

# COMBAT TRAINING

## FIGHT YOUR WAY TO FITNESS

BY KELLE VAN KEUREN, PHOTOS BY MATTHEW LESTER

**"It is unfair to blame man too fiercely for being pugnacious; he learned the habit from Nature." —Christopher Morley**

**A**dmit it. At least once in your athletic career, you've wished you were Rocky Balboa. Or the Karate Kid. Or Xena the Warrior Princess.

There's just something about the power, the agility, the smarts of a skilled combatant that elicits admiration from even the most peaceful of us. And few things satisfy our aggressive urges better than laying out a solid punch or letting loose a swift kick.

Perhaps it's the need to release those urges that has fueled the growth in combat-oriented workouts. Or maybe it's an increasing awareness of the necessity of self-defense skills. Or it could be simply boredom with traditional workouts. Whatever the impetus, workout programs that combine cardiovascular training with fighting skills have multiplied in recent years.



**National masters cross-country skiing champion Paul Ernst bangs the heavy bag at Front Range Boxing in Boulder.**

"You can't teach this stuff properly from just watching a video or going to a training session," says Marty Generous, third degree black

the instructor's background and credentials in the discipline he or she is teaching.

"It's not necessary to get the benefits of the workout," he explains.

And for serious endurance athletes, traditional boxing is the best bet when it comes to combat training.

"It's intense," Ernst says. "It's very close to total conditioning when you consider all the planes of motion you're moving in."

A typical boxing workout will likely be broken down into 15 or more three-minute intervals—or rounds—with 30 seconds of rest in between each interval. Each round consists of one of the following elements:

- *Heavy bag.* This is the big, hefty Polish-sausage-looking bag that you typically associate with boxing. The object is to move around the bag, nailing it with as many combinations of punches