Before you can unleash this kind of power, you have to experiment a bit. Raise your heel too high and you'll lose leverage. Leave it too low and you'll have too much inertia to overcome. Play with it. So much of learning any physical endeavor stems from feel. Find out where you strike that balance best.

**The Front Foot:** It's also imperative to look at front-foot positioning. If you examine any pictures of Lee in the JKD stance, you'll see that his right toe is pointed slightly inward. It doesn't point directly toward the target. The reason for this has to do with mobility. Try it and you'll see how difficult it is to maintain the stance. That's because you aren't facing your opponent squarely. You have to maintain a certain angle to make yourself as small a target as possible.

You also should avoid pointing your front toe too far inward. Again, this has to do with mobility. You'd be sidestepping your way toward your opponent, which is pretty awkward.

The best solution—and you'll see this in pictures of Lee—is to imagine a line running from your front toe to the arch of your back foot. Your front toe should be at a 30- to 45-degree angle to the line, and that line should run under the arch of your rear foot. ✘

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