

Summer Fencing at Home

Introduction

This guide is designed to help you keep up your skills (and maybe even improve them) over the summer. Keep in mind that learning without a coach is extremely difficult. You won't have someone with an experienced eye watching you and making suggestions. Working without a coach can still be useful. But make sure you are going slowly and that you feel fully confident in what you're doing. If you have *any* questions during the summer, please e-mail me immediately (at amcta579@uwsp.edu). I want to help you get the most out of this.

In this guide, there are three sections. The first lays out a series of activities that you can do by yourself. The second describes various ways to practice with another person. Lastly, there is a section that gives fencing book recommendations.

One Person Activities

Tennis-Ball Activities

All of these activities involve a suspended tennis ball. To create such an apparatus, I recommend getting a cheap broom and taking off the broom part. Then embed a nail or screw into the tennis ball, leaving a little showing. Then tie the tennis ball from the broom handle to the nail/screw. I recommend using fishing line or parachute cord, although string works relatively well. You can then hang this apparatus in an opened doorway by wedging it between the top of the door and the frame. Alternatively, you could put a hook in the ceiling as you would do for a hanging plant, then tie the string directly to the hook. When all set up, the tennis ball should be at least a couple feet from any walls and with advance-lunge distance in front of it (you do need some room to fence in!).

1. Hit the tennis ball 100 times in a row with a simple extension.
2. Hit the tennis ball 100 times in a row with a lunge.
3. 100 disengages around the tennis ball.
4. 100 disengage-lunges around the tennis ball. You should be lunging along the tennis ball's side.

Stationary Wall Target Activities

If you are able to attach things flush against a wall where you're living this summer, these activities may be another option for you. Take a square piece of wood or similar material. Then attach a rubber sheet to the front of it. Using a permanent marker, divide the square into four equal square quadrants. Then put a felt backing on it to help prevent damaging the wall. Then attach this to the wall (along studs in the wall obviously).

1. Decide which square you will hit, and hit it perfectly with a lunge.
2. Add different stickers or dots to the squares. Pick one and hit it perfectly with a lunge.
3. Stand about two feet from the wall. Use in-fighting techniques to hit each square perfectly.

Footwork Activities

This activity is a shortened version from Rudy Volkmann's [Magnum Libre d'Esgrime \(Big Book of Fencing\)](#) (check out the Recommended Books section). This is very good conditioning in addition to improving your fencing. If possible, this should be done in front of a mirror. Do each bullet 10 times, no breaks in between. A 10-20 second break in between bullets is allowed. Make it perfect. Then make it smooth. Then make it fast.

- Lunge, recover with a parry-4
- Lunge, recover with a parry-6
- Advance-lunge, recover with a parry-4, retreat with a parry-6
- Advance-lunge, recover with a parry-6, retreat with a parry-4

Two Person Activities

Some of these drills don't need to be done with another fencer. They can simply be done with any other person. Some don't even require the other person to have equipment.

Called Parries

Stand in front of a mirror. Have another person call out the number for a parry. Then either:

- Hold the parry for a moment, and then return En Garde before the next parry. OR
- Hold the parry. Move directly to the next parry called without returning En Garde.

Do this one very slowly. Make your movements and smooth as possible and your parries perfect.

Distance Activities

This requires both fencers to have gear. Stand at advance-lunge distance.

1. Designate a leader. Keep distance as the leader moves.
2. Without designating leaders, both move and keep distance.
3. Designate a leader. If leader advances with an extension, retreat. If leader advances without extension, lunge and touch. If leader retreats, advance.

Bouting Activities

This one is fairly self-explanatory and obviously requires two people with gear. In addition to the usual bout formats, you may want to try the following scenarios:

1. The score is 4-4 in a pool bout. It's "La Belle". Next touch wins.
2. The score is 3-3 in a pool bout. Designate someone to have priority. One minute of fencing. If no one scores, the person with priority wins.
3. Designate one person as stationary. They cannot move during the bout.
4. In-fighting only. Fencers must stay closer than lunge distance.
5. Allow only high-line touches. Or, allow only low-line touches.
6. Allow only compound attacks. In other words, no simple actions (simple riposte, simple lunge, etc.). All actions must be comprised of multiple simple maneuvers (feint-disengage, riposte with a change of line, etc.).

Recommended Books

You should be able to find these books sold at one or another of the fencing vendors. Check out the links section on the Club website for a listing of vendors and their websites. The numbers are in order of preference for people trying to work without a coach.

All Weapons

1. Volkmann, Rudy. Magnum Libre d'Escrime (Big Book of Fencing). 2nd Edition. Georgia, 1997.
ISBN: 0-9668038-0-9 About \$30
2. Garret, Maxwell; Emmanuil Kaidanov; and Gil Pezza. Foil, Saber, and Épée Fencing. Revised Edition. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.
ISBN: 0-271-01019-3 About \$30

Foil

1. Gillet, Jean. Foil Technique and Terminology. 2nd Edition. New York: SKA Swordplay Books, 1981.
About \$10
2. Bradford, Vincent and Darrell Williams. Taking Foil Groups to the Competitive Level. Illinois, 1994.
ISBN: 1-883616-03-4 About \$16
3. Lukovich, István. Electric Foil Fencing. New York: SKA Swordplay Books, 1998.
About \$25

Sabre

1. Beke and Polgar. Methodology of Modern Saber Fencing. Budapest: Corvina Press, 1963.
Out of Print – Try finding a used copy online

Épée

1. Vass, Imre. Épée Fencing: a Complete System. New York: SKA Swordplay Books. 1998.
ISBN: 0-9659468-6-X About \$30