

FMA Informative

Propagating the Filipino Martial Arts and the Culture of the Philippines

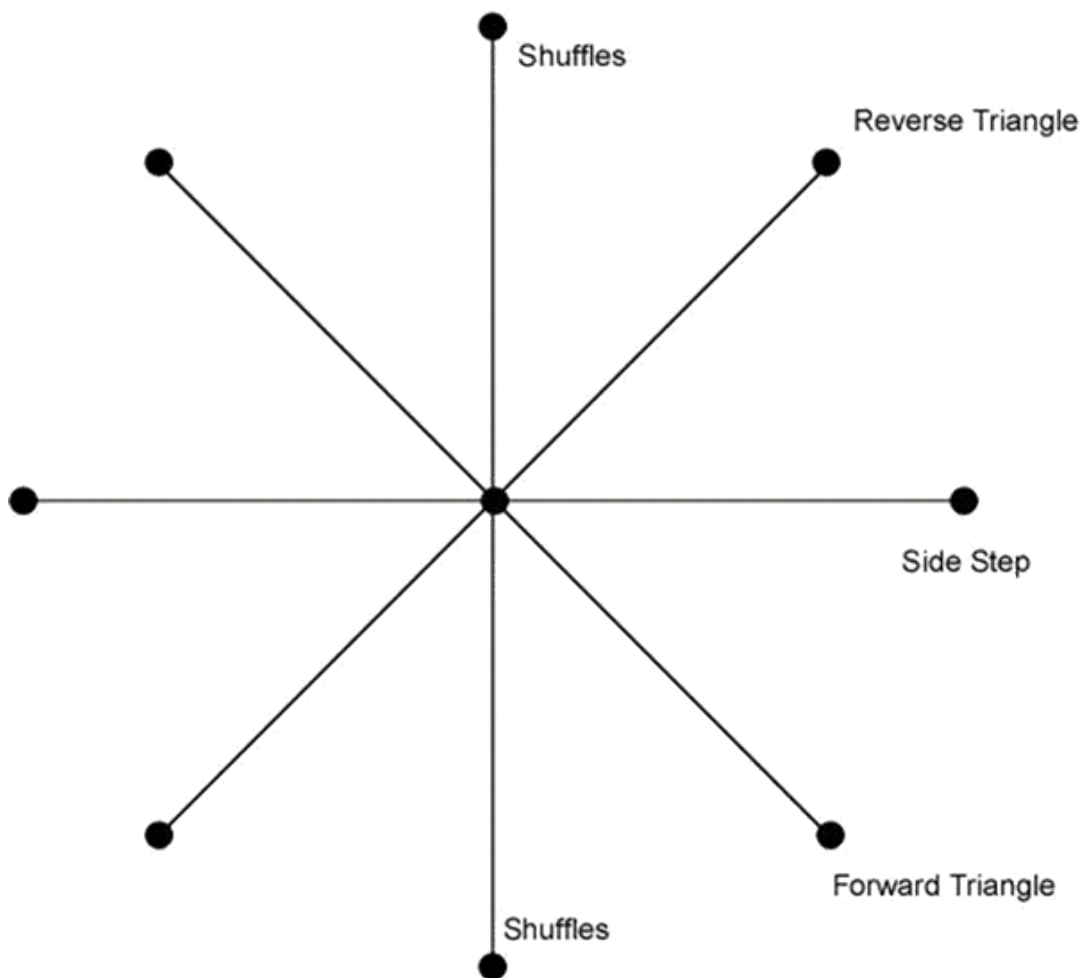
Informative Issue No. 212
2016

FOOTWORK

Fundamentals

Mr. Eric Primm sharing his posts on the basic fundamental concepts and principles of Footwork simply called: "**Footwork Friday.**"

The footwork discussed in this issue is from Counterpoint Tactical System as learned it from Master Zach Whitson. However the FMA Informative feels that most Filipino martial arts broken down conform to some of these basics in foot movement.



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Each issue features practitioners of martial arts and other internal arts, other features include historical, theoretical and technical articles; reflections, Filipino martial arts, healing arts, the culture of the Philippines and other related subjects.

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Mr. Eric Primm in 2015 had a series of Blog entries (<https://stlcounterpoint.wordpress.com/>) called "Footwork Friday".

The FMA Informative requested if possible that Mr. Primm submit his blog posts for this issue. The FMA informative thinks this issue is excellent information on the fundamentals of footwork, and greatly appreciates Mr. Primm in sharing the information in this issue.

Mr. Primm is the author of the FMA Informative issues:

- Informative Issue No #41 Iron Mountain Camp 2012
- Informative Issue No #103 Iron Mountain Camp 2013
- Informative Issue No #162 Iron Mountain Camp 2014
- Informative Issue No #202 Iron Mountain Camp 2015

Recommend visiting the FMA Informative website (www.fmainformative.info) and downloading the issues in the FMA Informative Past Issues section.

Eric Primm

Footwork has always been a weakness of mine, and as part of my journey in Counterpoint Tactical System (CTS), I decided to put special emphasis on improving the holes in my game. This series is a chance for me to dig deeper than just my weekly training sessions, and the FMA Informative has generously allowed me to gather up some introductory articles in one place. If you have any comments, please, contact me on my blog - (stlcounterpoint.wordpress.com) - or on twitter at: (twitter.com/PrimmLife). I hope you enjoy this study, and thank you for reading.

Disclaimer: The footwork discussed in this issue is from Counterpoint Tactical System as I've learned it from Master Zach Whitson. Any errors or inconsistencies are mine. The spirit of this series is for me to study footwork in more depth. I don't claim to know everything, and I will make mistakes. But, again, those mistakes are mine. Also, this article is for reference only and should be used as a secondary source only. Please, see a Filipino martial arts instructor if you wish to accurately learn these techniques.



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Introduction



Filipino martial arts are as diverse as the islands themselves, but the need for footwork seems common in all of them. The arts responded by creating a sophisticated system of movement and body positioning that could take a lifetime to perfect all on its own. The Filipino martial arts footwork is complex and beautiful. Control of range is control of the fight.

Reverse Triangle

One of the Filipino martial arts secrets is its beautiful footwork. I love watching skilled FMA'ers move. In that spirit, I created a new segment on the blog: Footwork Friday. Every Friday for a year, I'm attempting to write about footwork. This is gonna require some work on my part. A weekly article about footwork is a forced study for me to revisit what I've learned with fresh eyes. I hope to include videos and animations as well. So, let's dive right on into the first attempt.

