

5 TIPS FOR IMPROVING BOXING FOOTWORK

BY **BOBBY MAYNE** - September 19, 2019

Footwork drills develop fluid movement around the boxing ring, maintaining a position to attack, evading an opponent's punches and dictating the pace of the fight. Correct foot movement assists in maintaining balance and stability when both attacking and defending with effective speed and power. A boxer needs to move quickly into an opponent's space, score with a punch or combination of punches and then move out of range.

Basic footwork drills:

- Advancing (moving forward)
- Retreating (moving backward)
- Lateral Movement (moving left and right)
- Pivoting

Reminders when practicing footwork drills:

1. Balanced stance – feet approximately shoulder width distance apart with hips at a 45 degree angle. Bodyweight distribution should be approximately 60% lead foot and 40% rear foot. Heel of right foot slightly raised off ground for agility and front foot flat when advancing and retreating.
2. After each step finish with feet in original stance distance. For example; the Orthodox boxer push off from rear foot when moving forward or to left so the lead foot moves half a step and the rear foot comes back to resume the original stance. When moving back or to the right push off from front foot with rear foot moves half a step then the lead foot moves back to original stance.
3. Ensure stance is wide enough to maintain balance. Too narrow will disrupt balance, too wide will impede movement.
4. One foot should have contact with ground at all times, take small steps as this will improve hand and foot speed when punching. Wide steps equate to slower punches.
5. Never cross your feet when moving around as this will disrupt balance and punch effectiveness. Always imagine there is a line between the left and right feet that should never be crossed.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B16SwIdl-f9/>

As a coach the first things I focus on with a boxer is balanced stance and footwork. The following training tips will help develop footwork skills.

Tips for Improving Footwork in the Ring

- Skipping rope develops agility and foot speed by assisting to be lighter on feet, due to transferring body weight from one foot to the other on the balls of the feet. Initially, start skipping slowly to develop rhythm along with foot and hand coordination. When proficient take it up a notch by adding in short bursts of sprints and cross overs with the skipping rope to vary the rhythm and pace.
- Practice footwork movement and drills in the ring when shadowboxing, slowly increasing foot speed over each round. Shadowboxing is not only a warm up routine but the movements should simulate a fight.
- When using the heavy bag and floor to ceiling (double end bag) start arm's length distance focusing on footwork and jab to establish range. As the bag swings back and forth maintain range then lateral movement around the bag. Close down range to practice short range hooks and uppercuts finishing with pivots to resume jab range.
- Ladder drills will improve agility, foot coordination and speed when moving around the boxing ring. Focus on set drill patterns starting slowly then increasing speed with only the balls of the feet having contact with the ground.
- Plyometric drills and box jumps for developing leg strength and power.

You may also like: [The Importance of Footwork in MMA](#).

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Bobby Mayne is the Head Coach at Boxrite Boxing Club and author of several boxing coaching books including the bestselling "The Art of Boxing: Your Guide to the Sweet Science". Mayne has been involved in boxing since 1981. He has trained professional boxers such as Australian Daniel Dawson to compete at the world level, becoming a world contender and ultimately the WBF World Superwelterweight Champion. He also assisted in the training of top boxers from the Philippines including Rey Megrino and Rey Loreto, who were both successful in winning their respective WBC Regional and WBO World Flyweight titles.

