

FITNESS

KICKBOXING

TO BURN FAT FAST!

By Mike Andreula

Fitness kickboxing is the best workout in the world! While that statement may be subjective on my part, you'd be hard pressed to find any other workout that compares in terms of burning calories, shedding fat, improving cardiovascular fitness and creating lethal muscularity. A one-hour fitness kickboxing workout can burn up to 800 calories, as well as improve balance and flexibility and relieve stress.

In contrast to kickboxing workouts that only involve shadow boxing and aerobic kicking, using a heavy bag actually adds resistance to your training. This provides the substantial added benefit of muscle toning. And you don't have to kick like Chuck Norris to reap the rewards of fitness kickboxing. Any such routine, including the one on the following pages, can be modified to accommodate your own fitness level.

For this particular workout, wear good sneakers that allow you to retain your balance during twists and pivots, and wear loose-fitting shorts. In addition to a heavy bag, you'll also need something to protect your hands. You can use full boxing gloves or half-gloves, which will leave your fingers free. Another option, as the model for this routine uses, is to wear wraps, which are long strips of absorbent cloth that protect your knuckles when you punch, just like gloves do.

Before beginning, be sure to warm up your muscles with a few minutes of jumping rope or jumping jacks. Also thoroughly stretch your arms, legs, wrists and back. During the workout, be sure not to overextend yourself during the kicks and punches. You want to create lethal power without injuring your joints by snapping them out. In addition, discontinue kickboxing if:

- Your legs become fatigued and uncoordinated;
- Any pain becomes evident in your limbs, especially joint pain;
- You experience any shin area pain or discomfort;
- Dizziness occurs or you feel otherwise unable to continue.

Remember, martial artists aren't the only ones benefiting from kickboxing routines these days. Any fitness-minded guy who wants to burn off bodyfat, tone and strengthen his muscles, punch or kick away any stress, or just have fun getting fit will love this workout. Don't just stand there – get kicking!

Mike Andreula is the manager and an instructor at Club KO in Hoboken, N.J., the largest kickboxing facility on the East Coast, boasting 70 heavy bags and classes seven days a week. Club KO also has locations throughout New Jersey and New York; visit www.clubkogyms.com for more information. Andreula is available for personal training and one-on-one classes. Contact him at mike@clubkogyms.com or call 201-963-7774.

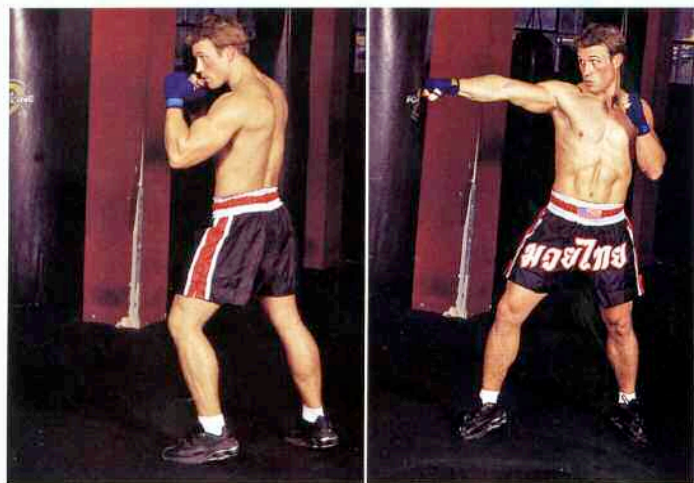
Club K.O. manager
Mike Andreula (left)
practices what he
preaches





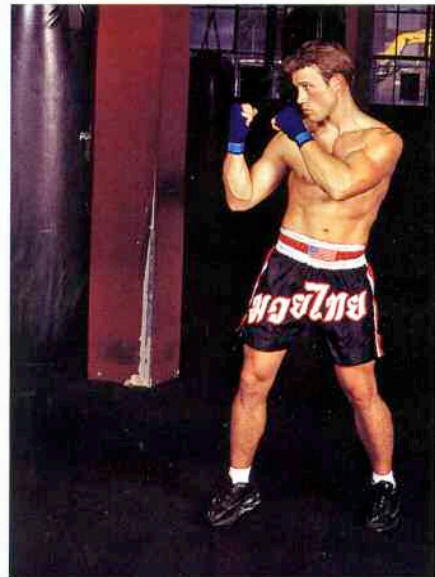
STANCE

First question: Are you right-handed or left-handed? If you are right-handed, you will lead with your left foot. If you're left-handed, you will lead with your right. Always keep your knees "soft" and maintain your weight on the balls of your feet rather than on your heels.



