

Coaching Cues

EXTERNAL CUES FOR INSTRUCTORS

Coaching Cues are short phrases you can use to drive home key points. They can be effective in correcting and improving performance.

In Taekwon-Do we tend to mainly use “internal cues”, which are cues that refer to parts of the body. For example, “lift the knee high before you kick”, “twist the fist on impact” etc. External cues however have been proving to be much more effective.

External cues are phrases that don’t refer to any body part. They talk of things outside of the body. For example: “Slice through the boards until you reach the back of the breaking machine” or “point the knot of your belt to the front”.

External cues spark the imagination and bring remarkable results... instantly.

Finding TKD-specific external cues is not easy... but we have made a start!

Included in this list is also some helpful internal cues that use rhyming for example. These are great for kids.

We hope this list will be helpful. Please send in any of your own that you would like to share.

GM Paul McPhail

Easy cues for movements as they appear in patterns

<i>Walking stance punch</i>	Point the knot of your belt to the front
<i>4 direction punch and block</i>	(Put bean bags on their feet or get them to stand on something, i.e. a piece of paper or money.) Don't lift your foot or you'll lose your money
	Pretend your foot is nailed to the ground
<i>Chon-Ji step turning direction</i>	Follow your pinkie
<i>Dan-Gun – sinewave on turning e.g. mov 8-9</i>	Corkscrew up, around and down
<i>Do-San – walking stance straight fingertip thrust and release</i>	Putt a key in the lock and turn it
<i>Do-San – wedging block</i>	Open the curtains
<i>Won-Hyo – L-stances twin forearm block to knifehand inward strike</i>	The hand on top does the chop
	(Imagine holding a broomstick between your hands in the twin forearm block.) Let your hands slide outward without dropping it. (If you pull your striking hand BACKWARD too far or rotate your hips too much, you'll smack yourself in the face with the middle of the broomstick).
<i>Won-Hyo – bending ready stance</i>	(Imagine a rubber band stretching from your floating rib to your front knee) Stretch the rubber band out then it pulls your knee UPWARD as you drop your body downward.
<i>Won-Hyo – circular block</i>	Grab a ball and pass it to the person beside you
<i>Yul-Gok – hooking block</i>	Make a shape like half of a McDonald's arches logo
<i>Joong-Gun – upward block</i>	Circle around the outside of a big red balloon to the bottom then pop the balloon up into the air.
<i>Hwa-Rang – upward punch</i>	Trace the curve of a capital D then punch upwards along the straight back of the D.
<i>Choong-Moo – walking stance upset fingertip thrust to backfist side back Strike</i>	Start the lawn mower

<i>Choong-Moo – 360 degree jump</i>	Maintain a vertical axis as if there was a pole through the top of your head and your centre of gravity
<i>Kwang-Gae – heaven hand to close ready stance B</i>	Pretend you have two magnets that you manage to pull apart
<i>Kwang-Gae – stamping motion in walking stance</i>	Like you are walking up a steep hill, then stamp downwards
<i>Kwang-Gae – stamping motion in sitting stance</i>	Make a shape like half of a McDonald's arches logo
<i>Po-Eun – horizontal punch</i>	Imagine a rail in space in front of you. Your fist should run along the rail... not under it, not in front of it.

Blocking

<i>W Shape block</i>	<i>U shape block</i>
Be a muscle man	Grab the bucket and throw out the water
Flex your muscles while you're riding a horse	Catch the broomstick
Be like Donkey Kong	Grab a swiss ball and slam it against the wall
<i>Crescent kick</i>	<i>Rising block</i>
Make a rainbow	Pulling the blind up
<i>Outer forearm wedging block</i>	<i>Inner forearm block</i>
Ride a motorbike	Like a windscreen wiper
<i>Forearm low block</i>	<i>Outer forearm block</i>
Swing like an elephant's trunk	Knocking on the door
<i>Inner forearm side block</i>	<i>Double arc hand block</i>
Show us your muscles	Read the book then throw it away
<i>Outer forearm wedging block</i>	
Ride a motorbike	

Attacking

<i>Turning kick</i>	<i>Side piercing kick leg action</i>
Swing [it] like a baseball bat	Kick starting a motorcycle
Putting your leg over a bike	Squashing a bug
Draw a circle with your knee	Hammer the nail straight into the wall
Dog on a lamp post	
Execute the kick without smashing into someone crouching beside you.	
<i>Scissor-Action Jump (eg High Kick, eg Flying Side Kick in Choong Moo)</i>	<i>Back piercing kick</i>
Imagine holding a bucket of water. Swing it upwards and slightly forwards – the weight of the bucket drags you upwards and forwards	Kick like a donkey or a horse Imagine you're in between something (avoid

behind it. Now imagine the bucket is attached to your driving leg. (The more energy you put into driving it upwards and slightly forwards, the more it will pull your body into the air behind it).	the knee coming to high to the side) Visualise a corridor barely wider than your hips. Execute the kick without scraping your leg on the walls of the corridor.
Front snap kick	Knifehand inward strike
Flicking the sand off your shoe	Chopping a tree
You're not kicking a gnome	
Flick it like a tea towel	Flying high kick
Flick your shoes off	Stand like a Flamingo then kick with the other leg
Reverse knifehand front strike	Flying side piercing kick
Throwing a frisbee or discus	You can't see the knot on your belt
	Imagine a knife stuck into the front of your thigh. The hilt of the knife should drop below horizontal.

