

Building and Mastering an Explosive Side Kick!

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Side kick is one of the most common techniques next to the straight punch in many martial arts disciplines. Ironically it is fairly easy to execute but very difficult to master, most students can perform a side kick in a few months and you will see various mixes of the kick as the new student executes the technique. It is only when you witness the kick executed at a high level that you see the beauty and at the same time the destructive power of the side kick.

The side kick can be used in numerous ways it can be thrust downwards to the shin, knee and thigh area which is great if you lack flexibility, it can strike the hip, rib area and chest and working up the body to the head, and in some martial arts even higher by jumping or spinning which is great for demonstration purposes. In competitions or in self defense it can be used to attack and also defend with equal effectiveness.

To perform the side kick at a high level you need to practice.....a lot!

Understand the kick and what muscles are used, the quadriceps and gluteals, the same muscles used to perform a squat, these muscles when trained properly can contract very, very fast which generates the power. There are many ways that you can perform this technique.



To start off the basic way is by picking your leg up in the chamber position, extending it out to strike with the heel or the blade of the foot, and then re-coiling it back to the chamber position. This method delivers a large amount of power.

Lets break it down further, when you pull up your leg to chamber position you want your knee close to your body with the sole of your foot facing your target, some martial arts will say you should use the sword part of your foot other use the heel, my preference is the sole of the heel as it is harder and the power is generated into a smaller

area rather then spread across the foot.

Either way your opponent or attacker will definitely feel it. Next make sure that you chambered leg is parallel to the floor as you want the kick to explode from the hip and travel in a horizontal direction, once the kick makes contact it should be brought back to the chamber position ready to kick again or to place it on the floor to take up your stance.

One very important thing to never neglect is the supporting leg, to execute any kick properly the supporting leg and foot should be in the right position, if it is not then you may loose balance, be in a worst position to defend yourself or most definitely twist or injure your knee. The supporting leg in a side kick position must turn with the supporting foot turning 180'. This means that your toes should be pointing backwards, away from the target.



To build strength, do lunges. Lunges also work out those important kicking muscles so that your kicks can have that important power behind them. If you want to build some explosiveness, try squatting and then rising into a side kick. Each squat and kick is a rep.

A great drill is to hold yourself against a wall or use a partner. With the leg facing away from the wall, perform all the vital parts of a side kick (chamber, extension, re-chamber, back down) on a four count. So, it will be one (chamber), two (extension), etc.

The key is to do the motion slowly to get muscle memory working. Try eight repetitions for each leg per session. Once you get proficient, you can do some variations of this drill. For example, you can hold each part of the cycle longer. You also can do the third and fourth parts of the cycle more than once per rep. This concentration drill is also great because it allows you to focus on all the parts of the side kick. Make sure that you open your hips up to allow maximum extension, and make sure that you are striking with the correct part of your foot.

Hold yourself against a wall or work with a partner and extend your leg into a side kick. Then, rotate your leg in a figure eight motion without dropping it. This will definitely make your muscles burn! Try for ten on each leg.

Please remember to stretch before and after every exercise. Stretching is just as important as the other drills. It keeps your legs limber and reduces the risk of injury. A lot of people pass over stretching, but if you want to improve your side kick it something that you can't omit.

Try sitting with one leg bent inward touching the upper inner thigh of the other, while the other is straight out in front of you. Bend over the bent leg, that will stretch your glutes. You can straddle, sit on the floor with your legs spread, make sure your back is straight and reach forward but most of all breath as air allows your muscles to stretch easier. You can sit in that position while watching T.V or reading.

Keep doing these drills consistently, adding or varying them to increase their difficulty when need be. It will give you the best side kick you can have.