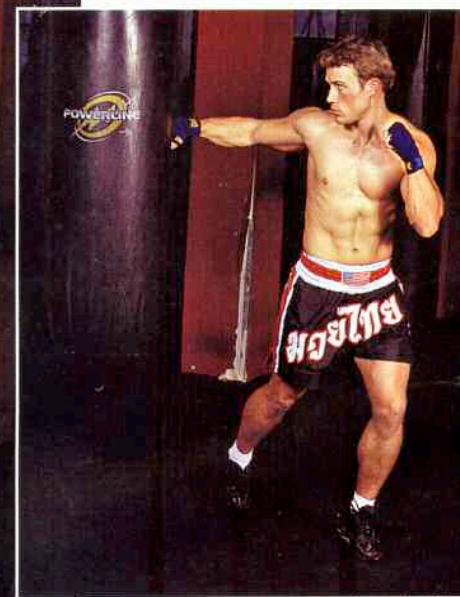
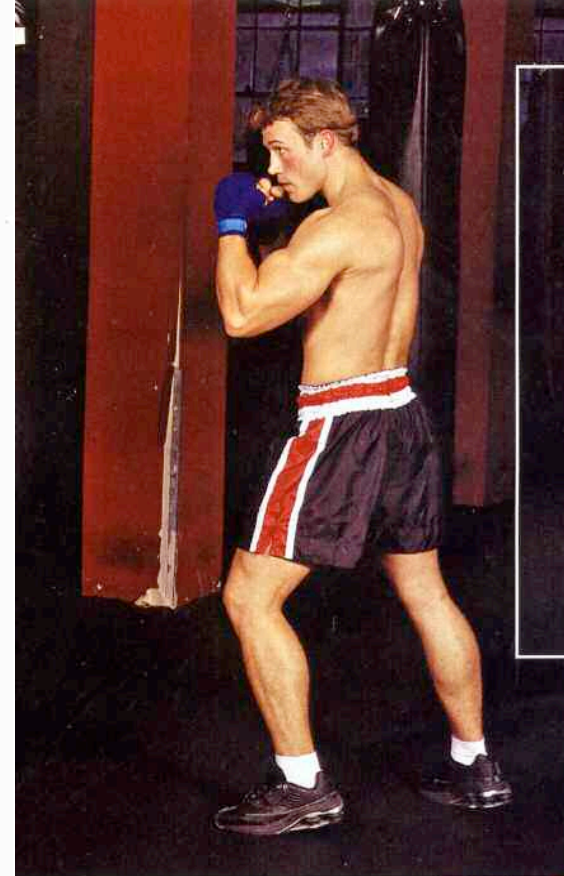
JAB

The jab is considered an outside punch, and is thrown with your lead hand. It is a straight punch that travels from your chin to the target, then back to your chin. You want to achieve full extension, with your front two knuckles landing the punch. The punch is delivered with your whole body acting like a whip. Your lead foot should step in as your hand is extending to cut the distance, as well as transfer energy. Remember, the jab is an exploratory punch, meant to measure the distance from the target or annoy an opponent. Complete 100 jabs with each hand, for 2-3 sets each.



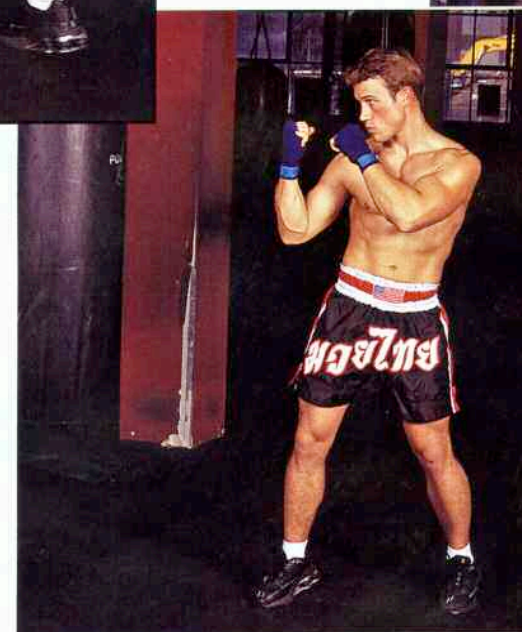
CROSS

The cross is very similar to the jab, but it is thrown with your rear hand. It commits a little more power, so your foot must be practically stomped down in order to prevent you from falling forward. Start in a defensive position, with your hands up. Once again, throw from your chin and then back to your chin. Complete 100 crosses with each hand, for 2-3 sets each.