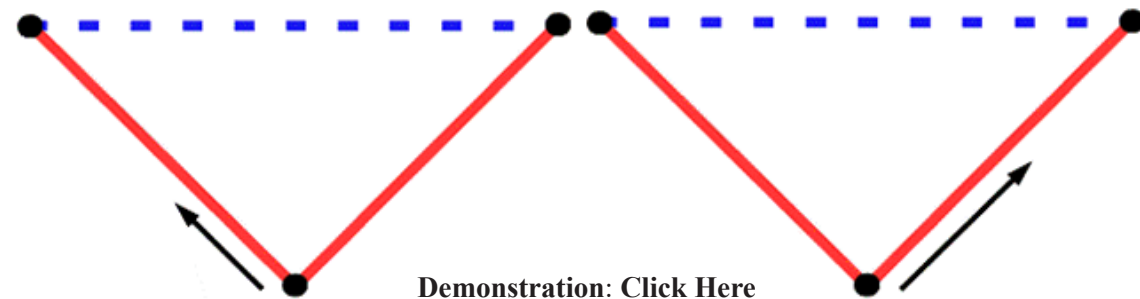
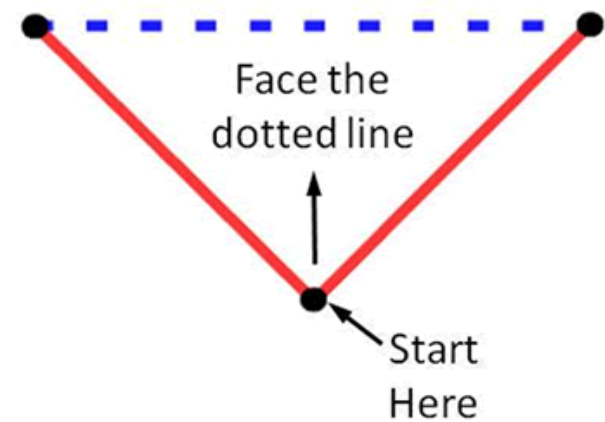
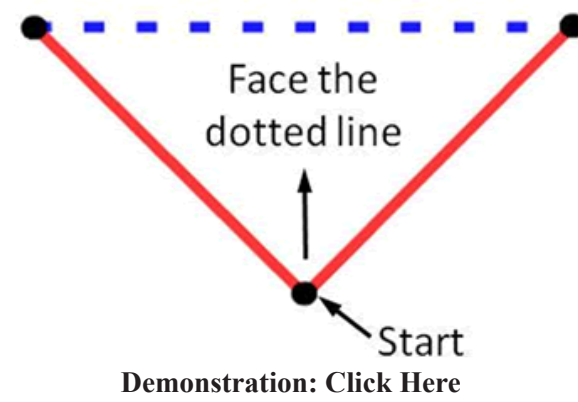
Triangular footwork is a hallmark of the Filipino martial arts. Angular footwork is a beautiful thing to watch, and it can really confound an opponent. TJ Dillashaw's masterful perfor-

mance against Renan Barao involved taking angles, and Barao had no answer for it. If taking angles works against a fighter at the top of his game, we should look to use angular footwork as part of our strategy. In CTS, we start with two triangles as an introduction to footwork. First we'll look at the reverse triangle, which is known in other arts as the female triangle.

In the reverse triangle, the practitioner starts at the point of the triangle, facing the base. For this article, we are not going to connect the base, which is why it is shown as a dashed line. Step with your left foot out at an angle, but do not move your right foot. The length of the step should be a natural stride for now. Bring the left foot back to the pinnacle of the triangle

and make similar step with the right foot out on an angle. Bring the right foot back. There you have it: your first angular footwork

The above description is for novices. It's important to go slow and to work on the mechanics. We want our form to be correct before increasing



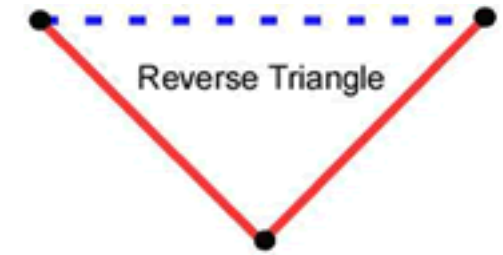
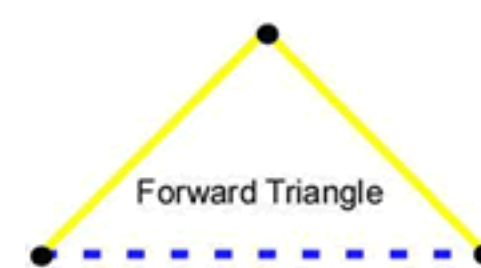
speed. Master Zach Whitson says that, "form is the driver of technique." By going slow, we teach our bodies the correct form and the correct technique. Once we can correctly do the technique without thinking about it, slow practice that focuses on form pays off in the form of maintenance. We can also increase the complexity as well as the speed.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Forward Triangle

Triangular footwork is a hallmark of the Filipino martial arts. Now, we'll look at the forward triangle, which is complementary to the reverse triangle.



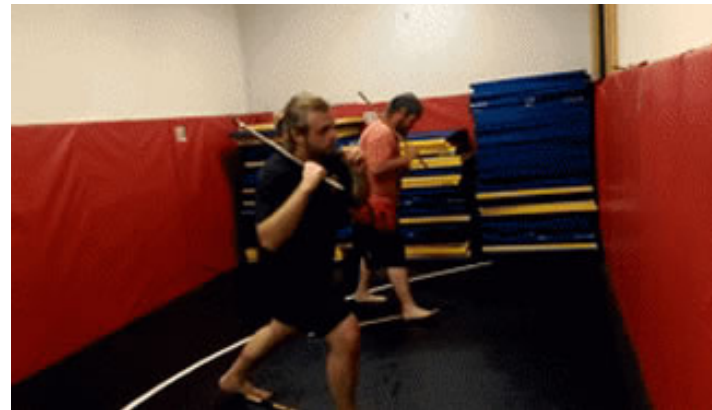
In CTS, we start with two triangles to represent our footwork. We've already looked at the reverse triangle, which is known in other arts as the female triangle. Let's examine the forward triangle, which is known in other Filipino martial arts as the male triangle. The forward triangle has the point of the located in the direction of the step.

