

THE IFC
MMA
GUIDE
TO
MUAY THAI
AND
KICKBOXING
FOR
A
BRICKHOUSE
BODY
AND
ROCK HARD
CONFIDENCE



**KICKBOXING FITNESS:
MUAY THAI FOR A
BRICKHOUSE BODY &
ROCK HARD CONFIDENCE**

by

Infinite Fighting Concepts

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KICKBOXING FITNESS: MUAY THAI FOR A BRICKHOUSE BODY & ROCK HARD CONFIDENCE

If you are looking for a total body workout that totally kicks butt, then Muay Thai kickboxing is for you. Muay Thai is an excellent way to increase your stamina, flexibility, and strength. It's also a lot of fun!

Combining elements of boxing, martial arts, and aerobics, kickboxing gives you overall physical conditioning and toning. This rigorous cardiovascular workout utilizes controlled jabs, hooks, uppercuts, knees, elbows and kicks designed to get you on your way to a leaner body. Practicing Muay Thai moves can also help to improve your balance, flexibility, coordination, and endurance.

Muay Thai may sound intimidating, but opposed to what some people may think, Muay Thai can be enjoyed by people of all skill levels and abilities. Ask anyone who has done it for a long time and they will tell you that this workout is a lot of fun. However, it is not something that you will be acquainted with for the first two or three sessions because of its steep learning curve. And it is certainly not a "self-taught" martial art. It is a very risky routine for those who are not doing it with proper techniques.

Muay Thai offers a multitude of benefits to one's health. Whether you are planning to fight in actual matches, spar (fighting practice), or just work out in class, the exercises are a great way to stay in shape. If you are looking for high-energy workout routines with heart-pumping cardio that can help develop your agility, balance and coordination then Muay Thai may be right for you. Another benefit is with a strong body your self-confidence soars. You'll find you take on new challenges at a work and play – and succeed!

What is Muay Thai?

Different kickboxing styles can be dated as far back as the Asian continent 2,000 years ago. Muay Thai has become more popular in the United States lately due to Mixed Martial Arts competition in the UFC. Muay Thai is not only a very popular and effective fighting style due to its inclusiveness of more techniques than most other kickboxing styles, but this inclusiveness also makes it a great total body fitness workout. The moves involve punching, kicking, elbows, knees, and footwork drills. All the punches, kicks and foot movements will get your heart rate up and give you a fantastic cardio workout while building muscle and toning your body.

One of the most popular forms of kickboxing today is aerobic or cardio kickboxing. It incorporates very basic elements of boxing, martial arts (like karate) and aerobics. The routines are marketed as a program that provides overall physical conditioning and toning. This type of kickboxing is mostly done in corporate gyms taught by personal trainers without much, if any, kickboxing style. It does not involve physical contact between students which is meant to limit injury. However, as the focus of these programs is to jam as many students into a room, the lack of focus on proper technique can lead to a student injuring themselves.

Some people think that they need to be really fit before joining a Muay Thai class. This is not true at all. We all have different goals and fitness levels so there is really no hard and fast rule about this. Your weight should not be an issue because if you keep using that as an excuse, you will never whip yourself into shape! Do not worry too much about having a little rough time doing the routines when you first dip your toes in the water. This is completely normal. Nobody feels at home right away. Your instructor will surely guide you and if needed, they will modify the exercises based on your level of fitness.

Doing Muay Thai to get in shape or stay fit will make you burn massive amounts of calories. This is perfect for people who want to shed weight fast. On an average, a person can burn 500 calories an hour. Some people can burn as much as 810 calories. The routines target the arms, shoulders, abdomen, thighs and butt all in one workout. It will take a few sessions to get the motions down and you may think of quitting after trying it once but kickboxing is totally worth it considering the calories you can burn along with other benefits it can give you.

