

**Thesis for:**

**Beginners Guide**

**Principles and Training Methods for  
Developing the**

**Taekwon-Do Side Kick**

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## **PREFACE**

### **Beginners Guide to Principles and Training Methods for Developing the Taekwon-Do Side Kick.**

The beginning student of Taekwon Do will be unaware of the immense amount of knowledge training and studying they will encounter as they grasp the fundamental elements of the art. Each technique deserves particular attention and will need years of practice for a student to gain competence in the understanding of the applications.

This paper is intended for the beginning student to use as a training aid and knowledge base for developing one particular technique, the Taekwon-Do side kick. It must be emphasized that in no way should the reader substitute this material for the guidance and training methods of their qualified (ITF), (ITFNZ), Instructors.

References have been sourced from the fourth edition of the condensed encyclopaedia, Gen Choi Hong Hi, the founder of the art. There cannot be any deviation from the principles, training methods and theories as this would only compromise the technique and application that Gen Choi Hong Hi intended.

Pictures and demonstrations of particular concepts are illustrated. These are included to give the reader training elements to refer to. Local students from different dan and kup grades have volunteered their services for the purpose of these demonstrations. This will give an indication of the different developmental stages students will go through.

I would like to pay special mention to Mr Evan Davidson, Miss Joanne Davidson & Miss Jodie Collins for their help with this thesis.

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## Introduction

Taekwon-Do has one of the most in-depth and complex range of unarmed self-defence techniques. Its unique syllabus and scientific approach to the application of technique is what makes it stand out from other martial arts.

With the correct training in Taekwon-Do one will come to understand the devastating power that can be generated through the application of the "Theory of Power".

The Taekwon-do side kick is unique in that no other martial art can match the speed, dynamics, and power generated by the exponent.

The side kick has many different applications that will give the student a choice of attacking variables, allowing precise and effective delivery to the target.

By analysing different aspects of the Taekwon-Do side kick, one will come to understand the physical and technical requirements, as well as the reason for application. By combining this knowledge with physical training, one will improve and enhance individual progress in training.

**"Understand the purpose and method of each movement clearly."**

(Gen Choi Hong Hi, Condensed Encyclopaedia).

## Side Piercing Kick (Yopcha jirugi)

The student must practice seven basic principles to build a solid foundation to deliver this technique correctly and effectively. If the trainee improvises or sacrifices these crucial intermediate movements, the technique will suffer by losing power and direction. The kick will be ineffective and allow the opponent to counter attack. Through correct guidance, instruction, and repetition, a student will increase their speed, power and accuracy.

Observing the following seven principles will assist the beginning student's understanding of correct technique, therefore progressing their development. If the beginner understands these principles, they will not have to un-learn an incorrect technique.



### **Seven Principles of a Side Kick**

**1. The attacking tool must reach the target in a straight line with a revolving motion.**

The first principle emphasizes that the side kick is a straight technique. It should travel in a straight line and take the shortest possible distance from point A to point B. By gradually increasing speed through the movement to the point of impact, the student gives the opponent little chance to prepare a defence.

**2. Regardless of stance, the footsword must be brought to the inner knee joint of the stationary leg prior delivering the kick.**

This intermediate position sets the direction of the technique and prepares the correct balance of the body as the momentum of the technique gathers speed. This principle can be difficult for the beginning student to develop, and sometimes needs to be introduced by developing each point separately. However it is important for the student to understand. Once the movement is in motion, it should not stop until it reaches the target.

**3. Keep the toes of the kicking foot pointed slightly downwards and the toes of the stationary foot pointed about 75 degrees outwards at the moment of impact.**

The foot angle is important in keeping the integrity of the kick intact. If the feet are not positioned as suggested the body loosens up and the impact is greatly reduced. The student should practice shaping the feet so that at the point of impact all the energy and power created throughout the movement is not lost, or directed away from the target or vital spot.

**4. For the kick to reach maximum height, lean the body away from the kick as far as possible while still maintaining balance.**

This principle refers to the positioning of the body. To assist the trajectory, balance is needed to keep the momentum of the kick in line so as not to compromise the increase in velocity and mass on impact.

**5. Do not attempt to kick diagonally as this is a waste of power.**

The side kick is a straight-line technique and if the student attempts a diagonal approach, indirect contact or missed target may result.

One should not compromise the principles of this technique. If the attacking tool is not able to make contact at the correct angles and distances, another technique other the side kick may be preferred.

**6. Unless advised otherwise by an instructor, execute a high punch using a right fist with the right foot and vice versa.**

If the kick is blocked, the student can deliver a high punch as a counter attack.

**7. The stationary foot pivots allowing the hip to rotate with the kick.**

The stationary foot pivots momentarily, this happens with knee spring allowing the weight to shift so the student can pivot on the ball of the foot. As the kick travels on its axis of rotation, the weight naturally shifts so that the heel is firmly on the ground at the moment of impact.

This principle is unique to the Taekwon Do side kick. The pivot of the stationary foot allows rotation of the hip joint, sending the kick in a straight line, and positioning the body in line with the target. The student should be able to sight the target down the length of their body, stabilising their balance, rather than down the front of their body, which may send them off balance.

## Theory of Power

**(Reaction Force, Concentration, Equilibrium, Speed, Breath Control, Mass.)  
Gen Choi Hong Hi, Condensed Encyclopaedia.**

When focusing on the delivery of any Taekwon do technique a student will practically apply the theory of power, taking note of the six elements.

The theory of power is the scientific and mathematical analysis of the body movement, function and control. Utilised in practice, this aspect of Taekwon-Do will assist a student of the art to reach their full potential and enable them to condition their bodies to deliver a technique with 100% power. The theory of power, combined with superior technique, is an attribute of Taekwon- Do that sets it apart from other martial arts.

All students of Taekwon-Do should study the theory of power in depth so all six elements become a natural occurrence when performing any technique, The following three examples have been selected from the six elements as a training guide to focus on when developing the side kick:

**Extract; Training Secret.**

“ Study the theory of power thoroughly.” ( Gen Choi Hong Hi).

**Concentration:**

“By applying the impact force onto the smallest target area it will concentrate the force and therefore, increase its effect.”

“The utmost concentration is required in order to mobilise every muscle of the body onto the smallest target area simultaneously.”

(Theory of Power, Condensed Encyclopaedia. Gen Choi Hong Hi)

**Speed:**

This is an essential element to develop when delivering a side kick. It would be difficult and incorrect for the student to try and deliver the kick at the same speed throughout the movement. This can be likened to having a gun and throwing the bullet at the target.

Instead the student should train to gradually increase the speed of the movement throughout the execution of the technique. The movement should not stop once it has begun and should increase to full speed at the moment of impact. Building speed gradually throughout the movement will also help to maintain balance and focus during the intermediate position and pivoting point of the technique.

“Speed is the most essential factor of the force of power. Scientifically, force equals mass x acceleration ( $f=ma$ ) or ( $p=mv^2$ ).” (Condensed Encyclopaedia. Gen Choi Hong Hi).

**Equilibrium:**

The body has to be well balanced to deliver an effective blow. Balance is an important element, and perhaps one of the most difficult to perfect. Everybody has a different body shape and size and therefore a different centre of gravity, making balance an individual element to develop.

“Equilibrium is classified into both dynamic and static stability. They are so closely interrelated that the maximum force can only be produced when static stability is maintained through dynamic stability”. (Condensed Encyclopaedia. Gen Choi Hong Hi)

For example, when delivering a side kick your balance must be centred. You must be able to adjust your centre of gravity according to your body weight, enabling contact with the target as the supporting foot is positioned firmly on the ground.

## Attacking Tools

Understanding of the different variations of sidekicks in relation to vital spots (targets) and attacking tools, can help the student combine the basic principles of the application with the correct attacking tool to the correct vital spot.

