

Kung Fu Throwing By Lou Burruss

Kung Fu throwing or Ninja throwing is a system developed by Lou Burruss and Mike Caldwell in 2005. He wanted to come up with a structured throwing plan to help developing throwers. As the only two Seattle Sockeye who lived on Capitol Hill at the time, Mike and Lou would meet often to throw. Lou solicited Mike to help him with this and to their surprise they found that it was an excellent system for established throwers. (They were in their 7th and 9th years on Sockeye.) They did KFT once a week the entire season and Lou's throws were more consistently on than any other year.

The philosophy of the KFT seeks to improve a thrower in three ways. First and simplest, repetition. The entire program takes about an hour and features ~450 throws. Second, it seeks to challenge the limitations of a thrower by pushing them to throw beyond their comfort. Not so much in terms of distance, but in range of release. Lastly, the central portion of the program tries to articulate the different components of a throw. It separates the wrist from the arm from the shoulder from the hips from the feet. Young throwers are often limited to a single forehand where the handwristarmshouldertorsohipsfeet have to all be doing the same motion every time. What if a defender takes it away? What if you need to get around a marker? Really great throwers make adjustments large and small to their footwork and release points in order to beat defenders.

A warning about KFT: it is very physically rigorous. Mike and Lou felt taxed by it and they were in incredible shape and their bodies in ultimate frisbee conditioning for years. KFT should be treated like a workout and you should pay attention to your body. Pay attention to the upper hamstring on your step leg (not your pivot leg) because that is where most of the stress of this workout goes. Also consider a partial workout to begin. Cut the 25s down to 15s or even 10s to start.

The Kung Fu Throwing workout follows on the next page for your convenience to print off just the workout.

Kung Fu Throwing: The Workout

Part I Warm Up w/ 25s

1. Throw 25 forehands, backhands and hammers at distances of 10, 20 and 30 yards
2. Throw 25 full lefty forehands, backhands and hammers at comfort distance (usually ~15 yards)
3. Stretch 5-10 minutes

Comments: Be disciplined about distance. The 10 yarder will feel way too short. You may not be able to throw hammers at the full 30. Try. When Mike and I developed it, my shoulders were wrecked and I couldn't throw a 30 yard hammer and so I just threw a mix of weird forehands and backhands. Throw the lefties. It is tempting to leave them out, but this workout really exacerbates the blacksmith syndrome inherent in training for ultimate and the lefty work will help balance you out.

Part II The Kung Fu

At comfort distance, throw 10 forehands and backhands...

1. As low as you can release
2. As far as you can release from your body
3. As high as you can release
4. Compass throwing. Imagine a compass with your pivot foot at the center. Pivot N and throw. Pivot NE and throw. Pivot E and throw and so on around the compass. Go four times around, twice throwing forehands and twice throwing backhands.
5. Rinky-dink. Throw 100 throws at a distance of 2-yards. The goal is rapid catch and release. Aim your throws to be easily catchable, but placed in such a way as to allow your partner to practice a variety of catches. *Don't regrip!* However you catch, you should throw. If pancake, throw hamburger. If you claw-catch over your head, upside-down backhand.
6. *Optional* Throw 10s at comfort outside in and inside out.

Comments: Completion rates should drop in this section. Mike and I had a focus goal of no turnovers the entire workout, but we never counted this section. The point is to challenge your technical and physical limitations, not to be perfect. Your throws in this section should feel awkward. The optional piece is there if you want. It makes the entire workout a bit long, but it is a nice extra piece of work.

Part III Hucking

Huck for 10 minutes.

Comment: Skip this part if you and your throwing partner are very unbalanced in power

Part IV Pivoting and Focus

25s with pivot at comfort

Comment: Fake, pivot, throw. You are working on a snap fake and quick grip transition. Forehand to backhand should be one handed. Backhand to forehand should be a small off hand check. If you are working on a particular move, now is the time to practice it.

Part V Stretch again.

Do it. All the recent press about in effectiveness of stretching has to do with the effects of stretching *before* working out. The science on stretching after is still solidly pro-stretching.