

Fei Kune Do — Lesson 9

勁 · The Yang Engine · Plyometrics, and the Tai Chi footwork that aims it

You have been using this engine the whole time without naming it. Every "crack" in the art — the fa-jin, the Flying Fist, the Coiled Dragon, the Dream Kick — runs on one mechanism: **plyometrics**, the science of explosive power. This lesson finally puts the names and numbers on it. But raw power is a cannon on ice — so we pair it with **Tai Chi footwork**, the platform and the aim. Plyometrics gives the bang; the feet decide where it stands and where it points.

0 Plyometrics — The Engine of Every Crack

the stretch-shortening cycle

The whole engine is one loop, run in three phases — you met it in the Soft Game, here it is as the core of all power:

Phase	What happens	The law
1. Eccentric (load)	The pre-stretch — muscle lengthens, storing elastic energy & priming the spindle (the dip)	Deeper load = more stored energy
2. Amortization (turn)	The instant between load and fire	Keep it short — dwell and you leak the energy
3. Concentric (fire)	Stored energy released as explosive force	This is the crack — the fa-jin

The three levels — earn power in order. The textbook is strict: you do not start with the big jumps. *Stabilization* (learn to land) → *Strength* → *Power*. The source's first level, *stabilization*, has you **hold each landing 3–5 seconds** for "optimum landing mechanics, postural alignment, reactive neuromuscular efficiency." **You earn the launch by first owning the landing.**

The Yang Drills — and where each one lives in the art

Drill (from the texts)	Builds	Fei Kune Do home
Two-foot ankle hop	Reactive ankle spring	The live bounce in the ginga — never flat
Squat / tuck jump	Vertical triple-extension	The Coiled Dragon / Shoryuken rise
Split-squat jump	Single-leg explosion	Kicks & the Gangster Step
Bounding / multiple hops	Horizontal power	Closing distance — the Empty Cut blitz
Depth jump (box drop)	Max stretch-shorten (advanced)	The deepest fa-jin
Med-ball rotational throw / power drop	Rotational & downward power	The armada, the Dream Kick, the cross

Plyometrics is not a martial art — it is the physics lab that explains why all of them work. It is the science of the v^2 you met in Lesson 8.

2 Tai Chi Footwork — Aiming the Engine

empty & full

A cannon needs a platform and a direction. That is footwork — and Tai Chi's is the most efficient there is, because it is built on one idea:

Empty & Full (虚实 — xū / shí): at every instant, one leg is **full** (weighted, rooted — the launch pad) and one is **empty** (weightless, mobile — the fast mover). All Tai Chi stepping is the smooth, unbroken trading of empty↔full. **Never caught 50/50** — that is the flat-footed death. The empty leg has zero inertia (your Empty Cut); the full leg is the rooted spring (your plyometric base). Footwork is simply *how you set up a good launch in a moving fight*.

The source also notes you choose your **frame**: *large frame* (long, low stances) for power & reach; *small frame* (short, higher stances) for speed & mobility. Pick the frame the moment asks for.

Footwork	What it does	Leverage
Empty/Full trade	The foundation — always one leg loaded, one free	Instant readiness in any direction
Follow / Chase Step (跟步)	Rear foot chases the front to advance	Close distance <i>without</i> breaking the root
Repulse Monkey retreat (倒撵猴)	Withdraw the weight back while neutralizing	Bait his overcommitment; stay based
Central-Axis Pivot	Plant a foot, turn everything round the spine	The torque generator — powers every spin; re-aims without a step

③ The Marriage — Power Needs a Platform

Plyometrics is the bang; footwork is where you stand to fire it and where it points. Wire them together:

Footwork (set the platform)	+ Plyometric fire	= Result
Chase-step in, stay rooted	Depth-load → concentric	Close distance, then the Flying Fist explodes
Central-axis pivot	Rotational throw power	The armada / Dream Kick spins with full torque
Repulse-Monkey retreat (bait)	Reactive ankle-hop	He overcommits → you spring the counter
Empty leg frees	Split-squat single-leg power	A kick fires with no warning, off zero inertia

Did you notice? This was the most **Yang** lesson in the canon — pure explosive power — and yet the thing that made it usable was **Tai Chi footwork**, which is pure **Yin**: soft, rooted, positioning. *Power is useless without a platform. The soft feet aim the hard fist.* Even at the heart of the Yang sits a seed of Yin. Hold that thought — it is the whole of Lesson 10.

▣ How to Train the Engine

Phase	Time	Content
★ Hip Awakening	8 min	The universal core — plyometrics is hip-driven; cold hips, no spring
Land first (Stabilization)	8 min	Box jump-downs; hold every landing 3–5s , perfect posture. Earn the launch.
Footwork — Empty & Full	8 min	Chase step, repulse-monkey retreat, axis pivot — feel one leg always loaded, one free
The Marriage	10 min	Step to the platform, then fire one plyometric strike. Quality reps, full rest.
Cool — Root	4 min	Wuji standing; sink and recover

The law of Lesson 9: Power is the engine; footwork is the steering. Earn the launch by owning the landing, keep one leg full and one empty, and never fire the cannon until your feet have aimed it.

Build the engine, aim it with soft feet, David. — 師父 ☯