

5 Tips to Improve & Strengthen Left Hook

BY **BOBBY MAYNE** - July 2, 2019

The left or lead hook is an effective punch every fighter should master, a well-timed hook can have a devastating effect on an opponent. The hook travels a short distance from the start point to the target, making it difficult to defend against. The power is generated from the hip rotating in the direction of the hook transferring the bodyweight from the lead to rear foot. In this blog I will refer to this punch as lead hook because Southpaw stance boxers lead with the right hand.

It takes many hours of training in the gym in developing the hook, initially focus mitt training with the coach to learn correct technique and body mechanics, then undertaking set partner drills including defences against a hook. Punching bag training improves timing and gauging range as the bag sways in different directions, the boxer will use correct footwork to manoeuvre into position and strike the bag with either single lead hooks or combination punches that include the lead hook.

It is important to focus on technique first, then slowly develop power and speed over time, improving technique will eliminate bad habits and costly mistakes, as my first amateur coach always reminded me "If you're in range to land a hook on your opponent, you are also in range to be caught by their hook".

Follow these tips to improve the (lead) left hook.

1. Bodyweight Transfer

Punching power requires a stable stance, keeping knees slightly bent to rotate hips and torso transferring bodyweight from the lead to rear foot.

Common mistake made is not engaging hips and torso and over emphasis on power using the upper body and arm only instead reducing power and effectiveness.

2. Correct Distance

Practice footwork and jab in gauging correct distance to opponent in setting up the lead hook, making the hook less readable and predictable to an opponent.

3. Winding Up the Punch

Over twisting the torso (winding up) for perceived extra power, instead telegraphing the punch allowing the opponent to defend and **counterattack**. Punching power is generated from the lower body not upper, by hip rotation and transferring of bodyweight.

4. Dropping the Guard

Dropping the non-punching hand when executing a lead hook is another mistake made that can leave a boxer exposed to counterpunches. Keep the rear hand high against the cheek for protection to the temple and the jaw and the elbow will also protect the ribs.

5. Palms Facing in or Facing to the Ground

Having the palm facing in toward your face or to the ground is personal preference, it should feel comfortable and the two top knuckles land on the target to be effective.

When I am training a boxer to hook I use this rule of thumb:

- The arm is bent at the elbow in a 90 degree angle or less, hook with palm facing in.
- The arm is bent at the elbow at an angle greater than 90 degrees, hook with palm facing to the ground.

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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.

