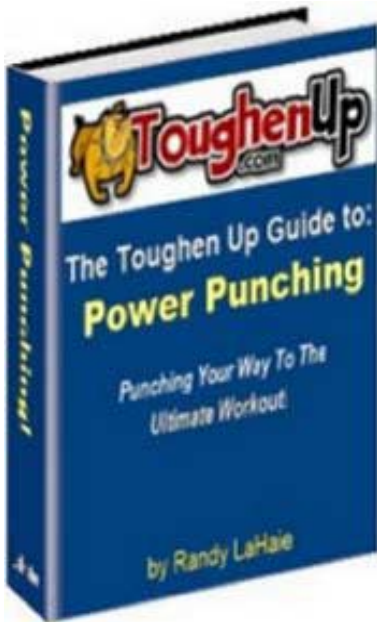


**Free eBook excerpt for:**

# The Toughen Up Guide To Power Punching

---



## **Punching Your Way To the Ultimate Workout!**

This free excerpt is intended to give you an idea about the quality, content and layout of the full-version of this comprehensive how-to-train resource. If you have any questions about this, or any other **Toughen Up Guide**, please contact me by email at: <mailto:Randy@ToughenUp.com?subject=? Power Punching Excerpt>

**By Randy LaHaie**

**DISTRIBUTION NOTICE:** This document is a "**FREE EXCERPT**" for the "Toughen Up Guide To Power Punching. Permission is granted to **freely distribute** this eBook excerpt in its "unaltered" and "complete" form. It may not be sold. It may however be shared freely, given away as a free incentive or bonus to your newsletter, ezine, product or service.

**MAKE MONEY GIVING THIS EBOOK AWAY!** If you are interested in finding out how you can make a **GENEROUS COMMISSION** on the subsequent sale of the full-version of this excerpt, please forward an email to the author at [affiliate@protectivestrategies.com](mailto:affiliate@protectivestrategies.com)

© Copyright 2004, by Randy LaHaie, Protective Strategies All rights reserved.

**All Rights Reserved:** No portion of this manual may be reproduced or modified in any way without the expressed written permission of Randy LaHaie.

**Disclaimer and/or Legal Notices:**

The decision of whether to use or not use the methods, information or advice in this document is solely up to you. The author, associates and Protective Strategies accept no responsibility for injuries sustained or inflicted, or damage of any sort that may occur as a result of following the instructions given here.

I have no way of evaluating your level of health, fitness or skill. With any physical activity there is a risk of injury from accidents or over exertion. If you are not of sound health, or are unaware of your health status, I strongly recommend that you get a thorough medical check up before engaging in physical training programs recommended here or anywhere else.

**Contact Information:**

Author: Randy LaHaie  
Email: [Punching@ProtectiveStrategies.com](mailto:Punching@ProtectiveStrategies.com)  
Web Site: <http://www.ToughenUp.com>

For common sense, self-defense training advice, subscribe to Randy's **FREE Protective Strategies Self-Defense Newsletter** at <http://www.protectivestrategies.com>

*\* Note: The content written in **RED** and **NOT Highlighted** indicates excerpted portions of the full Power Punching Guide available in this document.*

# Table of Contents

## Introduction

### Chapter 1 - Punching Preliminaries

#### Stance and Stability

Movement and Shifting

### Chapter 2 - Kinetic Energy Concepts

Energy Generation Principles

Energy Transfer Principles

Energy Resilience Principles

### Chapter 3 – Proper Punching Guidelines

Punching Pointers

Fist, Wrist and Rotation Issues

### Chapter 4 – Proper Punching Techniques

So what's the big deal about "THESE" punches?

Troubleshooting Your Punching Techniques

The Straight Lead Punch

The Straight Reverse Punch

The Hook Punch

The Uppercut

Forearm Strikes

### Chapter 5 - Punching Combinations

What is a Punching Combination?

Four Functions of Combinations

Pointers for Designing And Practicing Combinations

Four and Six-Punch Build Ups

The Four-Punch Build Up

The Six Punch Build Up

Sample Combinations

### Chapter 6 - Designing Punching Workouts

Design Criteria of Effective Workouts

Structuring Your Workout

Effective Punching Training Methods

How to Organize a Workout Sequence

## Conclusion

## Introduction

Welcome and thank you for downloading this excerpt from my "Toughen Up Guide to Power Punching!"

