

Evasion (esquive) – any action displacing the target from the attack. Evasions are generally accompanied by stop-hits.

Evasions include ducking, side-stepping and even the ninth or coward's parry or stepping back. We treat four, all with stop hits: the duck, passata sotto, in quartata, and rassemblement. Typically used sparingly and as late as possible as surprise is the key.

Duck

Duck: Dropping the target under the attacking blade by timely swatting.

Technique

- From an on-guard position, drop both legs and swat on the balls of feet while extending the point to target under the opponent's wrist or forearm.
- The rear arm also remains high for balance.

Variants – from quarte to octave, if opponent's arm is higher frustrating a riposte from quarte.

- ❖ Practice 1: Opponent attacks in high line with high arm, so duck and target under-the-wrist.
- ❖ Practice 2: Step forward and duck aggressively to elicit an instinctive extension by the opponent. Stop-hit under-the-wrist.

In Quartata

In Quartata: Removing the target sideways by pivoting on front foot and moving rear foot sideways with a swing of the rear shoulder and a stop thrust.

Technique

- From an on-guard position, move the shoulders and trunk from a 45° angle to the opponent's blade to a 0° angle by moving the rear foot sideways behind the sword arm.
- Extend sword arm in stop-thrust to opponent's arm or shoulder.
- Ensure no other movement – of front foot, of head, etc.
- Focus on hit throughout the action.

- ❖ Practice 1: Opponent attacks by step forward to inside high line.
- ❖ Practice 2: Opponent attacks by fleche to inside high line.

Rassemblement

Rassemblement: Moving the front foot target by withdrawing the front foot back to the rear one and standing up. Generally executed with stop thrust.

Technique

- From an on-guard position, push off the front foot to stand erect with feet at right-angles.
- Simultaneously, extend sword arm in stop-thrust to opponent's shoulder or mask.
- Ensure no other movement – of back foot, of head, etc.
- Focus on stop-hit throughout.

- ❖ Practice 1: Opponent attacks foot with a lunge.
- ❖ Practice 2: Step back leaving front foot to invite attack and then stop-hit to mask or shoulder.

Passata Sotto

Passata Sotto: Ducking below attacking blade in a reverse lunge (i.e., lifting and straightening rear leg while pushing from the front foot), putting the unarmed hand on piste for balance. Generally executed with a stop-thrust to arm or body.

Technique

- Make it look as if starting a step back, but fully straighten back-leg.
- Just as truck is moving back, pivot from waist to move head and truck downwards towards front knee (below attacking blade).
- For balance, place unarmed hand on piste close to front knee.
- Simultaneously stop-thrust with pronation in low line.

- ❖ Practice 1: Try first to get the movement and balance correctly by trying technique without an opponent.
- ❖ Practice 2: As opponent advances, make move look like a slow step back but aggressively pivot torso at waist to drop upper body low while stop thrusting to knee for foot.

Now try each practice with movement, reducing time window for student to exercise the stoke by being at correct distance/blade presented only briefly. Applying increased pressure until fight mode. Correct faults as they occur.