

The Hit – the final part of an action where the point strikes the opponent to bring on a light. The point should fix clearly on the opponent with penetrative force.

We can distinguish three forms of hit: the ‘push’ hit, the ‘touch’ hit, and the ‘flick’ hit.

The push hit is favoured by beginners where one simply pushes the point into the opponent, with blade ideally close to a right angle to opponent’s body.

A touch hit has the character of a touch – so the point is placed at a given coordinate in space, such that it is about 2cm inside the skin of the opponent, i.e., there is no continuous pushing.

A flick hit is where one uses the blade in a whip action so that the blade curves and the point hits, e.g., around the guard, or on back of opponent.

Push Hit Technique

- Start on guard at close quarters, with a body hit at 90% extension.
- Ensure that the sword arm is extended just sufficient to make the hit on outside chest.
- Point accelerating throughout the move, so moving fastest as hit is made.
- The wrist relaxes as soon as hit made, so blade slightly curves upwards.

Variants – with a step forward, with a lunge, with a flèche.

Touch Hit Technique

- Start on guard, with opponent coming forward with extending arm to under the wrist.
- Extend to hit forearm, with a contraction of hand (thumb forward as fingers tighten on grip) at end so point lands on forearm which is almost parallel.
- Point accelerating throughout the move, so moving fastest as hit is made.
- Point fixes to forearm and blade bends in an arc.

Variant – with a step back

- As point lands, rear leg starts a step back.
- Complete the step back.

Also, with step forward or flèche to arm.

Flick Hit Technique

- Make a whip-like action with the blade so the point lands on opponent at maximum curving of the blade.
- So elbow and wrist propel point forward in an arc, with sudden stop as the grip is tightened. The blade then bends and point lands on target.
- Extend arm during the action.
- Slightly supinate hand during the movement.
- Ensure the action is small and neat, so the wrist is barely exposed.
- Flick around the guard to opponent’s wrist or forearm.
- Sweep in counter-sixte to deflect opponent’s blade if in line of wrist.
- Leave point in line as withdraw.

Disengage Attack – one motion that passes the point under or over the opponent's blade while extending the arm to hit.

Technique

- When opponent is opening a line laterally (say, while attempting to engage), pass under the opponent's blade (or over if opponent is in low line) while simultaneously extending for a hit.
- Only finger/wrist movement to drop and rise the point and keep action small.
- Arm extending throughout the move, with feet movement only towards end of extension and only if necessary (e.g., short lunge).

Variants – with a step back

- As point lands, rear leg starts a step back.
- Complete the step back.

Also with step forward or flèche to arm/body.

Counter-disengage Attack - one continuous motion that deceives the opponents attempt to take the blade by circular or semi-circular action (e.g., circular sixte or semi-circular to octave) while delivering a hit.

Technique

- When opponent is seeking the blade with circular or semi-circular motion (say, while attempting to take blade in sixte), deceive the action by simultaneously making a circular or semi-circular motion in the same direction while extending for a hit.
- Only finger/wrist movement to drop and rise the point and keep action small.
- Arm extending throughout the move, with feet movement only towards end of extension and only as far as necessary (e.g., short lunge).

Variant – with a step back

- As point lands, rear leg starts a step back.
- Complete the step back.

Also with step forward or flèche to arm/body.

Coupé (or *Cut-over Attack*) – one continuous motion of passing point over the opponent's blade while in the high line (under if in the low line) and delivering a hit. The motion requires that the point moves back initially before accelerating towards target and thus exposes under the wrist.

- In épée, mostly executed as a flick hit to arm in order that the time of exposure of the under-wrist target is minimised.
- At longer distances, it can be used as part of flèche when opponent is focussed on your blade, so its withdrawal causes momentary confusion.
- Use sparingly and as surprise as it exposes advanced target at start.

❖ Practice: Progressive Simple Attacks (one period of fencing time) and Successive Simple Attacks.