

Technique: Haymaker Punch Defense

Position: Standing

Overview

In many cases, the precise movement and aim of your opponent's strikes are hard to predict. Sometimes, however, your opponent is so eager to attack you that their punch is totally predictable. The Haymaker Punch Defense is used when a determined attacker comes at you from a distance with the objective of putting all of their bodyweight behind one fight-ending punch. Because of this punch's power and predictability, the best option is to slip underneath it and get behind your opponent.

Technical Slices

1. Haymaker Punch Defense

- *Indicator:* Opponent throws very predictable haymaker punch at your face
- *Essential Detail:* Step with the front leg and protect your head with the front arm
- *Most Common Mistake:* Head remains in front of chest instead of slipping around the back
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* Aim for the head to make the punch as real as possible
- *Safety Tip:* Start slowly and increase speed as proficiency grows
- *Core Principles:* Distance (3), Mobility (30)
- *Drill Orders:* Standing start, 1 rep, reverse roles

2. Bonus: Verbal De-Escalation

- *Indicator:* Opponent is behaving aggressively but hasn't attacked physically
- *Essential Detail:* Distance and communication to lower the combative energy of the interaction
- *Most Common Mistakes:* Egos and alcohol
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* Play the part to make the drill the most fun
- *Core Principles:* Sacrifice (20), Distance (3)
- *Drill Orders:* Verbally aggressive start, 1 rep, reverse roles

Reflex Development Drill

Practice the

Haymaker Punch Defense – Standing (L30)

in combination with the

Rear Takedown – Standing (L29)

Fight Simulation Drill

1. Haymaker Punch Defense – Standing (L30)
2. Rear Takedown – Standing (L29)
3. Headlock Escape 1 – Side Mount – Super Lock (L18)
4. Headlock Counters – Mount – Back Mount Finish (L16)
5. Rear Naked Choke – Back Mount – Weak Side (L5)
6. Triangle Choke – Guard – Stage 1.5 Variation (L10)

Mindset Minute

If the punch is totally predictable, use the Haymaker Punch Defense. If the punches are not predictable, protect your face and use the standard Clinch entry strategies for an aggressive opponent.

Street Tip: Sloped Terrain

If you've never done it, fighting on sloped terrain presents all sorts of unique challenges and opportunities. For the clinch and takedown, you'll want to pivot around your opponent so your shooting downhill. If you're on the bottom of the guard, you'll want to use your feet to pivot your head uphill to make punch protection more comfortable and submissions more achievable. If you're on the bottom of the mount, you'll want to pivot your opponent so that your spine is parallel to the hill and you can roll them with gravity. There are other considerations that you can explore, but the bottom line is that gravity can be manipulated when you're fighting on a slope and our hope is that it's manipulated in your favor, instead of theirs.