



# Youngstown Historical Fencing

## Longsword Fundamentals 1.0

- **Common Fencing, Swords**
  - What is “common Fencing”?
    - The basic level of martial practice available in the time – how to hold, use a sword. Basic combat and fighting skills
  
  - What is a Longsword?
    - Parts of the sword
      - Long Edge
      - Short Edge
      - Strong
      - Weak
      - Crossguard
      - Pommel
      - Hilt/grip
    - Types of Swords
      - Sharps
      - Blunts
      - Federshwert/Feder
  
  - **Sword Pass-around and Questions**
  
  - **How does one use a sword?**
    - **Holding a sword**
      - Hews (strikes)
      - Thrusts
      - Slices
      - Pommel Strikes
      - Half Swording
      - Grappling
  
- **Brief overview of Historical swordsmanship**
  - **The Man, the Myth, The Legend - Johannes Liechtenauer**
    - “father” of German longsword in the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century
    - No surviving original works, but referenced by later masters

- Authored or compiled the “Zetel” – a poem of longsword teachings and secret techniques which established and codified the tradition
  - **What is a Gloss?** – notated version of the Zetel – created by later masters to better describe and elaborate upon the basic techniques in the Zetel for their students. Also referred to as “Manuals” as many were written as such.
  - **Sigmund ain Ringeck**
    - His name is included on a list of members of “The Fellowship of Liechtenauer” in 1470
    - Can be inferred to have lived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and may have been a direct student of Liechtenauer himself.
    - Wrote a very comprehensive gloss of the Zetel
- **How we train**
  - We are recreating the Art of unarmored Longsword fighting, utilizing Manuals and Glosses of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century masters
  - Strive to maintain the martial validity of the art while being conscious of artifacts from modern equipment and safety practices
- **To Fight, you have to move! Basic Footwork**
  - **Stance**
    - The head is held upright, not gazing down nor upturned.
    - Hips and shoulders are aligned and toward the target, not held at an angle.
    - Hips are tucked under so as not to introduce spinal instability.
    - Front leg points directly toward the opponent, knee bent so that the lower leg is roughly perpendicular to the ground, you should just be able to see the toes of the front foot if you glance down.
    - Rear leg extends back and to the side slightly. Also bent somewhat to allow for movement.
    - Rear foot faces out to the right at an angle which can be between 45 degrees and perpendicular to the front foot, which points at the opponent.
    - The front and rear feet are best placed on opposite sides of an imaginary center line in order to stay well balanced.
  - **Basic Footwork**
    - The Passing Step
      - Primary step used when striking
      - should be a gliding movement with no bobbing up and down, legs remaining slightly bent throughout. Neither should the foot be stamped down hard (this immediately stiffens the leg and makes you prone to having your balance taken from you)
      - Passing steps can be both linear and offline
    - Gathering step
      - Used to close distance, and for striking and thrusting
      - rear leg gathering the movement begins with moving the rear leg forward so that the feet are close together (ie. gathering for another step) and placing the foot down. The fencer then steps forward again with the front leg back out to distance.

- Lead Leg Gathering is achieved by lifting the front foot slightly and springing yourself with the rear, following immediately with the trailing foot to arrive in the same stance in which the fencer began
- The lead leg gathering covers a shorter distance than the rear leg gathering because it is made as an abbreviated lunge and gather, however it is useful because it allows a single action cut or thrust with a short advance, with no telegraphed action
- A gathering step can be deceptive – the final movement may be a gathering step, and offline step, a passing step, a triangle step, or some other stepping motion, it is difficult for the opponent to tell until the motion is made.

- **General Teachings of the Longsword (Ringeck)**
  - Verse 3-4

**This is the text of many good common lessons of the long sword  
If you wish to examine the art,  
Go left and right with hewing  
And left with right  
that is, if you desire to fence strongly.**

**Gloss.** Note, this is the first lesson of the long sword: That you shall learn to hew the hews properly from both sides, that is, if you otherwise wish to fence strongly and correctly. Understand it thusly: When you wish to hew from the right side, so see that your left foot stands forward. If you then hew the over-hew from the right side, so follow-after the hew with the right foot. If you do not do that, then the hew is false and incorrect, because your right foot remains there behind. Therefore the hew is too short and may not attain its correct path below to the correct other side in front of the left foot.

The same when you hew from the left side and do not follow-after the hew with the left foot, thus the hew is also false. Therefore note, from whichever side you hew, that you follow-after with the same foot, so you may deploy all your plays with strength and all other hews shall be hewn thusly as well.

- Verse 6

Item. You shall note that everything which you wish to fence, deploy it with the entire strength of the body

- **A guard, and a hew**
  - Vom Tag
    - Verse 62 (Ringeck)
 

**Item. The fourth guard [Leaguer]** is called from-the-roof [*Vom tag*]; arrange yourself thusly: Stand with the left foot forwards and hold your sword upon your right shoulder, or hold it with outstretched arms over your head; and how you shall fence from the guards, you find it all written in this book.
  - Oberhau
    - A cut from above, usually deployed from Vom Tag
      - Proper cutting form (stationary)
      - Proper cutting form (passing step)
      - Right and Left oberhau from right VT (passing and gather)