

INTRO TO FENCING



**Northwest Fencing Center
Tigard, OR
www.nwfencing.org**

WELCOME

Intro to fencing is designed for students who have never fenced before. In the course of 3 classes, you will be introduced to the rules of the sport. You will also learn basic positions, footwork, and how to execute basic attacks and defenses.

We are very excited for you to join us and wish you the best of luck.

WHAT IS FENCING

Fencing is an Olympic sport considered the "combat sport by excellence," because it is the only combat sport in which physical contact is not allowed. It is a sport of opposition and open skills that can be played individually or as a team.

WHAT IS FOIL

Foil is one of the three weapons in fencing. Foil is a thrusting weapon only. Fencers can only score a point by striking the point of their weapon on the defined target area of their opponent, which is limited to the torso. The foil is governed by the rules of right of way.

EQUIPMENT

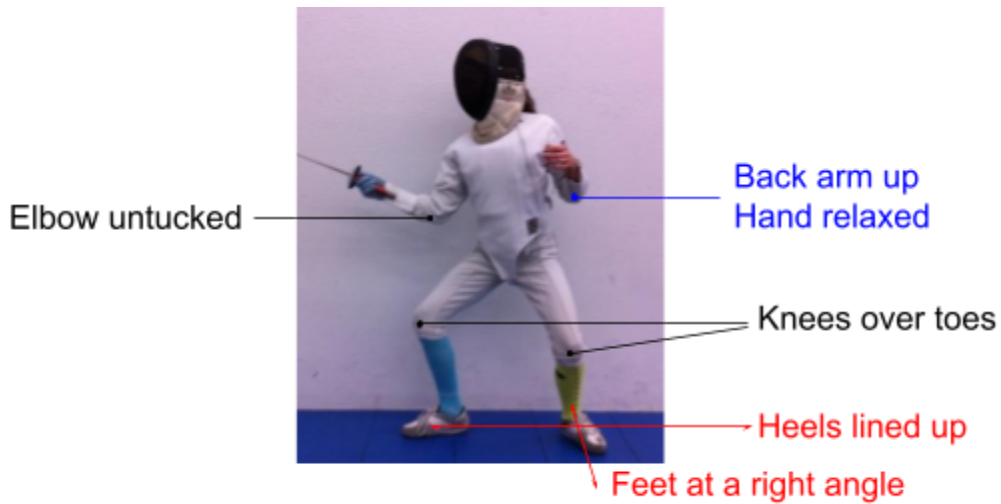
- **Glove:** It protects the fencing hand. Fencers should have their own after one month in class.
- **Mask:** It protects the head and the neck. Fencers should have their own after one month in class.
- **Jacket:** It protects the upper body. Fencers should have their own after two months in the class.
- **Chestplate:** It adds extra protection to the chest. This piece of equipment is a requirement for girls and optional for boys. Fencers should have their own after two months in class.
- **Foil:** It is the weapon of the fencer. Foils will be provided.

SAFETY RULES

- Keep the tip of the weapon below your knees when you are not fencing.
- No poking or fencing unless you and your partner have full fencing gear on.
- When putting on or taking off your mask, set your foil on the floor and use both hands.
- Do not cross a fencing strip if people are fencing; walk all the way around.
- Stop immediately when a coach says "Halt."