Whether you are new to punching or a long time veteran, I hope you find this guide useful and informative. This information is derived from thirty years of teaching thousands of people how to hit.

The content here is focused and simple. It's a "how to guide," to get you punching properly as quickly and easily as possible. This will allow you to incorporate punching into a variety of practice methods for an awesome, full-body workout while developing functional self-defense skills.

### Why An eBook On Punching?

In my self-defense seminars and free Internet newsletter, I identify numerous benefits of regular hitting practice. PROPER impact training in the air, on a heavy bag, on striking pads or with a training partner can make a significant, positive impact on your health, fitness, and self-confidence.

In addition to the obvious self-defense benefits, punching practice is an excellent form of exercise. It is vigorous enough to get you into terrific shape and is a great supplement to other sports or fitness activities you may already be doing.

I constantly get questions from people interested in self-defense training but don't know where to start or how to go about it. Some people are brand new to self-defense training. Many are experienced martial artists who want to improve their skills or learn how to organize them into productive training sessions.

Unable to find and recommend reasonably priced, high-quality resources, I decided to write one. This manual is the first in a series of "Toughen Up" training guides. It is "square one" in your education into healthy, ongoing self-defense training and hitting practice.

## **What You Will Learn From This Guide**

This manual contains the same instructions and advice I'd give you during a private lesson or seminar. It represents the fastest way to learn and refine proper punching skills in a written format.

Just like knowing how to lift weights does not make you stronger, knowing how to punch is only part of the process. The path to the powerful benefits of self-defense is applying your knowledge on a regular basis. It is the "training process" that holds the power to take control of your health, your personal safety and your life.

After reading this manual, you will be able to properly perform punching techniques that are conducive to ongoing impact training.

## **What Qualifies Me To Write a Manual On Punching?**

You might be curious why this manual is unique and the qualifications I have to be writing it. I have been training and teaching others how to hit for 30 years. Although I taught martial arts for a living, I no longer teach long-term, ongoing martial arts classes.

My "specialty" for about a decade and a half has been to teach people, of various experience and fitness levels, functional fighting skills, in the shortest time possible. I teach a variety of short-term training seminars and courses. I have aggressively pursued scientific learning theories for maximum skills development in minimal training time.

My mission is not just to teach you "techniques" but provide you with a strong foundation that you can enhance and solidify through self-directed practice and training. The BEST way to tap into the powerful, life-enhancing benefits of self-defense is from the training process itself.

The information in this manual is based on what I've learned from teaching thousands of people how to hit properly as quickly and efficiently as possible. In doing so, I have discovered the most common mistakes people make when learning each technique and have included them so you can avoid them yourself.

The Information In This Training Guide is Organized As Follows:

## **Chapter 1 - Punching Preliminaries**

Chapter 1 teaches what you need to know "BEFORE" you can punch properly. You need a strong, balanced and mobile base to punch from. You must position your body for optimal hitting while, at the same time, protecting yourself from being hit. Without being firmly grounded in these simple concepts, you can't develop proper hitting skills.

## **Chapter 2 - Kinetic Energy Concepts**

Chapter 2 describes what a punch is and what it does. I will explain the dynamics of hitting energy, how it is generated and transferred into a target. You will learn the ultimate source of kinetic energy and how to use your entire body to deliver knockout punching power.

## **Chapter 3 - Proper Punching Guidelines**

This chapter provides you with important guidelines that are crucial to hitting properly. I'll list and explain key performance checks and common errors people make during punching practice. This will allow you to correct existing flaws in your punching skills or get you off to the smoothest start possible while minimizing set backs and bad habits.

## **Chapter 4 - Punching Techniques**

This chapter contains the "nuts and bolts" of the manual... These punching techniques are the ones you need to implement ongoing impact training. They will provide you with skills needed to train on heavy bags, striking pads and basic boxing drills, etc. I will explain each punch in detail, describe the exact body mechanics and include a "troubleshooting" section to ensure that you are doing them properly.

## **Chapter 5 - Punching Combinations**

Chapter 5 teaches you about punching combinations: what they are, what they do, how to perform them and how to design your own. The four and six punch build-ups are used to learn the punches fast and put them together in combinations. I provide guidelines to designing your own combinations and some "sample combo's" to get you off to a good start.