In the forward triangle, the practitioner starts at the point of the triangle, facing away the base. For this article, we are not going to connect the base, which is why it is shown as a dashed line. Step back with your right foot at an angle, but do not move your left foot. The length of the step should be a natural stride for now. With the foot planted, weight should be evenly distributed on the legs. Bring the right foot forward to the pinnacle of the triangle and make similar step with the left foot back on an angle. Bring the left foot forward.



As a reminder, it's important to go slow and to work on the mechanics. We want our form to be correct before increasing speed. Before we add speed into the steps, I suggest varying the length of the step itself.

Shorter, longer, deeper, shallower, wider angle, more narrow angle, etc. I play with these variables as a way to get to understand how my body moves. I also recommend changing the stride length and experimenting with how that changes range to and from your opponent. But note that changing your stride affects your mobility.



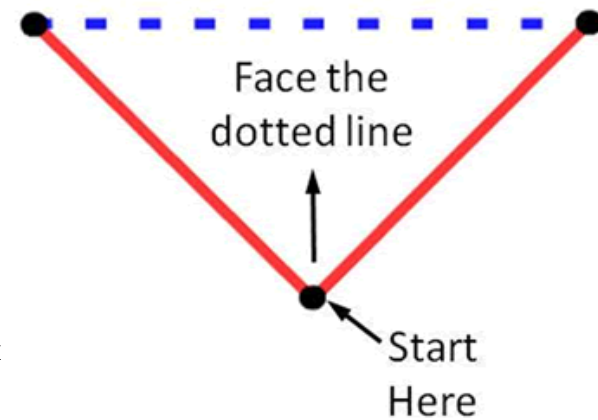
Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Triangle Variations

Part of good footwork is good cardio. If you've watched any of the smaller weight classes in MMA, you've seen that a high level of fitness is required for constant movement. One of the ways that I like to increase the difficulty level of my footwork practice is to work variations of the reverse and forward triangle. In addition, the variations keep the footwork drills fresh. Repetition of the footwork is necessary, and it's important to find ways to increase the diversity of a drill while maintaining the importance of the drill. Reverse and forward triangle are foundational footwork for Counterpoint Tactical System and a number of Filipino martial arts; as such, we cannot practice them enough.

The reverse triangle is the first angular footwork that I learned, and it is the first footwork that I teach. It's the basic that I go back to when sparring. If I'm thinking through a striking pattern, I return to reverse triangle while thinking. It is my default footwork, and from all the footwork Friday posts about it, anyone can see how much I use reverse triangle.

One way to add a bit of intensity to the footwork pattern is to tack a knee on the last step. As the foot moves out along the triangle, shift your weight to the forward foot, and bring the back knee forward into an upward knee strike. Be sure to point your toes down as you knee. Then, after the knee strike, return your foot back to the pinnacle of the triangle. This should set you up to move to the other side. Repeat on the other side.

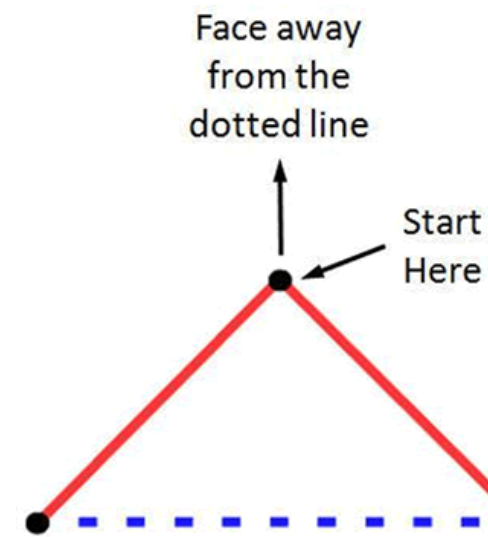


The forward triangle is the chili to the reverse triangle's cheese fries. Both are good separate but so much better together. And if you eat some chili, cheese fries, these exercises are needed. Forward and reverse triangle are a match made in heaven, and it's best to work them together. That way you get used to moving both towards and away from the opponent. Mixing and matching these two are enough to create a solid foundation of angular footwork.

For this variation, when your foot steps backward, shift your weight onto your back foot, and draw the front foot back to your knee. When you go to set your foot down, put it back at the pinnacle of the triangle. Repeat on the other side. The front foot can act like a pendulum, or it can be raised up into a knee shield.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)



As usual, take it slow at first to get the feel down. Once you feel comfortable with this, speed the steps up. Not only do I use this as a good warm up, I typically increase the intensity till I get a little sweat going. You can take it as far as you want to go, but I recommend thinking of these variations as additions to a cardio regime. I also do these variations out of the X pattern. Simply pin the pinnacles of the triangle together, and you have the X pattern. Add in the knees or foot movement to increase the complexity. Then, increase the speed. Get moving!



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Side Step

Now, let's look at the side step. In my short martial arts experience, the side step footwork is the most unique footwork that I've learned. CTS Empty hand versus knife level one was where I first learned this. The side step allows me to move away from the knife while maintaining the ability to strike my opponent. As you move around your opponent, you can position yourself on the other side of your opponent's body from his knife. It provides a measure of safety while allowing me to counterattack. This footwork took me a while to feel comfortable with, but it has become one of my favorite pieces of footwork. When pairing it with new techniques, I slow down and try to feel out the movements to determine where to combine them.



For this footwork, start on the middle dot. Step with your right foot out to your right side. Twist your body such that your back is facing the direction you want to move, i.e. face left. Draw your left towards your right. The left foot points in the direction from which it just moved. Both knees should be bent, and 90% of your weight should be on the right foot. Traditional martial arts call this a cat stance. To change, step out with your left foot and rotate it 90 degrees to the front. As you transfer your weight to your left foot, rotate your body so that you are now facing where you just were. Drag your right foot close to your left with the toes pointing in the direction you just came from. Now, 90% of your weight should be on your left leg.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

They are often surprised at how much force they are generating. Power comes from being rooted to the ground, transferring weight, and hip rotation. The side step contains all three elements.

As you turn from side to side, you'll notice that the hips are integral to making the turn. Because the hips are so important, you can see how this footwork easily translates into power generation. I love watching students pair up their stick swings with this footwork.

Here is the great Tuhon Bill McGrath teaching the side step from Pekiti Tirsia. Tuhon McGrath is showing two variations, the 90 degree and 180 degree side step.