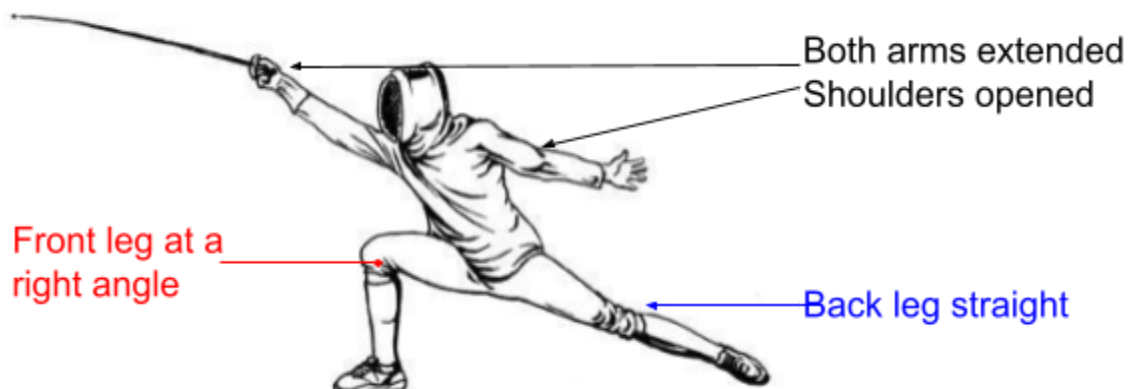
EN GARDE POSITION

The basic stance is called **En garde**. A good en garde position is essential to good balance and mobility.



FOOTWORK

- **Advance:** Forward movement is used to approach the opponent. When advancing, the front foot moves first, followed by the back foot.
- **Retreat:** Backward movement is used to get away from the opponent. When retreating, the back foot moves first, followed by the front foot.
- **Lunge:** Offensive movement is used to hit the opponent. The lunge starts with the front arm extending, tip pointing at the target, then kicking the front foot forward while pushing off the back leg. At the end of the lunge, the front leg is at a right angle, the back leg is straight, and both arms are extended. **(see pictures below)**
- **Advance lunge:** Link an advance and a lunge to hit from a further distance.
- **Recover back:** The action of getting back en garde from the lunge. Recover starts with unlocking the back knee followed by pushing of the front leg.

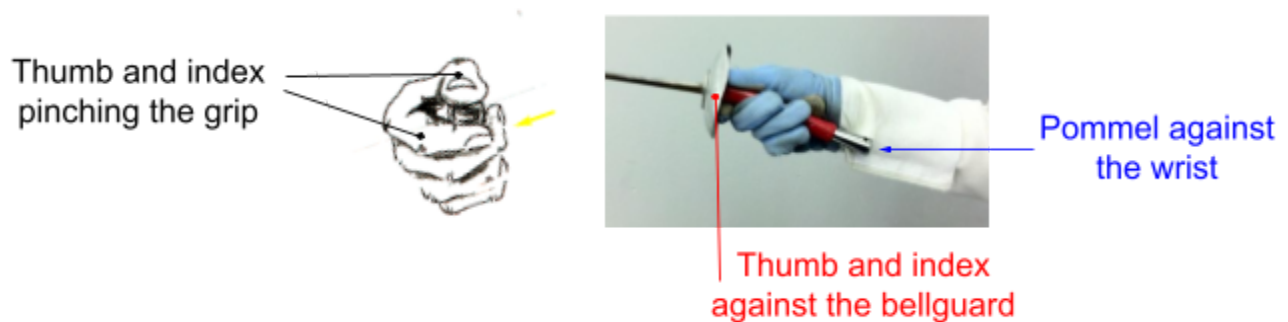


HANDLING THE WEAPON

The proper execution of all the actions that the fencer can perform is dependent on wielding the weapon properly.

- **How to hold a French grip:**

- The thumb and the index finger should pinch the top of the grip (against the bellguard), while remaining slightly flexed. The rest of the fingers fold firmly around the grip, but not too tight.
- The pommel should be located against the middle of the wrist and should be parallel to the axis of the forearm so that it forms a straight line from the point to the elbow.



- **How to wield a French grip:**

- The thumb and the index finger control the point of the weapon in the movements that it can make, while the other fingers help in the movements of the point of the weapon through contraction and relaxation of the fist, without ever releasing the grip.
- The pommel should remain parallel to the axis of the forearm. In certain fencing positions, and depending on the distance, the pommel will detach from the wrist to provide better coverage.

SALUTE

It must be done before a private lesson, a drill, or a bout. It is a sign of respect for your coach, your opponent, or the referee. At the end, fencers must salute again and tap blades.

- **How to salute:**

- Legs are straight, feet at a right angle, heels together. The front arm is in a straight line with the foil, the tip of the foil towards the ground but not touching it, the rear arm falling naturally, the hand open.
- First, point the foil toward the ceiling.
- Second, bring the bellguard below the chin.
- Third, point the foil back toward the ground.



