

Box It Out

Women are stepping into the boxing ring for a fun and effective workout.



There are a ton of fitness trends to try this year, but one of our favorite workouts is a real knockout. Boxing is gaining popularity among women of all ages looking for an exciting way to break a sweat. Boxing is challenging both mentally and physically, building strength, endurance, agility, and empowerment. These days, you can hire a boxing trainer, take a group boxing class, or glove up and work out on a heavy bag or speed bag at your local gym.

Not sure you have what it takes to box? Sumya Anani, a four-time world champion boxer who now teaches boxing and yoga in the Kansas City, Kansas, area, says the first step is to forget your fear! “Women are often afraid they aren’t athletic or strong enough to box, but anyone can start, at any fitness level or age,” says Anani. In fact, she says, “taking up boxing is a great way to *confront* those fears. All you have to do is be open to a challenge.”

Check out some of boxing’s other benefits:

- **It's a great cardio workout.** Few activities are more heart-pumping than jumping rope, a key part of boxing training. Sparring (going up against a trainer or opponent in the ring) can be a great interval workout, with two to three minutes of intense cardio followed by short rests. "That builds cardiovascular endurance," says Anani.
- **It builds muscle tone.** You get a great upper-body workout with jabs, hooks, and uppercuts, helping to sculpt and strengthen muscles.
- **It increases agility.** Boxing requires quick shifting of weight from foot to foot, as well as hand-eye coordination.
- **It boosts confidence.** The feeling of strength and confidence that boxing confers, says Anani, changes the way you carry yourself out in the world. "Women I've trained say that they feel less afraid and vulnerable."

Ready to give boxing your best shot? It's not hard to find a class or gym, but it's smart to ask a lot of questions, go slow to begin with, and listen to your body. "Try different places or trainers, and trust your instincts," says Anani. Soon enough, you'll find the perfect spot.