



Martial Arts for Beginners

*The Kicking Series.
PT1 -- the Basic Kicks*

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The Kicking Series

Part 1 – The Basic Kicks

By Justyn Billingham

Dedicated to all my students

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Introduction

“A kick is not a kick.”

It’s a bit of a strange statement to make but I can assure you it’s true.

Let me explain....

You see, a ‘*kick*’ as we know it is made up of a whole series of factors that all need to come together at exactly the right moment in order for that ‘*kick*’ to actually work.

Now, I could double or even triple the size of this eBook by breaking down each factor, detailing it and then giving you specific drills to work in order to super develop each factor and then, once you’ve mastered them all, get you to then bring all those newly developed factors together in order for you to get just *one* of the kicks we’re going to cover in this book to work.

But I think if you are new to all of this it might blow your mind.

(And if you’re *not* new to all of this then you probably don’t need *this* book).

Plus, it will take you a *lot* longer to learn anything that you can really get stuck into.

And you’d get bored.

And give up.

And personally I also don’t think I need to as all these factors will naturally improve as you practice.

You don’t need to understand *how* a mobile phone works in order to send a text message.

You just send the text message.

Or in this case... just do the kick.

Plus, I also really want you to have some fun with this -- which is what it's all about.

So instead, in these early stages of your martial arts development, I just need to show you how to *do* a kick and without knowing it, you will develop all those extra factors to a decent enough level naturally so they'll take care of themselves.

You can always break them down, isolate them and develop them to a much higher standard at a later stage if you really want to.

I recently started learning to windsurf.

I'd always fancied it as I've always thought it looks pretty cool (and challenging, which I like) so I had a go on a friend's board with absolutely no tuition, other than listening to their fantastic advice, which was... '*Don't fall off!*'

But as windsurfing is so difficult to do I just kept *constantly* falling off and consequently got frustrated, then bored and inevitably just gave up.

So, not to be beaten by this I decided to join a windsurfing school and they taught me the very basics (yes, I would have just bought a book or looked on YouTube but I also needed a lake to practice on so *had* to join their school) and they got me out on the water and after a very short amount of time I was able to stay stood up and have a bit of a sail around.

And I really enjoyed it -- which is ultimately what I was doing it for!

So, as far as I was concerned I was just '*having a go*' but in actual fact I was also developing all the (hidden) factors associated with windsurfing

such as balance, footwork, weight distribution, movement etc and all by simply just '*doing it*'.

Had that same school just got me to practice balancing on the shore for several hours at a time, I doubt very much I would have stuck at it.

I, like you, just wanted to get on and do it.

Far better to just learn the *minimum* amount I needed to know at that stage in my development in order for me to gain the *maximum* amount from the teaching.

And it worked.

Teach me the absolute basics and then get me out there on the lake practicing it worked great.

And so that's what I'm going to do for you.

But just before I do, I need you to read the next bit as it is quite important.

A (Quick) Word on Stretching

Having just spent that last bit telling you that we don't need to break down each of the factors of a kick and that I don't have to get you to develop each one etc, etc, I am going to throw this out there for your consideration....

... If you can't touch your toes at the moment you *may* just struggle to kick all that high.

Now I'm not suggesting you *have* to start a full on '*Flexibility Enhancement Programme*' as I don't want you to think that there's yet another thing you have to consider doing, but if you *do* decide to start developing your flexibility a tad more, not only will (should) it greatly enhance your overall general mobility and in turn massively (hopefully) improve your quality of life -- of course, but it will also mean you'll start to find your kicking becomes a bit easier to do.

And that can't be a bad thing.

And please don't confuse developing your flexibility with just stretching out your legs as part of your warm up, which I *am* going to advise you to do before you start each training session -- of course... as this is much different.

And if you don't currently have your own '*Flexibility Enhancement Programme*' or even remotely know what to do and / or how to do it, then check out my other eBook '*How To Develop The BOX Splits*', also available on Amazon, and this will show you how (*with simple to follow exercises you can do in the comfort of your own home*).

And that's me on the front cover showing off by the way so you can clearly see that the *Flexibility Enhancement Programme* I designed *does* actually work!

Plus, I achieved my incredible level of flexibility while sitting watching TV.

I'm not lying, it's true!

How To Use This Book

Another quick bit you need to read so you know *how* to use this book.

My intentions with developing this training manual / programme / book (whatever you want to call it) was not to try and create a batch of home grown martial artists.

Or to try and stop people from heading down to their local sports centres and signing up with their community martial arts instructor because they now have the power to do it themselves without having to step a foot outside their front door.

