

# **INTERMEDIATE STUDY GUIDE**



**Northwest Fencing Center  
Tigard, OR  
[www.nwfencing.org](http://www.nwfencing.org)**

## ABOUT THIS CLASS

In this class, you will continue to improve your technical skills. You will also fence electrically, learn more advanced techniques, explore tactics, and prepare for tournaments.

You may also test, as you did in the beginner class, and remember to pay attention in class as some of the details necessary to pass some tests are not written down in this study guide.

## LESSONS

Private Lessons are an integral part of fencing training. During a private lesson, the coach will provide instruction and feedback tailored to each student.

Private lessons are not a requirement, but they are highly encouraged for all fencers. One lesson a week is a good rhythm for young fencers. Two lessons a week is recommended for fencers competing on a regular basis.

## THE EQUIPMENT

- **Complete uniform:** In the Beginner program, you purchase some of your fencing uniform (jacket, mask, & glove). As you join the intermediate program, you are expected to complete your uniform.

**The following items are required before you can attend any tournament:**

- **Knickers:** These are your fencing pants
- **High knee socks:** Preferably white
- **Underarm protector:** It is an additional piece of clothing that will go under your jacket
- **Chest plate padding:** For those using a chest plate, a padding is required
- **Electric bib:** If your mask does not have it yet, you can purchase a patch
- **Fencing shoes:** You should have a clean pair of shoes that you will only wear when fencing. fencing specific shoes or indoor court shoes are recommended.

- **Electric equipment:** The electric gear can be purchased gradually. **Fencers competing on a regular basis are expected to own at least two of each:**

- **Electric foil:** Size 2 for Y10 fencers, size 5 for Y12 & Y14 fencers
- **Body cord:** Should be a 2-prong foil body cord
- **Mask cord:** Should be a straight mask cord
- **Lame:** It is the metallic vest that limits the valid target



- **Pistol grip:** Fencers showing good technical skills will be allowed to start using a pistol grip. The pistol grip can be Visconti or Belgian. You may ask your coach to find out if you are ready.

# FOOTWORK

- **Half advance:** Small movement of the front foot forward with a small advancement of the body without moving the back foot.
- **Half retreat:** Small movement of the back foot backward with a slight transfer of balance.
- **Check forward:** Forward movement starting with a half retreat, followed by an advance.
- **Check back:** Backward movement starting with a half advance, followed by a retreat.
- **Double check forward:** Forward movement starting with a half advance, followed by a half retreat, followed by an advance.
- **Double check back:** Backward movement starting with a half retreat, followed by a half advance, followed by a retreat.
- **Jump forward:** Forward jump starting with the front foot kicking and landing with both feet at the same time. The jump should remain low to the ground, be small, and finish en garde.
- **Jump back:** Backward jump starting with the back foot energetically thrown back and finishing en garde.

**Note: Half steps, check steps, and jumps can be used to explore distance, trigger a reaction, or confuse your opponent.**

- **Forward recover:** Recovery from the lunge bringing the back leg forward into en garde.
- **Redouble:** Forward recover leading into a second lunge. The arm may stay slightly extended to facilitate the continuation of the offense.
- **Fleche:** Offensive movement starting with an extension of the front arm and shifting the balance on the front leg until imbalance is achieved. As imbalance is achieved, the front leg pushes forward while the back foot moves ahead to land in front of the front foot.



# RHYTHM & TEMPO

Rhythm and tempo are two very essential concepts. It is important to understand what they mean, and how they will be applied.

- **Tempo:**

- This is the time it takes to execute a simple action. When referring to tempo, we are talking about the number of moves an action is made of.

- Example: Lunge is a one tempo action, and advance-lunge is a two tempo action.

- In some situations, tempo will also determine if a fencer gains or loses right of way. At lost tempo refers to an action that was not executed in time to maintain right of way.

