

2. Hits to Flank

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWGIRc_6ZeM&list=PLW9OQerjy9W3kizillfQ6wokHKCpTU05Y&index=6

The hit to flank is completed by moving the point towards the target with the minimum of movement or swing from the upper arm. It's tricky, because the eye of the fencer, especially that of a beginner, will tell them that they need to move their hand from right to left to make the hit (if they are right handed). The fencer might even lean right to left. But in fact the hand moves forward and the fingers manipulate the point.

The reason for this is simple and can be demonstrated as follows. Ask the fencer to keep their hand still in tierce and without moving the arm, rotate the blade from 12 o'clock position to 9 o'clock position. Now look at the point, then look at the target. Note that in order to hit with the point, the point has to move left to right. The fencer needs to become aware early on of where the point is, how to move it correctly towards the target and the finish with a crisp cut from the fingers.

Again, the double cut is introduced to ensure the cuts are being made correctly and finally, the "hit move" coordination is introduced and emphasised.

At 55secs, the fencer initially gets it, then starts to do too much. This fencer is in danger of thinking that harder from the shoulder is better. The coach then explains by demonstration how the cut to head and the cut to flank are achieved by moving the arm in the same way - it's only the hand and fingers that change the direction of the blade. His comment, that to do otherwise is to lose "time" is critical here. The action needs to be as efficient as possible, minimising extraneous arm and body movement that might otherwise prevent a well timed hit.

The necessary precision of the flank cutting action is demonstrated well in this next video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jL6l39QVjI&list=PLW9OQerjy9W3kizillfQ6wokHKCpTU05Y&index=7>

You can see in this video how the fencer has a strong upper arm dependency and finds the idea of timing, especially the double cut, problematic. The overly strong upper arm is also constantly pulling the hand away from an effective tierce position. The coach explains that by putting the hitting action into the hand, the arm is able to lengthen if required.

Always happy to take any questions on prof.carson@yahoo.co.uk