No, instead my intention with this book was simply to do one of three things.

One -- to give people a taste of what it's like to perform some proper martial arts techniques and see if they like it (and can do it) all before then committing to a regular training programme in a leisure centre with an instructor – if you feel the need.

Two -- to impart my years (thirty to be exact) of study and knowledge and help anyone that is just starting out in the martial '*kicking*' arts improve their current kicking ability.

Three -- for those that *do* just want to throw a few kicks about for fun, like a ninja, and in the comfort of your own home (or back garden) instead of just doing it blind, or like I did (and still do), pause some cool combo on an action movie I'm watching and move it forward frame by frame re-enacting the very same moves at the same time... much to the frustration of my very understanding family who also just happen to be watching the movie with me as well.

I tend to complement my own personal training with a spot of lifting weights every now and again.

I don't do it because I want to enter this year's 'Mr Universe'.

Or turn myself into an Arnold Schwarzenegger clone.

I do it because I enjoy it.

It's a slight change from all my martial art training.

It helps *complement* my martial arts training.

And it also helps keep me a little toned now I've hit that middle stage of life.

I basically bought a multigym (initial investment done and no ongoing fees).

Set it up in my spare room.

And off I went.

Now as far back as I can remember no one has ever really shown me how to lift weights.

There were never any structured classes on '*how to lift weights properly*' that I could take.

Yes, I could hire a personal trainer, but they're not cheap.

So instead I kind of worked it all out by myself.

And naturally I made a lot of mistakes.

Mistakes that sometime resulted in the odd little injury.

Today, however, I'm a lot older.

A lot wiser.

And a lot more experienced.

And I've learnt from my mistakes.

Read a few books (with photos) where someone explained it all very well.

And I now lift weights properly.

I'm not a trained mechanic but I'm fairly confident that if I brought a Haynes manual I could follow the step by step instructions and perform a pretty good oil change on my car.

I doubt very much I'd be able to start up my own workshop afterwards but after a while, if I kept changing the oil on my car on a regular basis, eventually I'd be pretty good at changing the oil on my car -- and then maybe once I'd got a bit of confidence with that, I could try something a bit bigger.

A bit more challenging.

But, what that Haynes manual may not show me, in its step by step guide, was what to do if a nut was welded on a little too tight.

That's where a proper trained mechanic might come in handy.

And so it is with this eBook.

This book will show you how to how to perform each of the basic kick properly with photos to follow and as a bonus I've even uploaded videos of me doing the kicks to my YouTube channel for you so you can now actually see how the kicks should look.

But what this book won't be able to do for you is turn you into a cage fighting champion -- if that's what you're hoping to achieve.

For that, you'll probably need the services of a qualified and experienced instructor.

And a few cage fights along the way!

The Fundamentals of Kicking

Last bit, I promise....

Here are a few simple things to understand about kicking.

We use a kick to:

1. Keep someone at bay
2. Attack at long range
3. Or cover ground and close distance.

It's as simple as that.

Whereas, if you take a basic punch, for example, this is used more for when we *have* closed the gap, or for when our opponent closes it for us, and we can't (or we chose not to) step back into kicking range.

A good kicker *should* be able to use distance, footwork and movement to their advantage and at the same time (possibly) keep someone that is not so good at kicking just out of reach.

The term '*static kick*' as in the title of the next chapter, basically refers to a kick that is done with the supporting leg on the floor and without incorporating a jump or a spin.

If it involves a spin then it's a '*Spinning Kick*'.

If it involves a jump then it's a '*Jumping Kick*'.

And if it involves a jump and a spin then it's a '*Jumping Spinning Kick*'.

Every static kick can be turned into a spinning kick, a jumping kick *and* a jumping spinning kick and these (naturally) will be the subjects of future eBooks -- so check back on Amazon regularly.

Anyone can throw punches around (don't get me wrong here, I fully appreciate there's a massive difference between a trained boxer and a scrap in a school playground -- it's the scrap in the school playground that I'm referring to here).

Most people can't kick well.

Every technique that you can do well is one more 'weapon' you have at your disposal.

If your opponent can only throw the four basic punches but you can do that and seven additional kicks that can be used to attack your opponent regardless of how you are stood and regardless of what targets your opponent leaves open to you, you instantly have seven additional weapons at your disposal that your opponent doesn't have giving you a massive overall advantage.

In the next chapter I'll take you through the seven most popular *static* kicks found in pretty much most kicking arts and we'll look at a detailed breakdown of each one along with how to perform it correctly.