- Example: Fencer A parries the attack but does not riposte immediately, waits, and only riposte after his opponent executed a remise. In that case, the riposte was executed at lost tempo and the remise has right of way.

- **Rhythm:**

- This is the speed at which actions are executed. Change of rhythm refers to a change of speed between actions. A change of rhythm can be an acceleration or a deceleration, and multiple changes of rhythm can follow each other.

- Changing the rhythm when you fence will be essential in drawing reactions from your opponent or surprising and outpacing them.

- **Footwork:**

- **Double advance:** Two advances with an acceleration from the first one to the second. The acceleration comes from the back foot movement in the first advance.

- **Double retreat:** Two retreats with an acceleration from the first one to the second. The second retreat will also be bigger as the action is often used to get away from the attack.

- **Two tempo advance:** Advance in which each foot movement is clearly separated, stretching the duration of the step.

- **Two tempo retreat:** Retreat in which each foot movement is clearly separated, stretching the duration of the step.

**Note: Two tempo steps can be used to explore distance safely and be combined with a change of rhythm.**



# PREPARATIONS

A preparation is what you do to set up your final action. It can be a movement of the blade, the body, or the legs. Preparations can set up offensive, defensive, and counter offensive actions.

- **Footwork preparations:**

- **Setting up, opening, or closing distance:** Moving closer or farther from your opponent before executing an action.

- Example: From the en garde line you take a couple advances to get close enough to attack.

- **Trigger a reaction:** Your footwork can trigger a reaction from your opponent.

- Example: A change of rhythm can draw some opponents into attacking.

- **Blade preparations:**

- **On the blade:** Beat, engage, and press can be used to facilitate your action or draw the opponent into a reaction.

- **Tip presence:** Position the tip of your weapon slightly forward to encourage the opponent to interact with it before their action or to establish a safe space in front of your body.

- **Invite:** Open a line or search for the blade in order to draw your opponent toward a specific target.

- **Disruption:** Search for the blade aggressively in order to interrupt your opponent's preparation or keep them from getting in distance.

- **Absence:**

- **What is it?** This is the act of keeping your blade out of the opponent's reach to prevent them from beating your blade.

- **When should I use it?** You may use absence to avoid disruption while advancing to get within attack distance.

- **Keep track of your tip!** You must be aware of your tip position and be able to bring the tip back from absence and to the target.

- **Watch your distance!** Avoid getting too close while in absence because it would make you vulnerable to an attack on preparation or a counter attack.

# SIMPLE ATTACKS

- **Coupe (or cut over):** Simple attack indirect.
  - It starts from one line and finishes in a different one.
  - The tip of the weapon changes lines by pulling the blade along the opponent's blade and going around the point, combining work of the fingers, wrist, and forearm.
- **Preparations:** Simple attacks are most effective on the opponent's forward preparation and around a blade action.
  - **Maneuvering:** You should be able to set up simple attacks by maneuvering your opponent.  
Example: Your opponent often rushes forward when you open the distance → Open the distance to draw them forward and beat attack on their advance .
  - **With the blade:** You may also use blade actions to trigger and exploit your opponent's reaction.  
Example: Your opponent often beats back after you beat their blade → Beat their blade to trigger their beat back and disengage around it before they find the blade.

# DEFENSES

- **Variations of parries and ripostes:**
  - **Beat parry:** You may parry your opponent's attack by simply beating their blade before they land their attack. You have the right of way and should riposte, even if their attack continues.
  - **Holding parry:** After parrying, you may keep control of your opponent blade and delay your riposte. This is an effective way to deal with remise\*.  
(\*See page 9)
  - **Riposte by opposition:** After parrying, you may riposte while maintaining blade control, keeping the line closed.
  - **Counter riposte:** After being parried, retake the blade and hit.
- **Preparations:**
  - **Set up:** You may use footwork and blade preparation to draw your opponent into attacking at a moment you have chosen and in a line you are ready to close.
  - **Fighting pressure:** If under pressure from your opponent, use disruption to interrupt their preparation or trigger their attack before they have reached an optimum distance.

# COUNTER ATTACKS

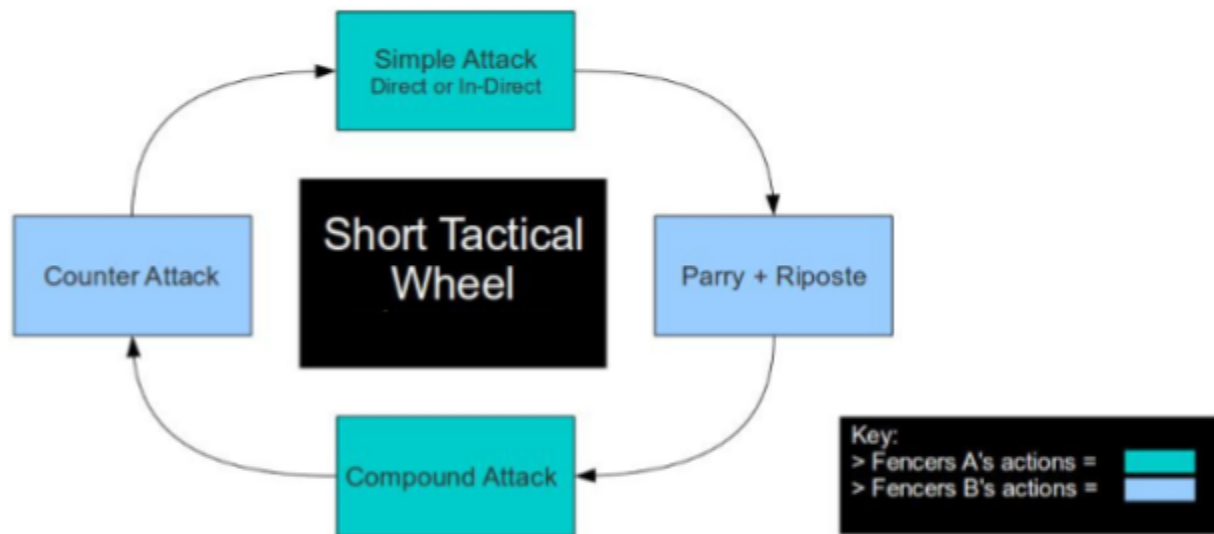
A counter attack is an attack executed against the right of way or when the opponent is already attacking.

- **Exploit the mistake:** A counter attack will be successful when its timing exploits a mistake from your opponent. Here are common mistakes you may exploit:
  - Your opponent rushes forward and does not control their momentum.
  - Your opponent is very close and hasn't triggered their attack.
  - Your opponent is overly using compound attacks or absence.
- **Don't get hit:** When counter attacking, you have to make sure you do not get hit because you do not have the right of way. If your opponent hits you, they will get the touch.
  - **Evasion:** While counter attacking, you may move your body forward or backward, up or down, or to the side to avoid getting hit. When executing an evasion, you can not turn your back to the opponent or cover the valid target with your back arm or your head.
  - **Collapsing distance:** You may aggressively close the distance to catch your opponent by surprise and prevent them from bringing the tip on target.
  - **Closing the line:** You may close the line while counter attacking (opposition) or quickly follow the counter attack with a parry.



# TACTICAL WHEEL

It lays out the logical progression of a fencing exchange and provides a tactical map.

