



1.

1

Position your feet for stability. Your feet should be positioned approximately shoulder length apart. Your body should not be facing directly toward the opponent, but rather to the side. The front foot should be positioned forward, facing directly toward your opponent. The back foot however, should be perpendicular to the front foot, facing in the same direction as your body.

- Your two feet should be at a 90 degree angle from each other.
- This position allows for maximum stability, while allowing you to lunge as far forward as possible with your front foot.^[1]
- Your knees should be bent far enough to extend out to your toes.
- Your butt should be pushed downward as if sitting slightly.
- Be sure that your front foot is facing directly in line with your blade. This is important for maintaining accuracy.^[2]
- Proper fencing position is uncomfortable, and will require some lower body strength, but allows for maximum mobility.^[3]
- If your right hand is dominant, then your right foot should be the front foot. If your left hand is dominant, then your left foot should be the front foot.



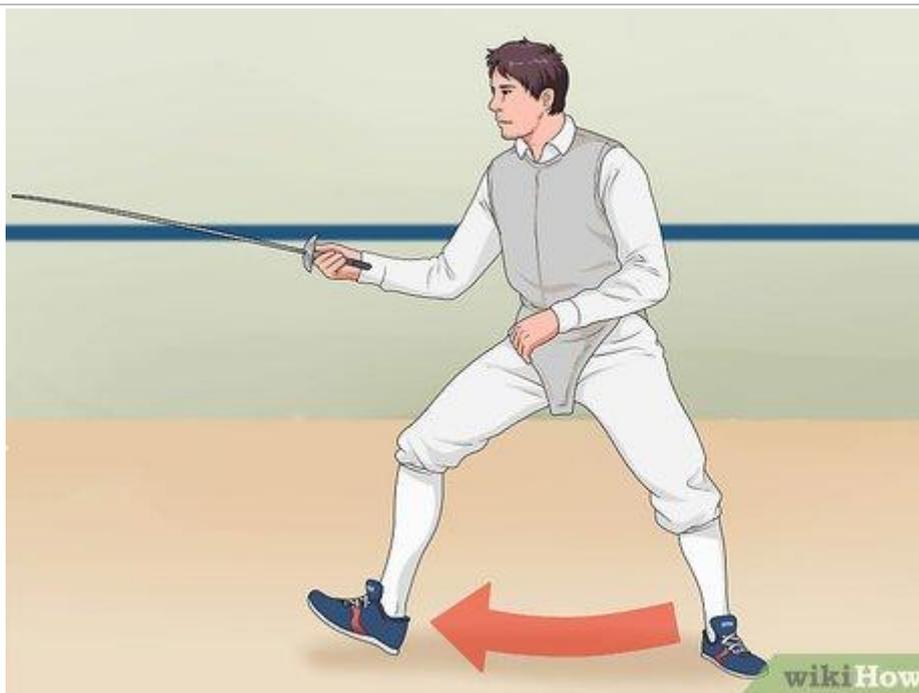
2.

2

Keep your distance. Your goal should always be to stay far enough from your opponent that you are just out of reach from the tip of her sword should she lunge forward as far as possible. Understanding how far this is will take a lot of practice. Maintaining this distance will also require that you be quick on your feet.

- While this means that you might also be unable to lunge and hit your opponent, it leaves you in control until you are ready to advance and strike.^[4]

3.



3

Advance. An advance moves you slightly closer to the opponent without compromising your position. It is a three step move, during which your legs should always be shoulder length apart.

- The first step is to lift your front foot, moving it slightly forward. You should end on the ball of your foot with the toes still off the ground.
- Next, move your back foot forward the same distance as you moved your front foot.
- As you move your back foot forward, lower the toes of the front foot so that you are no longer on the ball of your foot. [\[5\]](#)
- Practice until this move flows like one fluid motion.



4.

4

Retreat. The retreat will move you backwards approximately as far as the advance. As with the advance, the retreat allows for short, small movements that do not compromise stability.

- Begin stepping back with the back foot, so that it lands on the ball of the foot.
- Once on the ball of the foot, move the heel toward the floor and let the front foot slide back.



5.

5

Crossover. The crossover is a larger movement, allowing you to travel a greater distance at a faster pace. When moving forward, take your back foot and move it forward in front of and past your front foot (hence crossing over). Then take your front foot and take it past the back foot so that you return to your resting position with both feet shoulder distance apart.

- When moving backward, take the front foot back behind your back foot. Then, move your back foot backwards until your feet are again square with your shoulders. [\[6\]](#)



6.

6

Lunge. A lunge is a quick, long step forward that you use to reach as far as possible with your sword. To perform a lunge, step forward with your front foot as far as you can manage, with your heel hitting the ground first. Afterward, you will need to recover quickly so as not to be vulnerable to a counterattack.

- How far you lunge is dependent upon your skill level. To cover the distance between you and your opponent, you should lunge as far as possible. However, if your leg strength is not sufficient to recover from that distance and return to your normal fighting position, then you should consider making a more modest lunge. [\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)

- To recover, bend the back knee and pull your front leg back as quickly as possible to shoulder length distance. Following that, perform a retreat step to ensure that your opponent does not advance quickly upon you.^[9]
- When lunging you can straighten out your back arm, so that instead of facing up it faces backward and is straight with your shoulders. This will help you maintain your balance as you lunge.^[10]



7.

