BOXING CANADA

NATIONAL COACHING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

INSTRUCTION BEGINNERS

REFERENCE
MATERIAL

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National Coaching Certification Program

BOXING CANADA – INSTRUCTION BEGINNERS

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National Coaching Certification Program

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Acknowledgements

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It has been said that many hands make light work, and the production of the Instruction Beginners Reference Material is proof of that. Boxing Canada would like to thank the team of volunteers who wrote, edited and reviewed the contents of this manual. We would also like to acknowledge the cooperation and financial support from the Coaching Association of Canada and Sport Canada. Coaching development is a lifelong journey and with this manual we wish you success as you begin your career in coaching. For further information on coaching development please contact:

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Introduction

This document is aimed at boxing coaches wanting to learn about teaching the sport to athletes. This reference manual supports the learning of coaches wishing to initiate their practice in a boxing club.

The updates of the reference material will be taken care of by Boxing Canada.

The Collection, Use, and Disclosure of Personal Information

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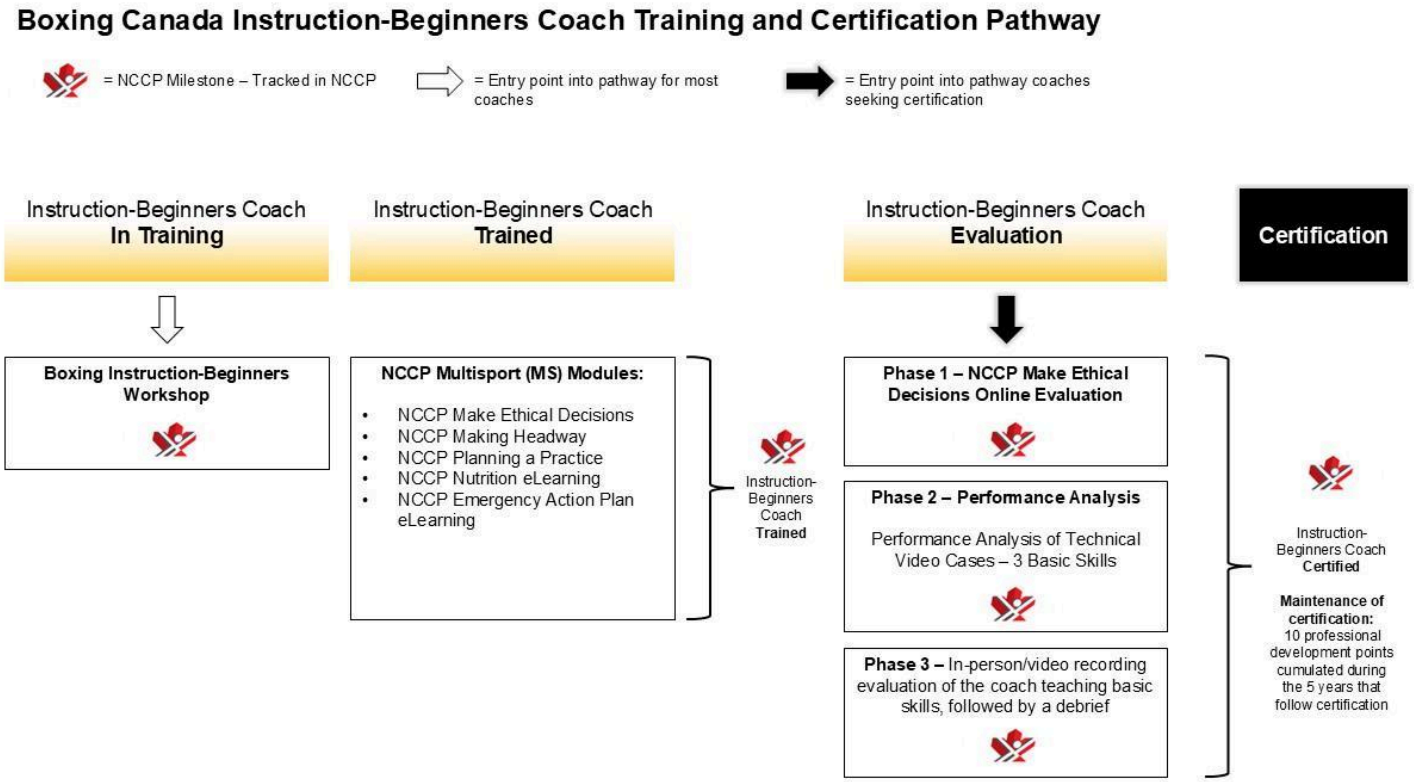
Instruction-Beginners Coach Pathway



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Evaluation Requirements for Instruction-Beginners Certification

Upon successful completion of the evaluation requirements listed in the table below, the candidate will be considered a “Certified Boxing Instruction Beginners” in the NCCP database.

	EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS †	CRITERIA (WHAT WILL BE EVALUATED)	EVALUATION METHODS
	* Make Ethical Decisions (MED)	Apply the NCCP ethical decision-making process correctly.	Online analysis of an ethical scenario using the NCCP MED process.
	Analyze Performance (Basic Skills)	Detect errors made by athletes who are performing basic Boxing skills.	Video analysis of Boxing skills. A link featuring all the skills dealt with during the NCCP Instruction beginners workshop. For each skill, a variety of segments will be provided, ranging from “perfectly executed” to “needing major improvements”. As part of the evaluation, each candidate will be randomly assigned three (3) segments of “skills needing technical corrections”. He or she will be required to complete and submit a written or audio performance analysis of these videotape segments, accompanied by a series of technical corrective measures, consistent with Boxing Canada’s skill analysis model and technical guidelines.
		Correct such errors, consistent with Boxing Canada’s skill development model.	
	Provide Support to Athletes In Training	Ensures that the practice environment is safe.	Submissions of two (2) videos showing the Candidate coaching in his or her Club environment. The focus of each video will be assigned to the candidate from a list of pre-determined themes. Videos must meet the guidelines developed by Boxing Canada relative to format as well as to image and sound quality in order to be acceptable. A debriefing discussion over the phone between the candidate and the evaluator follows the formal observation.
		Implements an appropriately structured and organized practice / training session.	
		Makes interventions that promote learning during the practice / training session.	

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1. The demands of boxing

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches:

- Understand the fundamental nature of the sport of Boxing.
- Use common terminology to describe the various athletic abilities that support performance in sport.
- Appreciate the multifaceted demands of Boxing.
- Recognize the importance of the specific physical and motor athletic abilities that are required to perform.

1.1 The Fundamental Nature of Boxing

Boxing is a dual-contact sport, meaning it is a one-on-one confrontation arranged and conducted according to specific rules.

For competition, boxers are matched according to age, gender, body weight and skill level. Matches are performed in a confined area (the ring), and the boxers move around executing various offensive (attacking) and defensive maneuvers, trying to defeat each other by scoring points for well-placed blows.

In boxing, attack and defense often occur simultaneously. The efforts produced by the athletes are intermittent (i.e., a pause follows each engagement), and their intensity is generally high.

The training done by the boxers must prepare them to:

- Perform a variety of offensive and defensive skills.
- Achieve an optimal level of fitness and physical conditioning.
- Maintain control of their emotions during a match.
- Analyze and study the opposition for intentions or weaknesses, and regulate their actions accordingly, through quick and efficient decision-making.
- Produce learned responses very quickly to particular stimuli or cues made by the opponent.

1.2 Athletic abilities and their importance in boxing

When the boxer executes specific skills, or when he or she is involved in a competition, performance is supported by a variety of factors or *athletic abilitie*s. The term *athletic ability* refers to the aptitude a person has to carry out certain types of efforts, movements, or tasks that support performance in sport. Athletic abilities can be grouped into four general categories: Physical, Motor, Tactical, and Mental. Table 1.2.1 presents a brief description of the *physical* and *motor* athletic abilities. Table 1.2.2 provides examples outlining their importance in Boxing.

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Table1.2.1 – Definitions and key points about athletic abilities

