

Want to get fit? Try punching the bag

Most boxers go for total body workout

By LAURIE KAY OLSON

For the Colorado Daily

If you're tired of the same old aerobics class or if jogging is losing its hedonistic appeal, Front Range Boxing Academy just may have what you're looking for. Located in a renovated garage on 28th Street, it's hardly the dingy hangout of blunt-faced pugilists. The gym, with its red, white and blue boxing ring and simple signs advising "sweat is good" and "when in doubt, workout," is where more than 30 area residents of all ages go to work out.

According to the gym's owner, Dave

Gaudette, most people don't think of boxing as a way to work out because of the stigma that it has carried for so many years. In reality, boxing requires more than just brute strength and an iron jaw. It requires finesse, concentration and focus. He said dancing is one of the best ways to cross-train for boxing because of the similarities in movement.

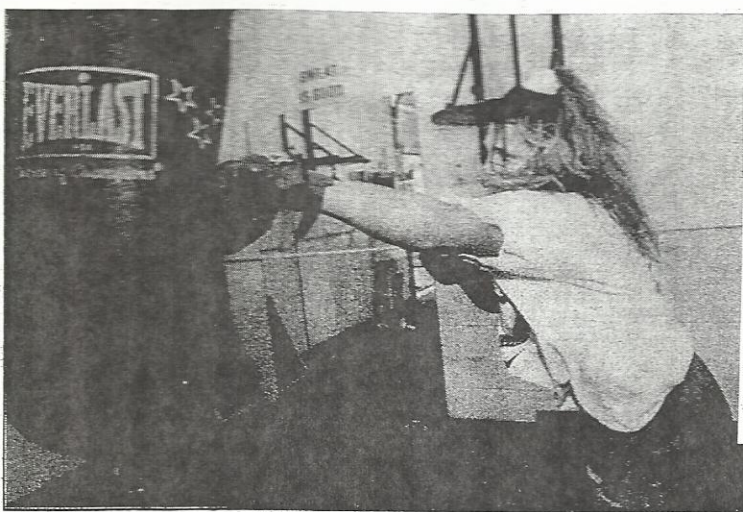
While most gyms are geared to train fighters, Gaudette has tried to create a place for both the serious boxer and regular people. Most of the gym members are there for the total body workout.

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Charlie Johnson/Colorado Daily

Dylan Olson, left, goes through a workout at Front Range Boxing Academy in Boulder. Olson aspires to box in the 2000 Olympics.



Charlie Johnson/Colorado Daily

Trudie Barthen unloads a punch on the heavy bag during a workout at the Front Range Boxing Academy in Boulder.

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Boxing is "one of the best all-around conditioning workouts," Gaudette said. It offers both low-impact aerobic and anaerobic benefits, including strength and endurance conditioning. Workouts include using equipment such as the heavy bag, speed bag, double-end bag and maize bag, among others.

It's also "more interesting because you are practicing a skill while you work your body," explained Gaudette. For the best results he recommends working out three to four times a week.

Sparring isn't a part of the training routine for those who box for exercise, but if someone is interested he'll set it up once they're ready.

As with any sport, there is the chance of getting hurt. But if you stretch well, do what your trainer tells you, and don't get ahead of your skill level the risk of injury is minimal.

Gaudette, originally from New Hampshire, became interested in the sport in high school. He liked the aspect of competing with himself to find his personal

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best. It became his passion.

"It gets in your blood," he said.

Dylan Olson, who has been training with Gaudette for about six weeks, has already found it in his blood. The two are talking about Olson going for the Golden Gloves amateur boxing tournament. "I'd like to follow it to the Olympics," admitted Olson. Though his mom isn't crazy about the idea of his boxing, he thinks that his dad is secretly proud of him.

Eddie Hag, a transplant from Norway, goes for the workout. "It's a good way to focus," he said. "You need good endurance."

Boxing for fitness isn't just for the guys. Trudie

Barthen, a local dental assistant, also spends time with the gloves. For women, boxing provides enough of a total body workout to hit some of the areas that they find particularly problematic.

Gaudette has trained people from ages 8 to 64. Just about anybody can give it a try; however, he suggests checking with your doctor first. "If your doctor says don't do it, don't do it," he advises.

With a regular \$50-a-month membership, he offers spot-training during workouts. Private lessons can be scheduled for an additional fee.

On Tuesday, Front Range Boxing will be offering a free introductory program at 7 p.m. For more information contact Gaudette at 546-5747.