Stances

Bending ready stance A	Bending ready stance B
Be a flamingo	Holding two shopping bags
Close ready stance A	Close ready stance B
Speak into the microphone	Holding a can in front of you, or balancing a can on top of your leg
Walking stance	Attention stance
Imagine you're on train tracks	Penguin feet like the movie Happy Feet, or like a slice of pizza
Parallel stance	
Follow the floorboards	
Stepping	Rear foot stance
Glide in an arc very close to the floor	Like wearing high heel shoes (but not stilettos)

Misc.

<i>Crossings</i>	<i>Power breaking</i>
Pretend you have velcro or rubberbands around your wrists and you rip them apart	Get angry
Bang your watch faces together	Go through the object not to the object
	Slice through the boards until you reach the back of the breaking machine
<i>Exhaling or breathing</i>	<i>Self Defence (passive stance)</i>
Blow out a candle	Use the stop sign
<i>Angles for techniques</i>	<i>Hand back to the hip</i>
Using numbers on a clock	Pulling a rope from the pole
<i>Sparring</i>	<i>Posture</i>
Fire an arrow in the air (flying punch)	Be like a pencil
<i>Lifting the leg in front like a puppet string (front leg side kick)</i>	
<i>Backward motion</i>	<i>Landing on flying techniques</i>
Like throwing a ball	Fly like a feather not a brick
<i>Power in techniques</i>	<i>The 'Stop' of a movement</i>
Imagine an enemy in front of you	Visualise a 'freeze frame' at the end of each technique
Fire your punch like a bullet	
Spinning like a bullet (for rotation in techniques)	
<i>Power in the punch</i>	<i>Sinewave</i>
Visualise a bungee cord tethering your fist to the far wall.	Imagine a roller coaster reaching the crest of the hill as it hangs in space for a split second before picking up speed and accelerating down the far side.
Visualise blasts or fire or lightning at the end the movement.	

General Visualisation Cues

<i>Rhythm and movement</i>	<i>Hands in transition</i>
<p>Everything in Taekwon-Do is like throwing a ball. Don't throw a ball from a neutral position; pull your arm back first. Don't pull your arm back and wait, and then throw; the throw flows smoothly from pull-back to release.</p> <p>Every forward motion begins with a backward motion; however, once the movement is in motion it does not stop. e.g. Knifehand Strike: Pull back to an intermediate position before striking forward, but don't stop at the cross.</p> <p>Jumping: Flex your knees and ankles to prepare for the jump, but don't pause with them bent before you spring.</p>	<p>While the body is in motion but before the hands have moved to the intermediate position for the next technique, they are relaxed. Imagine standing in a pool of chest-deep water. As soon as you leave the previous movement, allow the wrists to float on the surface of the water. This keeps the hands and shoulders relaxed – you are expending no effort to keep them in a particular position, just allowing them to float.</p> <p>The timing of the application of power is like driving a car around a bend. Don't accelerate INTO the bend, or the car starts to slide outwards. Accelerate OUT of the bend to retain control and keep the car moving in the right direction.</p> <p>When you move your hands to the intermediate position, don't move them sharply or with power; this results in the movement looking rushed and power 'bleeding' out the back of the technique. Move the hands smoothly INTO the intermediate position, then accelerate OUT of the intermediate position to execute the technique.</p>
<i>Hand techniques</i>	<i>Preparation for inward and outward movements</i>
<p>Imagine a wave of energy travelling up through the body. Hip, torso, shoulder, elbow... but flowing smoothly, not four separate events.</p>	<p>Feel rubber bands PULLING your elbows in the direction of the movement.</p>
<i>Rising block (great for kids)</i>	
<p>Like an jet taking off an aircraft carrier Position the aircraft (back of the wrist) on the runway (on top of the accompanying arm) and accelerate along the flight deck (direction) and take off, rising up vertically towards the sky. (Emphasis can be given to the sharp vertical trajectory on the take-off and finish position of the block (Sky).)</p>	

Special thanks to Master Matthew Breen, participants of the IIC in the Gold Coast 2022 and the TKD Coaching Community for their contributions