

Taekwondo Kicks: A Complete List

- Axe Kick/Swing Kick**
- Back Kick**
- Spinning Back Kick**
- Flying Back Kick**
- Crescent Kick**
- Inside Crescent Kick**
- Outside Crescent Kick**
- Jumping/Spinning Crescent Kick variations**
- Front Kick/Thrust Kick**
- Jumping Front/Thrust Kick**
- Push Thrust Kick**
- Knee Strike**
- Hook Kick/Whip Kick**
- Spinning Hook Kick**
- Side Kick**
- Spinning Side Kick**
- Flying Side Kick**
- Reverse Side Kick**
- Roundhouse/Turning Kick**
- Jumping or Hopping Roundhouse Kick**
- Tornado Kick/Jumping 360 Roundhouse Kick**
- Spinning Roundhouse Kick/360 Roundhouse Kick**
- Scissor Kick**

Why TaeKwondo Is Heavy On Kicking

- People tend to refer to TaeKwondo as Korean karate, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. In karate, they rely more on punching and linear movements, while TaeKwondo relies a lot on a multitude of kicks. This is what separates TaeKwondo from Japanese karate.
- A lot of the techniques are actually taken from an ancient Korean kicking game known as Taekkyon. The founders of TaeKwondo actually took a lot of this game's curriculum that survived the times and implemented it into modern TaeKwondo.
- For some Korean practitioners of TaeKwondo it is a matter of national pride that they practice the national art of their country and not karate. Kicks are the core of the martial art, but punches are also included in combinations generally to set up kicks.



The Kicks of TaeKwondo

- Axe Kick/Swing Kick:** This kick gets its name, because it comes down in the same motion as swinging an axe. You use your heel(the hardest part of your foot) to either strike at the opponent's collar bone or the top of their head. It can be thrown circulating inward, outward, or straight up and down.
- Back Kick:** A back kick(also referred to as a turn sidekick) is a powerful kick in TaeKwondo. Your back leg is used in this kick and you turn 180 degrees to gain power/speed. You use the heel of your foot and generally throw the kick to the solar plexus of the opponent. It is also thrown to the face depending on the rules of the competition.
- Spinning Back Kick:** This is a very powerful kick that combines the driving of the heel like a horse kicks into opponent with the spin that adds extra force.
- Flying Back Kick:** Same motion as a back kick, but you fly forward to hit the opponent. This adds extra power to the kick.
- Crescent Kick:** It is similar to the motion of an axe kick and you also land with the heel, but you kick with the front leg. To throw this kick you step forward with your back leg (it becomes your front leg) and throw the kick. The motion is an inward crescent motion outward. Hence the name crescent kick.
- Inside Crescent Kick:** This crescent kick is done in to out motion.
- Outside Crescent Kick:** Crescent kick done in an outside to inside motion.
- Jumping/Spinning Crescent Kick variations:** The crescent kick can also be thrown in variations that include a jump, spin, or both.
- Front Kick/Thrust Kick:** This is a strong kick in TaeKwondo and is also used in karate. To throw this kick bring your knee to your chest and throw it outward in a snapping motion. You hit the opponent with the ball of your foot to their core or face.
- Jumping Front Kick/Thrust Kick:** You can add a jump to hit a taller person's chin. This move is also used in board breaking demonstrations.
- Push Thrust Kick:** This kick is similar to the motion of a front kick, but instead of a snapping strike it is a pushing strike. A push kick is also used as a defensive move to make space.
- Knee Strike:** A knee strike is called chigi instead of chagi, because it isn't a kick. It is specifically used for self defense and not allowed in competitions.

