

Lesson 2 - Punching

Words of the Week

Obverse Punch – **Baro Jirugi**

(leg forward, same arm punch)

Reverse Punch – **Bandae Jirugi**

(leg forward, opposite arm punch)

I must admit that before I started learning Tae Kwon Do, I thought a punch was a punch and that was it – simple. No! Learning to throw a punch properly takes practise.

When I was a boy, I loved watching Batman. The dreadful fight scenes were hilarious. Batman and Robin could have done with learning a bit of Tae Kwon Do! Just take a look at this scene:

BIFF! POW! KERSPLAT!!

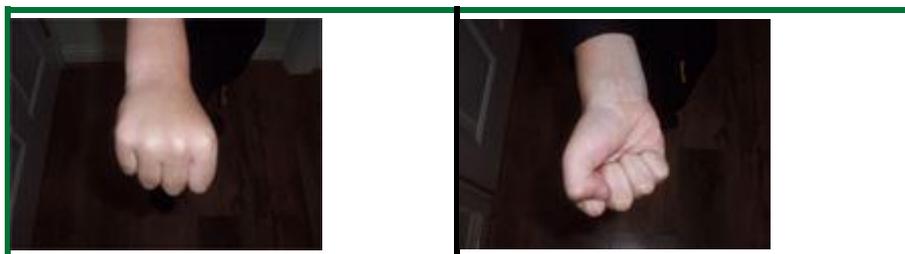
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r94AJzJZZaU>

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There are several factors that will make a punch effective. The first of these is making a correct fist.

Imagine your mum has just given you a shiny pound coin and put it in your hand. You don't want any bullies to come along and steal it from you, so curl your fingers tightly around that coin and lock them shut by wrapping your thumb over the top. This is how your fist should be whenever you punch – tight and solid.

This is **correct**:



These are all **wrong**:



It is dangerous for two reasons.

On hitting something solid the fingers will compress and send an exaggerated shockwave through the hand and up the arm on impact. (I broke a bone in my hand for just this reason when punching through my first wooden board!)

Again, there is also the possibility of damaging the thumb if it is not tucked underneath the fingers.

When we first learn to punch it is important that we understand which bit of the fist we are trying to hit with and where we are aiming our punch. When we punch we want to hit our target with the hardest part of our hand, which is the front of our two strongest knuckles – the index and middle finger knuckles. This part of the hand is known in Korean as the Ap Joomuk (forefist).

We begin by aiming our punches at our opponent's mid-section – in particular at a point just underneath the rib cage called the solar plexus.

Initially we learn to punch **from the hip**, where we have been practising holding our fists, palm up ready to strike. We must also learn the principle of Reaction Force.



We begin our punching in Annun Sogi (sitting stance) with one fist out in front of us as if we have just thrown a punch. This is called the measuring arm. As we throw our punch from the hip, the measuring arm is pulled back at the **same time** and speed to the chamber position. The fist twists at the last possible moment to further increase the speed at the impact point and increase the power of the punch.

We can add even more power through our fist by twisting our upper body to add more momentum, focusing the impact to the smallest possible target area, and by throwing the punch with as much speed as we can muster.

Proper breath control helps the focus. This is why we use a ki'hap (shout) as we punch – it helps us to breathe out at the right moment.



Here is the correct finishing position for an obverse punch. (Same leg, same arm forwards).



And here is a reverse punch (opposite leg and arm forwards). Always try to look at where your fist is punching.



All too often I see this - a good punch, but no focus. Always try to look at the impact point of the technique you are using. Focus is a major part of the points awarded in gradings!

Try practising in front of a mirror. Get into sitting stance and see if you can do single punches so fast that it seems as if one fist is disappearing, only for the other one to appear in its place.

Remember, the target is the same for both fists and so no matter which arm is punching, the fist should end up in the same spot.