

# Why Walking Correctly Is Your First Martial Art

by

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## Foundations of Movement – Lesson 1:

Across all the students I've taught, each one of them brings their own mix of strengths, weaknesses, and habits. Some glide through certain drills while others need focused help with the simplest actions. These differences reveal the uniqueness of how each body moves, where tension hides, and what needs attention before more complex skills can be learned safely.



I've found that even small inefficiencies in something as basic as walking can limit balance, speed, and power, or later lead to injury. My practice is to put every student through the complete basics of movement, starting with learning to walk correctly, which is a process that reveals far more than it appears to.

The goal is to identify and correct subtle mechanical issues early. Once a consistent baseline is established, I know each student can perform safely as training progresses.

## Observing Heel and Toe Stepping:

When we first start, I'm not looking for perfection, I'm really watching how a person moves.



The student should stand upright, with their head up and eyes aware of what's happening around them. Several studies have shown that people who walk confidently are far less likely to be targeted for attack: it's not just posture, it's presence.

From there, I'm looking for a gait that suits the person's height, with the hips moving fluidly and the arms swinging naturally.

Most importantly, the heel and toe stepping pattern must be present. That is, the heel makes first contact, then the toes follow. This simple pattern ties the upper and lower body together. It looks effortless when done correctly, but it tells me a great deal about coordination, control, and awareness.

For the instructor, this stage is a quiet diagnostic tool. It exposes habits, imbalances, and sometimes even congenital conditions that may not have been mentioned in induction. For the student, it builds awareness of movement and begins the process of moving with intent rather than instinct.

### **The Drill:**

1. Start upright. Look ahead, not down.
2. Step forward. The heel makes first contact with the ground, deliberate, clear, and controlled.
3. Let the toes drop. The toes follow naturally, settling without tension.
4. Continue walking. Repeat the same motion in a straight line. Each step should look and feel identical.

This drill seems simple, but its simplicity is the point. It establishes control, awareness, and balance in motion, qualities that underpin every stance, transition, and technique to come.

### **Closing:**

The first lesson in movement isn't about speed, power, or technique. It's about awareness of posture, rhythm, and how your body interacts with the ground.

Once that awareness is built, everything else in martial arts becomes more stable and efficient.

The first opponent to overcome is your own habits.

*Steven Andreatza.*