

BASIC SABRE SKILLS: 4



How to deceive

- 1 By extending late in the lunge
- 2 By changing line
- 3 By drawing a parry and changing line again

The aim of any deception is to make your opponent think you're about to do something else until it is too late to effectively defend your attack. The more tricky you can be, the more effective your attacks will be. But remember that the same manoeuvre rarely works twice in a row. Use of deceptive tactics will bring variety and interest to your game.

Late extension

Complete the final stage of extending your arm and reaching towards open target as late in the attack as you can. It helps to develop a slow-fast cadence in the action to avoid drawing attention to the early stages of your attack.

Changing line

If your opponent's blade is in the way, quickly lift the tip of your blade over it and bring it back down in the undefended part of their target. This is known as a cutover or coupe. If the action is kept small it will be more difficult to pick up in time to defend.

Drawing the parry and changing line

Once your opponent knows you can cutover, they will move their weapon to cover vulnerable target (e.g. in 4th/quarte). Hold the tip of your blade long enough to close in for the parry but avoid contact by moving your tip at the last moment to the target that has just opened up (e.g. forearm in 3rd/tierce). This is called a compound attack or one-two. You can combine almost any pair of target areas in a two-stage compound attack, but remember the feint must look convincing and if no parry is drawn, go in for a direct attack.

If there is contact with your opponent's blade during the compound attack, this will be read as a parry and your right of way is lost.

Even trickier

Now that you have grasped the essentials of deception, try variations on target, timing and distance to see what works best for you. You can even add in feint attacks and feint parries to make your intentions less clear to your opponent.