



FIRST STEPS IN BOXING™

By D. C. HUTCHISON

ILLUSTRATED WITH DIAGRAMS

PART III

WHILE it is a good plan to keep the left shoulder advanced and the left side turned toward an opponent when feeling him out or boxing on the defensive, for purposes of offense it is better to keep the chest squarer in front of him; that is, to stand with both shoulders more equally distant from him, as then you are in a better position to hook with either right or left and to throw the shoulders behind your punches. This will be evident to any one when punching the dead bag where the natural inclination to equalize the force behind the alternate right and left hooks is so strong that beginners have a tendency to stand with not only the

shoulders but also the feet equally distant from the bag.

This position of facing an adversary squarely is better, too, for using the straight right, a good punch for long range boxing, and one that many find difficulty in avoiding, probably for the reason that nearly everybody expects the right to hook or swing. The straight right is illustrated in Fig. 19. The palm is usually turned down more than with the left jab, but as with the jab the effectiveness of the straight right will depend on the speed and snap with which it is delivered. It may be directed at the face or body, usually over the heart.

Fig. 19 also shows a method of blocking this blow with the left forearm which is the left counterpart of the well-

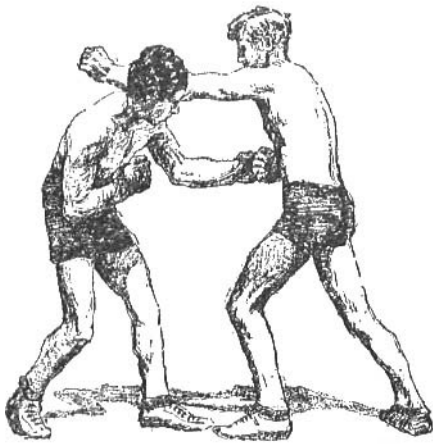


Fig. 8—Blocking left hook to body.

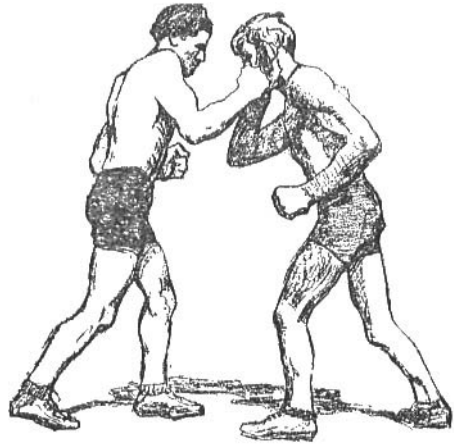


Fig. 10—Blocking a right hook to jaw.

known right-hand guard for the jab described in Part I of these papers. When directed at the face the straight right may be blocked by the right palm, in the same way as is described in the first paper for a right cross-counter. (See Fig. 10.)

The best block for this blow when directed at the heart is the left arm held firmly over that region. (See Fig. 15.) The right forearm across the body with the glove over the heart is a good protection, as in Fig. 8. A straight right for the face may be avoided by slipping the head to right or left and countered by right or left hooks. The straight

right cannot in any sense take the place of the left jab, unless employed against a left-handed man who stands with right foot advanced instead of the left. The face of the man who uses the left jab is protected from a right hook or swing to some extent by his shoulder and arm, while the straight right exposes the face to these damaging blows. The straight right is best used as an alternate punch with the straight left. A volley of well-directed straight right and left punches will usually crumple up the onslaught of the most determined slugger.

The right uppercut (Fig. 18) is, with

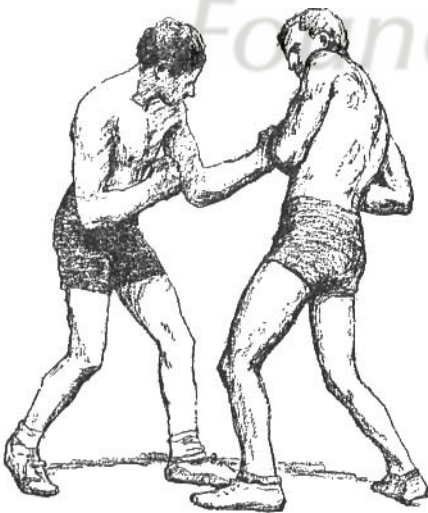


Fig. 15—Blocking left hook to body with left forearm across stomach.

