

Guidance for beginners attending their first session at Malvern Hills Sword Fencing

The aim of this note is to cover some necessary administrative and other common matters without having to delay the start of sessions dealing with individual needs. That said please do ask others for help if you need it. Fencing is fun when you know what you are doing but like learning to drive a car the early sessions can be rather less exciting while you learn essential rules and basic skills.

MHSF runs two sessions every Wednesday evening throughout the year; one from 6 pm to 7 pm for children typically aged 8 to 14 and another from 7 pm to 9 pm for older children and adults.

We teach epee using a mixture of group activities and individual tuition according to the needs and experience of those attending. We provide protective clothing and metal weapons (epees) for beginners. You should wear normal indoor sports clothes and shoes but with long socks that cover the legs below the knees. You should also bring water to drink and any medical aids (e.g. inhaler), which you need when doing physical activities.

MEMBERSHIP and REGISTRATION

Before your first session please take out a free 90 day 'Introductory Membership' of British Fencing www.britishfencing.com or any other membership of British Fencing or Pentathlon GB www.pentathlongb.org, which provides insurance cover for fencing. Please be sure to include 'Malvern Hills Sword Fencing' as your choice of club, as that will enable us to access your profile to verify membership status and contact details.

On arrival please fill out a Registration Form, add your name to the Attendance Sheet and pay the session fee (£4 for the 6 pm session, £5 for under 20s and £6 for others at the 7 pm session). A copy of our Privacy Notice is available as a .pdf file <http://www.one4all.plus.com/mhsfPrivacy.pdf>

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Next you will need to gather and put on the correct protective clothing in the following order:

1. **Chest protector** (required for girls and women, voluntary for men)
2. **Plastron** on the sword arm side of your upper body (Elastic loop fits over the head, strap goes round the back and fastens by passing it through the two D rings on the front and doubling back over the 2nd ring and back through the 1st ring). [NOTE: Adults require a CEN Level 2, 800N plastron bearing the **FIE** logo]
3. **Breeches** (Remove shoes while putting on breeches)
4. **Body wire** (Hold one end in the sword hand when putting on a jacket. Put the other end in the rear pocket of the breeches until it is needed.)
5. **Jacket** (Most of our jackets zip up the middle of the back. Front opening jackets zip up on the non-sword arm side. See that the strap, which is attached to the bottom front tail of the jacket, passes between the legs and is fastened to the back of the jacket. It is easier to start with it fastened and step through the loop as you start to put the jacket on.)
6. **Glove** on the sword hand over the sleeve of the jacket. When using a wire open the gauntlet down to the wrist and position the wire so that it exits the glove at the wrist before neatly closing up the gauntlet.

7. **Mask** Choose one that fits comfortably but will not come off when fencing. Most club masks have a size marker on top: yellow=small, blue=medium, red=large, black=extra large. Masks should have the elastic straps against the back of the head. When not fencing it is best to remove masks. Do not hold a weapon when putting on or removing a mask until you have been trained how to do so safely.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Fencers are advised to follow the British Fencing Safety Guidelines.

http://britishfencing.com/uploads/files/jan18_approved_safety_guidelines.pdf

To get started we suggest fencers keep in mind the following principles:

1. Always wear full **protective equipment** when fencing and do not attempt to fence anyone, who is not correctly dressed in full protective equipment with their mask on.
2. When **weapons** are not in use for fencing bouts or lessons, always hold or carry weapons with their point near floor level or hold them by their point and hanging with the handle near the floor. Furthermore, if a weapon breaks or becomes bent out of shape, fencers stop using it immediately until it has been repaired.
3. When in a venue where there are fencing activities **keeps your eyes open** for the safety of yourself and others (e.g. by paying attention to trip hazards and by keeping a safe distance from areas in use for fencing activities).

FEEDBACK

We appreciate that we may or may not meet your expectations but either way please try a few sessions and do let us have your feedback.

The club caters for fencers from 8 to 80 with a variety of experience from beginners to international medallists. The turnout each week varies depending on the time of year and the fencing calendar, so your experience will vary depending on who attends and who you meet.

We rely mainly on volunteers to run the club and keep our equipment in good order. We welcome your feedback and any help you can give, especially with tidying and putting away kit you have borrowed.

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