- Side Piercing Kick (Yopcha jirugi) is an attacking technique. Delivered correctly it will have devastating results in stopping an attacker. The attacking tool employed is the footsword (Balkal).
- If the footsword is not correctly shaped the sole of the foot will make contact to the vital spot or target. This will dramatically reduce the effectiveness of the kick, and compromise the principles and practical application, which emphasizes the attacking tool meeting the vital spot with maximum force at the moment of impact.
- The footsword is correctly shaped by, pushing out the heel, while bending the toes back and facing them slightly downwards. This will tense the foot and prepare the attacking tool for contact. It is the outside edge of the foot that is effectively the attacking tool. This should be the only part to make contact with the vital spot.
- Correct shaping of the footsword allows for maximum effect when making contact with the vital spot. For example, directing all of one's energy towards the attacking tool.
- If the footsword is incorrectly shaped it will not contact with the vital spot correctly and it may cause injury to the person performing the technique.



Correct



Incorrect

## Conditioning the Body and the Attacking Tool

Once the student understands the correct shape and angle of the footsword, the conditioning process can begin.

Conditioning is imperative if the student is to deliver an effective technique. It is a gradual process starting with simple training techniques then developing into more advanced conditioning to create hardened effective weapons.

*“No matter how skilful ones techniques are, if the techniques lack force, one is unable to impact any pain or shock to the opponent during actual combat”.* (Gen Choi Hong Hi Condensed Encyclopaedia)

A good starting point of the conditioning process is repetition of the technique. Ultimately this is the process for developing all techniques, as it develops muscle memory while at the same time conditioning and strengthening the correct muscle groups. Students must pay special attention to their instructors before self-learning, as it will take immense effort to correct a technique after a period of time training incorrectly.

Mirrors are a good training tool, a student can develop correct technique by constantly checking their body angles in relation to the target. Mirrors enable the student to break down and scrutinise their own techniques without their instructor.

For further conditioning focus pads will allow the student to develop correct distances heights and balance at the point of contact. Small focus pads allow the holder to move the pads in different directions and to different heights. This will develop the student's ability to judge the distance and direction of each technique.

The large focus pads can be used as a stationary target, allowing the student to concentrate on creating power on impact, thus developing, conditioning and strengthening the body and limbs to contacting targets at full speed and power. If using a large focus pad, it is important the holder relaxes and allows themselves to move on impact, otherwise they run the risk of injury from absorbing the blow. The forging bag is particularly good for practising flying kicks as it can be adjusted to suit the student.

## Vital Spots

Vital spots in Taekwon-Do are defined as a sensitive or breakable area on the body, vulnerable to an attack.

*“ Indiscriminate attack is to be condemned as it is inefficient and wasteful of energy”.* (Gen Choi Hong Hi. Condensed encyclopaedia)

Vital spots for the application of the side kick include the temple, armpit, floating ribs, neck artery philtirum and point of the chin. The solar plexus is a secondary targets.

### **Temple**

An effective contact to the temple with the footsword will almost certainly render the attacker unconscious. As with any head injury this should be treated seriously. By delivering a strike to the head, your intention must be to stop the attacker and or cause death as a result.



*click photo to enlarge*

### **Armpit (axilla)**

The armpit is a soft tissue area and is exposed when the opponent lifts their arm to execute a block, punch or strike. A complete side kick to the ulnar nerve may render the arm useless, dislocate or break the shoulder joint. The arms of the attacker would normally protect this vital spot. So when the opportunity presents an attack striking with speed and accuracy will be important to complete the technique.



## Neck Artery

Specifically the carotid arteries are the vital spots in the neck. They are located on both sides of the neck and are the main supply of blood to the brain. A side piercing kick delivered correctly to this vital spot will cause extremely serious damage to the opponent. It is important to realise that contact to this vital spot may have lethal results.



## Point of Chin and Philtrum

This area may be exposed momentarily by the opponent. The Mandible is a moving part of the face structure and easily displaced or destroyed with the side piercing kick. The Philtrum is a sensitive vital spot found in the upper lip region forming a small groove between the upper lip and nose. A successful attack to either of these vital spots will almost certainly render the opponent incapacitated.



