

## **How to Throw a Snapping Punch**

Learn how to throw a snap punch. If you want serious speed and knockout power to your punches, read this ASAP!

Many fighters have never been taught how to throw snapping punches. They don't even know the difference between a snap punch and a push punch. Unfortunately for me, I didn't know the difference either at first. I didn't learn through a Jack Dempsey book or Bruce Lee documentary. I learned by getting my ass kicked all the time by better boxers. I knew they were better than me but I didn't know HOW! It took me a while before I realized that their punching techniques were different from mine. It was quite a discovery to realize there was more to punching than just jab-cross-hook-uppercut!

Many beginner boxers don't realize when trying to punch harder, is that they're just push-punching. It's wastes energy, moves slower, and doesn't cause much more damage to their opponents. It also leaves them more open to counter-punches and limits their overall boxing ability. Every time I push-punched a better boxer, he simply parried my punch and sent my body flying off-balance.

Learning how to throw snapping punches will allow you to put together faster punch combinations and minimize risks of getting countered. Snapping punches will allow you to be more energy efficient while increasing the damage inflicted on your opponents.

### **Snapping Punches VS Pushing Punches**

I consider the snap punch and push punch to be opposite kinds of punches.

#### **What is a Pushing Punch**

A pushing punch is when a punch is thrown with the fist driving "through" the target to cause maximum damage. Martial artists generally believe a pushing punch to be a strike comparable to a bullet. The force of the punch is expected to go beyond the surface maximizing damage to everything in its path. It's called a pushing punch because the punch is meant to be pushed all the way through to full extension of the arm and body.

#### **What is a Snapping Punch**

A snapping punch is a quickly thrown punch that aims to minimize the contact time with the target. The snapping punch strikes the target and returns almost immediately after it makes contact instead of the pushing punch which tries to maximize the contact time with the target by forcing the punch all the way through it's target. It's called a snapping punch because the arm quickly snaps back after striking the target.

#### **Disadvantages to Pushing Punches**

In most boxing situations, the pushing punch is an overcommitment. Just as a stockbroker doesn't put all his money into one investment and a farmer does not put all his eggs into one basket, a boxer should not put all his energy into one punch. Boxing is not a brick-breaking contest.

Some fighting experts will argue that pushing punches increase the likelihood of knockouts but I disagree. For one thing, a knockout is achieved by simply overcoming the threshold of impact your opponent's body can withstand before it shuts down. If your opponent's knockout threshold is say 50 (random number I just made up), then any punch you throw above 50 would be sufficient. If I could throw 4 snapping punches with the power of 50 versus throwing 1 punch with the power of 200, I'd definitely pick the 4 snapping punches. Applying 4 times the effort required to knockout your opponent is like trying to fill an empty cup with a gallon of water. It's overkill and wasteful!

Why should I put myself at defensive risk by over-committing to one punch? I will only be wasting energy and making myself more vulnerable to getting counter-punched if I miss. I'm not saying pushing punches are useless and should never be used. I'm only saying that based on boxing's rule of "hit and don't get hit", snapping punches are in fact superior to pushing punches because of their defensive qualities.

I do believe that push punches have one area of advantage which is throwing to the body. Push punches may be considered a waste when you punch to the head because the head is a hard shell and bounces away the moment you hit it, so the punch will never be able to "penetrate". However, a push punch to the body can definitely be shoved in further and bruise the internal organs. Regardless, I still choose to use the snap punch for body shots but you're welcome to try either.

### **Advantages to Snapping Punches**

The snapping punch has devastating power. When thrown properly, you can transfer a ton of energy from your body's momentum to your opponent. Instead of just pushing into your opponent, you're using acceleration and power to deliver crushing blows to your opponent. A snapping punch carries more speed increasing the chances of success and at the same time retracts quicker securing your defenses and allowing you to punch again much sooner. The snapping punch is not a slap. It actually does penetrate and "punch" through the surface to cause damage to your opponent. The difference is that you pull back the punch after it's driven through your opponent.