This is a rather difficult footwork to learn just by reading or watching a video. Please, seek out a qualified instructor. It is worth learning this footwork if you train in close quarters combat.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Ranging Drill

The ranging drill followed a weekend full of Counterpoint Tactical System training. Iron Mountain was a blast. After my test which included some espada y daga sparring, Master Zach Whitson commented that my footwork was looking better. I guess these Friday posts are helping. We learned the reverse and forward triangles and the side step first, and with that preparation let's look at the ranging footwork pattern.

The ranging footwork drill blends the reverse triangle, side step, and forward triangle. The flat pattern of the drill looks like an asterisk without the vertical line. Students start out with feet together on the middle dot with the red lines in front and the yellow to the rear. One foot moves along the pattern while the other stays in the center with one exception. Each angle is further broken down into three steps: short, medium, and long. These distances will vary with body type, age, mobility, and overall health. Depending on what you're trying to accomplish, the natural stance can be either the medium or long step. In the example below, we used the long step to move into the natural stance. When teaching this, I start my students moving to the left as a subtle reminder to work the left side, which is why the left reverse triangle is labeled number one. Students should be able to start the drill with either foot. We start the pattern moving along reverse triangle, but one could start with the other angles as well.

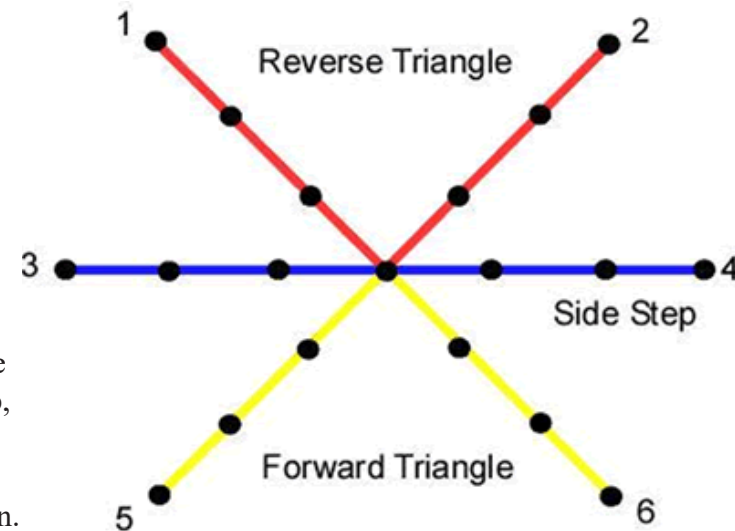
As I said, I like to start my students out going to the left. Joe and Kyle start stepping to the left on the reverse triangle. Once they get the third step, they drag the foot back to the starting position. Notice that during the reverse triangle, the stationary foot stays in the center of the pattern. The only time the stationary foot moves is at the end of the side step, and then it returns immediately to the center of the pattern.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

I recommend using this footwork to explore your own movement. What is a deep stance for you? Depending on range, you may need a longer stance to connect. This will require a longer recovery time as well. This drill will familiarize you with your own attributes.

Also, I use this as a warmup before class, and I like it if the whole class



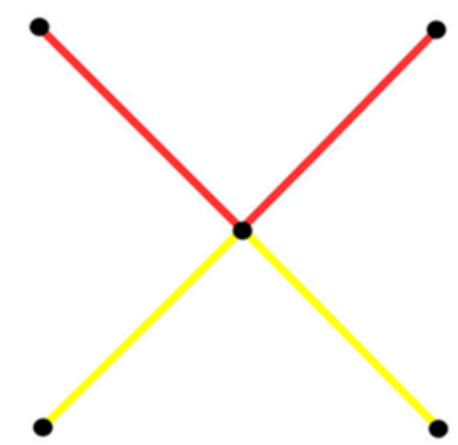
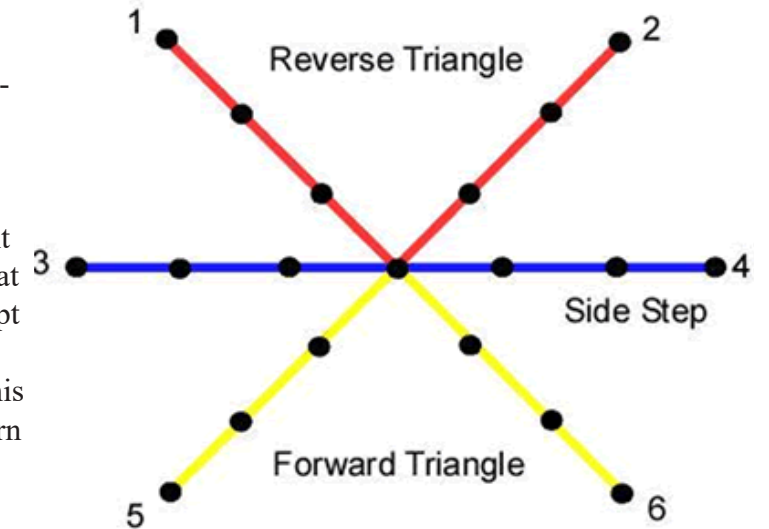
counts the steps together. The first step is one, and when we get back to the center, we start over. Watching a group of students do this synchronized is a great sight.

Ranging Variation

The ranging drill has been introduced. This is great footwork for warming up and for figuring out what a comfortable yet mobile stance is, but I also like to mix it up by adding in the X pattern. The ranging footwork drill is made of the reverse triangle, side step, and forward triangle, and the X is the same pattern with the side step removed. While working the ranging drill all by itself, students can achieve a meditative practice. By inserting the X, students must pay attention to the changing situation. It forces them to be present. So, let's get to it!

When working this variation, I start with the ranging drill. It is the base drill from which the changes should be made. Since the ranging pattern loops back on itself, the continual motion makes it easy for students to reset if they get lost. Make sure that a few rounds go by before modifying the drill. It's important to establish a pattern before introducing changes. What we're trying to learn with this variation is how to adapt to a broken pattern.

At random intervals, call out the X pattern. This whole variation goes from an 18 count stepping pattern to a four count stepping pattern. I typically advocate maintaining the same direction of movement to start with. For example, if the students start moving forward in the ranging drill, the reverse triangle portion of the X drill should be the first movement. This will seem awkward at first. That's entirely okay. It still occasionally feels awkward to me because I'm not perfect. It's important however to keep working these skills.