Physical abilities are determined by the rate at which energy and force can be produced by the muscles, and by the range at which the movements can be executed.	**Maximum speed**: The highest rate at which a movement or a series of movements can be executed, or the ability to cover a given distance in the shortest possible time during an all-out effort of very short duration *(8 seconds or less).* **Speed-endurance**: The ability to sustain efforts at near maximum speed for as long as possible *(normally, very intense efforts lasting between 8 and 60 seconds).* **Aerobic stamina**: The ability to sustain a dynamic effort over an extended period of time (normally, efforts lasting several minutes, or even hours). **Note**: Intense efforts lasting between 2 and 10 minutes require a subset of this athletic ability referred-to as "maximum aerobic power". **Maximum strength**: The highest level of tension generated by a muscle or muscle group during a maximum contraction, regardless of the duration of the contraction. **Speed-strength**: The ability to perform a muscle contraction or overcome resistance as fast as possible *(normally, very brief efforts of 1 or 2 seconds).* **Strength-endurance**: The ability to perform repeated muscle contractions at intensities below maximum strength *(normally, 15 to 30 repetitions, or more).* **Flexibility**: The ability to perform movements of large amplitude around a joint without sustaining injury.
Motor abilities support the controlled execution of movements.	**Coordination:** The ability to perform movements in the correct order and with the right timing. **Balance**: The ability to achieve and maintain stability. There are two types of balance relevant in Boxing: (1) **static balance**: adopting a controlled body position in a stable environment (2) **dynamic balance**: maintaining control during movement, and/or stabilizing the body by performing muscular contractions to offset the effect of an external force. **Agility**: The ability to execute movements or to move rapidly, with precision, and with ease.
Tactical abilities support effective decisions.	The ability to analyze a situation and produce a correct response, i.e. one that gives a competitive advantage and/or increases the probability of a good performance.
Mental abilities enable the athlete to be in the proper state of mind to perform successfully.	**Goal setting:** The ability to identify clear goals and priorities that will guide future actions and decisions. **Concentration:** The ability to pay attention to what is important in a given situation and avoid negative influences or distractions. **Emotional control**: The ability to consciously maintain a high level of control over one's feelings when in stressful conditions.

Note: In this document, the focus will be on basic boxing skills as well as on the motor and tactical athletic abilities that support performance. Methods for developing the physical and mental athletic

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abilities will be dealt with in the NCCP multisport modules and Boxing Canada's Competition Introduction Reference Manual.

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Table 1.2.2 Overview of the physical and motor abilities required to perform in boxing, and of their importance

Importance in Boxing	Physical Abilities							Motor Abilities	
	High	Moderate	Moderate to high	Moderate (relative to body weight)	Very high	Very High	Moderate to High	Very high	Very High
Examples of Boxing situations requiring this athletic ability…	Boxers do not sprint or move their body very quickly between two points, like in many other sports. However, they must execute a variety of fast movements, and speed supports performance in moves such as: footwork, blocks, parries, punches, combinations, etc.	Speed-endurance allows the boxer to (1) sustain the production of efforts at very high intensity lasting 10 seconds or more during certain phases of a fight; (2) execute many repetitions of certain movements throughout a fight, without a marked decrease in their speed (i.e. punches; jabs; etc.).	Aerobic power and endurance help the boxer accomplish high volumes of training, sustain a high level of intensity throughout a fight, and recover quicker from training and competition.	Strength is required in the hands, arms, shoulders, torso, core, and legs. Along with speed, strength is necessary to generate powerful punches. An adequate level of muscular strength also contributes to protecting the boxer's body and articulations against injuries that could result from the opponent's blows.	Speed strength allows the gloved hand to be accelerated very quickly when performing a punch, a jab, a block, etc.	Strength -endurance allows the boxer to execute many repetitions of certain movements throughout a fight, without a marked decrease in the amount of muscular tension that can be generated each time (i.e. punches; jabs; etc.).	Flexibility allows the boxer to perform each offensive or defensive movement with the required amplitude. It also helps to protect specific body parts against injuries such as muscle tears that can occur while performing very quick movements, or during misses.	Coordination is a critical motor ability in boxing. It supports nearly every boxing skill because an appropriate position and sequence are almost always required. It comes into play in actions such as the pivot, the punch, footwork, combination moves, parries, etc.	The success of nearly all boxing skills depends upon the stability of the boxer's stance. If a boxer loses balance even momentarily, he/she is in no position to attack or defend and becomes extremely vulnerable.

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Image 1.2.3 below illustrates many of the athletic abilities that are involved in Boxing:

- Skill
- Balance
- Coordination
- Reaction and decision-making
- Speed of movement
- Power (speed-strength)
- Flexibility
- Concentration and focus

Image 1.2.3- Two boxers in action in a bout

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2. Long-Term Development in Boxing

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches:

- Appreciate the importance of taking a long-term approach in developing young boxers.
- Gain insight into how growth and maturation can impact the training of specific athletic abilities.
- Become familiar with the key stages of Boxing Canada's Long-Term Development (LTD) model.
- Realize that the focus of training changes given the specific stages of the boxer's development.