## Chapter 6 - Designing Punching Workouts

Chapter 6 teaches you how to design your own punching workouts. You need to get clear on what you want to accomplish through your punching practice, how often and how intensely you need to train to challenge yourself and ensure rapid progress. I'll explain how to organize your workout so it flows smoothly from start to finish and so that fatigue and injuries don't interfere with your progress. Finally, I'll introduce you to some different training methods you may want to incorporate into your punching workouts.

There you have it, this guide provides you with a logical blueprint for learning how to punch properly. **I suggest that you read the entire guide from start to finish before physically practicing the skills that it contains.**

If you have any questions or comments about the content of this guide or in relation to your self-defense training, please send me an email and I'll do what I can to answer your questions or point you in the right direction.

I can be reached at: <mailto:punching@protectivestrategies.com>

Or through my web site at <http://www.toughenup.com/>

Lets get started!...

Take care, train smart and stay safe,

Randy LaHaie  
Protective Strategies

**Free Self-Defense Newsletter:** The Protective Strategies Self-Defense Newsletter is FREE. As a subscriber, you will receive information about the self-defense concepts and resources. You will receive articles, special offers and be notified about changes to the web site or the release of NEW information Products. Your email address will not be sold or shared with anyone.

To subscribe, fill in the subscription box on the web site at <http://www.protectivestrategies.com/>

# Chapter 1 - Punching Preliminaries

## Stance and Stability

Before you can punch effectively, you need a stable, well-balanced position to punch from. Whether you are on your feet or on the ground, you need a "solid base" before you can deliver a powerful strike.

In this training guide, I'll limit the instruction to the standing position. All of the punches you will be doing will start from and return to a solid, fighting stance.

### The Fighting Stance



The Fighting Stance is a stable yet mobile position that puts you in an optimal position for offensive or defensive movement. Many flaws in your punching techniques are caused or exaggerated by problems in your stance.

Keep in mind that a stance is not fixed, static or precise. It is dynamic and subject to constant adjustments, shifts and weight changes. Once you get a sense of the basic aspects of a stance, "play" with it so that it becomes comfortable and natural.

## What Side Forward?

For starters, consider placing your non-dominant side forward, closest to the target or your opponent. If you are right handed, keep your left side forward. If you are a lefty, then reverse it.

This places your stronger, more coordinated hand farther away from the target. That allows better body rotation to generate more powerful punches with that hand. It also reduces the chance of your "strong hand" being grabbed or trapped by an assailant.

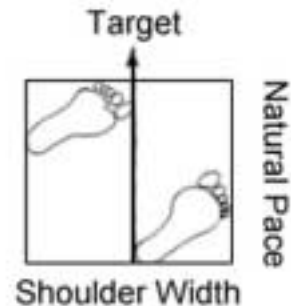
Later on, after you are comfortable with the punches and combinations in this guide, you can practice with either side forward and learn to strike effectively with both hands.

For now though, I suggest you pick one side to keep forward and stick to it until you've learned all of the strikes from that position.

## Foot placement

To adopt the fighting stance, begin by standing square to the target with your feet side by side and about shoulder width apart. Step straight back with your strong-side foot about the length of a natural pace.

Bend your knees to lower your center of gravity. Distribute your weight evenly on the balls of both feet.



Turn your feet so that your toes point about 45 degrees toward your dominant side. This increases your stability and provides some protection with your lead thigh making it more difficult for an opponent to kick you in the groin.

Here's how to get a sense of how wide your stance should be. It may sound "nit-picky" but there is a reason for learning it this way. If your feet are too wide apart, you are more susceptible to being kicked in the groin. Too narrow or crossed over and you'll find yourself off balance and unable to generate power.

If you were to draw an imaginary line on the ground toward your target, the toes of your front foot and the heel of your rear foot would be touching that line. This will ensure that your stance is neither too wide nor too narrow.

## The “On Guard Position”

The "On Guard Position" refers to the positions of your hands, arms and upper body while in the fighting stance.

It places you in the best possible position to launch effective strikes without having to change or adjust your body first. It also puts you in a good position to protect yourself from an attack.

Your lead hand should be held in front of you about the level of your chin. The forearm of that arm should be "aimed" directly at your target with your elbow pointing down toward the floor.

