

JEET KUNE DO SOURCE /

in the Tao. Haislet wrote:

"Arm action alone is insufficient to give real power to blows. Real power, quick and accurate, can be obtained only by shifting the weight in such a manner that the hip and shoulder precede the arm to the centerline of the body."

The same principles apply to hook kicking. The knee, just like the fist, never overtakes the hip until after impact. I take the leg up and am completely extended at the hip. As in Haislet's description, I should have no more room to extend that hip. This places maximum tension on the joint. Notice in the photos that my knee is so extended that from the angle of the camera, you can't even see my lower leg. All I have left to do is whip out at the knee. I maintain strain energy at the knee and ankle. The knee is fully extended, and the ankle is in complete plantar flexion. I'm fully extended at all three joints—hip, knee and ankle—at impact. That gives me the leverage needed to generate power.

The final whipping action at the knee and the plantar flexion at the ankle, however, are rendered worthless unless there's that initial tension on the hip. In punching,



if the hand overtakes the hip, it reduces the technique to mere arm punching. Likewise, if the knee overtakes the hip, you lose all power and end up with a flicky kick from the knee. Only after impact do you let the leg relax. At this point, you've released all the energy into the target and can finally let that knee finish ahead of the hip.

Strain energy isn't just important to hook

punching and kicking; it's also important, though less obviously so, when executing uppercuts and straight kicks. Even though the uppercut is largely a vertical motion, you lead with the hip to create leverage and tension. And with the straight kick, you lean back ever so slightly to give yourself as much extension as possible at the hip. You should have a tremendous amount of tension on your quads, and at that point, you whip out at the knee. The more distal joints—knees and elbows—follow the more proximal ones—hip and shoulder—to increase final acceleration. But in hooking motions, everything starts with the hips to create strain energy. ✕

About the author:

A registered dietician who specializes in sports nutrition, Teri Tom is a board member of the Bruce Lee Foundation and the first woman to be certified to teach jeet kune do under Ted Wong. The Jeet Kune Do Source is the official column of the Bruce Lee Foundation. For information about ordering Bruce Lee's books, visit www.shopblackbelt.com/bruceleebooks1.html.

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