## Solar Plexus

This region offers a variety of vital spots. They are massed together and somewhat protected by the rib cage. Although they are defined as secondary targets if struck they will cause internal injury and may be life threatening. This area appears to be an easily accessible region to strike, but while the opponent is moving around, pinpoint accuracy will be needed to penetrate the rib cage and cause internal damage.



## Angles of Attacks in Relation to Vital Spots

The side kick can be applied to three different sections: high (nopundae), middle (kaundae) and low (najundae). By defining each area the student can identify the vital spots related to each section.

The student's body position, angle and height they are kicking are important. By categorizing the body into sections, the student can better focus on using the correct height and angle to effectively deliver their kick to the appropriate vital spot.

Each section is governed by the student's height and attacking range, not the target on their opponent. For example, if a student was to deliver a high section kick it would be at their own eye level not the opponent's eye level. If the student can not make correct contact using these principles, a different technique may need to be employed.

## Variations of the Side Kick

### **Side Thrusting Kick** (yopcha tulgi)

This variation of side kick is designed to enable an attack from further distance. It has the added advantage of being able to target the front of the opponent's body.

The ball of the foot is the attacking tool. Again the attacking tool is horizontal to the target and the ball of the foot is stretched at the moment of impact.

The toes can be used if you are wearing shoes.



### **Side Rising Kick** (yopcha olligi)

This kick is designed as a defensive kick used to deflect an attacking hand or foot.



### **Flying Side Piercing Kick (twimyo yopcha jirugi)**



#### **Principles of a flying side kick:**

- The kick must be executed when the body reaches the apex of the jump.
- With few exceptions, the back must be straight at the moment of impact.
- The non-kicking foot must be tucked and not drooped at the moment of impact.
- Immediately after kicking, resume a good posture and balance.
- Proper stance must be regained at the moment of landing.

(Condensed Encyclopaedia. Gen Choi Hong Hi).

#### **Midair Kick (twio dolmyo chagi)**

The method of kicking is the same as a flying side piercing or thrusting kick, except that the kick is executed while spinning in the air. Since the direction in which the kick will be delivered cannot be seen until the moment the kick is performed, this technique is highly valued as a surprise attack. Spinning is executed either 360 degrees or 180 degrees. The footsword is chiefly used, though occasionally the ball of the foot can be engaged in a thrusting motion.

## Developing the Body to Enhance Delivery of the Side Kick

By specifically concentrating on the muscle groups that generate the coordinated body movement to execute the sidekick, one can improve focus, power and speed of the technique.

The following exercises are examples that will enhance and improve kicking techniques by increasing strength, balance, and focus.

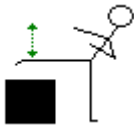
Students should experiment and adapt these exercises to discover which exercises best suit their individual needs. There are many different variations of these exercises and as long as they are performed correctly and safely, they will enable the individual to advance through to more intense exercises as training progresses. These exercises are designed to improve joint range of motion, balance, strength and flexibility.

Remember to warm-up, even if your warm-up is only 5-10 minutes.

### **Side Kick Strength Exercise**

Hold each leg out in side kick position above a chair or table for at least 10 seconds. Grounded foot must be pointed in the opposite direction of the kick, try to extend the out over the kick.

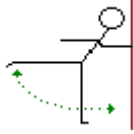
*Variations of this exercise could be adding leg weights or doing small leg raises*



### **Side Rising Kick Exercise**

Using your partner for stability swing the leg up. Grounded foot must point in the opposite direction to the kick and it is important to maintain a footsword position for the duration of the exercise.

*Variations of this exercise could be using a wall for stability and/or adding leg weights*



### **Side Lunges**

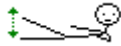
Start in a wide sitting stance position and lower down, make the foot into footsword position, back must be straight.



### **Ground Leg Raises**

On hands and knees raise and lower the leg to the ground while keeping the leg as straight as possible and foot in footsword position.

*Variations of this exercise could be adding leg weights or lying on your side.*



### **Splits**

Move the legs out to a comfortable position, feet facing straight ahead, then lean forward. As you relax into the stretch take the legs out further.

