

Boxing For Fitness

Phase, craze, or just the real deal?

Christian Marchegiani



Hillary Swank won an Academy Award for her role as a female pugilist in Million Dollar Baby; Russell Crowe proved he's a Hollywood heavyweight in more ways than one in the inspirational Cinderella Man & Sylvester Stallone's Rocky Balboa is about to hit the cinemas.

But boxing's resurgence isn't restricted to the silver screen. In gymnasiums around Australia and New Zealand boxing for fitness classes - such as THUMP BOXING - are enjoying tremendous support from huge numbers of men and women.

Over the years Boxing for Fitness has experienced many cultural changes in the health and fitness industry.

While at times lying dormant and on the brink of extinction Boxing for Fitness has managed to pave the way for many group exercise revolutions such as Boot Camp, Tai Bo, and freestyle circuit classes.

Not limited to just group exercise Boxing for Fitness has also been a popular training method for Personal Trainers and Gym Instructors.

Boxing has - yet again - become the latest craze for movie script writers and directors.

While there are many myths & training concepts surrounding Boxing for Fitness one conclusion does remain - the benefits!

While it would appear the multiple benefits of boxing for fitness would ensure it has a long term future some questions that need to be addressed by the fitness industry are:

Why has boxing training stood the test of time?

Boxing training has stood the test of time because it is raw. The basic training methods, punching, skipping and ground work are tried and proven forms of exercises. The limits are up to the individual because boxing is not only a physical test but it is also a mental one. Most people respond to the challenge of "lifting" to complete a set of punches and all feel as if they have achieved something by the end of a class.

Calories, the measurement so many people live their life by prove that boxing is the most superior of all activities for burning energy. A study conducted by researchers at the American College of Sports Medicine found that a 60 minute boxing session can expend an average of 2821kj. Equivalent to running 9km on a treadmill (Williams & Wilkinson, American College of Sports Medicine).

Can this popular form of exercise die out?

Definitely! Do you remember freestyle circuit classes? They were the biggest and best thing to hit the fitness industry since Lycra and leg warmers in the '80s. However, there was a breakdown in the way the trainers spread the word. They digressed from using their own creativity and flair to following pre-programmed sheets which didn't fit the classes and the classes went the way of the pogo stick and dinosaurs.

My greatest concern for the future of fitness for boxing is unqualified instructors taking classes. Anyone can pull on a pair of boxing gloves and focus pads but if a trainer doesn't know what they're doing or they haven't been instructed in the potential dangers of taking a class the danger is they'll have a negative impact on the class.

Christian Marchegiani is the director and founder of THUMP Training Systems and has been associated with Boxing for Fitness for over ten years. He is the current boxing coach for the Sydney Swans and the NSW Cricket Team.