It's all about the little things.

The pivot on your foot. The rotation in your hips. The placement of your hand after the jab. The step through on your punch. The little things.

Last week's entry led to a great discussion in the comments about these sorts of issues. As a result, they were fresh in my mind this week, and as fate would have it, they were also a big theme of this week's training. I started the week paired up with a new sparring partner – one who was considerably above me in terms of experience. This ended up being a great thing, as he went out of his way to give me very specific pointers on ways to improve my form – all of which were very helpful and most appreciated.

The only difficulty is – there are just so many little things to remember. Let's take one combo we worked: a relatively simple jab/cross. Combining instructor Andre's pointers with my partner's tips, I ended up with this list of things to watch for:

1. On the jab, snap my hand back up into place after the punch in order to protect my head.

2. Keep my hands a bit off to the side of my head, not right in front as boxers do.

3. On a double jab, don't bring the first jab back all the way, and step forward as you bring it back so that the second punch has more forward motion.

4. Give a small pivot on the foot to the jab.

5. On the cross, pivot my whole body, especially in the hips.

6. Bring the cross back right away.

I think that's it for this 3 punch combo, though I'm sure as I get these down there will be more to add to that list.

When I write them out and think about them one by one, each seems simple and easy to execute. But when throwing the combo at anything resembling a decent speed, it becomes much harder. I get in my head and before I know it, I've remembered to bring my hand back, but the second jab has come and gone and I forgot the step. Clearly the key is to drill, drill, drill. Put these motions into your muscle memory so that your brain doesn't need to do the work – your body does it for you. I suspect that will come, and I look forward to it – because right now I can't possibly imagine adding responding to an opponent's moves into the mix. And luckily, I don't have to. For now, I'll keep my mind on the hips, the pivot, the step, the guard, the... well, the little things.

For those of you who have been training, I'm sure it varies quite a bit from person to person, but when did you notice yourself getting out of your head and letting your body guide these motions more?

And one more highly practical question for the day – best way to wash hand wraps?

Training Diary is a weekly series documenting my journey starting Muay Thai training. For more on this series, read the first entry here . I train at Conviction Fitness & Martial Arts, 4430 N. Western Ave., Chicago, IL www.convictionfitness.com .