The snapping punch preserves your defense because your hand returns home after each punch instead of being delayed and pushed against the opponent like in a pushing punch. If you were to miss a pushing punch, you would definitely be vulnerable. So ultimately, the snapping punch will allow you to inflict great damage but still retain your defense. In a sport where the athlete's job is to hit and not get hit, snapping punches are a perfect compromise.

### **Snapping Punch Theory & Technique**

The power beyond the snapping punch has to do with your mental attitude. You should view the snapping punch as a method of transferring energy from your relaxed body, through your arms, dispersing the force at the fist upon impact, and then returned the fists home relaxed leaving the impact energy with your opponent. They focus of snapping punches is RELAXATION, SPEED, POWER, and RECOVERY. The muscle that starts relaxed has more potential to burst with more speed and power than a stiff muscle. With maximum focus on explosive power, you can expect to maximum damage to your opponent. The punching arm is treated as a rubber band accelerating to maximum velocity, striking the target, and then bouncing off relaxed immediately afterwards. You can use any

snapping punch technique you want as long as it focuses on RELAXATION, SPEED, POWER, and RECOVERY.

### **How to Throw Snapping Punches**

**Relax** The snapping punch starts with a completely relaxed arm and body. A relaxed muscle has the greatest potential for speed so this means your punch will come out faster than a stiff arm that is just trying to push-punch through the target. To further relax your body, you should also relax your mind! Don't think about being overly aggressive; instead, think about surprising him with a controlled relax snap punch.

**Explode** As the snapping punch is thrown, the arm quickly bursts from a state of rest into high velocity. An explosive exhale of breath will aid the explosive movement. (Don't release a long sigh of air, shoot your breath out FAST!)

**Release** The problem with some boxers and "push-punchers" especially, is that they like to hang on to their fist once they throw a punch. They don't realize that they're unintentionally tightening up the arm, squeezing the forearms and fist as they try to direct the fist to its target. Once you send your fist out with the initial burst at the beginning of the punch, just relax your body and let the fist fly out at full force. Again, don't try to control your arm or your fist once you throw the punch. Just let it go and trust that it will hit its target.

**Minimize Contact Time** Tighten the fist ONLY at the point of impact. Make sure your fist has hit and you hear the satisfying \*SMACK!\* of the punch on your opponent. Immediately after impact, relax the whole arm and quickly retract leaving the impact to disperse on the opponent.

**Recover Quickly** Recovering quickly is tricky because you want to conserve energy but also make sure that you transferred the force from your fist to your opponent. If you pull back your arm too fast, you're punching power decreases AND your shoulder muscles will use more energy to pull the fist back since it is simultaneously counter-acting against the tricep muscle that launched the fist out. If you allow the punch to travel out too much, it might become a pushing punch. The easiest way for me to know when the perfect time to retract the punch is to allow the force of impact naturally "bounce" my fist back to me. In the event that I am missing (or shadowboxing in practice), my arm naturally returns the fist home in a RELAXED manner once the arm is extended to a certain point.

**Visualization** This is the hardest part about teaching the snapping punch. When I teach people how to punch, I have to give different visualizations for different people. Do keep in mind that these are just different VISUALIZATION METHODS. They might work, they might not. I'll list a few different ways to visualize the punch below and it's up to you to figure out which one gives you the best snapping punches.

#### **Method 1 - Two Frames of Punching**

This method helps you punch quicker with more explosiveness. Don't think about your hands traveling in a smooth motion to your opponent's face. Instead, imagine your fists exploding from your body to your opponent. Almost as if they're so quick that they can't be seen traveling through

the air. Imagine that if someone was watching you box, your punches are simply disappearing from the start position and instantaneously reappearing on your opponent's chin.

### **Method 2 - Relaxed Launch, Relaxed Return**

Your punches start out relaxed and pick up speed accelerating throughout the punch and ultimately reaching full speed right before impact. You are starting off all your punches slow (almost slow motion) and allowing your body to whip the speed and power into the punch near the end of the punch. This method allows your body time to swing slowly at the beginning of the punch before pivoting hard right before the punch lands. Your breathing is also similar - you are exhaling slowly at the beginning of the punch and then quickly finishing the breath exhale sharply as you land the punch. The return will be completely relaxed as your body swings the other way punching with the other hand in a relaxed manner.