- Hook Kick/Whip Kick:** This is a deceptive kick that seems like a missed roundhouse, but your foot hooks back around to hit the opponent. You aim to hit the side of the opponent's head with your heel with this kick.
- Spinning Hook Kick :** This is a very powerful kick that combines the snap of a heel kick and the spin adds extra force.
- Side Kick:** This kick is a bit slower than most of the other kicks, but very powerful when thrown correctly. You're in a sideways stance and you chamber the kick by bringing it to your chest. The kick is thrown with the foot horizontal aiming to land with the heel to the solar plexus or face. A back kick/turn sidekick is another variation.
- Spinning Side Kick:** To throw this kick, step forward and spin your body backwards before throwing the sidekick. This spin generates extra momentum and thus creates a more powerful kick.
- Flying Side Kick:** Another variation of the sidekick that includes a jump to cover more distance to attack an opponent. It also adds power to the move.
- Reverse Side Kick:** This kick is similar to the back kick, except the body turns further, allowing the heel to hit the target with the foot pointing to the side as in a regular side kick, instead of downward as in a true back kick.
- Roundhouse/Turning Kick:** This is a common martial arts technique that has different variations for each one. To throw this kick, turn your foot(opposite the kicking foot), bring your knee up for height, and turn to bring the kick across your body. It is possible to throw the kick with the other foot.
- Jumping or Hopping Roundhouse Kick:** The roundhouse kick is thrown when jumping or hopping.
- Tornado Kick/Jumping 360 Roundhouse Kick:** A tornado kick is another variation of a roundhouse like a spinning roundhouse. The difference is that you stay on the ground for a spinning roundhouse and a tornado kick involves a jump. It is one of the signature kicks of TaeKwondo generating a lot of power.
- Spinning Roundhouse Kick/360 Roundhouse Kick:** This variation of the roundhouse involves a 360 degree spin, where you generate more force on a roundhouse
- Scissor Kick:** This is a demonstrative kick, where in theory you hit two opponents simultaneously. It involves a jumping side kick and a jumping front kick to opponents on each side of you. You've probably seen the move in different martial arts movies.

Punches & Strikes in TaeKwondo: A Complete List

- The Jab**
- Straight or Cross Punch**
- Chestnut Fist**
- Eagle Strike**
- Four-Knuckle Strike**
- Uppercut**

- Hook Punch**
- Backfist**
- Turn Backfist/Spinning Backfist**
- Hammerfist**
- Extended Knuckle Punch**
- Spear Hand Strike**
- Knife Hand Strike**
- Ridge Hand Strike**
- Palm Strike/Palm Heel Strike**
- Throat Strike/Tiger Claw**
- Fingertips**
- Thumb**
- Pincer Hand**
- Scissor Finger**
- Elbow Strike**

Punches & Strikes Are A Secret Weapon

- In TaeKwondo punches are an underutilized tool in competitions. Many competitors focus so much on landing kicks that they forget about their hands. Not only forget to throw them, but also forget to defend them.
- Depending on the type of competition and which organization is running the event a punch and strike can be between 1-2 points. A competitor can stack up points landing punches if the opponent is leaving themselves open.

How To Throw A Punch & Strike In Taekwondo

- Most think that punching and striking just involves the arm, but it involves the whole body.
 - Feet:** Your feet are the foundation on a punch and strike. They need to be grounded to the floor to be able to generate power. Stay on the balls of your feet in order to be able to step, turn, and pivot during punches and strikes.
 - Abdomen:** Your abdomen is the center that connects the power generated by your feet to your hands. Keeping a tight core will prevent you from losing the power generated during a punch and strike.
 - Arms:** Obviously your arms that do the punching and strike movement are important. Make sure to keep a firm fist and wrist when throwing a punch and strike to avoid injury.

Types Of Punches Thrown & Strikes In TaeKwondo

- ❑ **The Jab:** In TaeKwondo, the jab is used to measure distance and defense. It is also used to bait an opponent to act and open themselves up for a counter. You can prod an opponent with a jab when they come in to attack or get them to react to set up a kick.
- ❑ **Straight or Cross Punch :** A punch with your back hand that involves rotating your body to generate power. Hitting the opponent with your first two knuckles. It's the same movement as in boxing and it can be thrown either to the head or body depending on the organization. Straight punches to the body are great to use for when an opponent is moving forward.
- ❑ **Chestnut Fist:** Similar to normal fist except that first three knuckles are pushed outward slightly with the thumb.
- ❑ **Eagle Strike:** In this strike, the fingers all touch together, and the hand is pointed down, exposing the top of the wrist, which is then swung upward to strike the underside of the jaw. If done properly, this strike can easily fracture the jawbone, and is usually banned from competitions due to the extreme danger. If done improperly, however, the practitioner may break his wrist.
- ❑ **Four-Knuckle Strike:** Instead of closing the fist completely, the fingers are held out and only the knuckles are bent, thereby presenting the upper set of knuckles as the striking surface. This fist is used for breaking boards as the smaller surface area concentrates the punches power. In self-defense, it may be used to purposefully break an attacker's jaw.
- ❑ **Uppercut:** To execute this punch, you turn your body to load the punch and send it upward at an opponent. Both hands can be used and it is good for close combat to rip a body shot.
- ❑ **Hook Punch:** A short compact punch used to hit the sides of an opponent. Your body makes a tight turning movement when throwing this punch. This punch can be used to hook over an opponent's guard to strike them or hit a body shot in close combat.
- ❑ **Backfist:** There are a few different types of backfist, but this first type is performed with the front hand. It's similar to a jab, but you hit with the padded part on the back of your hand. The motion is a flick of your hand reaching out and hitting the side of the opponent's head.
- ❑ **Turn Backfist/Spinning Backfist:** These are the other two types of backfists used in TaeKwondo and there's a slight difference between the two. A turn backfist is a 180 degree turn before hitting the opponent with the back of your hand. The spinning backfist is a 360 degree spin that generally comes after another strike that initiates the spin. Both are usually set up with a punch or kick to set the backfist up.
- ❑ **Hammerfist:** To throw this punch, you do the same motion you would as if you were swinging a hammer. A downward motion hitting with the padded part of your hand that can go over an opponent's guards. This punch can also be thrown off a turn or spin to add more force.

