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*“Not everyone will teach or do kicks the same way but
this is how I have learnt them and they haven’t let me down yet!”*

INTRODUCTION

Over the coming pages I have detailed the principals that must be understood to deliver any kick as well as gone into a detailed explanation of how to carry out each individual kick.

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TYPES OF KICK

There are two basic types of kick the first is a **linier kick**. This is a kick that fires out in a straight line from the kicker towards your opponent and the second is a **rotational kick** which as it sounds is a kick that uses a circular motion to gain power and speed on route to its target.

By knowing which kicks are which you will be able improve your technique and learn which kick is most effective in each situations.

INDIVIDUAL KICKS

Most kicks can be broken down into three parts. **The preparation, the strike and the recoil.**

THE PREPARATION

The Preparation usually puts your body in the best position to generate power and speed as well as maintain balance.

THE STRIKE

The Strike is the part of the kick that accelerates from the preparation position to hit the target. The three main types of strike are hinge, stamp and hook.

A hinge movement is when your leg starts bent and the lower part of your leg swings around the knee joint to get to its target. Just like if you were kicking a football.

A Stamp movement is when you leg starts coiled up in a "Z" shape made up of the foot, the lower leg and the upper leg. To strike the foot travels along a straight line to the target (not a circular path as in the hinge movement. Just like when you lift your knee to the front and stamp down on to the floor.

A hook movement is when you start with your leg straight and you bend you leg using a reverse hinge movement to strike with the back of the heel.

THE RECOIL

The Recoil is often a return to the preparation position or just the best way of returning to a balanced position where you can continue kicking or evade a counter attack.

Although all three sections of a kick should be performed as a single fluid action it is important to understand and practice all elements of a kick. Most poor technique and weak kicks are due to kickers only concentrating on **the strike** and neglecting to master **the preparation** and **the recoil**.

From the top of your head to the end of your toe, each kick will take time and practice to perfect. Only then will you be able to strike with speed and power from almost any position.

ADAPTED FOR PURPOSE

Within Taekwondo you will practice kicks for a variety of situations. And the same kick may be adapted to best suit its use. For example;

In patterns kicks are performed with perfect posture and are often held at the point of impact for greater emphasis.

During demolition greater time can be taken to push off from the ground or wind a kick up as the main aim is to generate power upon impact. Also **the recoil** section of the kick has less importance. However greater attention should be given to striking with the correct part of the foot to maximise power and avoid injury.

In real life self defence situations the fastest and most powerful methods of kicking are used to deal with an opponent as quickly as possible. Perfect posture is rarely a concern instead a need to maintain your own safety is your primary concern.

Sparring or competition has a set of rules which the kicks are adapted to suit. Whether it is the need to only make good contact with a target to score a point or the fact that your opponent can only counter attack with a limited range of techniques to a limited set of targets. Often in competition the part of the foot you strike with may be changed and power may be substituted for speed (although it should be noted that speed is often an ample replacement for power).

STARTING POSITION

For all kicks we will assume a starting position of a guard and block fighting stance. Pull your right leg back so your hips and shoulders are at a 30° angle to the front. Have your left fist in front of you at mid section and your right fist approximately in line with your heart.

FRONT KICK

Front kick is a linear kick.

THE PREPARATION

While the standing foot stays in a fixed position pointing to the front, the other leg should be lifted and bent as tight as possible while the knee is pushed forwards. The point of the knee should aim at the intended target whether it is the groin, body or head and the top of your thigh should be pointing straight up.

Your body should stay upright, your hips should stay square and your body weight should be over your standing leg.

THE STRIKE

Keeping the upper part of your leg relatively stationary accelerate the lower part of your leg using a hinge movement to strike the target. Traditionally you should have your foot pushed away from you and your toes pulled back to strike with the ball of the foot. This can sometimes be varied to have your toes also pushed forwards to strike with the instep. The leg should be completely straightened at the point of impact and the hip of the kicking leg should be sharply pushed forwards at the same time to generate greater power.

THE RECOIL

Do not just drop the straight leg! Return the lower part of the leg to the bent position whilst continuing to keep the upper part of the leg relatively stationary and then put your foot down as needed (or kick again from the preparation position if needed).