Plus videos to accompany them.

At the end of the book I'll also include some simply training drills along with recommend (free) training aids to help you develop them even further.

Trust me... if you follow what I say *exactly*, I will have you kicking like that ninja in a very short space of time.

So enough chat... let's get started!

The First Three Basic (static) Kicks

There are three basic kicks that can be found in pretty much all fighting styles that feature kicks.

They are:

1. The Front Kick
2. The Round Kick
3. And the Side Kick.

Let's start off with the simplest of all the kicks to master.

Make sure you warm up and stretched properly before you start.

The Front Kick

Is designed to attack from a front on position off either the lead or rear leg.

You will most commonly see this kick used to attack the mid section, however, it can also be used to attack anywhere on the body.

The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this from is a front facing stance.



Ensure your feet are at least as wide as your shoulders.

Your rear foot is raised up so your heel is off the floor -- this helps you to push off (move) with explosion (like a sprinter on the starting blocks).

Your guard is tight -- back hand on the side of the chin or cheek.

Front hand in front of the body (for distance fighting) or face (for close range fighting).

Ideally if you are right handed, ensure your right leg and right hand is at the rear.

If you are left handed, then your left leg and left hand should ideally be at the rear.

In brief -- your dominant hand is the most powerful one so that goes at the back and is (generally) used as the knockout punch as it will generate more energy and force as it travels, and your weaker hand is at the front and therefore closer to the opponent and so is used for speed with which to stun an opponent allowing you to send the big knockout punch.

The same principle works for the kicks.

The striking part

Quite simply, there are three main parts of the foot that you can use with the front kick.

1. The ball of the foot with the foot fully extended -- this one is probably the most common way to strike a target and gives you and extra few inches.

2. The flat of the foot -- generally used to push someone back.
3. The heel with the foot pulled back.



The breakdown

To start with we'll focus on the lead leg front kick.

The footwork for this kick will depend greatly on the width of your stance and the distance between you and your target.

For ease of explanation we'll use a simple '*step up*' movement for now.

1. Start facing your target (or opponent) in your front stance as shown.



2. Lift the lead (kicking) leg straight up into a chambered (bent) position. (If you find that you are too far away from your target, or you are unable to lift your lead leg off the floor, simply shorten your stance or take a little step forward with your rear leg and this will help).



3. Drive the leg out using a '*stabbing*' motion.



Hints & Tips - The temptation for many people is to drop the guard when performing kicks. This is a bad habit to get into and one that can be difficult to break once the foundations have been set so avoid doing this at all costs.

As you execute the kick be sure to send it straight out (as if kicking a door open) and NOT swing it (as if kicking a football).

To increase the power and overall effectiveness of the kick, thrust the hips forward at the point of connection.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --

<https://youtu.be/xTyFXdLe2Ug>

Now let's look at the same kick but off the rear leg

The rear leg front kick is the more powerful of the two kicks, however, because it is slightly further away from the target compared to the lead leg, it can be a bit slower and in turn take a little longer to land.

Unlike with the lead leg front kick, there is no real necessity to step up as your balance is taken care of by the front leg as the rear leg kick passes through.

1. Start in a front stance as before.



2. Bring your back leg up straight up into a chambered position, driving your hip forward and maintaining your balance.



3. Drive the kick out as before, focusing on the striking part of the foot.



Hints & Tips – In the breakdown we isolated the hip moving forward (photo 2) and then got you to drive the kick out (photo 3) however when you do it properly use the ‘*hip driving forward*’ movement and ‘*drive the kick out*’ as one explosive move.

Once you’ve executed the kick you can either land your kicking foot in front and then step back into your original stance, or control the kicking leg and place it back where it came from.

How you land will generally be governed by what you intend to do next and the amount of energy you put into the kick. Both landings are correct.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --
<https://youtu.be/7AM9aSq2Yow>

The Round Kick

Is probably the kick that is used more than any other and is a definite favourite with all good kickers.

One of the most versatile of all the kicks, it can be used with incredible speed, can deliver knockout power off both the lead and the rear legs, and can deliver multiple attacks with ease.

Equally effective for high, middle and low use, this kick is definitely one worth mastering.

The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this style of round kick from is an angled stance.



An angled stance involves the toes of your front foot resting on the same line as the heel of your rear foot.

If you study the images above, you'll see what that should look like.

You'll also notice that now we're stood a little more at the angle (note the direction of the toes compared to the front stance), the lead hand guard has changed slightly to cover more of the body.

Front View

Side View

The striking part

Before we look at the actual kick it's important to understand which part of the foot we use to strike with.

