

BROADSWORD For the STAGE and SCREEN: The De Longis Method

Teachers Guide F951

Welcome to *Broadsword for the Stage and Screen, the De Longis Method*. We will be examining the techniques for Broadsword that I have devised during thirty years of studying, teaching, choreographing and performing with the sword on both sides of the camera as both a performer and a Fight Director. For a full list of my credits and credentials, please visit my website at www.delongis.com.

Choreography is dialogue with action instead of words. Fights are emotionally charged conversations between characters and offer tremendous acting opportunities. The set is not the place to learn your craft. You must already have mastered the skills to safely and dynamically perform in whatever environment and situation you find yourself.

Broadsword for the Stage and Screen is structured as a series of private lessons. Both the beginning actor and the experienced veteran will learn professional level skills and techniques that get the job done with security and style. Instructors will find the syllabus structure progresses logically, each lesson building on the information taught in the previous sessions. Students are urged to follow the order of the lessons and not leap ahead or skip chapters.

Broadsword for the Stage and Screen is geared for the intermediate to advanced swordsman. My basic sword techniques and vocabulary are

covered in detail in *Rapier for the Stage and Screen: the De Longis Method*. I recommend you buy the video and practice the step by step lessons in stance, grip, distance, parries, footwork and attacks with both point and edge until they become second nature. *Broadsword* will utilize much of the same vocabulary while making the necessary adjustments to accommodate the larger, heavier weapon.

This video is not an attempt to accurately recreate the style of any single period in history. My goal is to offer the student the tools to perform comfortably, safely and effectively with the broadsword. The Broadsword is more difficult to control and the potential for injury is considerably greater than with the rapier or small sword. You must make gravity an ally and utilize the weight of the Broadsword as an advantage instead of constantly fighting against your prop. As in *Rapier for the Stage and Screen*, our techniques hide a rigorous safety protocol that promotes confident, accident free rehearsals and performances. Let's get started.

Stance & Footwork: Advance, retreat, male & female triangle, standard & reverse guards.

Grip: The alignment, the relaxed "pivot" squeeze for "finger tip" control.

Parries: Using alignment to create an impenetrable "wall of steel"

Cuts: Horizontal, vertical, diagonal, "aim with the hands, deliver with the feet."

Drills: Working with a partner develops an awareness of **Distance** and cultivates **Timing** while teaching our basic combat vocabulary.

GOALS :

- Cultivate balance, safety and a sensitivity to your partner's energy.
- Hone basic physical skills.
- Develop poise, balance and confidence.

- Develop relaxation and awareness
- Connect both body and intellect into one powerful unit of expression.

Practice Weapons: The weapon should be balanced, its weight manageable and easy to control. Select one that fits your body and level of experience. It must feel and perform like a natural extension of your arm and body.

Footwork: Move your feet! The story starts from the ground up. The entire body remembers the choreography, not just your head. The more of your body you use, the slower you can go and the faster it looks because some part of your body is always in motion guiding the eye and focusing the story.

Grip: I favor the same pivoting grip described in *Rapier for the Stage and Screen*. You literally have finger tip control of the weapon at all times. Guide the blade but let it perform the action. Our safety protocol relies on fingertip control, accurate targeting, bent legs for balance and an awareness and sensitivity to distance.

One Handed Parries:

Review six parries and basic cuts performed in Standard Guard. **Cuts** are made with an extended arm in the center of the half above the middle of the blade. **Parries** are made with a bent arm, the elbow behind the hand for skeletal alignment at the center of the bottom half of the blade.

Review The Concept Of "Inside and Outside"

- Cuts/thrusts to the "inside" delivered palm up/supination.
- Cuts/thrusts to the "outside" delivered palm down/pronation.
- Attacks to the head delivered with palm vertical.

Blades Meet At Near Perpendicular

- Cuts to the body & hips are horizontal >> Defense is vertical
- Cuts to the head are vertical >> Defense is horizontal (quinte/sixte).

Adding The Second Hand/The Grip:

Adding the second hand to your defenses and attacks shouts "power" because the whole body is involved. Maintain all safety protocols of control, targeting and distance.

Two-Handed Parries:

The left hand acts as a brace to provide additional skeletal alignment. The left hand acts as a supporting partner only or skeletal alignment will be sacrificed at your peril.

Pendulum Action Of The Blade/Gravity As An Ally:

Gravity helps the blade move easily, fluidly and rapidly into parry positions. Forcing produces tension and inaccuracy.

Two-Handed Footwork: Full Body Skeletal Alignment:

Make certain the body is behind the elbows and the hips face the action. The attacker pivots the hips and drives from the rear leg. The defender's hips face the opponent so the rear leg absorbs the power of the incoming strike.

Energy of illusion or "**cooperative**" energy allows you to remain relaxed and sensitive to your partner. Combat energy is useful only as a tool to remind yourself of what the intensity and weight of the weapon would feel like. In performance it's dangerous, selfish, indulgent and unfair to both partner and audience.

Distance and Timing

Align & aim the entire body to create the illusion. Aim the rear foot to unlock the power of the hips.

Extend the arms and squeeze the fingers to control the cut. Power is generated by driving with the legs and controlled by bending the knees. This improves balance by lowering the center of gravity and gives the generated energy a safe place to go.

The Diagonals:

Blades contact through the common center line. The cut happens on the withdrawal. The energy returns to your own center instead of away from your body towards your partner. The body and hand are beyond contact distance. Maximize distance by switching feet to mirror the incoming attack.

Diagonal Parried Cuts: (not drawing through)

Cuts are to same targets as "X in 4" pattern but with focus on footwork and distance to keep body behind all parries. Replacement triangular footwork is essential to keep body out of line and out of distance. Utilize skeletal alignment to maintain structure and safety.

Ceding Or Yielding Parries:

Leave Blade/Move Body

Blade glides along parry. Defender allows attack to go where directed but removes body from completion of blow.

Deflections/Binds/Envelopment's:

Pass energy/maintain contact

Support with footwork and body angulation. Maintain a parry position throughout. Cue partner's reaction with squeeze of fingers.

Avoids: Dodging the Diagonals:

Remove blade contact and avoid with body.

Binds & Cooperative Energy:

Binds must be done from an extended arm. Bending the arm will counter the bind and spoil the technique.

Safety: Take care of your partner. It's the best way to take care of yourself. Keep tips of the blade above both faces. Maintain contact, minimize force, maximize sensitivity.

Wounds and Kills & Interruptions of Energy:

Impact registered in body to both deliver and receive the illusion. Keep your elbows in front of you to maintain proper distance and keep the picture open. Vocalize to cue reaction, especially when attacking from behind or when staging multiple opponents.

A PALPABLE HIT PRODUCTION

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