- Extended Knuckle Punch:** You make a fist and use your thumb to push your index or middle finger up and reinforce the finger's middle joints. It is used as a stinging strike to hit a weak part of an opponent's body such as the temple.
- Spear Hand Strike:** This is an open hand strike, where all your fingers are fully extended and it resembles a spear. Target areas for this strike are soft parts of the body like the side of the neck. (The asterisk next to the name is, because while it is hand strike taught in TaeKwondo it is illegal in tournaments. Also hand strikes to the throat are illegal.)
- Knife Hand Strike:** This is the karate chop move, where you chop down on an opponent's neck with the outside ridge of your hand. (This is also an illegal move in competitions, as well as being a neck strike.)
- Ridge Hand Strike:** For this strike, your hand and fingers are extended and you strike with the meaty part of your hand under the thumb. This is a really good strike, because it is thrown similar to a hook and overhand punch. But it covers more distance to the hand being open and can easily pass over an opponent's guard and strike the sides of their head. (Also legal in competitions.)
- Palm Strike/Palm Heel Strike:** Your hand is open with the fingers tucked in to strike the chin or nose. It is a good self defense technique, but very illegal in competitions.
- Throat Strike/Tiger Claw:** You form a C with your hand and strike at the throat of your opponent. Tiger Claw is not allowed in any competition.
- Fingertips:** Fingertips can be used to strike vulnerable areas of the body such as pressure points. Four finger strikes engaging the tips of the outstretched hand (known as a spearhand) can be made to vital points in the neck.
- Thumb:** Emoji is a fist with the thumb protruding over the top. This is a formidable weapon in pressure point striking. Vulnerable areas can be targeted all over the body such as the sternum, the spaces in between the ribs and other nerve clusters.
- Pincer Hand:** A strike which uses the thumb and forefinger to strike the opponent's throat. In this technique a fist is closed except the thumb and forefinger which are fully extended outwards.
- Scissor Finger:** A fist in which the forefinger and middle finger is extended out as if to dig someone's eye. Similar to Pincer hand except that the forefinger and middle finger is extended outwards
- Elbow Strike:** The forearm is folded inwards towards the body and the strike is delivered with the outside of the forearm or elbow while stepping forwards. Tae Kwon Do also makes use of reverse and front elbow strikes.

How To Practice TaeKwondo Kicks, Punches & Strikes

- Partner Based Drills:** You get with a partner and practice throwing specific kicks at one another mimicking live action. Kicks are thrown at 50% or less and you and your partner give each other feedback on your technique.

- Bagwork:** Spending rounds performing kicks on kicking bags repeatedly builds your technique and physical health. All types of martial arts do the same training.
- Mitt Work:** Doing different types of mittwork is also used to improve technique. There are a variety of different pads and shields you can find on Amazon used to drill a variety of different TaeKwondo kicks.
- Shadowboxing:** Also of course shadowboxing can be used to practice TaeKwondo kicks. Stand in front of a mirror, so you can see your technique as you throw kicks and make adjustments as needed.
- Technical Sparring:** This is where students are matched up with a partner and go less than 50% practicing techniques on each other.