FRONT TURNING KICK

Front turning kick is a linier kick.

THE PREPARATION

Twist the standing foot very slightly on the ball of the foot in an anti clockwise direction and push the right hip through to approximately 45°. At the same time the right leg should be lifted and bent as tight as possible whilst the knee is pushed forwards. The point of the knee should aim at the intended target whether it is the groin, body or head and the top of the thigh should be leaned 45° towards the left.

Your body should stay upright and your body weight should be over your standing leg.

THE STRIKE

Keeping the upper part of your leg relatively stationary accelerate the lower part of your leg using a hinge movement to strike the target. Traditionally you should have your foot pushed away from you and your toes pulled back to strike with the ball of the foot. This can sometimes be varied to have your toes also pushed forwards to strike with the instep. The leg should be completely straightened at the point of impact and the hip of the kicking leg should be sharply pushed forwards and over at the same time to generate greater power. The Kick should travel along a line 45° between straight up and 90° parallel to the floor.

THE RECOIL

Do not just drop the straight leg! Return the lower part of the leg to the bent position whilst continuing to keep the upper part of the leg relatively stationary and then put your foot down as needed (or kick again from the preparation position if needed).

TURNING KICK

Turning kick is a rotational kick.

THE PREPARATION

Push your right shoulder and arm forwards and pull it back as you twist your standing foot through 180° on the ball of the foot in an anti clockwise direction and push the right hip over so it is almost directly above the left hip. At the same time the right leg should be lifted to the side of you and bent as tight as possible. Continue swinging the bent leg until the point of the knee is aiming at the intended target. The top of the thigh should be turned over the full 90° so it is pointing parallel to the floor towards the left.

Your body should lean back and match the position of your hips. Your body weight should be over your standing leg and you should feel that your right elbow is leading your upper body to twist in the opposite direction to your hips and lower body.

THE STRIKE

Keeping the upper part of your leg relatively stationary accelerate the lower part of your leg using a hinge movement to strike the target. Traditionally you should have your foot pulled towards you and your toes pulled back to strike with the ball of the foot. The ball of the foot should be slightly lower than your heel. This position can sometimes be varied to have your foot and toes pushed forwards to strike with the instep. The leg should be completely straightened at the point of impact and the hip of the kicking leg should be sharply pushed over at the same time to generate greater power. The Kick should travel along a line 90° parallel to the floor on its way to the target.

THE RECOIL

Do not just drop the straight leg! Return the lower part of the leg to the bent position whilst continuing to keep the upper part of the leg relatively stationary and then put your foot down as needed (or kick again from the preparation position if needed).

SIDE KICK

Side kick is a linear kick.

THE PREPARATION

Push your right shoulder and arm forwards and pull it back as you twist your standing foot through 180° on the ball of the foot in an anti clockwise direction and push the right hip over so it is almost directly above the left hip. At the same time the right leg should be lifted to the side of you and bent as tight as possible. Continue swinging the bent leg until the point of the knee is aiming at the intended target. The top of the thigh should be turned over the full 90° so it is pointing parallel to the floor towards the left.

Your body should lean back and match the position of your hips. Your body weight should be over your standing leg and you should feel that your right elbow is leading your upper body to twist in the opposite direction to your hips and lower body.

THE STRIKE

Keeping the upper part of your leg relatively stationary accelerate the lower part of your leg using a hinge movement to strike the target. Traditionally you should have your foot pulled towards you and your toes pulled back to strike with the ball of the foot. The ball of the foot should be slightly lower than your heel. This position can sometimes be varied to have your foot and toes pushed forwards to strike with the instep. The leg should be completely straightened at the point of impact and the hip of the kicking leg should be sharply pushed over at the same time to generate greater power. The Kick should travel along a line 90° parallel to the floor on its way to the target.

THE RECOIL

Do not just drop the straight leg! Return the lower part of the leg to the bent position whilst continuing to keep the upper part of the leg relatively stationary and then put your foot down as needed (or kick again from the preparation position if needed).