Quite simply, there are two main parts of the foot that you can use with the round kick.



1. The ball of the foot -- generally used for destruction.

2. The instep -- generally used for pad work and sparring.

The breakdown

To start with we'll focus on the lead leg round kick.

1. Face your opponent (or target) in a fighting stance.



2. Bring your kicking leg up into a chambered (bent) position. Again feel free to step up with your rear leg if that's easier for you.



3. Drive the kick straight out towards its target.



Hints & Tips -- As you chamber the kicking leg, pivot on the rear (supporting) foot. This tiny movement will make a huge difference to the kick as it will allow you to open up your hips and ensure the leg travels out towards its target correctly. It's not a natural or easy move at first but do practice this and it will make the kick much easier to do. Check the rear foot position on the last two photos to see what I mean.

If you're too far away from your target, simply step up with your rear foot to cover distance. This will also help you bring your kicking leg off the floor if your stance is too wide. The only thing to be aware of with stepping up is that you add additional movement which will in turn slow down the kick down and against an experiment opponent will '*telegraph*' (give away) what you are about to do. Sometimes however, the step up is necessary.

Get the kicking leg back on the floor again as fast as possible and be sure to keep your guard up as you kick.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --
<https://youtu.be/Z1wOLz0Oiw4>

Off the rear leg

This can be a very powerful kick if done properly but, as with all back leg kicks, does have a tendency to be a little slower to land than the lead leg as it has further to travel (but in turn it also has more time to build up additional energy which is why it's more powerful).

Certain kicking arts allow low level kicking in their syllabus and the rear leg round kick can be an incredibly effective kick when targeted at the thigh region.

1. Although it doesn't show it in the photo, if it's easier for you, you can start off in a Front Stance when doing a rear leg round kick as this will allow you to get your rear leg round to the front quicker and with reduced movement.



2. Bring your rear (kicking leg) knee up and around to the front to help you with the start of the kick.



3. As the rear leg begins to come up pivot on your supporting leg and drive the kick through using a circular motion and striking with the correct part of the foot.



Hints & Tips -- Once you've executed the kick you can either land your kicking foot in front and then step back into your original stance, or control the kicking leg and place it back where it came from.

How you land will generally be governed by what you intend to do next.

For now, if it's easier, simply focus on isolating the rear leg round kick and working it as described here.

Don't forget to pivot on the supporting foot (see the photo) and get your hips and whole body turning into the kick.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --

<https://youtu.be/F-OEbdSfJXQ>

The Side Kick

Is a great stopping kick which essentially means when used defensively, it can stop an opponent dead in their tracks.

The secondary benefit of the side kick, if done properly, is that it puts a barrier between you and the opponent which can be very difficult to get past (check out the two photos below to see what I mean).

It can also be a very fast kick because the motion used to execute the kick is so very different from most others and when used offensively, is a great kick to keep an opponent at bay with or to use in conjunction with multiple kicks.

The striking part

Before we look at the actual kick it's important to understand which part of the foot we use to strike with.

Quite simply, there are two main parts of the foot that you can use with the side kick.



1. The heel of the foot with the toes pulled back.

2. The side of the foot (foot sword).

Which one you use is down to personal preference. I tend to favour the heel as I find that works better for me.

The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this from is naturally a side on stance.

You *can* work the side kick from a front on stance however you need to do a little more work, therefore a side stance is a good stance to start off with when you first start learning this kick.



A side stance involves the heels of both feet resting on the same line.

If you study the images above, you'll see what that should look like.

You'll also notice that now we're stood completely side on the lead hand guard has changed slightly to cover more of the side of the body.

Notice the direction of the toes now compared to the last two stances.

The breakdown

To start with we'll focus on the lead leg side kick.

1. From your side on stance.



2. Bring your kicking leg into a chambered (bent) position. If you struggle with this or feel you are too far away from your target, then simply step up a little with your rear (supporting) foot as before.



3. Drive the kick out in a perfectly straight line towards its target.



Hints & Tips -- As you chamber the kicking leg, pivot on the rear (supporting) foot in exactly the same way as you did for the round kick.

Again, this tiny movement will make a huge difference to the kick as it will allow you to open up your hips and ensure the leg travels out towards its target correctly.

Check the difference in the rear foot positions on photo1 and photo 2/3.

Drive the kick out using the hips and not just the leg as this will help to increase the overall energy (and power) of the kick. This might not make sense you to now but the more you practice the quicker it will.

Get the leg back on the floor again as fast as possible.

