

## Decision Point Exercises Part II

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These drills point out the necessity of starting an attack with a plan, but without commitment to one set of actions.

Concept: Each action you take in fencing contains a decision point. At the end of an advance you ask yourself: Am I close enough to attack? Are they stopping to make and attack on preparation? Are they defending their 4? etc. Your job is to train yourself to make the right decisions at the right time.

Your goals for the exercises are:

- Maintain optimum balance and coordination
- Maintain the distance at a critical edge (at the edge of your attack distance)
- Don't rush footwork; each segment contains a decision point
- Remain relaxed during preparations
- Accelerate on final action (only when the distance is correct)

Distance for these exercises: Lunge or long lunge distance.

### Drill Options

1.

L - Engagement or change of engagement of P's blade

P - Attempt a change of engagement of L's blade (Do not begin to advance until the engagement is successful)

L - Deceive the engagement and attack with advance, lunge, or fleche P - Do not advance in preparation, attack, or counterattack. Remain relaxed and under control. Parry L's attack and riposte. (A retreat may be necessary to maintain proper distance against stronger attacks.)

2.

L - Engagement or change of engagement of P's blade.

P - Change of engagement of L's blade and begin advance in preparation.

L - Support P's engagement, but do not retreat; attack indirect with advance or lunge just as P begins the advance.

P - While completing the advance in preparation, parry L's attack and riposte (remain relaxed and calm.)

3.

L - Engagement or change of engagement of P's blade.

P - Change of engagement of L's blade and begin advance in preparation.

L - Retreat with a faster tempo and longer step than P's advance, finishing the retreat before P can finish the advance. (Near the completion of P's advance - disengage and extend.)

P - Finish the advance. Parry and opposition riposte with lunge or fleche.

4.

L - Engagement or change of engagement of P's blade.

P - Change of engagement of L's blade and begin advance in preparation.

L - Retreat (supporting P's engagement); at the completion of P's advance press P's blade inviting indirect attack.

P - Attack by disengage with lunge or fleche (only if P's advance is completed before L's press, and only if the distance is correct.)

5.

L - Engagement or change of engagement of P's blade.

P - Change of engagement of L's blade and begin advance in preparation.  
L - Retreat (supporting P's engagement); at the completion of P's advance press P's blade inviting an indirect feint.  
P - Feint by disengage with the completion of the advance.  
L - Attempt to parry P's feint.  
P - Deceive and complete the composed attack with lunge or fleche.

If you are having problems executing these drills, then you are probably moving too fast or using footwork that is too large. A longer step gives you less chance to change direction or control your action. A number of shorter steps give you many more decision points in your attack.

These drills also point out the necessity of starting an attack with a plan, but without commitment to one set of actions. In other words, if I decide to attack with a beat-4, disengage, lunge and my opponent does not parry on my beat, then my disengage will lead to me being out of place for the attack. If I attack with beat-4, then see that my opponent does not react with a parry, then I can modify my attack by accelerating to a straight lunge instead of the disengage.

As with all drills, start these slow and work out the timing issues, then increase the speed until you are able to do them at bouting speed.