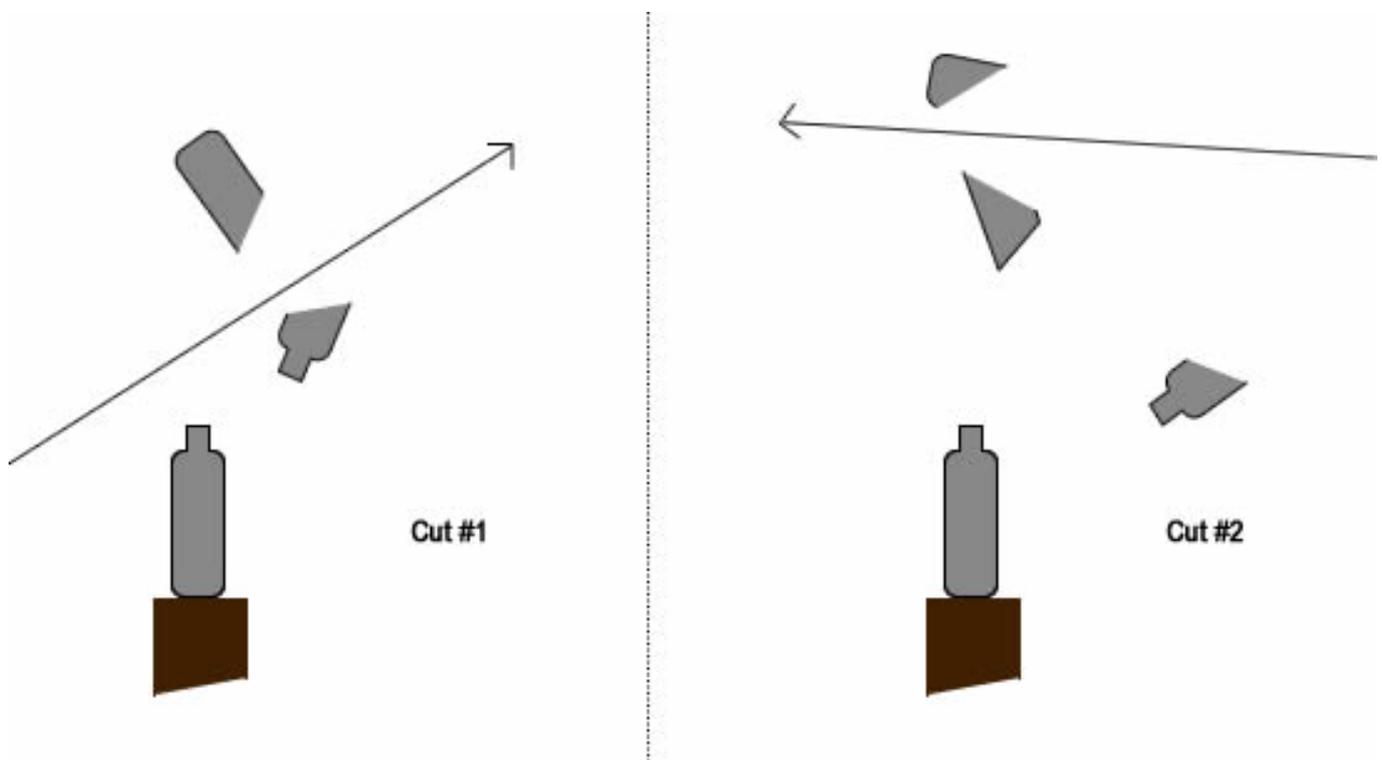


# Practical hints and guidance for sword owners

## Chip and slice, a light hearted way to train tracking

At some point, you're going to end up looking for new ways to cut, something to shake it up a bit as it were and maybe something to push you that little bit further. For freestyle cutters, it's always about pushing the boundaries of their own skills and seeing what they can make happen. I'm still only really just starting on my voyage but I have certainly progressed to the point where I'm looking at new cuts and more importantly I'm realising that I can probably take a shot at doing them.

One of the more fun ones that you can have a go at is what I playfully call the 'Chip and slice'. I forget who first started doing it but it basically involves stacking two bottles on top of each other, as you would do for normal double or returning cuts but you're trying to place two cuts on just the top bottle. One whilst it's stationary and the other whilst it's airborne. (pick either piece of the cut bottle to cut again) Yep, you heard right. It sounds almost impossible when you describe it to someone but seeing someone actually making it happen shatters that illusion instantly. Now unless you're gifted or lucky then this cut might take a little time to get down but it's very satisfying when you do.



The other benefit to the chip and slice is that it will drastically improve your target acquisition and tracking skills. If you find that you're missing the second bottle on your doubles for example, then this little exercise may well help you with that. The cuts that you can place on the bottle are entirely up to you but certainly to begin with, you should focus on starting with an upward diagonal cut. It doesn't matter if it starts from the left or the right, just use whatever you feel most comfortable with. The second cut is up to you as well but what with not knowing exactly where the bottle is going to end up going, means it's largely going to involve you improvising at the last minute. A good first cut should give you a half second air time to cut the bottle before it falls. This half second bubble to hit the target again has forced my tracking to improve.

Another thing, I hate getting water in my eyes. I'm not the first cutter that I've heard of having this issue and I'm probably not gonna be the last. For this reason this exercise is fantastic

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practice for me being as I simply can't hit the target again if I blink in the face of flying water.

There are of course tricks that you can use to make your life slightly easier when first trying this. I've found that a 45 degree cut is best because it will fling the bottle upwards more, generally giving the best airtime which makes your second cut easier to land. It is possible to lift the bottle up more by trying to 'scoop' your cut but I have found that for me it made the cut more awkward and I decided to simply improve my speed and get the next cut in quicker. You may find it helps though so try it.

The easiest cutting patterns I believe are 45 degree upward in one direction and an almost horizontal cut in the opposite, but don't worry too much about what angle you're using on the second cut. The second cut is almost adlib so just concentrate on your tip acceleration and edge alignment on the angle you decide to take.

Judging distance is a crucial skill to have as a cutter and you may need to adjust your distance to your cutting stand depending on the direction and distance you're getting the bottle to fly in. This ones up to you and where you feel you need to be.

Start off with lighter thinner water bottles because they fly better and you can land your first cut more lightly, lending more control to your next one.

In the hope that it will encourage you to give it a try, here are my first attempts at it I tried and published only recently. There's a lot of misses at the beginning and some successes at the end. We all start somewhere ;)

Now, you're going to fail a lot of times. I've killed so many bottles trying to get a handful of successes but don't worry. This is a ton of fun, just take your time, think about your angles, take a deep breath and make the cuts. ;)

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