

**All Athletes need Speed** ... here is a way we can learn from other sports; consider the following strategy used to enhance speed in the martial arts.

## Striking Paper

Striking a piece of paper is an excellent way to improve your speed (not to mention how cost effective it is).

All of us should be able to afford a piece of paper!

What makes paper such a great tool is the fact that you don't have the tendency to tighten up as when facing a heavier target. It is only natural when squaring off with a larger target, such as a heavy bag, that the first instinct is to think about hitting as hard as possible.

Usually, thinking about hitting hard makes the body tense.

Tense, un-relaxed muscles slow you down. It's like driving your car with the parking brake on. With paper as the target, you can relax and concentrate on speed and form. Power is not an issue.

Find a way to hang a short staff horizontally and secure a piece of paper to it so that it hangs in front of you. Several sheets of newspaper work well, or possibly, a plastic sheet protector. Stand in front of it and practice your hand strikes. (You can use any hand technique that you wish to improve.)

The **key** to making this work is in the **concentration**.

Concentrate on the form.

Make sure your entire body is relaxed prior to initiation.

Upon striking the paper, listen to the sound it makes. You should hear a quick snap.

Pay attention to the way it feels when you hit the paper. It should feel like a whip cracking on the surface.

**Practice each punch a hundred times three days a week for a month and I guarantee you will notice a difference.**



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