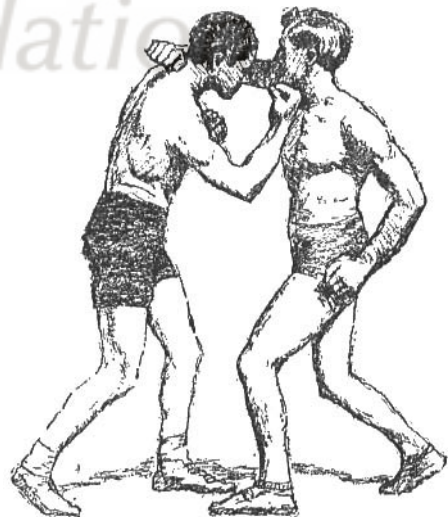


Fig. 18—Stepping inside of a right hook, and countering with uppercut



Fig. 6—Blocking a left uppercut.

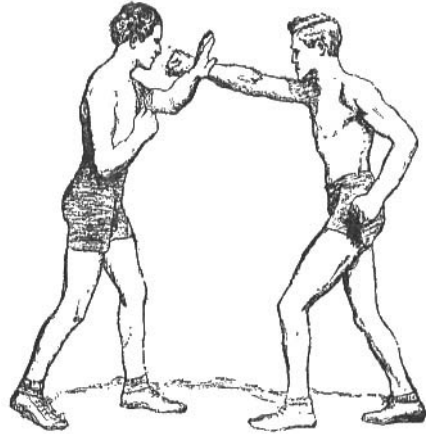


Fig. 19—Blocking a straight right.

the exception of the cross-counter, the severest blow known to the boxer. It is a sure knockout when landed accurately—that is, on the point of the chin. The knees are usually slightly bent, and as the body straightens upward the blow is delivered at close range. It is most effective when employed by a tall man against a shorter opponent.

Probably no legitimate blow is used so much in violation of the rules which call for clean breaking between boxers. Under the rules which provide for a clean break, which are those of the Amateur Athletic Union, and also those under which professional bouts are sanctioned in New York State, a boxer is not permitted to hold with one hand and punch with the other. He may hit only

when both hands are free, so that uppercutting when breaking from a clinch, the best opportunity for an uppercut, is disbarred. The device of hooking the left around an adversary's neck, jerking his head down, and uppercutting him with the right is nothing short of a revival of the old London prize-ring trick of getting a man's head "in chancery," as it was called, and should mean the instant disqualification of anyone employing it. The right uppercut may be blocked with the right or left palm, as is illustrated in Fig. 6 for the left uppercut, or with the left forearm, as in Fig. 20.

The right hook to the body (Fig. 21) is usually directed to a point on the ribs below the left breast. It is now pri-

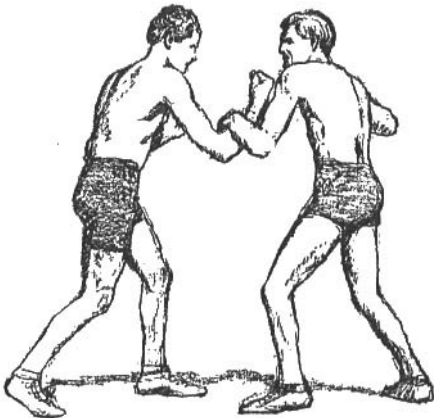


Fig. 20—Blocking a right uppercut.

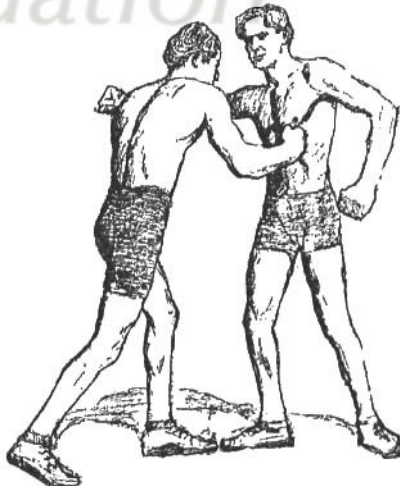


Fig. 21—Right hook to body.

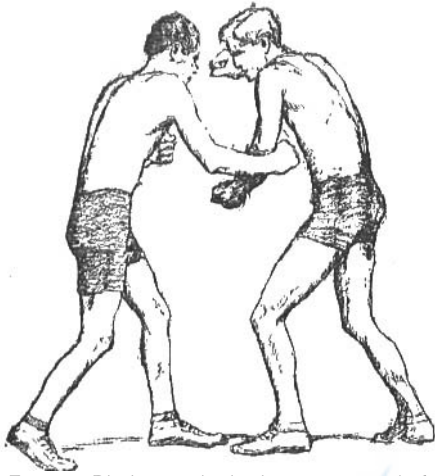


Fig. 22—Blocking right hook or swing to body.