2.1 What is LTD?

Given the fundamental nature and the demands of the sport of Boxing, a logical and well-planned path is required to develop a healthy, balanced, and successful boxer who will enjoy the sport, and wish to remain involved over many years.

Long Term Development (LTD) is a model outlining the specific training and competitive activities that are deemed the most effective in developing a successful athlete over several years. The model is based on a seven stage progression, with each stage having a specific relationship to the important biological, psychological and social development periods in a person's life. A fundamental principle behind the LTD model is that *sport programs and activities must be tailored to the rate at which athletes grow and mature*.

The key points pertaining to each LTD stage in Boxing are outlined in Boxing Canada's Long Term Development manual. Important aspects of the LTD model relate to the:

1. Specific times in the life of the developing athlete when it is most effective to work on specific athletic abilities such as coordination, balance, agility, skills, speed, endurance, strength, etc.
2. Major differences that exist between younger athletes regarding the developmental process, and the implications this has on training.
3. Types of training and competitive activities that should be part of an athlete's program throughout the developmental process.

2.2 Why an LTD model in boxing?

LTD is about offering optimal training, competition and recovery programs and activities throughout an athlete's career, particularly in relation to the important maturation years of young athletes, so that they can reach their full potential throughout all stages of their career.

To achieve this goal, it is critical to clearly articulate to coaches, parents, administrators and the Boxing community in Canada what a long-term approach to training and preparation means, and what should be emphasized at each stage of the boxer's development.

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Applying the principles and guidelines of the LTD model should help Boxing to address some of the current shortcomings of its development system, including:

- boxers lacking fundamental athletic abilities
- specialization occurring too early in many instances
- too many competitions, too soon in the career of many boxers
- adult training models superimposed on adolescent boxers
- male boxers training models superimposed on females

Boxing needs to create an *integrated system* that will enable more:

- opportunities for young people to participate in Boxing
- boxers staying involved in the sport for longer
- boxers achieving their aspirations through a higher standard of performance

2.3 Developing boxers: what to train and when

By and large, Instruction Beginner coaches will be working with athletes in the *Fundamentals*, *Learn to Box*, and *Train to Train* stages. These are critical stages for acquiring and developing basic boxing techniques, refining boxing skills, developing physical and motor abilities and providing a positive, fun environment so that the athletes grow to love the sport and want to remain involved on a long-term basis.

Instruction Beginner coaches may also work with participants who are in the *Active for Life* stage, and who choose boxing as a recreational, personal development, and/or fitness activity.

“Optimal windows of trainability” relate to a precise period in the athlete’s life during which his or her body is particularly receptive to a specific training stimulus, and when the response to training is therefore very good. Key points include:

- Athletic abilities may be trained at any age, and some gains will always be observed as a result of training. However, the magnitude and the rate at which the adaptations and the gains occur are not the same throughout a person’s life. To give athletes all the opportunities they need and deserve to develop their athletic potential fully, certain types of training must be emphasized at certain stages of their development.
- For some athletic abilities such as coordination, agility, and balance, the “optimal windows of trainability” are similar in boys and girls, so chronological age can be used as a point of reference. For the above-mentioned abilities, the critical years are early childhood. If the appropriate opportunities are provided, a solid foundation can be established in the area of motor development, which will be critical for athletic success in later stages of development.
- Once growth spurts begin, the critical times for training speed, aerobic stamina, and strength vary between males and females. For these athletic abilities, developmental age, not chronological age, should be the main point of reference when determining if the athlete is ready to begin a highly focused training program.

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3. Safety in boxing

The purpose of this chapter is to help coaches be able to:

- Appreciate some of the risk factors associated with the sport of Boxing.
- Apply appropriate safety precautions and measures in group coaching situations.

3.1 Risk factors

By their very nature, most sports present some risk of injury for the participants. As a demanding combative sport, Boxing is no exception.

One of the key responsibilities of the boxing coach is to manage the potential risks that present themselves during practice or competition. To do so, the coach must be constantly aware of the risk factors involved with the sport and take precautions to reduce and control these risks.

The main risk factors are listed in the following table. Specific measures to deal with them will be outlined in the following sections.