The reverse hand is up touching or very close to your cheek providing protection to your head. The elbow of that arm is down protecting your ribs and midsection.

## Troubleshooting The Fighting Stance:

### ➤ **Avoid the "Supermarket Stance!"**

If your feet are too wide apart you'll end up in what I refer to as the "Supermarket Stance." (Bag me and send me home!)

This position increases the chances of being kicked in the groin or knocked off balance and taken to the ground.

### ➤ **Don't cross your feet**

For some reason, many people tend to reverse the heel/toe alignment on the imaginary line to the target.

Placing your lead foot too far across that line "closes" your stance. This compromises your balance and your ability to generate power with a reverse hand strike.

### ➤ **Keep your center of gravity low**

Remember to keep your knees bent to lower your center of gravity. If you don't, you are more likely to be knocked off balance and taken to the ground.

Also, by keeping your center of gravity low you can move more effectively and can generate much more striking power from your hips and legs.

➤ **Keep your elbows down**

When your elbows point out to the side instead of down, it increases the likelihood of them being out of position when you hit. This decreases the power that you can generate and transfer into the target.

Also, with the elbows out you leave your ribs exposed to body shots and it will be easier for an opponent to tackle you and take you to the ground.

# Chapter 6 - Designing Punching Workouts

## Design Criteria of Effective Workouts

### Purpose and Goals

Goals are very personal and unique to each individual. They motivate behavior and determine the actions needed to produce a desired result. The results you want to produce dictate the design of your training program and how intensely you pursue it.

Obviously if you are a competitive athlete looking for high-level results you train differently than if you are an "average Joe or Jill," trying to shape up and burn some fat.

Before you design your punching program, decide exactly what you want to accomplish. Are you a beginner trying to learn how to punch or a long-time veteran interested in refining your punching skills?

I recommend that you identify the reasons for your punching workouts and write them down before progressing any further. Examples of the benefits of punching include:

- To learn how to punch?
- To improve your self-confidence?
- To enhance your self-defense abilities?
- To tone and strengthen your muscles?
- To reduce body fat?
- To improve your cardio vascular health?
- To relieve "stress" and become emotionally tougher?
- To strengthen your bones, tendons & ligaments in preparation to more vigorous impact work?
- To supplement other forms of exercise such as running or lifting weights?
- To make use of a new heavy bag, or other piece of equipment that you have in your home or gym?
- To improve your fighting skills for boxing, kickboxing or martial arts?
- To condition your body for improved performance in other sports?
- To participate in a functional form of exercise that is "fun" to do?
- All of the above? ;-)

It is important to be honest with yourself in assessing where you are starting from, what you want to achieve and the best way to do it. I should refer you once again to the "disclaimer" at the front of this manual.

Careless or over zealous punching practice, or any physical training for that matter, can do more harm than good if you are not smart about it. Do not train haphazardly!

Training "SMART," means taking your time, creating a plan and "easing" your body into punching practice. If you are not in particularly good physical condition, start your training slow and easy and adjust your workouts as you improve. Over zealous training is asking for trouble.

Even if you are in excellent physical condition from other sports or fitness activities, your body STILL needs time to adjust to the unique stresses that punching places on your bones, muscles and joints.

Here are things to consider when designing your workouts:

## **Training Frequency**

How frequently you train will be dictated by your present level of conditioning, experience and the results you are trying to produce. In my opinion, most people should limit their punching practice to two or three times a week. This is especially important with "high impact" work on a heavy bag or some similar piece of equipment.

Think of it this way, you wouldn't want to lift weights, doing the same exercises for the same muscles every day. Your body needs time to recover and adapt to the stress you place on it. It's during your time off that your body adapts and gets stronger. Punching is no different.

Impact training stresses your muscles, bones and connective tissues. You need time off for your body to recover and become more resilient. The more intensely you train, the more time off you will need between workouts.

## **Training Intensity**

Intensity refers to how hard you train during your workout. In weight lifting, intensity is measured by how much you lift, how many times and how long it takes you. In aerobic training, your intensity

is gauged by your heart rate or perhaps how far you go or how much work you do in a given period of time.

The intensity of punching practice is a bit harder to measure. It can be measured by how "hard" you are hitting as well as how many punches you throw in a given period of time.

When you are learning how to punch properly or beginning to condition your body to the rigors of hitting, keep the intensity of your training low. Your punches should be "light" and slow to half-speed.

As your hitting skills improve and your body becomes more resilient you can increase the intensity of your training by punching faster, harder and more often in your workouts.

Full power strikes are delivered to "test" your power, not develop it. Regardless of your level of competence, I don't recommend training all out, full power all the time. Excessive effort and hitting hard is not necessary to develop effective striking skills. Emphasize proper body mechanics first, speed second and the power will take care of itself.

The intensity of a workout is also the result of the type of striking activity you are performing. For example, you could easily do light shadow boxing every day. It places little stress and strain on your body. However, "high impact" activities such as heavy bag training subject you to a lot more "wear and tear." High impact training should be limited to two or three times per week.

## **Training Duration**

Duration is how long a training session lasts. Once again, duration is dependent on your present level of conditioning, the goals you are trying to achieve and the intensity of your workout.

You can train intensely or you can train long. You can't do both. I would suggest that you limit your punching practice to 20 minutes to an hour.

## Combining Impact Training With Other Forms Of Exercise

It is unlikely that you will use punching practice as the only activity in your conditioning program. You will probably want to combine it with other forms of exercise such as running or weight lifting.

The amount of those other activities you are doing will impact how frequently and intensely you should be practicing your punching.

If you are lifting weights for example, I recommend doing your hitting practice on your weight days BEFORE you lift. Hitting after a weight workout is more likely to result in an injury due to muscle fatigue.

If you do your hitting practice on days between your weight workouts, keep that training less intense and avoid a lot of hard punching.

With aerobic training such as running, swimming, biking etc. its not that important when you do your hitting practice.

### WEIGHT LIFTING RESOURCE:

I am often asked about specific weight lifting programs that work well with self-defense training. I've done a lot of research and have come to think that the "best" training for fighters and martial artists is high-intensity training that produces results in the fewest and shortest workout sessions possible.

The faster you can get in and out of the weight room and the less often you have to do your weight workouts, the more time you have for other types of training. (Like Punching Practice! ;-)

I came across a VERY interesting eBook called "[Train Smart](#)" that was written by a guy named Pete Sisco... He's a pretty big name in the weight lifting field and has some radical but scientifically valid ideas about how to lift weights.

According to him, the vast majority of people "overtrain." They train too often, do far too many sets and exercises and spend way too much time in the gym.

He has a "beta" variation of his workouts that is appropriate for fighters and martial artists. I bought a copy and I highly recommend it to people looking for a good weight lifting resource. Rather than going into all of the details, you can check it out yourself at <http://protectivestrategies.com/trainSMART.html>

## Structuring Your Workout

This section will help you decide how to organize your punches within a workout... There are different ways of conducting punching training and measuring the "volume" or amount of punching you do.

### Sets and Reps

Repetitions (reps) are single executions of a technique or combination. Sets are groups of repetitions interspersed by brief rest periods or a different activity.

Once you know the techniques or combinations you want to practice, use sets and reps to structure your workout.

For example, using a four-punch combination, do three sets of twenty repetitions. Rest in between each set for about a minute or until you catch your breath. You will have completed 240 punches (3 sets x 4-punch combo x 20 reps).

### Build Ups

Earlier in this manual, I described a training method called "build ups." A build up is simply a multiple hit combination that is constructed one punch at a time.

In a six-punch combination for example, you throw your first punch a pre-determined number of times... lets say for 25 reps. Then add the next punch and throw the two punches together for another 25 reps. Then add the third punch and so on.

Using the example of 25 repetitions, a six-punch build up will result in a total of 515 punches being thrown.

### Rounds

Another excellent way to train is to perform punches for a pre-determined number of rounds. A round is timeframe of work-to-rest intervals. You throw punches for a period of time and then you rest for a period of time.

Keep in mind, that during a round you do not necessarily perform a constant, steady stream of non-stop punches. It is more likely to be

a series of hits and combinations broken up into short bursts with brief "re-setting" efforts in between. Most boxers use three-minute rounds with a one-minute rest period.

## **Circuit Training**

Circuit training involves alternating different exercises or activities without resting very long before moving from one activity to the next.