Types of Kickboxing

There are many styles of Kickboxing and each one emphasizes different techniques. Here are brief descriptions of the different types of kickboxing:

- 1.) Muay Thai - also known as Thai Boxing, this kickboxing style is the most open as it allows strikes with the fists, feet, elbow and knee. Opponents can aim above and below the waist as well as throw strikes from close range in the "clinch" position. This allows for a total body workout and extremely effective fighting style.
- 2.) American Kickboxing - this style of kickboxing uses more rules of traditional boxing than other styles. Punches and kicks are allowed but opponents can only target their strikes above the waist. This is mostly a mix of Boxing and Karate.

3.) San Shou or Sanda - this martial art style originated from the ancient Chinese Wushu fighting style. This form of kickboxing includes techniques including takedowns and throws.

4.) Lethwei - this is a raw form of kickboxing that can be traced back from Burma. It was more brutal before but now the rules are more controlled. The rules are very similar to Muay Thai. This kickboxing style permits head butts, attacks with all limbs, elbow and knee.

5.) Adithada - this kickboxing uses tackling and striking concepts. It also involves a study of pressure points. Adithada is very similar to karate.

6.) Savate – this French kickboxing style that requires the students to wear heavy shoes and prohibits striking with the shin.

BENEFITS OF MUAY THAI

1.) Great full body workout - the reason why more and more people are getting hooked on Muay Thai is that the moves are designed to train the entire body. You do not have to do a set of different routines to make sure that every area of your body is targeted. You are going to sweat like crazy and burn calories like you have never imagined. For you to properly deliver a punch, kick, elbow, or knee you have to work your entire body. With kickboxing, you will learn how to work on your balance and develop muscles you didn't know you had.

2.) Lose weight fast and tone your body – Muay Thai combines different striking techniques with heart-raising cardio routines that will make you burn calories and fat at a fast pace. If you do the kicks and punches along with conditioning drills and rope jumping, you can burn anywhere between 700 and 900 calories in an hour. The cardio element is a very effective way to burn fat. Studies have found evidence that doing aerobic exercises is better at reducing belly fat than resistance training. The toning component of the martial art forces you to engage all the muscles in your body.

3.) Reduce stress - because of Muay Thai's high energy nature, you would be able to punch and kick your stress away in no time. The movements will challenge several core muscle groups. This is very beneficial in conditioning not only your body but your mind as well. Unlike other workout routines with limited movements, Muay Thai will allow you to move your body without limits, and this is considered as a very good stress reliever. People who have been doing Muay Thai have noticed an increase on their energy levels.

4.) Improve your coordination - Muay Thai is not only a good way to drop the pounds, people with posture problems will benefit from it as well. The moves will help strengthen your core and improve your reflexes, flexibility and coordination skills. When you throw punches and perform kicks, you need to concentrate in doing each movement successfully.

5.) Boost your confidence - once you start losing weight and feeling stronger, you are going to be more confident. Exercise releases endorphins, a group of hormones that give us a feeling of well-being. You will feel happier and more confident for several hours after your workout.

BASIC GUIDELINES ON MUAY THAI

Although there is no specific set of rules about who is fit enough to start a Muay Thai routine, it's best to be familiar with the basic guidelines to prevent injuries and get into the swing of things easier. Muay Thai is a high intensity workout that is action packed and fast paced but when you first start, you might need to take things a little bit slower. Here are some important guidelines to keep in mind:

1.) Knowing your current fitness level is very important especially if you haven't been working out for quite some time now. If this is the case, you need to be prepared to take it slower than the advanced students in class. Your body will tell you when it is ready to do more and remember that everyone has started from a lower level and had to work their way up. It's more important to work out at your own pace and do not overexert yourself. Your instructor will know when to push you and has the experience to know how to do this safely.

2.) Even if you are fit enough to do the routines, you have to start with the beginner workout. This should allow you to learn the moves correctly. Don't get too excited and try to do the intermediate moves right away. Classes are structured to build from the fundamentals to build up to more advanced training. For a beginner, it is important to train in a gym or academy with an established program so you learn your fundamentals correctly and do not need to relearn or correct these techniques later.

3.) A major benefit from joining a gym for classes is the motivation you get from a communal program. Before you sign up for a class, try to schedule an appointment with the gym for more information and a prep class. Observing a class can also be beneficial before starting so you are prepared to train. Ask if the gym offers any sort of trial period so you can see the classes for yourself!

4.) Comfort is everything. Always wear something that will not restrict your movement. Go for loose, comfortable clothing that will let you move your arms and legs in all directions. T-shirts are ideal. A high support sports bra is also a must for women. Wear comfortable pants or shorts that allow for a large range of motion. Muay Thai shorts are designed to be short and baggy for comfort and increased range of motion but are not required in most gyms. You will not wear shoes in a legitimate Muay Thai gym. For sanitary reasons, no shoes can be worn on the mats. Flip-Flop sandals are a great item to bring for make it easier if you need to get on and off the mat quickly. Talk to your instructor or a gym official if you have any questions about equipment and the rules your gym might have.

5.) Make sure you stay hydrated by drinking enough water during and after the workout. Your water bottle is your most important piece of equipment for training! You are going to sweat a lot and the last thing you want is to have to wait in line at the water fountain when you need a drink. Bringing your own water bottle will encourage you to drink more during water breaks and not have to wait in line. Keeping your body hydrated will allow your body to work more efficiently.

6.) Do not over train and know when to stop. Overdoing it can cause a lot of problems. Don't overextend or lock your kicks and punches into any position because this can cause problems with your joints and muscles. If you find yourself short of breath, take a few minutes to rest and drink some water. Again, this is where proper instruction really helps keep you from beating yourself up!

7.) Your muscles to repair and rest. You may want to look into protein powder or supplements if you feel you are getting overly tired or sore from working out. Being tired and sore shows you are progressing, so knowing where it is too much can be tricky. Make sure to check in with your instructor if you have questions, they can sometimes give some helpful tips or point you in the best direction for more information.

MUAY THAI GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Muay Thai equipment can be very expensive if you get all the top shelf gear. However, it can be very affordable if you know what to buy and when. Choosing the right equipment is crucial for your safety and performance. Here is a list of the most common gear and equipment used for kickboxing:

1.) Comfortable clothes - always wear comfortable clothes that will let you throw punches and deliver kicks easily. Do not worry too much about looking good because you will be sweating a lot anyway. Your gym may have some sort of uniform to differentiate between skill levels of classes.

2.) Gloves – Gloves add weight to your punches, protect your hand, and are used for defensive shielding. A good pair of gloves should protect your hands while allowing comfortable movements during class. Many seasoned Muay Thai fighters prefer using leather gloves over vinyl gloves for durability; however, vinyl gloves are typically cheaper. While some gyms may use lightweight gloves, Muay Thai requires 16 oz. boxing gloves for competition and many gyms require all their students to use the official gloves for training. A good starting pair of Muay Thai gloves can cost anywhere between \$40 and \$80.

3.) Shin guards - a shin guard or shin pad is worn on the front of a person's shin to protect them from injury. There is a wide variety of shin guards available in the market today. A cotton foam filled elasticated shin guard or a karate style foam dipped shin guard will not be enough padding for Muay Thai. For Muay Thai, you need MMA or Muay Thai shin guards. You can find a decent pair to start out around \$40.

4.) Mouth guards – Check with your school about if your beginner class will have any contact drills where you might need a mouth guard. You can get a “boil and bite mouth guards” which need to be placed in boiling water to become softer to form to your teeth. It is not necessary to get the dentist fit mouth guard that costs hundreds of dollars to participate in class. At the end of the day, they are your teeth and whatever you need to feel safe is the most important.

5.) Headband and elastic tie - for women with longer bangs and hair, do yourself a favor and get your hair out of your eyes and face. This will ensure that you can see properly so you can focus on doing the moves. Workout headbands are fairly cheap and they are available in different styles and colors.

6.) Headgear – If you get into sparring or fighting you will need some additional protection. You may have a difficult time adjusting to your new headgear because of the weight and the decrease to peripheral vision. Kickboxing headgears are usually padded. Before buying one, try it on first to ensure a proper fit. However, if you are not into competitive kickboxing, there is really no need for a headgear.

7.) Training bag - not all kickboxing bags are created equal. If you are planning to kickbox at home, you need a bag that is specifically intended for kickboxing. Using a regular punching bag is not recommended. Muay Thai training bags are the way to go because they are longer. You need a longer bag because in Muay Thai, you use the 8 points of attack including the knees and legs. A punching bag is more or less the waist up of an opponent or target. Obviously, you need a longer training bag to execute the moves properly.

Muay Thai bags are usually made of leather or vinyl. Do not settle for cheap training bags because they will most likely sag within a short period of time. Make an investment and purchase a bag that will endure millions of kicks and punches. If you want to save a little cash, you can fill your own bag.

MUAY THAI MOVES FOR BEGINNERS

Do not let the thought of being inexperienced with kickboxing scare you. Everybody has to start somewhere, right? This martial art has six basic elements: kicking, punching, elbows, knees, clinch work, and footwork. Needless to say, most of the exercises involved will be based from these six elements. Here are some of the most basic moves for beginners:

Basic Muay Thai stance

A stance is the distribution of foot orientation and body positions when defending, attacking or advancing. The first step is to part your legs more than a shoulder width apart. Your lead shoulder and trailing shoulder should form a forty-five degree angle to your target. Your toes will point forward and your knees should be soft while keeping your abdominal muscles tight. Do not lock your knees or elbows during practice. You cannot go on learning different kicks and punches unless you master the basic Muay Thai stance.

Basic Punches

Once you have mastered the basic stance for Muay Thai, it's time for you to learn the basic punches.

Jab - involves a simple punch where you extend your arm straight in front of you. Your body should be in an upright position while throwing jabs.

Cross punch - as the name suggests, you need to punch across your body. Simply put, this is a type of punch that is thrown with the left hand rightwards and with the right hand leftwards. Make sure you keep your knees and toes aligned to avoid injury. Many Muay Thai fighters, as well as other strikers, like to use these first two punches in a sequence. It is the classic "1-2 Punch" combination you may have heard of.

Upper cut punch - to throw this punch, you have to stand in a defense position. Lower your fist as if you are going to punch low and swing it back up through the object you are aiming to hit.

Hook - this is a surprise punch that is performed by turning the core muscles and back then swinging the arm. Your arm should be bent at a 90-degree angle, in an arching motion. This type of punch is thrown to create the most impact on the opponent.

Basic Kicks

Roundhouse kick - also known as swinging kick, this type of kick is done by swinging the leg around in a semicircular motion, striking with the front of the shin. You have to stand with the right side of your body while facing a target (kicking bag). Your knees should be bent while keeping your feet shoulders width apart. When you lift your right knee, point it to the right of the target or kicking bag and pivot your body toward the same direction. Use your right leg to kick the target and then repeat with your other leg.

Front kick – Also known as a foot jab or “teep”, this is a powerful kick that can bring down an assailant quickly. The front kick is very easy to do. Stand facing your target or opponent, lift the knee of your back leg up, and deliver the kick by snapping your leg out with your toes facing upwards. Use the ball of your foot to strike your target. Position your leg back to the same place where you originally chambered (bend your knee and lift it up) it. Setting up in the chamber position will allow you to aim at your target better. It will also help build up much more power when you kick.

Muay Thai Exercises for Strength

If you have been walking or jogging for a couple of months now but you are not shedding off the pounds, maybe it's about time for you to take it up a notch and try a more intense workout routine. Muay Thai is one of the most effective ways to lose weight because it involves high-energy exercises that can make you burn at least 500 calories an hour.

With Muay Thai, you are going to execute punches, kicks, elbows, knees, clinch work, footwork drills and even holding pads will work you out! If you find that the moves are a little hard to follow at first because they are swiftly performed, focus on performing the techniques slower and smoothly and you will find yourself picking up the speed at no time. You may find yourself a little sore after one session but this is completely normal as your body is trying to get used to the high-intensity workout.