Table 3.1.1 Main risk factors in the sport of boxing

CATEGORY	THESE RISK FACTORS RELATE TO …	EXAMPLES AND APPLICATION TO BOXING
ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS	The weather and/or its effects on the site or location where the sport takes place	• Extreme heat and humidity.
EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES RISKS	The quality and operating conditions of the equipment and the facilities	• Ill-fitting helmet. • Laces not inserted into gloves. • Debris or obstacles on the gym floor.
HUMAN RISKS	The participants and the people who are associated with them, such as parents, coaches, officials, and event organizers. Human risks may also be related to a participant's individual characteristics (e.g. height, weight, level of physical preparation, ability) or behaviour (e.g. carelessness, panic, aggression). Human factors related to coaches include their training and experience, their supervision of the participants, as well as their decisions they make about situations in which they place the participants.	• Matching participants whose height, body weight, and/or fitness levels are significantly different. • Matching participants of uneven experience or ability level; for instance, a boxer whose defensive skills are insufficiently developed who would be paired with another who has a wide range of attacking moves. • Uncontrolled aggressiveness by a participant.

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3.2 Safety precautions to reduce environmental risk factors

Boxing is predominantly an indoor activity. For this reason, many of the environmental risk factors that can come into play in outdoor sports and activities, such as rain, lightning, very high or low temperatures, generally do not apply.

However, boxers may perform some of their training outside. When extreme environmental conditions are present (e.g. heat and humidity; cold and wind), the safety measures outlined in the NCCP multisport module entitled Planning a Practice should be implemented, for more information refer to the Air quality and outdoor sport safety module found in the NCCP Locker

An athlete's performance may become impaired as a result of dehydration. Boxing is a very demanding sport, and participants may sweat profusely and become dehydrated during indoor training. An adequate temperature should therefore be maintained at all times in the gym (approximately 20 C) in order to avoid premature fatigue of the athletes. Each boxer should also have a bottle of fluids readily available and be encouraged to drink regularly to replenish bodily fluids. Hydration breaks should also be incorporated into each training session.

3.3 Safety precautions to reduce facility and equipment risk factors

The Boxing Gym
The gym is a boxer's workshop where he/she learns how to master the skills of the sport, and condition his/her body for the stress of competition. The gym is the primary training site of the boxer therefore coaches must ensure the facility is safe.

In certain circumstances, the gym floor may become slippery, which can cause injuries such as falls and sprains. Similar consequences may occur if there are obstacles or debris on the floor. Coaches should inspect the gym before each session and ensure the training surface is clean and clear of any debris or obstacles.

Adequate lighting should also be maintained in the gym to ensure optimal visibility by participants. Heavy bags, wall bags, and double-end bags are commonly used to help the boxer improve his or her repertoire of punches. All suspended fittings and springs should be checked before each session, as accidents or injuries can occur when using defective gym apparatus.

Gym equipment
Table 3.3.1 lists various pieces of equipment commonly found in boxing gyms, and briefly describes how they can be used in training. Many gyms also have special areas where boxers can perform training exercises using mats, benches, dumbbells, barbells, Swiss balls, medicine balls, etc.

The Boxer's Equipment
The boxer must wear athletic clothing and footwear that fits and are clean. This includes:

1. clean training t-shirt or singlet
2. trunks and socks
3. running shoes or boxing boots

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The protective equipment worn by boxers is listed and shown in table 3.3.3.
All pieces of protective equipment must be of the right size and correctly adjusted. Coaches should regularly inspect their athletes' equipment to ensure it is in good condition and fits adequately. Athletes should wear their protective equipment whenever they are engaged into a boxing activity with a partner

Table 3.3.1 Equipment commonly found in boxing gyms

Heavy Bags	Heavy bags come in different sizes and weights. Heavy bags are essential for boxers to practice their repertoire of punches. Although the bag cannot hit back, the boxer should always be conscious of his/her defensive positioning when working on the heavy bag.
Wall Bags	As their name implies, these bags are fixed to a wall. They are particularly useful for developing combinations consisting of straight arm punches.
Focus Pads	The terms "pads", "focus pads", "target pads", "punch mitts" are used to describe this equipment, and reflect the various methods and styles in using them. Pads are a vital coaching tool and can also be used as a means of putting training stress upon the boxer. On the pads the boxer can practice his/her skills before putting them to the test in the ring.
Maise/Bean Ball	This pear-shaped leather bag is used to practice a variety of punches with the accent on speed rather than power. The bean bag can be used to teach your boxer to punch at the target. If the boxer is punching properly, the bag will have minimal movement.
Skipping or Jumping Rope	Jumping or skipping ropes are commonly used to support a boxer's conditioning. They can be used to enhance coordination, agility, quickness, footwork, and aerobic endurance. Ropes should be used with the length adjusted to suit the height of the individual. Beginners should be encouraged to persevere with what can be a difficult skill to learn and master initially. With regular practice, however, they will progress to more advanced skills such as *rope crossing* and *double jumping*.
Mirrors	In the gym, a wall-mirror is a useful aid for boxers to perform shadow boxing drills, and to check their stance, hand positioning and technique (Image 3.3.2). The boxer's