Keep your guard tight.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --
<https://youtu.be/4f3IjaIpPHI>

The rear leg side kick

This kick is favoured a great deal among the traditional kicking arts such as karate and tae kwon do, and is particularly effective when used for board breaking (destruction).

As an attacking kick it is considerably slower than its lead leg equivalent, however, as a power kick it can be quite incredible.

One thing to note with this kick is that it's not used a great deal in the freestyle kicking world as the aim of this style of martial 'sport' is speed over power and, as the rear leg side kick has to pass across the lead leg and then move along the exact same line, it is considered to be much quicker and more effective to use a lead leg kick.

The breakdown

1. This time start more in a front on stance as this will allow you to get your rear leg round to the front quicker and with minimal movement.



2. Drive the kicking leg up and through to the front as if doing the start of a front kick.



3. As the rear leg begins to come up pivot on your supporting leg (check the foot position).



4. Drive the kick through using the hip in the same way as before.



Hints & Tips -- Once you've executed the kick you can either land your kicking foot in front and then step back into your original stance, or control the kicking leg and place it back where it came from.

How you land will generally be governed by what you intend to do next although I personally think it's going to be easier for you to just land it and then either step back or perform a spinning kick (subject of a later book).

For now simply focus on isolating the side kick and working it as described here.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --

<https://youtu.be/jMV-zMVVsnU>

THE FINAL FOUR

The following four kicks form the final part of the static kick programme.

These kicks are considered to be slightly more difficult to master than the previous ones, which could be down to several factors.

Either the kick may require a higher degree of flexibility in order to work properly.

Or the breakdown of the kick may be slightly more advanced.

Either way, they are certainly worth persevering with as they will help to complete your basic knowledge and with practice and training, add additional weapons to your armoury and allow you to attack from different angles and varying (stance) positions.

The Hooking Kick

Is very similar in movement to the lead leg side kick with the added variant of a whip or hooking motion at the end.

Due to the way the kick moves, it is predominately designed to attack the side of the head or body and works very well at high level.

It is also a great kick to use in combination with a multiple kicking attack as it can send an opponent's guard to one side of their body thus opening up their opposite side.

The striking part

Before we look at the actual kick it's important to understand which part of the foot we use to strike with.

Quite simply, there are two main parts of the foot that you can use.



1. The heel of the foot -- generally used for destruction.

2. The flat or ball of the foot -- generally used when sparring.

The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this from is a 'Side Stance', although it *will* work from any of the other two stances with a bit of additional footwork (but will slow the kick down).

The breakdown

To start with we'll focus on the lead leg hooking kick.

1. From your preferred stance.



2. Bring your lead leg up into a chambered position.



3. Pivot on your supporting leg to open the hips up.



4. Extend the leg out just slightly passed the target as if you were performing a side kick.



5. Whip the leg back in using a hooking motion.



Hints & Tips -- Again, note the change in foot position between the photos to ensure you get your hips and body into the right position for the kick to work.

Although the photos show the kick broken down throughout each of its stages, you'll actually find in practice that momentum and flow will assist you greatly.

As you connect the kick you can either follow it through (so you'd land it on the right side of your opponent (your left side in a left lead), or bounce it off and land it on their left side (so your right side).

Both are correct and both options allow you to follow up with something else.

For example you could follow it through and then send a lead leg side kick to the body (if it was open).

Or you could bounce it off and send a rear leg spinning kick to the body or head (which ever was open).

This may seem like a lot to take in right now so don't worry too much about it however as your ability improves, so will your processing speed and it's your brains ability to process all that's happening quickly that will make you a great martial artist.

Be sure to keep your guard up as you kick.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --
<https://youtu.be/6qW8B7WjXwI>

Off the rear leg

This can be quite an awkward kick due to the angles that the leg needs to travel through and the shifts in both body mechanics and energy you have to perform in order to get the kick to work.

Once you are familiar with the kick and have tried it a few times, you may feel that a lead leg round kick could possibly work a little more efficiently.

1. From a front stance.



2. Bring the rear leg up into a chambered position as if you were about to perform a rear leg front kick.



3. From this position, pivot on the supporting leg to open up the hips and turn you side on.



4. Extend the leg out in the same way as for the lead leg hooking kick.



5. As the leg passes the target, hook the kick back in, striking with the correct part of the foot.



Hints & Tips -- Once you've executed the kick you can either land your kicking leg as previously discussed.

Just note that as you start to develop these kicks you will favour some above others.

The most important thing for you is to try everything and then decide which ones work better for you and super develop those ones.

Most great fighters will only have a repertoire of around five techniques that they use.

They just use those five techniques *really* well.

The Axe Kick

The axe kick is a technique that does require a good degree of flexibility in order to make it work to its full potential so if you *can* invest a little time in your stretching here, it will be well worth it.

As one of the more ‘intermediate’ level static kicks, the axe kick is one of those rare techniques that if used correctly can find its target almost every time.

The striking part

Before we look at the actual kick it's important to understand which part of the foot we use to strike with.

Quite simply, there are two main parts of the foot that you can use with the axe kick.



1. The heel of the foot -- generally used for destruction.

2. The flat or ball of the foot -- generally used when sparring.

The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this from is a 'Front on Stance' or, depending on your current level of hip flexibility, possibly an 'Angled Stance'.

The breakdown

To start with we'll look at the lead leg axe kick.

1. Start in your preferred stance.



2. Step up with your rear leg to help generate the required momentum to swing the leg upwards.



3. Swing the kicking leg up as high as you can being sure to take it across your body.



4. Drive the leg back down again (using your hip) towards the target.



Hints & Tips -- The axe kick is most effective when used to attack the blind side of an opponent (e.g. the side they have in front) as the lead (forward) shoulder can sometimes obscure their peripheral vision allowing for a greater likelihood of the kick landing.

It should also ideally travel across your body (e.g. across your open side) rather than allowing the body to open up by kicking in the opposite way.

Be sure to keep your guard up as you kick.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --

<https://youtu.be/yNr9PtpDjDE>

And to see how effective the Axe Kick can be is --

<https://youtu.be/JEguUBV6c0E>

Off the rear leg

Now we'll look at the same kick but from the rear leg.

1. From a front stance this time.



2. Swing your rear leg across your body in the same way as you did for the lead leg, driving the hips through to bring the kicking leg fully forward.



3. Ensure the leg travels above the actual target.



4. And bring the kick down directly on top of the striking area.



Hints & Tips -- Understanding the kick off the rear leg will give you the distinct advantage of being able to use the axe kick to attack the blind side of your opponent regardless of which leg they have forward.

This ability is particularly useful if they have a tendency to switch stance during a fight.

The Outside Crescent Kick

The crescent kicks are simply variations of the axe kick and are designed to travel in a similar way but attack at a different angle.

They tend to complement the axe kick quite well and enable the user to quickly switch between angles based on the movements of the opponent.

They can be used from long range with good footwork and can also be used at close range with good flexibility in distances where punches would normally be used.

They can also be used as a major attack or to set up a second technique and due to the nature of the kick, can also be used to attack an opponent's guard if needed.

The striking part

The striking part for this version is the outside of the foot -- in particular, the outside of the heel.



The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this from is a 'Front on Stance'.

The breakdown

To start with we'll look at the lead leg Outside Crescent Kick.

1. Start in your front stance.



2. Start to swing your lead leg up and across your body in a similar way to the Axe Kick.



3. Bring the leg out to the side in a crescent shape.



4. And drive it back towards the target using your hip.



Hints & Tips -- A little step to the side with your rear leg as you start the move will help you with the swing in the early stages of learning this kick.

And if you struggle to get the kick up to the head, then a bit of flexibility development will pay off massively.

Note, when watching the videos, how the crescent kick and the axe kicks do vary. The axe kick travels more from ceiling to floor, whereas the crescent kick travels more from wall to wall.

Be sure to keep your guard up as you kick.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action --

<https://youtu.be/fDyybInPdpM>

Off the rear leg

Now we'll look at the same kick but from the rear leg.

1. From a front stance once again.



6. Swing your rear leg across your body in the same way as you did for the lead leg, driving the hips through to bring the kicking leg fully forward.



7. As the leg reaches the same height as your opponents head (or target area), whip it back across (using the hips) being sure to kick with the correct striking part.



Hints & Tips -- You may find the outside crescent kick more effective when used to attack the inside of your opponent as opposed to the outside or the *blind side* as in the case of the axe kick.

Due to the way the kick travels it is quite possible that an attempt at a head height kick via the outside route could be easily absorbed by the opponent by simply raising the lead shoulder to defend the head or by stepping into the kick to deflect it.

The rear leg crescent kick gives you the advantage of being able to attack the inside of the head or body without the need for you to switch your stance and give away your intentions.

The Inside Crescent Kick

The inside crescent kick is the final static kick and one of the easiest of all to perform.

It is designed to attack the inside of your opponent and works equally well to the head or body.

It is also the kick that is seen in many martial art movies being used to parry a straight punch or direct knife attack, although in reality it would be highly inadvisable to try using a kick to do this and for that reason is probably best left to the movie industry.

The only real disadvantage that you may find with this kick is that due to the way it travels, it does have a tendency to leave you slightly open and in turn potentially vulnerable to attack, so use with caution and a tight guard.

The striking part

The striking part for this version is the inside of the foot -- in particular, the inside of the heel.



The stance

Due to the nature of the kick, the most effective stance to work this from is a 'Front on Stance'.

The breakdown

To start with we'll look at the lead leg Inside Crescent Kick.

1. Start in your front stance.



2. Step up slightly with your rear leg. This will help you with the momentum required to swing the leg up.



3. Swing your lead leg out to the side of your body in a crescent motion.



4. And drive it back in again towards the target using the hips for additional power and energy.



Hints & Tips -- As with the Outside Crescent Kick, a good initial step up with your rear supporting leg will help you generate a good degree of momentum to swing the leg up.

If you just '*let the kick go*' (just send it) and land where it wants to this will make it easier for you.

The temptation when you first start learning this kick is to try and force it back to where it came from as it starts its descent.

Don't.

Instead just let the leg land where it naturally wants to land and then just step back into your stance once more.

As you saw with the hooking kick, if the inside crescent kicks lands quite a way over to the right, you can simply follow up with a spinning kick or bring it back across for an outside crescent kick or even an axe kick.

Check out my YOUTUBE video to see this kick in action –
https://youtu.be/71yOLy9zm_Q

Off the rear leg

Now we'll look at the same kick but from the rear leg.

1. From a front stance once again.



2. Transfer your weight onto your lead leg, drive your hips forward and swing your rear leg out to the side.



3. From here drive the kick back in towards the striking area attacking with the correct part of the foot.



Hints & Tips -- The principle for this kick is the same as the rear leg outside crescent kick.

Understanding the inside crescent kick off both the lead and rear legs gives you the added advantage of being able to attack both quickly and directly with little to no telegraphing of your intentions -- a skill sought after by every martial artist or sport fighter in the world.

Training Drills

So teaching you how to kick is all well and good but now what I plan to do is to give you some basic training that will help to *'make you even better'*.

Do you remember at the beginning of the book I said at this stage in your training you don't need to worry about all the additional *'factors'* and instead just start kicking.

Well it's still true, it's just that now you know *how* to do all the kicks, I want to give you a few additional things to work on (not many, as there's no need at this stage), in the comfort of your own home *and without out the need to spend any more money* (which is a good thing) that will help you to develop those additional factors without you even knowing it.

I basically developed my flexibility and in turn my kicking ability to an incredible high level, with very little additional outlay, by simply using the things I already had around me.

I want you to be able to do the same.

And back when I started, by the way, I didn't even really know what I was doing.

And there was no internet!

This eBook has already given you at a massive head start on me.

Drill Number 1

This is a fantastic drill and I'd highly recommend you do this one at least once a week.

1. Find yourself a chair, balance bar, training partner or some other sturdy object capable of supporting you.
2. Lightly rest your hand on the support to assist your balance.



3. Perform either a Front Kick, Round Kick, Side Kick or Hooking Kick kick off the lead leg as slowly as possible going through the full range of motion (e.g. lift, chamber, extend).

This drill unfortunately won't work very well with any of the other static kicks.

As a guide it should take you about ten seconds to take the leg from the floor to full extension.

Any quicker and your kicking too fast.



4. Once at full extension, hold for a further 5 seconds.



5. Bring the leg back down as slowly as possible (retract, lower, land – again over a 10 seconds period)
6. Practice this for 10 reps, take a rest (between 1 – 3 minutes, based on how you feel) and then perform one of the other kicks.

Hints & Tips - Once you become efficient with this, try enhancing it by not using a support and instead keeping a tight guard throughout.

Set yourself a target to try and touch.

I used to do this by trying to turn the light switch on while waiting for the kettle to boil.

Or open a door and try to touch one of the panels on the door.

I also used to try to lightly touch the leaves on my mother's huge cheese plant that would sit in the corner of our lounge. She used to hate that!

You can also try adding some resistance to the exercise by wearing ankle weights (as shown). The most important thing to remember when training with ankle weights is to only wear them when performing the kicks SLOWLY.

Kicking at speed while wearing ankle weights can cause serious damage to the knees and joints.

Drill Number 2

Probably don't need the photo's anymore.

Work each kick slowly and methodically to enable you to develop each technique in isolation.

Do it wherever you can.

Use the targets I mentioned above.