What's great about Muay Thai is that it is a complete body workout. The routines target all major muscle groups while improving your balance, focus, aerobic capacity and endurance. You will find that you will be shedding the fat and replacing it with lean muscle in no time. One of the many advantages of doing full body workouts is that they require lower time commitment. You can do the routines two to three days a week and you are good to go. This is perfect for people who hardly have time to go to the gym.

Warm up

It is important to properly prepare yourself for each class. Try not to miss the warm up exercises in your class. Coming into class ten to fifteen minutes late may be tempting if you are looking to make the workout easier, but this crucial part of class is the most important and effective way to prevent injuries. Do yourself a favor and make it to class on time and even come early to do some extra stretches. This is especially important if you have any minor injuries or have very tight muscles. Your in class warm up may include jump roping, shadow boxing (practicing footwork and strikes in a solo free form method), and or other cardio exercises.

Muay Thai Workout

When you are new to Muay Thai, your instructor will show you the basics so you can start your workout. Don't be worried if you get a lot of feedback correcting your technique when you first start. There is a lot to work on and it takes time and repetitions to get it right. You will be taught the basic stance, the basic punches and kicks, some short combinations, and basic footwork.

Once you get the basics down, you can start learning longer combinations, elbow strikes, knees, and the famous Muay Thai clinch. The clinch is a position Muay Thai fighters use to control their opponents by grabbing their upper body in various ways and throwing strikes or by throwing their opponent to the ground.

The calories that you are going to burn will depend on your fitness level and weight. Do not focus too much on the numbers on the scale. Keep in mind that muscle weighs more than fat which means that your weight in number may not drop at the same rate as your clothing size. If your clothes fit better, it means you are on the right track!

MUAY THAI SAFETY TIPS

Muay Thai does not only help you burn a great amount of calories but it can also help you reduce stress and boost your confidence. Attending a class is a fantastic way for you to have fun with the routines while staying motivated. Since Muay Thai is a high-intensity workout, you need to take note of the safety reminders pointed out below to avoid injury:

- 35**
17 Know your limitations. Your body will tell you how far it can go. If it signals you to slow down then take a moment to rest. You do not have to deliver accurate kicks and punches in your first few sessions. Allow yourself to get used to the basics before graduating to more advanced exercises.
- 35**
17 Don't do Muay Thai too often. Start with two workouts per week and then work your way up once you get accustomed to the routines. Other beginners make the mistake of doing too many sessions of Muay Thai without the proper rest and recovery. This can lead to a pulled muscle or strained joint.
- 35**
17 Warm up for 10 to 15 minutes before engaging yourself in a high-energy workout routine or make sure that your program will have a warm up built into the class. This will allow you to awaken all parts of your body that you will use to perform Muay Thai moves successfully.
- 35**
17 Do not overextend your arms and legs because this may cause a serious injury. If you feel pain or discomfort, tell your instructor so they can give you the proper adjustment to correct your techniques.

Muay Thai has become extremely popular over the years because of the benefits it provides to the mind and body. It is a full body workout that can effectively sculpt your body and make you drop the pounds. In addition to that, Muay Thai can help improve blood circulation in all parts of the body. People who have stress-related problems can also benefit tremendously from doing the routines because they are able to release stress in a healthy way.

As with any other workout routine, safety measures should always be practiced. Muay Thai is not a light exercise that anyone can do. Knowing your current fitness level will tell you whether this type of

martial art is for you or not. Make sure that the gym you take classes at uses proper safety precautions.

Many gyms separate students in to different ranks or levels. This has many benefits for the program and the students. You may find your self motivated to work towards getting a higher rank. Finding a multi-level program also has the benefit of keeping the more complicated techniques as well as the sparring or fight drills separated to a different class. Don't worry about joining a gym that has fighters even if you have no desire to fight. Most students, even in gyms with big fight teams, don't fight. It is the norm in Muay Thai to be a student who is just there to get in shape and have some fun. Gyms with fight teams are typically better at reducing injury, teaching proper technique, and getting students in great shape as these are all necessary to having successful fighters. Joining a gym with a fight team can be fun when you go to see your team mates compete in an art you are learning!

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