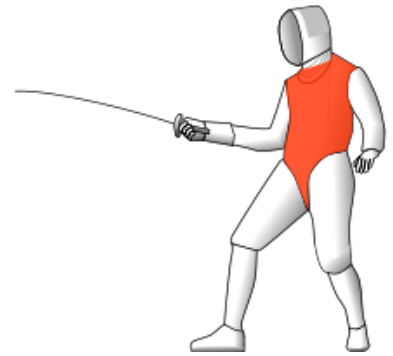
TARGET AREA

The valid target is limited to the torso, the groin, the back, and the bib (lower part of the mask).

A hit on the valid target is called a **touch**.

A hit outside of the valid target is called **off-target**.

Fencers stop fencing when a hit happens. They then determined if the hit is a touch or if the hit is off-target.



SIMPLE ATTACKS

A simple attack is an offensive action executed with one tip motion and forward movement. It can be direct or indirect.

An attack is properly executed when the front arm is extended, tip threatening the valid target.

- **Straight:** Simple attack direct.
- **Disengage:** Simple attack around the opponent's blade.

HAND POSITIONS

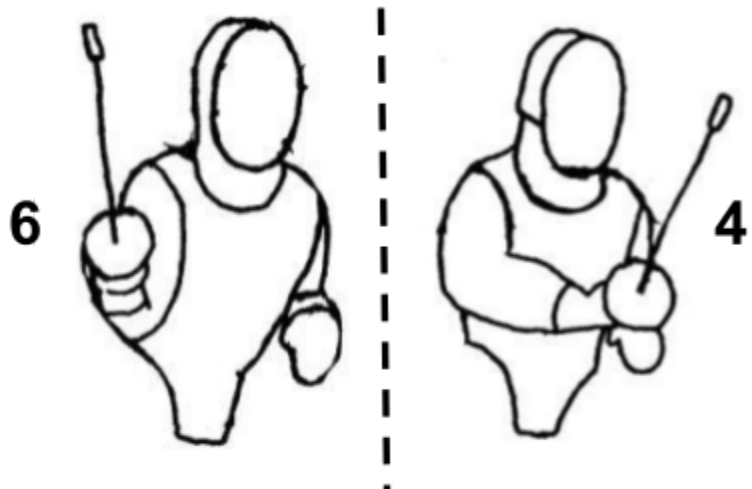
Each hand position will close a specific line:

→ **Position 6.**

- Thumb up top
- Tip pointing up

→ **Position 4.**

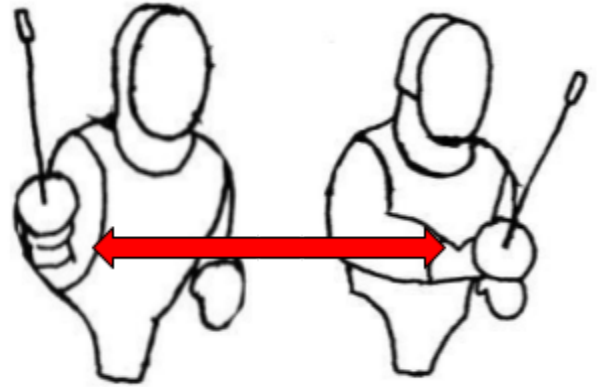
- Hand in pronation (palm down)
- Tip pointing up



DEFENSES

When your opponent is attacking, you need to defend to make the attack fail.

- **Distance:** You can defend using distance and retreating just before getting hit. We call that making the attack fall short.
- **Parry:** It is the defensive action that consists of deflecting or blocking the opponent's offensive action with your blade.
 - The parry is executed with a lateral movement from position 6 to position 4, and vice versa.
- **Parry-Riposte:** After parrying, you should try to hit your opponent. We call that a riposte.



RIGHT OF WAY

Right of way determines who gets the point if both fencers touch at the same time.

RIGHT OF WAY BELONGS TO WHOEVER ATTACKS FIRST OR DEFENDS LAST.

If the fencer with the right of way hits his/her opponent's off-target the action is reset.