Rig up your own cheap ones such. I used to blue tac a piece of string to a ping pong ball and stick it to the ceiling. Cheap and VERY effective.

Use a mirror as you can then see what you're doing (right and wrong).

Video yourself.

Drill Number 3

Add in movement allowing you to incorporate footwork (so just move around a bit and then kick).

Drill Number 4

In a stationary position work each technique as many times as you can for a period of one minute.

Make a note of your score and next time try to beat that score.

When you can't get any more in, increase the time by thirty seconds.

For these final two drills you can either use a training partner or, if one is not available, do what I do and record yourself giving *yourself* instructions.

It's a bit strange when you first start recording yourself but trust me, it will pay off massively when you're training.

I just use my phone and then plug my phone into my stereo and off I go.

Simple!

Drill Number 5

Your partner (or a recorded you) calls out the names of techniques in multiples of two, three or four and you respond straight away by performing the appropriate techniques in the same order.

Drill Number 6

As above but change the drill by moving around and using your footwork. As you do this you'll find you naturally transition between a front stance, an angled stance and a side stance -- just like when you fight.

It's that ability (and processing speed) to be able to quickly use the best kick, from whatever stance you are in that will make you a GREAT martial artist.

Final Word

You get out of life what you put in.

You've probably been told this a thousand times and if not, then you probably already know this anyway.

But it's true.

I got into martial arts because I got attacked when I was a teenager.

It was an horrific experience and at one point I thought that one of my two attackers (much older youths) was going to stab me.

He made a big thing about it but luckily for me when he pulled his hand back out of his inside jacket pocket he was only holding some kind of CS gas or pepper spray -- but getting sprayed full force in the face with that is no pleasant experience I can certainly tell you.

I thought it was acid and I thought they had blinded me.

It took me several hours and a trip to A&E before I could finally see properly again.

Afterwards all the skin peeled off my face (much to the amusement of all my school friends!).

Not only that but it happened in a busy town centre with people walking past and (get this) no one stepped in to help.

Not one person.

They all had a good look as they past though.

The memory of it all stays with me to this very day

When I finally recovered from my beating, I decided to start studying the martial arts.

And I'll be honest, I hated it.

You see I was a very lazy, overweight kind of kid.

I loved watching Ninja movies and always wanted to be able to do all the moves they did on screen but I couldn't be bothered to actually put the effort in, if the truth be known.

I started a Karate class once when I was about twelve but it was tough and I quit after only two lessons.

And then I got attacked four years later and my life changed forever.

Training was very different and very tough back in 1984 but no matter how tough it was and no matter how much I hated it, I refused to quit because I never wanted to be in THAT situation again.

Adopting that mentality has helped me in so many areas of my life.

Getting told I couldn't do something and then proving people wrong is the most satisfying feeling in the world.

But it's not easy and it's not for free.

And I mean, you pay in time and with blood sweat and tears (cliché I know but it's true).

So what I'm basically trying to tell you is this....

You've bought this book (yes I know it cost you less than a glass of wine, pint of beer or, if you're a teenager, then less than a trip to the cinema, but you still made an investment to yourself and what you can potentially get

out of it is a whole lot better for you than those other three things) so why not give it a go.

And don't just half heartedly '*give it a go*'.

I mean give it a *proper* go.

I'll be honest... you may well go through the exact same stages that I went through (and that everyone else goes through) and get bored and then want to quit and then convince yourself that everything I've just taught you is pretty rubbish as you were actually hoping that this book would simply present you with that magic secret that would instantly give you black belt abilities (everyone is searching for that quick, easy fix as opposed to simply good old fashioned hard work -- which is why performance enhancing drugs are so popular) and then maybe even leave a really bad review but remember this....

Sticking at something, especially something that takes a lot of effort is tough.

But anything worth achieving is certainly worth the effort.

And, you have something now that really does have the potential to change your life... if you'll let it.

Or, you could just go and buy yourself another pint.

When I got attacked I had seven of my closest friends with me.

They ALL ran off and left me.

They ALL joined Tae Kwon Do with me as my attack terrified them as well.

They ALL quit within three months telling me (or perhaps just trying to convince themselves) that it was boring (what it really was was hard and demanding and a great way of filtering out the winners from the wannabes).

I still keep in touch with a few of them and thirty years on they regularly tell me how they wish they had never quit as they'd be where I am now (feel free to Google me if you want to see where that is).

One of them has even recently taken up Tae Kwon Do again.

I'll give him three months!

You, on the other hand....

... Well how badly do you want it?

And I mean **REALLY** want it?