7

Get in shape. In order to excel at fencing you will need to have cardiovascular endurance, the leg strength to make long lunges, and the core strength for balance and stability. Some of this can be obtained by extensive practice with fencing, but additional exercise regimens can augment your fencing ability as well.

- For endurance, consider jogging.^[11]
- For core strength practice sit ups, planks, crunches, and bicycles.
- For leg strength, consider squats and lunges.

8.



8

Practice. Fencing footwork involves considerable coordination. You should practice the footwork to master quick, seamless, and balanced motion. You should work up the endurance to keep up a fast pace of movement for an entire match.

- Nothing is natural about fencing footwork or posture. Expect it to take considerable practice to master. If you are serious about fencing, do not give up because you can't seem to master the movements. There is no reason why you should be able to perform them initially.
- Consider practicing in front of a mirror to verify that you are making the motions correctly.

1.



1

Position your arms correctly. Your back arm should be positioned behind your body with your bicep parallel to your shoulders and your forearm bent upward, as if in a curl position. Your front (sword) hand should be facing forward, with your elbow approximately one hand-length away from your body.^[12]

- You can open up the hand of your back arm so that the palm faces up toward the ceiling.^[13]
- Use your dominant hand to control your sword. If you are ambidextrous, consider using your left hand. Left-handed fencers have an advantage because it is difficult for their opponents to adjust to their fighting styles.

2.



2

Grip the sword lightly. Holding a firm grasp of the sword makes it difficult to get full wrist motion, creates over large movements, and compromises your accuracy. Use the thumb and first two fingers only to lightly secure the sword, maintaining control of it while allowing for easy flicks of the wrist.^[14]

- While doing this, keep your hand straight so that your sword is aligned with your arm. It is common for inexperienced fencers to bend the hand, but if your forearm is not aligned with sword, it will be more difficult to make precise and accurate movements.^[15]

3.



3

Use small wrist movements. It is tempting to rear the sword all the way back behind your head and put all of your body weight into a slash. Although this may look impressive and would probably hurt if you were using a real sword, in fencing it just makes all your attacks obvious. To make all your motions quick and hard to anticipate, keep your arm straight and make all of your movements with your wrist.^[16]



4.

4

Thrust with your arm first. A thrust involves both your leg and arm moving forward to reach as far as possible. The leg, however, is slower and will telegraph your attack. Instead of performing both motions simultaneously, focus on moving the arm slightly before you move your leg without interrupting the seamlessness of the motion.^[17]

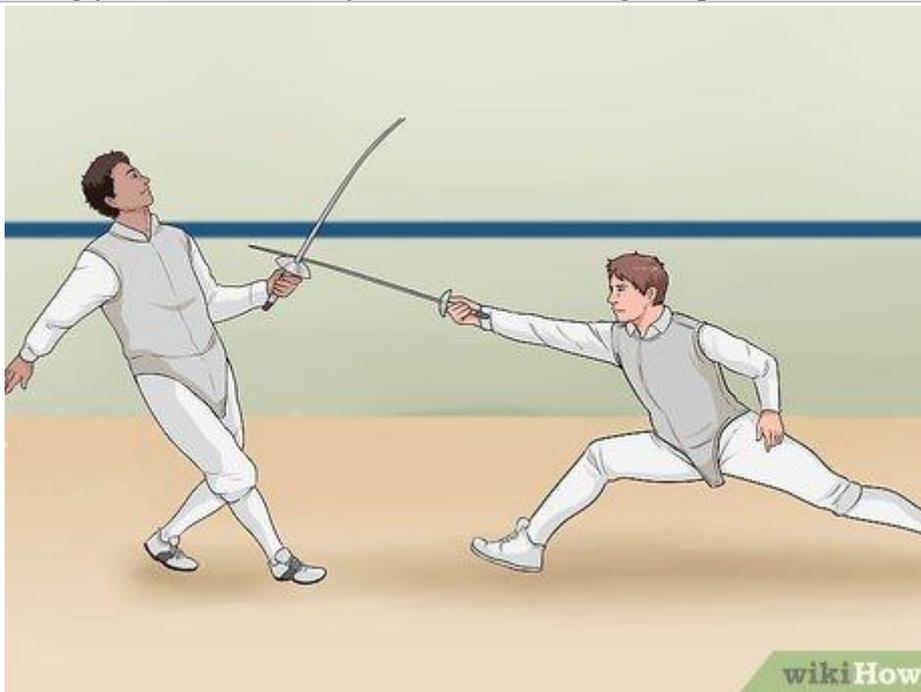


5.

5

Practice accuracy. Much of the point of good body alignment is to ensure that you can thrust the sword exactly where you need to in order to penetrate your opponent's defenses. Ideally you can hit a dime when you thrust. Try picking a small target and practice thrust at it over and over again to see if you can consistently hit it.

- If, after a lot of practice, you are still unable to thrust accurately, try verifying your form. Look in the mirror to see if you are using the correct form. Be sure that your front leg is aligned with your sword, that the sword is aligned directly with your forearm, and that your elbow is close to your body.
- You should also practice twisting the sword with your wrist in a small, precise, and quick semicircle. This sort of motion is important for disengaging your sword from your opponent's sword, freeing you to attack when you have become tangled up.^[18]



6.

6

Train with a partner. Ultimately, there is no substitute for working with a partner. Understanding when to make your moves, appropriate distance from an opponent, and keeping your footwork at an opponent's pace, can only be learned in conjunction with someone else. Find a friend who is willing to join you in your practices.