Basic Skills

There are many basic skills of wrestling to be mastered in wrestling and some of the basics in most wrestling styles (folkstyle, freestyle, Greco-Roman) in the USA are fundamental to success. This article outlines some skills to be mastered for success in wrestling.

Position

Being able to sustain good position is critical to success whether on the feet, top or bottom postions. Stance is the word that describes excellent position on the feet and when this stance in broken, the optimal opportunity to attack or counter attack is an instant away. On the mat, position is needed to keep from getting turned or pinned and to gain an advantage to turn or pin opponents.

Offsetting the opponent's balance generally breaks position either by pushing or pulling. Set ups are the key to breaking position to create a near perfect time to attack and or counter attack.

Generally, angles of attack are gained by set ups which, again, break position. Some examples of a set ups include and are not limited to: fakes, feints, off balancing with specific tie ups (i.e. underhook, overhook, 2 on 1, etc.).

Timing

Knowing when to attack or counter attack is another area that is paramount to wrestling success. After position has been broken, there is a small window of opportunity to execute all wrestling skills. A 1 or 2 second delay of execution, in many cases, will result in an unsuccessful attempt or execution of most wrestling skills.

Understanding and mastering timing takes many repetitions, failures, successes, and practical experience wrestling in practice and in competition. Wrestlers must practice timing with appropriate reactions from training partners.

Drilling

Learning how to drill is the key to better performance. Simulation of wrestling is what drilling should imitate and often times this skill needs to be taught and learned. Both wrestlers must be willing to understand this concept if either is to gain from drilling.

When one partner is learning a new skill, the other partner must mimic what will happen in a match with varying degrees of resistance and intensity.

When learning offensive skills, minimal resistance must be given by the defensive wrestler in order to allow the offensive wrestler to learn the movement. This same concept is employed when defensive wrestlers are learning counter attacks. Again, the position of both wrestlers is most important with varying degrees of resistance.

As new skills and the appropriate movement patterns become engrained and/or second nature, offensive and defensive wrestlers must increase the amount of resistance, to give a more real feel or a similar match like reaction.

When skills are mastered, both wrestlers can give full resistance and essentially this is where wrestling becomes similar to the game of chess. At this point, position and set ups become, again, important.

Relaxing

Wrestlers have to be taught how to relax muscles when not in use so that when these muscles are needed for explosion of technique, they are fresh, ready, and prepared.

When certain parts of the body are relaxed, as with the mind, the body is fully capable of exploiting angles of attack that are created by breaks of position. If on the other hand, the whole body is tight (all muscles tense and contracted) movements are rigid and actually slower because the energy used to keep these muscles in a contracted state prohibits fluid movement patterns.

An example of muscles being used inappropriately is seen when trying to extend the arm with the triceps muscle while the biceps is contracted at full tension.

Relaxing also gives the mind a break, which causes the muscles to relax, and saves valuable energy for wrestling. When the mind is thinking of many different things at once or at worry, the body tends to tense up and become less explosive and slower.

Focus

To master any skill being taught, focus on the coach or teacher is necessary. Intense focus or concentration by students on the teacher or coach, on movement patterns, placement of body parts (hands, feet, hips, etc.), and the position of the demonstrating opponent must be given extreme consideration by learning students of wrestling skills.

During technical or teaching sessions, wrestlers must be able to focus on key parts of instruction to mimic the offensive and defensive positions of the teacher or coach and the demonstrator. If the student or wrestler gives complete focus, all points of reference can be seen then imitated during drilling sessions.

Calisthenics

Creating productive maximal force in the weight room or on the wrestling mat starts with mastering exercise body movements that also strengthen the body.

There are many types of calisthenics and most can be used as sport specific movement patterns that will enhance body awareness, flexibility and strength. Some of the more basic positions or calisthenics include: push-ups, sit-ups, and jumping jacks. The last several exercises have many different variations that will challenge the mind and