When done with the X pattern, flow right back into the ranging footwork drill. Maintaining the flow is important. When the students have flowed along the ranging pattern a couple of times, it's time to go back to the X pattern. I recommend varying the number of ranging drill repetitions between each X pattern. This will keep us on our toes. By interrupting the complex footwork pattern with a simpler one, we are learning to adjust to tempo changes. Fights have a rhythm and pace that are unique to each and every encounter. Adjusting to those changes is essential to becoming a martial artist. This simple variation is one way of helping students adapt to the unexpected.

Step Drag

The previous sections dealt with angular footwork. In this article, we'll begin looking at linear footwork. First up is the drag step footwork. I associate this footwork more with panantukan – empty hands – or boxing or kickboxing. But step-drag works with weapons as well. Footwork should be combined to make footwork combinations. Angular and linear can be combined to create a diverse arsenal of movement. But let's dive right into the step-drag.

One of the best things about the step-drag is that its name is also its description. Start in a staggered stance with feet about shoulder width apart. The foot in the direction you want to move is the one that steps. If you want to move forward, your forward foot steps. If you want to move right, your right foot steps. Then, drag your other step to return to your stance. This step can be done in any direction. The concept applies whether moving backwards or to the side.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

When I teach this, I stack two steps together before changing direction. This allows us to start putting the footwork together in combination, and it keeps us in discipline. If our opponent backs away farther than we can get in one step, we just continue the step. We don't want to break footwork when pursuing. Also, I teach the step drag in reverse, but I don't like exiting on a linear path. Humans move faster forward than backwards; so, it's easier for your attacker to chase you down when exiting backwards linearly. If weapons are involved, the extended reach of the weapon may still bridge the gap created by your linear step backwards. Exiting is best achieved when



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

circling or angling out. But we need to learn the concept, and if step-dragging backwards is the best available option, then we have to be able to execute. It's a tool we need in our arsenal even if it we never use it.

I use this footwork a lot when I'm hitting the heavy bag. When stick sparring, I use it sparingly, but I do use it. I mix it in with angular footwork to avoid creating a predictable footwork pattern. While I prefer angular footwork and getting offline, it's important for a well developed striking skill set to have linear footwork as well. Step-drag is a simple, effective pattern to use.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Drag Step

Now, it's time to look at the complementary footwork. If we can step drag, we have to be able to drag step.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

front kicks. So that I drag up and the step happens after the kick. In my experience, students feel awkward with this footwork. I recommend playing with it during sparring to find where it's useful for you. Remember sparring is not about winning, it's about learning. To be well rounded, it's important to have these skills even if you never use them. We should understand how our bodies move as martial artists.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Drag step is just the reverse of step drag. The foot farthest from the direction that you want to travel is the first foot you move. For example, if you want to step forward, you drag the back foot up to the front foot. If you wish to move backwards, you drag the front foot back to the rear foot. When your feet are close together, that is when you step. As with all footwork, what we can do forward, we have to do backwards and side-to-side.

We show this footwork slowly at first. In use, it's much faster. I like this footwork to throw



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

The step drag shadow drill can be modified with this footwork. In fact, I recommend trying it. This drill improves your reaction times and your ability to adapt.

Step Drag Shadow

By discussing the step drag shuffle, we began our study of linear footwork. I'd like to build off that footwork into a shadowing drill. This drill can be used with any footwork pattern, but for the purposes of this blog post, I'm limiting it to step drag. Let's dive right in.

In the GIF, Joe and Kyle are moving slowly, in sync with one another forward and backward. The foot closest to the direction they want to move is the one that makes the step. So, if Kyle wants to move backwards, his back foot steps and the front drags. Joe moving forward steps with the front foot and drags the rear



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

When the students get the footwork down, I like to increase the complexity a bit by adding in a reaction drill. It's not just a follow drill, though, it is a mirror drill. One student leads the footwork, and the second student mirrors the first. The lead student decides which way to move. It is up to the second student to maintain the distance between them. The goal is for the second student to react to the first student. I call this a shadow drill because I want Joe to stick to Kyle as if he were Kyle's shadow.

Joe and Kyle are moving slowly in the video because we start off everything slowly. I recommend starting off slowly to adjust to the mirrored movement. The lead student should not follow a set pattern. You can speed this drill up and train the following students reactions. Always keep in mind maintaining the distance is the goal. If you can control the distance, you can control where the fight takes place.

The example I used is the step drag footwork, but you can do this drill with whatever footwork you choose. I recommend working the drill by isolating each footwork pattern first.



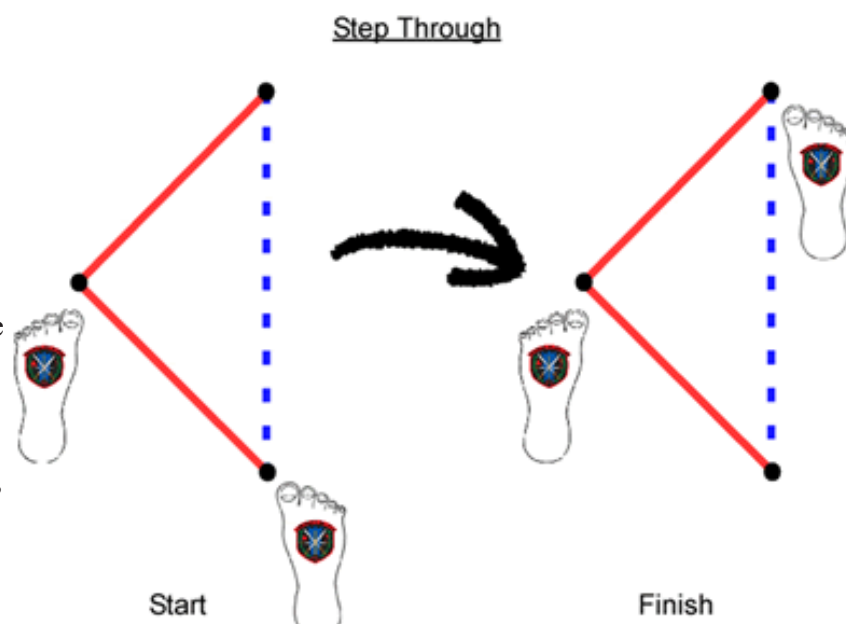
Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Then, you can increase complexity by mixing two different patterns, and each progression adds another pattern. You can follow a set pattern or let the lead student choose randomly. Happy footwork everyone!

Step-Through

Filipino martial arts love the triangle. It defines the footwork; it's used in striking, in targeting, in balance. It's everywhere, and so far, we've looked at the triangle with the base in front and behind you. If you combine reverse and forward triangle, they make an hour glass shape with you standing in the middle. This begs the question what if the base is off to one side? How does this change the footwork? Today, we look at one simple answer. Welcome to the step through.

If you've been following along so far, Footwork Friday has only covered linear, forward-backward patterns with a drag step shuffle and step drag. Shuffles are great footwork to have in your arsenal. Where shuffles involve both feet moving, the step through moves just one. The lead foot doesn't change during the shuffle movement, and strategically there are times when a change of lead is necessary. So the step through fills that need.

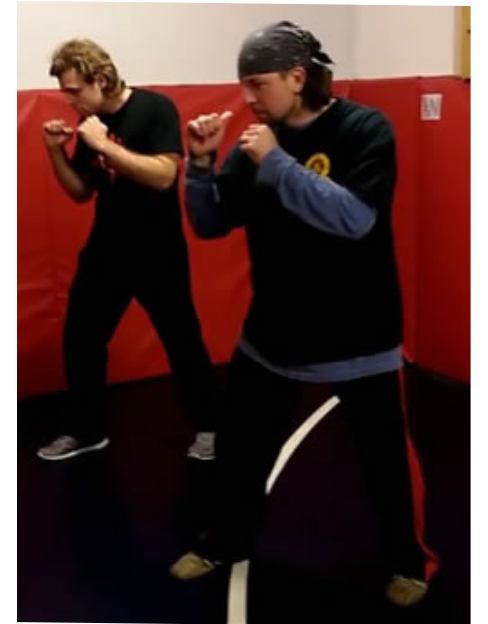


Step Through

Following the above example, start in a left lead. Drag your right leg along the imaginary base of the triangle straight up until you're in a comfortable right lead stance. Congratulations, you've just stepped through. Reverse those instructions to go backwards. This can and should be done left or right lead. Even though you are using a triangle for visualization, this is still linear footwork because the motion is a straight line in the direction you wish to move.

If you do this step switching between left and right, as my friend Mike pointed out, you look like a cowboy from an old Western walking along because you are shifting which shoulder is in front. To be most effective, this footwork is often paired with other patterns. While you can walk someone down using the step through, I don't recommend it. This footwork should be worked as a standalone pattern, but as you begin to feel comfortable with it, combine it with the other patterns that we've discussed in the past. Use it to set up reverse triangle. Tag it on the end of forward triangle to put more distance between you and your opponent. Put it before the side step to get a deceptive, defensive angle.

Because it's such a fast movement, step through is a good distance management pattern. I find that I most often call this out when students are working together and the range is opening up between the two. Step through is a quick way to close that distance. Since I'm a clinch fighter, I prefer close quarters, but this movement is just as important for long range practitioners. As with all footwork, it's important to attempt this pattern during sparring. Finding where it's awkward and where it's not is an important part of learning who you are as a martial artist. Keep moving, and start stepping through.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)



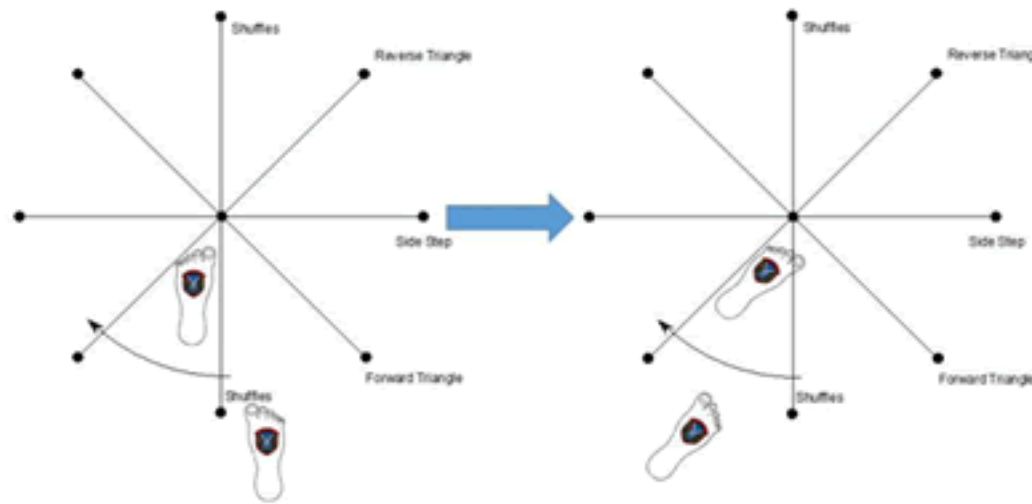
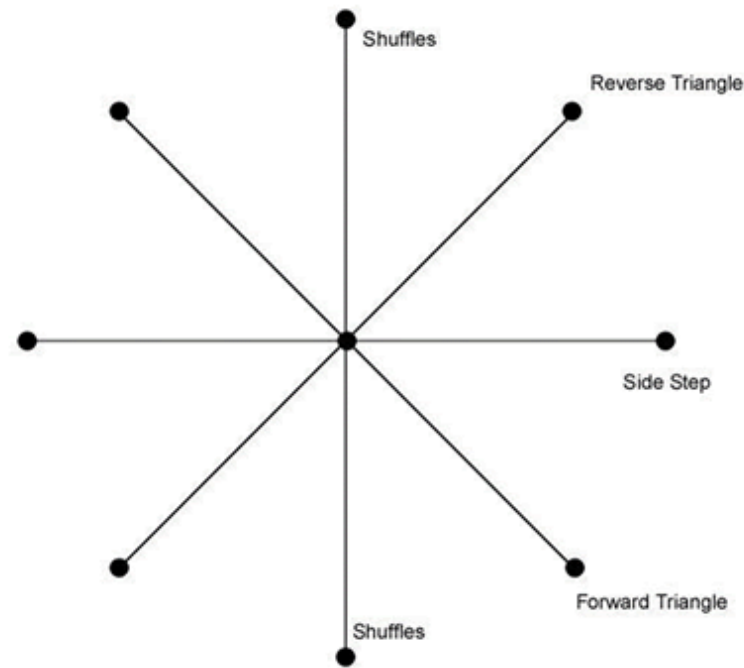
Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Move Up the Circle

By this point, we've walked on angles; we've stepped to the side; we've shuffled; and we've ranged. To this point, our footwork – whether angular, to the side, forward, or backwards – is moving along a line. Why not add a little variety? Spice up your footwork with a little circular movement. Try "Move Up the Circle!"