### **Method 3 - Recover Early**

Try recovering your punches earlier than you usually did. Try to recover early so that the punch almost doesn't penetrate the heavy bag too much before you pull it back. You may notice that your punch combinations becoming faster and snappier because your hands are spending less time touching the bag and more time traveling through the air.

### **Method 4 - Shock Don't Push**

Many people will tell you that your punches shouldn't be pushing the heavy bag, it should be shaking the bag all over in once place like a seizure. The bag should not be swinging away if you're throwing proper snap punches at it. Instead the bag should be shaking right where it is and appearing to have a seizure.

### **Method 5 - Punch From The Hips**

Don't think of your fists as weights connected to the end of your arms. Think of your punches as weights connected to your waist. Your arms and hands will drop relaxed to your waist as you move around the heavy bag. When you are ready, quickly ground your feet anchoring your hips and imagine your hands suddenly picking up "weight" and firing with amazing power from the hips.

### **Method 6 - No Aim**

This method helps you relax your hands even more and allows your body to move more naturally using more of your raw speed and raw power instead of "stiff programmed punching motions". What you do is basically punch at a heavy bag without aiming. Just throw your fists anywhere landing up and down on the bag. Try to make each punch land close to last one without consciously "controlling" the fist too much.

### **Method 7 - Stealing Bread**

I've heard this funny analogy being used to describe the motion of punching fast and figured it might help. You basically imagine your hand quickly shooting out towards your opponent in a relaxed manner. Your fist will turn over and tighten as you "grab a loaf of bread" and quickly pull your hand back. Let's go out and steal some bread!

## **Method 8 - Whip VS Bat**

Think of your arm as a loose whip. Every punch (except the jab) has a very relaxed cocking motion where you relax the arm allowing your chest to stretch a little just before you quickly whip that arm forward and punching in a quick powerful snapping motion. What you DON'T want to do is stiffen your arm and swing "like a bat". Again, punch like a whip, not like a bat.

## **Method 9 - Smack The Bag**

When you land a proper snapping punch, the bag will make a satisfying smack sound. When you land a push-punch, the bag makes a muffled "thud". The smack sound comes from you cracking the bag with perfectly landed snap punches. Go ahead, use your ears, and try to "Smack The Bag".

## **How to Practice The Snap Punch**

**READ READ READ!!! This is the most important part of this whole guide!**

### **Turn Off The Power**

This is the MOST IMPORTANT tip for a snap punch: To really develop the snapping punch, you have to learn not to load up your punches. When you are first practicing the snapping punch, you have to keep your arms and body relaxed and loose. Do not try to punch hard or fast. Relax and let the arm travel at whatever speed it wants. (Try 25% force and 25% speed. When in doubt, use less effort.) You WILL feel ridiculous and silly hitting the heavy bag with no force. Again, it's not about hitting faster or slower, just relax and let the fist punch with minimal effort. You are ultimately learning how to punch with technique and NOT energy, so TURN OFF THE POWER!

### **Natural Return**

Many boxers are wasting energy and diminishing the snap punch power by pulling their fist back too early or too late when punching. Pulling your fist back too early takes away from the punch power and tires your muscle faster since you have muscles pulling back the punch while opposite muscles are still sending the punch out. Pulling your fist back too late means you're basically pushing into the punch and it's a push-punch instead of a snap-punch.

The best way to practice building a perfect natural return is to let the impact return your hand back to you. I like to tell boxers to hit the bag and let the fist fall immediately after impact. Most likely, your punches will hit the bag and then bounce back and fall to your waist since you fully released control on your fists. Once you figure out the perfect timing to recover your hands without pushing for too long or pulling too early, you will now know exactly when to recover your hands. A perfect natural return is the perfect balance between most damage inflicted and least effort used to recover the punching hand.

### **Vertical Fists**

I noticed that many boxers lack the snap in their punches because they are too busy trying to control their arm throughout every aspect of the snap punch motion. I would suggest trying this: relax the hands and punch with the fists completely vertical standing straight up. You are now throwing jabs, crosses, and hooks with vertical-fisted punches. You should feel like your arm is more relaxed and

moves faster since you are not busy turning your fists over like you normally would. The vertical fists should only be used for practice. Once you get the hang of this, you should start turning your fist over like you normally do.