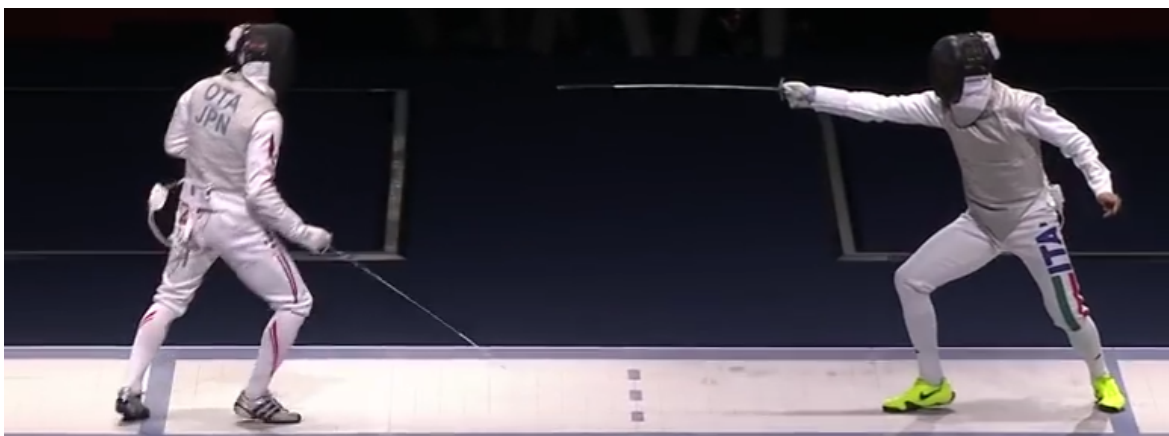


## POINT IN LINE

Point in line is a specific position in which your front arm is kept straight and the tip of your weapon continually threatens your opponent's valid target.

It gains right of way if established before the beginning of your opponent's attack. If your opponent is already in moving forward, point in line must be established before their final advance lunge.

You may use point in line to make your opponent cancel their attack or to force them to use balde preparation.



# REMISE

This is a second offensive action that immediately follows an attempt to hit. It is very effective against opponents who do not riposte, riposte late, or riposte with a compound action.

- **Exploit the mistake:** Remise is a counter offensive action, which means it does not have right of way. Like counter attacks, remise should exploit a mistake in your opponent's action and can be combined with evasion, collapsing the distance, or closing the line.
- A remise will be named after the action that preceded it.  
Example: Remise of attack follows an attack, remise of riposte follows a riposte, etc...

# INFIGHTING & PRIME

Infighting is the situation in which two fencers are in a very close distance without touching each other. You must learn to deal with infighting situations as these will often happen in bouts.

- **Corps à corps (pronounced cor-a-cor):** It is the situation in which fencers are in contact. Referee will call "Halt" when it happens. It will be sanctioned by a yellow card if it prevents the opponent from executing their action.
- **Prime:** It is a hand position closing the high inside line in which the fencing hand is high and turned down and the tip of the weapon is pointing down. Parry prime, or hitting from prime, is very effective when infighting.



## TRACK MY PROGRESS

Equipment		Basics & Concepts		Actions	
Complete Uniform		Footwork		Simple Attacks	
Electric Equipment		Rhythm & Tempo		Defenses	
Pistol Grip		Preparations		Counter Attacks	
		Tactical Wheel		Point in Line	
		Infighting & Prime		Remise	

## TOURNAMENTS

Fencing tournaments are a fun and enriching experience. They allow you to meet new people, fence with fencers from other clubs, and challenge yourself in a new way.

The important thing going into a tournament is to give your best and have a positive attitude.

Some of the fencers you will encounter might be more experienced than you. The final result is not the best way to determine how well you performed. Instead, focus on how much effort you put into each bout, and how you managed challenging situations

- **Local events: Pacific Northwest Cups (PNWC)**

Pacific Northwest Cups are designed to build confidence by giving you tournament experience. These tournaments are organized in house but will often welcome fencers from other clubs.

You should have a complete fencing uniform before signing up for one of these events.

We recommend that you fence at least 3 Pacific Northwest Cups before considering Regional tournaments.

- **Regional events: Regional Youth Circuit (RYC)**

Regional events will happen across the states of Oregon and Washington.

These events will bring the challenge to a new level as you might fence fencers with several years of experience.