Filipino martial arts (FMA) footwork can be visualized as an asterisk on the ground. The student stands in the middle of the pattern, and the legs of the asterisk represent the different directions of movement. In past Footwork Friday entries, we moved along one of those lines. Sometimes, adjustments are necessary without transferring along a line. An easy way to do this is make a circular movement along the outside of the asterisk.

Imagine that your left foot is at the center of the asterisk and that it is nailed to the floor. It can spin around but it can't leave that spot. Next, take a small step backwards with your rear foot. Turn your hips and front foot back into a normal stance. Ta da! You've just moved up the circle.



While you can make large turns with this step, I recommend small movements. Think of this as an adjustment step. If you imagine a thrust along the "shuffle" line, moving up the circle is a small adjustment to get offline of the strike. This is how footwork can work in conjunction with your hand defenses to keep you safe. For example, moving up the circle gets you of-

fline of a knife thrust with a minor movement. This little bit creates space to counter. The additional space gives your hands more time to do their work. In the video below, Mike, Steve, and Joe show the small adjustments but move 360 degrees around the whole circle.

Here's a close up of their footwork.



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)



Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

One of the more interesting parts of move up the circle is how it changes range. Note that Mike's hand is fully outstretched to Joe's forehead. By moving up the circle, Mike has to readjust his fingers up Joe's forehead because Mike suddenly has more reach. He hasn't moved any closer to Joe, but through the magic of geometry, his reach is greater than that of Joe's!

Moving up the circle is a pattern that chains well with the linear movements. They compliment each other. For now, add a little circular spice to your linear footwork.

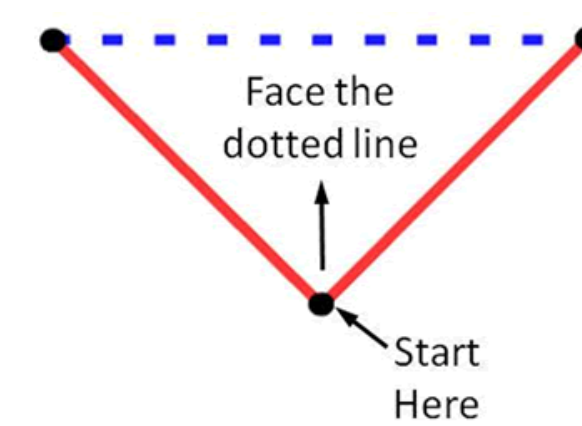


Demonstration: [Click Here](#)

Footwork Friday: Training Clusters

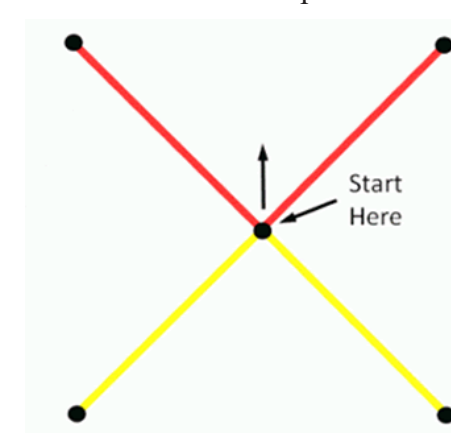
When I started my Footwork Friday series, I didn't put any thought into organization. I just started writing and whatever footwork I was thinking about that week was the topic of the article. That isn't the way that I teach footwork, though. Having a progression for the students is a stronger method of instruction, and part of that progression is blocking together like objects. Counterpoint Tactical System employs block curriculum as an organizational method of instruction, and the material in each block can be further broken down into similar categories. This gives a continuity to training; we're not skipping around week to week. This entry is an example of how to block similar footwork patterns with an eye towards skill progression.

Angular Footwork



of moving in one direction only.

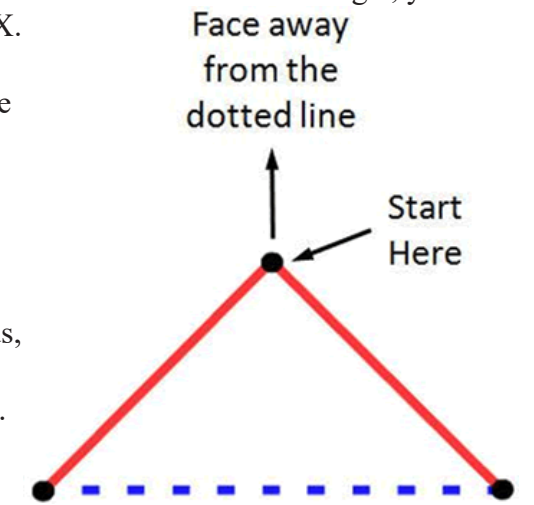
These three patterns are what I like to start with for beginners.



These three patterns are the ones that I come back to time and again. Whether with weapons, empty hands, or just footwork only, these patterns are the start of my personal practice. After working on the mechanics of the patterns, I then try to get some cardio in by working the triangle variations. At this point, I increase speed and add the knee raises in to up my heart beat. I'm looking to break a sweat, not burn my legs out.

Putting together the angular footwork block is a pretty easy task. Start with the reverse triangle and then move on to forward triangle. These two patterns are featured a lot in Footwork Friday posts, and that's because they are my go to footwork patterns. I can't practice these enough. In fact, I recommend you practice them till you're sick of them and, then, practice them some more.

After a lot of repetitions of forward and reverse triangle, you can put them together into the X. It's good to keep this pattern together with the above triangles to break the habit



Side Step

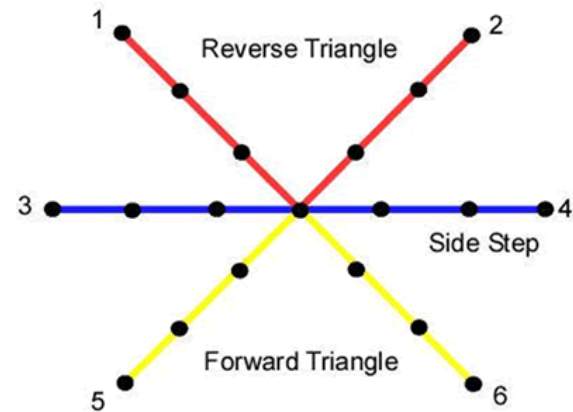
The side step is a pattern that I focus on simply by itself. I like to teach it after the angular footwork. Side step is used over and over in CTS. I usually teach this with the introduction of pangamot, or empty hand versus stick. So much of the



[Demonstration: Click Here](#)

CTS empty hand vs. weapon foundation is built on that drill, which makes it important to work and set up the mechanics right away. Side step, when used properly, is fascinating because it is used to distance yourself from the weapon while staying close to your opponent. Range is incredibly important in self defense, and it is most often taught as a whole. Your whole body is at long range, or your whole body is at short range. Side step is the first encounter applying the principles of range to different parts of your and the opponents body.

Ranging Footwork Drill



Once the students are skilled with angular footwork and side step, I introduce the ranging footwork drill. I love this drill. When time is a factor, this is a great warmup that employs all three footwork patterns learned so far. You can also add variations to this drill in order to break patterns.

Linear Footwork

In my opinion, angular footwork is the most important to start with because most students instinctively know how to move forward and backward. It may not be skilled or purposeful footwork, but everyone knows how to move forward and backward.

Convincing the body to go against instinct and move on an angle is tougher, but once the student has started down this path, linear footwork cannot be neglected. It's time to match the forward and backward instincts with skill and technique. This is where I introduce step-drag. After a few years of teaching this, I introduce step drag first because it seems to be easier to grasp why we're dragging our foot. The zombie-like drag has a reason, and it's important to understand why before moving on.

The next class after step-drag, I'll introduce the complementary drag-step pattern. This does cause a little confusion, which as an instructor I like, but we keep working on it. Objectively, these are the same patterns; the only true difference



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is which foot moves first. Application dictates which pattern is necessary.

Once the students are able to differentiate between the two



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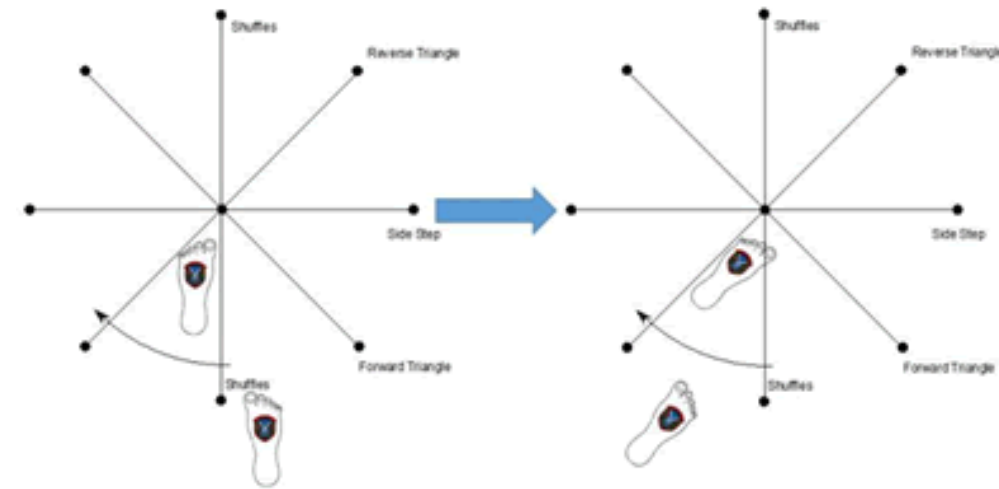
steps, I like to play a game with them. The shadow game works with one student leading and another reacting as quickly as possible by following the lead's movement. At first, stick with one type of footwork to facilitate learning, but you can increase the complexity by having the lead student vary the pattern and having the other student match which pattern is used.

The linear footwork so far keeps the student in one lead only. No matter which direction the student moves, the lead foot will not change. We learned with the angular footwork how powerful changing leads can be; so, there has to be a way to change leads with linear footwork, right? Right! You're so smart. This is the time to teach the step-through. Mix and match the step through with drag step or step drag to have linear footwork that works both sides of the body.



Circular Footwork

By this point, the students have worked three categories of footwork: Angular, Side Step, and Linear. It's time to move to the circular footwork. Move up the circle is important for making small adjustments. It will take you offline of a thrust without changing the distance between you and the opponent. It's really just a fun little pattern to work, but it doesn't move you anywhere. You are literally circling around yourself. This is why I teach it after all the other footwork. It is important but it doesn't move you across distance. It simply changes the direction that you face. When used correctly, this is a powerful tool. On its own, this pattern is too specialized for general usage.



The power of move up the circle, though, comes from the ability to combine it with the other categories listed above. Now, move up the circle becomes a critical adjustment that allows you to keep all of your weapons on target.

Conclusion

This grouping of footwork patterns is incredibly powerful for teaching footwork. By learning similar skills in proximity to each other, each pattern takes on a larger significance, and the lessons end up being greater than just the individual parts. This grouping takes a little forethought by the instructor, but the gains for the students are large. I recommend grouping skill sets together as general teaching device. This works for all aspects of the martial arts. Grouping is also a great way to show the student just how far he/she has come. When we reach move up the circle, I can point back to the triangular footwork to show just how much has been learned. As we start to combine move up the circle with other footwork, smiles usually break out. Progress has been made.

School Submission

The schools listed teach Filipino martial arts, either as the main curriculum or an added curriculum.

If you have a school that teaches Filipino martial arts, or you are an instructor that teaches, but does not have a school, list the school or style so individuals who wish to experience, learn and gain knowledge have the opportunity.

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We reserve the right to use any photo(s) as cover material or additional compensation. We also reserve the right to edit material and to crop photographs.

We reserve the right to use articles or parts of articles that are given and approved from time to time as needed to promote the Filipino martial arts and the Culture of the Philippines.

Physical manuscripts should be typed in black, double spaced, and set to 1-1/2 margins (right and left).

Emailed manuscripts should be typed in Ariel or Times Roman, on programs such as Notepad, Wordpad, Microsoft Word, Word Perfect and can be sent as an attachment. Photo(s) can be sent as a .jpg, .gif, .bmp, or .tiff - to submit material for either the FMA Informative Newspaper or an Issue [Click Here](#)

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