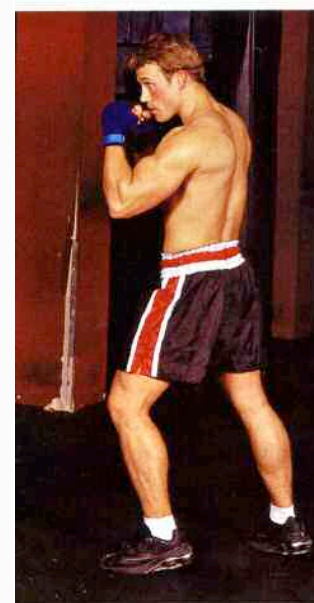
UPPERCUT

The uppercut is also an inside punch which is thrown with your front two knuckles. Start in your defensive stance. The punch starts by bending your knee, keeping your calves tight and your palm facing the ceiling. As you explode up with your calves, thrust your hand upward. At the top, immediately snap your hand back to a defensive stance. Normally, the uppercut would be thrown straight up, but for our purposes it will be thrown on an angle to hit the bag. Complete 100 uppercuts with each hand, for 2-3 sets each.



HOOK

The hook is an inside punch, which means you are toe-to-toe with the bag. The punch is similar to a baseball swing (making this connection helps, because most people are familiar with a baseball swing). The energy is transfer from your lower body into your front two knuckles. The correct motion is to twist your hips and pivot your feet. Your hand should go from your chin into a hooked position, as your hips twist and your feet pivot. The punch should wrap around the bag, landing with your lead knuckles. Then return to defensive stance. Complete 100 hooks with each hand, for 2-3 sets each.



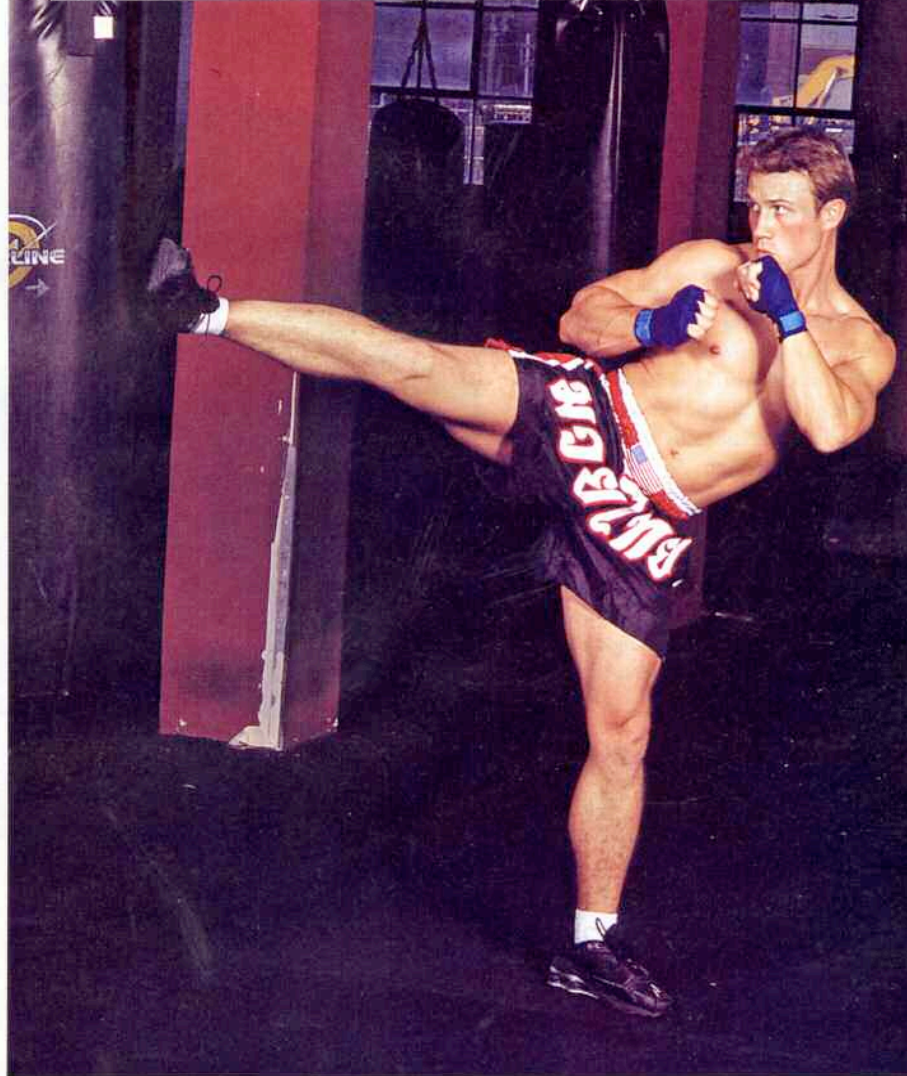
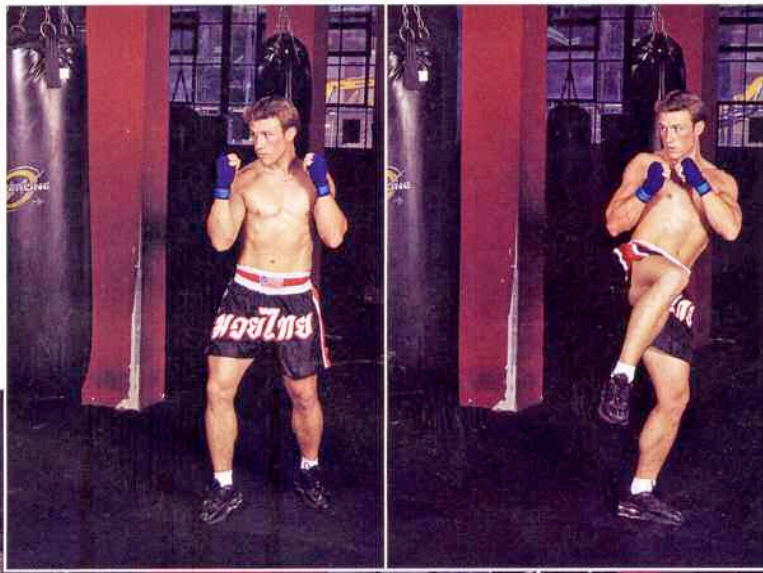
SPINNING BACKHAND