If you are already in good shape, consider alternating rounds of punching practice with other "low-intensity" exercises.

For example alternate a three-minute round of punching the heavy bag with a three minute round of jumping rope. (or a light jog)

You can set up different "stations" and then move around the room doing three to five minutes on each. Circuit training is great for developing your endurance, burning body fat and adds variety to your workouts.

However, I do not recommend alternating resistance training (weights or calisthenics) with rounds of hitting. The fatigue in your muscles can impair proper punching mechanics and can make you more susceptible to an injury.

## **Blitz Training**

Blitz training should be reserved for when you have achieved a high level of fitness and well-established striking skills. It is a hard-core training method and excellent preparation for a self-defense encounter.

A Blitz is an intense, all-out, rapid-fire barrage of punches or combinations for a time limit or repetition goal. A suitable time frame would be around a minute.

## How to Organize a Workout Sequence

What follows are some general guidelines about how to organize different training activities within a workout. That order can affect your enjoyment, progress and the probability of injuries. These are only suggestions, not hard and fast rules. You may or may not incorporate all of these activities into the same workout.

### General Warm Up

Start with about 10 to 15 minutes of a light cardio exercise that will raise your body temperature and heart rate. You should continue to the point of a "light sweat."

Exercises such as jumping rope or jogging would be good choices for a general warm up. This gets the body moving and prepares it for more vigorous activity.

Incorporate "light" stretching and limbering exercises. However, DO NOT use extreme or intense stretches at the beginning of a workout. This can compromise the stability of your joints and INCREASE the potential for injury.

### Related Warm Up

Move into light movements that approximate the types of actions that you'll be training. In other words, throw light, half-speed punches to start activating the muscles you'll be using in your punching practice.

Light shadow boxing or throwing combinations in front of a mirror would work here.

### Speed And Precision Training

You'll want to practice speed, precision and coordination movements early in your workout while you are still fresh and your level of concentration is high.

This is a good point to work on any new techniques, combinations or hitting drills that you are learning.

If you are new to hitting practice, this may be as far as you go in your workout. You'll want to save more aggressive hitting practice

until you refine your techniques and condition your body to accept the "punishment" of impact work.

## **Power Hitting**

By this point in your workout your muscles and joints should be thoroughly warmed up and "lubricated." Your body is prepared for more intense exertion.

If you are going to incorporate high-impact hitting, such as hard punches into a heavy bag, this would be the time to do it. Fatigue in your muscles should not be much of a factor at this point.

I recommend limiting the amount of this type of training that you do. Remember, power hitting is more of a "test" of power than a means of developing it.

Too much high-impact training is the equivalent of "stamping your feet" when running. It punishes the body unnecessarily.

## **Related Conditioning**

Hitting practice in itself is an excellent form of conditioning the entire body. It is a great way to get in shape and stay there.

Related training is simply using the punching movements themselves to create a fitness and conditioning effect.

If you were going to push yourself hard to develop endurance and stamina, to burn off body fat or to "toughen up" mentally, this would be the time to do it. By placing this type of training near the end of your workout, your body is warmed up and ready to be challenged.

Round Work, Circuits and Blitz Training would work well at this point.

## **General Conditioning**

If you are going to incorporate other forms of exercises in the same workout as your hitting practice this is the time to do it.

Exercises such as weight lifting or calisthenics would work well here since you no longer have to worry about muscle fatigue hampering your punching practice or increasing injury potential.

## Cool Down

NEVER finish a vigorous workout and just stop. A cool down is a process of gradually bringing your body back to a resting state. It can also reduce soreness after a vigorous workout by helping to clear lactic acid out of the muscles.

A cool down is similar to a warm up. Use general and related movements to gradually reduce heavy breathing, an elevated heart rate, etc.

If you are going to work on your flexibility with vigorous stretching exercises, this is the time to do it. Your muscles are thoroughly warmed up and ready to be stretched.

---

Hopefully this sample of this valuable training guide has given you a sense of the quality, content and layout of the full version.

If you are interested in purchasing the full-version of the **Toughen Up Guide to Power Punching** please click on the link below:



<http://www.toughenup.com/>

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at:

<mailto:Randy@ToughenUp.com?subject=Power Punching Excerpt>

Take care, train smart and stay safe....

Randy LaHaie  
Protective Strategies