### **Adjust The Return**

Some people still can't figure out a way to make the punches snappier. What you can do from here is experiment with when to pull your hand back. You pull it back after the fist has penetrated 2 inches into the heavy bag. Or you can pull back the hand immediately after you hear the "smack" sound of the fist hitting the bag. Whatever it is, find the exact moment that makes your punches feel the most snappy and speedy/powerful.

### **Use Your Body**

Make sure you use your body by moving it with your punches. If you're just throwing arm punches, there's no power and it's just speed punches. Think of speed punches as a game of "hot hands" where you're just trying to tag each other. What you want is POWER which means you have to put some weight into the punch. Using your body when you punch is the best way of putting weight behind the punch.

### **Build Recovery Muscles**

This is a very important point. I see so many boxers and fighters that only do exercises that build their punching muscles (push-ups, dips) instead of recover muscles (back, deltoids). Just think about it, the punching motion has two parts: the launch part where the fist is coming out towards your opponent, and the recovery where the fist is returned home to you. If you're only working out your punching muscles, your recovery motion will still be slow.

Now if you do workouts that target your recovery muscles, you will be able to recover your punches faster which means you can punch again faster which ultimately means you will have faster (and snappier) combinations! I highly recommend a lot of shadowboxing and double-end bag as best workouts for recovery muscles. You're more likely to hit air this way and your recovery muscles will be tested more. If you only hit a heavy bag, your recovery muscles won't develop as well since the heavy bag is bouncing your fist back to you. Other exercises I recommend are ones that use light weights.

### **Great Examples of Snap Punchers**

You can see the advantage of having snap punches in these world champions below:

Julian Jackson - Considered one of the hardest punchers of all time. The puncher of all punchers. See some monstrous knockout footage.

Thomas Hearn - The middleweight that hit like a heavyweight. Watch this tall skinny boxer knockout people left and right.

Floyd Mayweather - Another great whip puncher. Watch his fights against Diego Corrales and Justin Juuko to see his amazing snap punches thrown one at a time. Watch his fights against Arturo Gatti

and Ricky Hatton to see him land devastating right hands.

Kostya Tszyu - One of the best unified 140lb boxers of all time. Pro footage. Olympic Amateur Footage.

Manny Pacquiao - Forget about his knockouts. Watch this speedy southpaw shadowbox with crazy speed. Incredible snapping punches used in sparring.

Lucian Bute - Awesome up and coming southpaw champion. Beautiful relaxed snap in his punches.

Yuriorkis Gamboa - Insanely talented boxer puncher. Knockout 1. Knockout 2. Look at his blinding speed and snap!

Mike Tyson - You've seen Mike Tyson's knockouts, now see Mike Tyson's boxing training.

Muhammad Ali - Amazing whip punches. Watch how he whips those punches out with his hands dangling relaxed from his waist!

Even though they have one-punch knockout power, you can see that they're not always knocking out their opponents with just one punch. They're still setting up shots and punching rapidly in combinations until the knockout comes. Anybody can see that they're throwing snap punches not pushing punches. Notice how their arms are very relaxed and appear a bit "rubbery" while punching.

### **Conclusion**

When I first started learning snapping punches, I did it to increase my power and overall offensive abilities. What I didn't expect was for it to make my defense better. Over time and time again, I realize that the snapping punch isn't a special secret move. It's an essential technique that every fighter should learn in order to maximize their offense and defense while conserving energy. Virtually ALL top level amateur boxers use snapping punches!

The most rewarding thing about snapping punches is that it's very hard to master at first but once you do, it's so much fun to use. You will know when you've finally got it because your punches will feel as though they have become three times more powerful. You will amaze everybody in your gym with your punching ability and gain the respect of all your opponents for at least your punching ability if not your boxing ability. I'm embarrassed to admit that I boxed for so long without knowing how to put snap in my punches but I'm glad I know it now. It has made a world of difference in my boxing ability and I'm sure it will do the same for you.