

BASIC FOIL SKILLS: 3

How to defend

- 1 By stepping out of the way
- 2 By a blocking action (parry)
- 3 By counter-attack



Defending with your feet

Just as you can prepare for an attack by stepping forwards, you can defend by putting your target out of your opponent's reach. A single or double step backwards, taken at the right time, can make your opponent's attack fail and give you the right of way.

- 1 Push back with the ball of your leading foot
- 2 Extend your trailing foot behind you
- 3 Quickly bring your leading foot back to the *en guard* position
- 4 Keep your eyes on your opponent
- 5 Look for an opportunity to go onto the attack

Parries

A parry is a blocking action taken with the stronger part of your foil blade. Parries 4 & 6 are the basis of your defence. Remember to steer the blade and the guard towards the incoming blade, keep the hand relaxed and the elbow bent. Immediately after the parry you have the right of way, so reach out to attack your opponent's target (riposte).

Number	Parry of ..	Blocks cuts to	Riposte to
6	Sixte	Upper chest	Upper chest
4	Quarte	Opposite weapon arm	Preferred target
8	Octave	Low line, leading	Low preferred target
C6	Circular sixte	Upper chest	Upper preferred target
7	Septime	Low line, trailing	Low preferred target

Counterattack

When your attack begins after your opponent's and your opponent still has the right of way (you haven't yet parried) then you can attack into their extending arm. This is called a counterattack or stop-hit. BUT you must be careful not to get hit by their attack. This is risky. The best bet is to try to catch them early in their attack, during the preparation stage, then complete a parry after you land a hit on their target. These actions are best during a retreat, and should generally not be used when you are advancing.