



nawaz modi
perfect fit

Fighting fit

Kickboxing is the latest health fad. But it's not as easy as it looks

HHEY, you! Are you really ready for the next century? Do you have what it takes? Are you looking to get fighting fit? Looking for a new attitude?

Find your new and improved self through your evolving workouts! Have you considered kicking and punching your way to fitness with one of the hot and happening new cardio kickboxing programs?

Whether marketed as Tae-bo, Boxercise, Tai-chi, Cardio-karate or Cardio kickboxing, these classes take the upbeat music and high energy excitement of aerobics and combine it with martial art moves, athletic drills and the boxing flavour. This makes for a great, highly effective workout.

Today, millions of exercisers are trying this popular trend in physical activity. This is presently a very hot sport for men and women of all ages and all fitness levels.

They provide the heart all the benefits of a cardiovascular workout, while offering gains in agility, strength, flexibility, balance and coordination. They're great for stress-relief, discipline, self-esteem and weight control. They're designed to work all parts of the body, and due to the great new variety of movements, the likelihood of injury due to overuse is reduced.

While the range of benefits is certainly impressive, cardio kickboxing also imposes a considerable risk of injury for new exercisers or participants who don't know how to protect themselves from the potential dangers. Even very fit exercisers can be challenged by their first class.

Cardio kickboxing is a complicated form of exercise because the range and planes of motion differ from what most people are used to. Traditional martial arts training builds progressively. Students learn each new move gradually, giving their bodies time to develop the ability to perform all moves safely and correctly. Moves are not done repetitively to fast music, as they generally are in cardio kickboxing classes.

In your very first cardio kickboxing class, you could find yourself performing advanced moves, such as fan and hook kicks. However, you wouldn't do these in a martial arts class until a very advanced stage.

You would first have to progress through several belt colours. Kicks like these produce explosive forces on the lower back and other joints. The punches and jabs taught in these classes can cause problems for the elbows, wrists, neck and shoulders. Unless you progressively develop the necessary strength and stability to perform these moves with good form, you will be at risk for injury.

A Few Safety Tips

Play hard, while playing safe!

Start Low and Slow With Kicks and Punches.

Whatever you do, don't start throwing full kicks and punches in your first class. Begin slowly and keep your kicks low, especially on side kicks and roundhouses. Don't overextend or hyperextend your kicks or lock your joints.

Take It Easy!

Remember that usually kicks are weapons to the lower body and punches are weapons to the face. Don't act as if you were kicking at an opponent's head — you're often kicking at the legs.

Do Just One- Three Cardio Kickboxing Workouts per Week.

If you want to have longevity in the sport, start with only one workout per week and gradually build up to no more than three (unless you're also doing some other form of martial arts training or sport-specific strength training).

Look for an Interval Training Program.

A cardio kickboxing program that follows an interval training session will alternate high-intensity workouts with recovery periods in which moves are performed slowly, which provide a breather. By choosing interval training, you reduce your chances of getting fatigued and sacrificing good form. You'll end up doing it just right!

Select a Trained Instructor Who Offers Progressive Teaching.

Your instructor should be trained and certified as a fitness instructor, in addition to having boxing or martial arts training. He or she should give you specific instructions for modifying moves to include people of varying fitness levels, at different stages of learning. You'll learn about correct form and body alignment, intensity, the proper range of motion, and how to maximize muscle toning.

Eye Yourself.

Keep a constant eye on yourself in the mirror. No, that's not because we think you're self-obsessed, but because this way you'll be more aware and in control of your body form and alignment. You'll keep yourself in check.

Allow Yourself To Be A Beginner.

Look for a relatively simple program that isn't heavily choreographed, has limited repetitions and isn't extremely fast. Ideally, the music speed should be no faster than 135- 140 beats per minute. Take the time to focus on your form and body alignment before progressing to the next stage.

Include Strength and Stability Training In Your Fitness Routine.

If these are not part of your cardio kickboxing program, supplement it with additional training to target overall fitness.

Hit It Right.

Never 'snap' at the elbow. Extend the arm out to 80 or 90 per cent of your full reach, but never 100 per cent. This way the joint remains slightly bent or soft, and is well protected.

Appropriate Footwear.

Your shoes need to be designed for pivots and lateral movement. If you wear running shoes on carpet, you risk spraining an ankle.

Focus On Your Feet.

Consider taking on jump rope drills or other forms of floor-work to strengthen your feet for the specific demands of cardio kickboxing.

Warm Up And Cool Down, Always.

Your warm-up should be specific to the class and should include static and dynamic stretching, possibly with some practice kicks and light punches. This has a rehearsal effect. In other words, one can learn the basics at a lower and slower pace before getting into the heart of the routine.

Cross Train Using Contrasting Activities.

Complement your kickboxing program with non-impact or low-impact, more linear forms of exercise — such as indoor stationary cycling, jogging and swimming.

Medical Clearance.

Remember to check with your physician for his/ her recommendations and restrictions before starting a cardio kickboxing program.

Besides being highly effective and energizing, it's also a fun workout. So get into the groove and get punching and kicking!

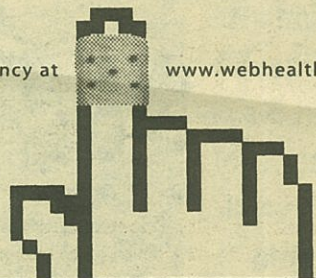
Remember- (As our nation's leaders know only too well) that if you shove your weight around, jump up and down, huff and puff about, you eventually end up getting what you want!

Who knows, the training might just come in handy with your boyfriend or husband! (Hey! Slow down! I'm just kidding!)



nawaz@chalomumbai.com The 'Magic Triangle': Arms are in the 'On Guard' position

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