This strike is delivered with the back of your fist. Get in your defensive stance. Leading with your back foot, step to the side of your front foot (your toes and heel should be on the same line). Looking over your shoulder, spin around as you extend your arm, squeezing your triceps out. The strike should have a nice snap to it as you make contact with the bag. Complete 10 spinning backhands with each hand, for 2-3 sets each.

FRONT KICK

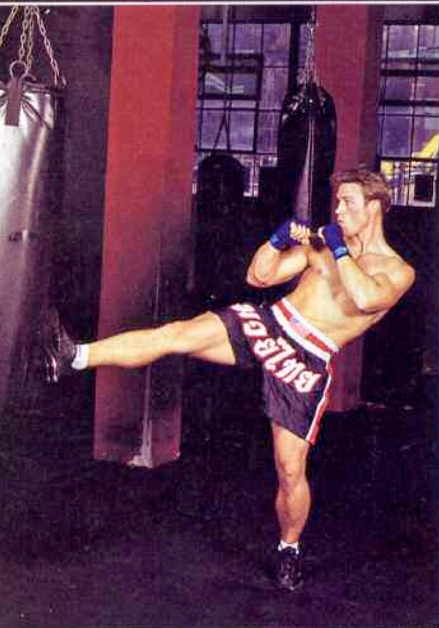
This kick can be broken down into three steps. Begin with your hands up and feet in a balanced stance. Whichever leg you're kicking with, pull your knee up into the chamber position. (The chamber position is used to disguise your kick, but more importantly, to keep your body balanced.) Next, extend your leg forward, using your

foot to strike the target with either the ball of foot or your heel. Then pull your leg back into the chamber position, and put your foot back down. This is done so you are not thrown off balance. Repeat the entire movement. Perform 50 kicks with each leg, for two sets each.



SIDE KICK

This kick can be broken down into three steps. Begin with your hands up and feet in a balanced stance. Whichever leg you're kicking with, pull your knee up into the chamber position. (The chamber position is used to disguise your kick, but more importantly, to keep your body balanced.) Next, lean your upper body back as you extend your leg sideways, using the heel of your foot to strike the target. Then pull your leg back into the chamber position and then drop your foot back to the ground. This is done so you are not thrown off balance. Repeat the entire movement. Perform 50 kicks with each leg, for two sets each.



ROUNDHOUSE KICK

This kick can be the most fun to perform, but it must be done properly. Start with your upper body upright in good posture. The most important step in this kick is the actual first step. Determine which side you're going to strike with. Your opposite foot will step in on an angle, with your weight on the ball of your foot. Keep your knee bent. This is the most important step, because it determines the distance between yourself and the target. For this kick, you are going to hit with the instep of your lower leg; this is where the foot meets the shin. Your toes should be pointed straight out to ensure that they don't get jammed when hitting the target. Your knee should be brought up into a side chamber, then whip your foot out as your opposite foot pivots. If you keep your opposite foot flat, a torque of the knee will happen, which increases the kick's force. Perform 50 kicks with each leg, for two sets each.