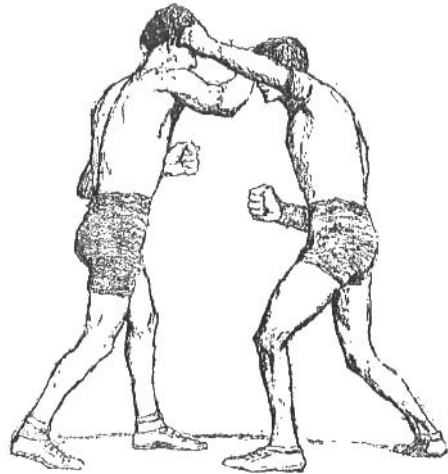


Fig. 23—Blocking left hook or swing to jaw.

marily a knockout blow, but when repeated has the effect of weakening an opponent and slowing him up. Right and left hooks to the body are often used to get an adversary to drop his guard, thus exposing his jaw. The right or left forearm across the body will protect it from this blow, which can then be countered by whipping the free hand to the jaw. Another block is shown in Fig. 22. Counter with right to the jaw.

The left uppercut to the jaw has been discussed in Parts I and II of this series. There is a left hook to the jaw, the counterpart of the right hook to that point delivered with the elbow high. This blow and a block for it or for a left swing are illustrated in Fig. 23. This left hook can often be stopped with a timely straight right.

A left hook or swing to the jaw is often followed up so swiftly by a right to the same place, that the second punch is on its way before the first one lands, or the right is followed immediately by a left. In the same way a straight punch with either

hand is often followed up instantly by a similar punch or a hook from the other hand. These are known as one-two punches, and the effectiveness of the plan of delivering two punches in rapid succession lies in the fact that in blocking the first blow the defender must often expose himself to the second. It is excellent practice for the beginner to arrange with his partner that each in turn shall attempt any combination of one-two leads while the other blocks. Fig. 24 shows a right and left hook delivered in quick succession and both blocked.

A good deal of space has been given in this and in the preceding papers to blocking, for the reason that with most beginners learning how to block comes with much greater difficulty than learning how to hit, and a man who knows no other way to stop punches except with his face can hardly be considered proficient in the art of self-defense. At the same time it is well to remember that in boxing, as in warfare, a good offense is the best defense. In other words, the best way to block is

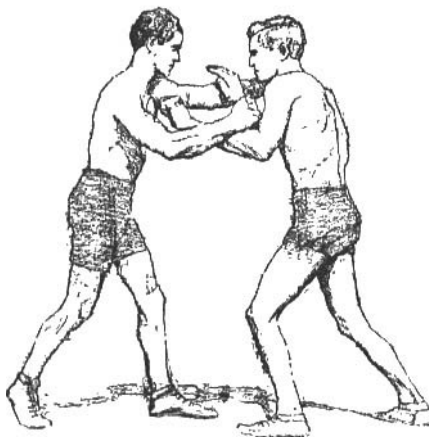


Fig. 24—Double block of right and left hook or swings in quick succession.

to hit the other fellow first. Rapid, accurate hitting, together with good footwork, will make much blocking unnecessary. That will be the concern of the other man.

Many young fellows have the idea that the best equipment for a boxer is ponderous strength, especially of the arms and shoulders, and they go in for heavy gymnasium work with that end in view. This sort of training will soon rob them of that suppleness and looseness of limb which is their best asset. Strength is essential, of course, but it is such strength as gives speed and endurance rather than the ability to lift weights and break chains. The best training for the would-be boxer is boxing, plenty of it. In this way only can he acquire that fine perception of distance and time, together with the ability to send in a stiff punch from any angle so necessary to the man who would excel or attain more than mediocre skill in this branch of athletics.

All exercises that develop speed and precision, and ease of movement, bag-punching, skipping, running, handball are good. Punching the dead bag is sufficient for heavy work, and bending

exercises for the abdomen are necessary. The abdomen is the one region where the boxer can afford to be muscle-bound. Shadow boxing, that is, going through the movements of boxing without a partner, is good training.

In boxing with a partner I would not advise pulling punches, that is, holding back the full force of the blows. It is better to use gloves sufficiently large and well-padded that they will not injure an opponent. There is now an excellent pneumatic glove on the market which permits the delivery of a solid punch without marking or cutting the users. These should be in every gymnasium. After you have acquired some skill work with every kind of partner, with men who are taller than yourself and with men who are shorter, with heavier men, and lighter men. You will learn something new from each, and most from those who have an advantage over you. It was not altogether bad advice I once heard called from the gallery to a boxer who showed himself rather reluctant to take a chance with a more skilful adversary. The adviser shouted "Go in, get knocked out, and get some experience."