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	reflection provides instant feedback about what the opponent would see during a match.

Note: Although some clubs supply bag gloves, headgears, and other pieces of training and protective equipment, the boxer should be encouraged to have his or her own equipment. (see the Boxer's Equipment section).

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Image 3.3.2 - A group of boxers using a mirror for shadow boxing
Each athlete is positioned so he or she can have a clear view of himself or herself performing boxing-specific movements.

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Competition Headgear

Sparring Headgear

Cup protectors (males)

Cup protectors (females)

Chest protectors for female boxers

Personally fitted mouth guard

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Fight gloves	Bag gloves	Sparring gloves

Particular safety considerations applying to gloves and to mouth guards are outlined below.

Headgears

There are two types of protective headgear: those used in competition, and those used in training. Headgears used in competition must meet the new World Boxing Organization standards. There are several models of training headgear available on the market, but these are not governed by regulations. Club managers should, however, ensure that headgears used during training matches are made of protective material with a high density and that they are designed to offer optimal protection to the head and cheeks.

In training, athletes should always wear headgear when performing exercises with a partner. In competition, all athletes must wear a headgear that complies with WBO standards with the exception of boxers in the Elite – Men category who do not wear one during international competitions sanctioned by the WBO.

Gloves

There are three types of gloves used in boxing:

1. fight gloves (used in competition)
2. sparring gloves (used when training with a partner), and
3. bag gloves (used to train on bags)

Regardless of the type, all gloves must be of the appropriate size and weight. The weight of competition gloves is 10-12 ounces depending on the size of the boxer. For exhibition matches 16 oz gloves are used.

The weight of sparring gloves can be 14, 16, or 18 ounces. The purpose of sparring gloves is to protect the boxer and his or her partner, and for this reason they have more padding. As a general rule, smaller boxers wear 14-oz. sparring gloves, 16 and 18-oz. sparring gloves are generally used by heavier boxers. However, a boxer who is strong and a hard hitter may use 16 or 18 oz sparring gloves, even though he or she may be relatively small.

Clubs may supply bag gloves however; boxers should be encouraged to buy their own as this will ensure that gloves are of the appropriate size and weight and fit properly. Also, because athletes with different hand sizes use “club gloves”, the quality of the padding can be compromised which can lead to incorrect punching and to injuries to the hands and/or wrists.

In a group situation, all laces should be pushed down inside the glove before the gloves are put on or taped. Velcro wristed gloves are ideal for group coaching and eliminate any danger to the eyes from flying laces.

Mouth guards

The mouth guard is a vital piece of equipment used to prevent mouth and jaw injuries. Clamping down on the mouth guard will immobilize the jaw and will also cushion the impact of punches. This will help to prevent teeth chipping and lacerations inside the mouth.

Mouth guards are a must for sparring and partner drill activities. Boxers should be encouraged to purchase the best boxing mouth guards available.

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Bandages
Bandages help to support the bones of the hand while lessening excessive impact to the hands and wrists. Hands should be bandaged to reduce the risks of wrist sprains and metacarpal damage.

Appendix 1 shows the proper procedure for bandaging the boxer's hands.

3.4 Safety precautions to reduce human risk factors

The following human risk factors are dealt with in this section:

- Group Size
- Participants' Attitude, Behaviour and Discipline
- Health Status of the Participants
- Prohibited Blows
- Matching of Partners
- Group Control and Management
- Progressions
- Sparring
- Physical preparation

Group Size
The number of boxers involved in a group training session should be determined by the size of the space being used. Boxers working in pairs must have the freedom to move without risk of accidently colliding into other members.

Given the size and configuration of the gym, it is ultimately the responsibility of the coach to set a limit to the number of participants who can train together at any one time.

Participant's Attitude, