

# Backyard cutting

## Retraining after a period of laziness

OK, This one is maybe incorrectly titled because it's not always laziness that prevents us from getting out there, maybe into the back garden or wherever it is you practice. Sometimes life just becomes too chaotic, there are too many things to deal with, each one placing a barrier between you and the sword. In some cases, all this unrest or life-chaff going on around you doesn't actually prevent you from your practice, but rather it prevents you from enjoying these sort of things and therefore it removes the motivation to actually do them. I mean theres no point in doing something if it just feels like another chore, right?

The danger with these periods of 'argh!!!', is that the response to them can become habitual. That is to say that even after you've sorted out your responsibilities, paid the bailiffs, painted the shed, built the cabinet, visited the dentist or whatever the hell it was that was preventing you from picking up your sword, you're still left with that overwhelming feeling of mental fatigue and apathy. Now this doesn't happen all the time, in fact for some people it doesn't happen that much at all but it's still a problem that is inherent in the human condition. The real skill comes from recognising these periods where you haven't been training or practicing and then realising that when you get back in the saddle it will start to get easier. If you don't then that almost guilty feeling that comes from not being motivated or willful enough to do so will only add to the feelings that prevented you in the first place.

Like I said, most people will get this at some point and you need to just recognise it and drag up enough impotus to shrug it off, pick up a sword and get out there and do something about it. Not only does this get you back into the swing of things (pun intended) but also the accomplishment of kicking this small mental impairment to the curb will make you a stronger and happier swordsman.

Ok, so we've established that the problem is simply one of starting on the first few steps again, but how do we go about making them?

Yes, it's all well and good me sitting here waffling on about getting up off your butt and doing something but we usually need something more specific. I'm much more likely to fill up some bottles and do some cutting if theres structure to what Im doing. So, here are a few examples that will help you feel like you've done something and also improve your form.

Static cuts - These are fantastic because the idea is so simple and easy to set up that you can just get on with it. Place one target, usually a filled water bottle on your cutting stand which for the purposes of this cut needs to be fairly rock steady. Cut the target without the bottom half falling from the stand. sounds easy but it requires practice. Too much force and you'll knock the bottle off, too little force and you'll drag the bottle off. Your edge alignment and the correct amount of force is crucial.

Imitation is the finest form of flattery - Pick a cut that you've seen done by someone else and replicate it. Don't worry about any others, simply get that one cut down so you feel more confident with it. Its picking something you can improve on or learn that is key here. Train the movements that you'll need to do for at least 20 times before doing the cut and you'll drastically improve your chances.

Have no targets? - Sometimes you don't want to cut anything, you just want to do some practice or maybe you've run out of targets, that's always depressing. :p Dry cutting is good for this because you dont even need targets so theres no set up and you can just concentrate on

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getting that sword singing.

There are plenty more things you can do and targets you can choose from of course. Remember that you're just trying to get back into the ritual of actually doing something with your sword. You shouldn't just let it sit on the wall looking pretty for too long and if its gathering dust then you need to act fast ;)

Film what you do, then if you do something that you feel proud of, share it on YouTube or Facebook because part of the payoff is showing what you've managed to achieve to others and in doing so you'll be encouraging others to do the same. This stagnation is a problem that happens to everyone all over the place, regardless of what it is that they do and this happens especially with endeavours that require effort, equipment and run the risk of failure.

Becoming a better swordsman is in my eyes, the best way to beat that feeling of being trodden down and it will also make you a stronger person.

Follow the [Cutting Mechanics youtube group](#), upload some of your cutting activities and say hi if you haven't already. We're also on [Facebook](#).

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