

Stage Combat Challenge

In this challenge, you'll learn how to execute a stage punch safely.

1. Watch the short YouTube VIDEO (below) on how to safely execute a stage punch. Pay attention to all of the safety measures and technique involved!
2. Read through the DEFINITIONS, SAFETY ROLES, and INSTRUCTIONS before you begin any "fighting."
3. Make sure to practice your punch at $\frac{1}{4}$ speed until you and your partner are very comfortable with how it works. Then move up to $\frac{1}{2}$ speed until you're comfortable. Then you can move to full speed.
4. Maintain your safety rules every time you practice the move. Each time before you punch, we should see a distance check and eye contact before you raise your arm to punch.
5. When you feel comfortable, begin to slowly increase the speed of your punch until you are at regular speed.
6. When both you and your partner are comfortable, record yourselves. First demonstrate your safety check (distance check and eye contact). Then demonstrate the punch at $\frac{1}{4}$ speed. Then show it to us at $\frac{1}{2}$ speed, and finally at full speed. Make sure to position yourself as though the camera is the audience so that the illusion of the punch is maintained!
7. BONUS! Come up with a mini scene before your punch. This "prelude to a fight" helps build tension before the fight and helps the audience understand the characters, their motivation, and why they're fighting.

Remember: SAFETY FIRST!

[Click Here for the Punch Video](#)

Stage Combat Definitions

Knap: a technique for creating a sound of impact

Aggressor: the actor who initiates the attack

Victim: the actor who receives the attack

Eye Contact: Basic process used to ensure both partners are ready to perform combat

Distance check: used to ensure safe distance between partners. You and your partner should be 3-4 feet apart, and when you extend your arms in front of you, your fingertips should remain about 8 inches from your partner.

Active Hand: hand used to strike the opponent

Non-Contact Strike: Any offensive action that creates the appearance of contact

Punch: Offensive strike made with a closed fist

Cue: A signal to a partner; eye contact, movement, or word

Stage Combat Rules

1. No jewelry or watches
2. Nothing in pockets – no change, phone, etc.
3. No stage fighting outside a controlled environment or with anyone who hasn't learned how about stage combat.
4. Always check your space – who is near you?
5. Never actually make contact with your partner
6. Take care of your partner
7. Always do a distance check prior to beginning (partner stand facing each other, one partner extends their arm straight in front of them – should have a few inches between tips of your fingers and your partners body or face.) Keep your distance: don't move your feet as you're punching or after the punch. You do not want to change the distance between you and your partner.
8. Always make eye contact with partner before engaging in stage combat
9. Stage fighting is done at 1/4 speed until choreographed well, then slowly increase speed
10. Victim is always in control so that they are not taken off-guard. Victim must be in control because they are the one who would get hurt if something went wrong.

Stage Combat Punch Instructions

1. Review safety rules
2. Choose who will be the attacker and the victim.
3. Attacker stands with back to audience, with victim upstage facing them. Plant your feet firmly.
4. Do your distance check and keep eye contact. Remember your extended arms should be about 8 inches from your partner.
5. Attacker lifts right arm to ear-height, extending all the way back (so that the audience can see)
6. Attacker's right fist moves from right to left, travelling across the line of the victim's face all the way through, extending to the other side of the body so that the audience can see the follow-through
7. As the fist travels past the victim's face, the victim does the knap on their own chest.

The Knap: Cup your hand as though you're holding a small amount of water, find the spot just below your collarbone, and bounce your hand off. This sound should be made when the punch "connects" with you.

Victim's head should follow punching motion and react. All stage combat relies heavily on the reaction of the victim to sell the combat moves. This takes practice, but try to make reactions as realistic as possible by not over-dramatizing.

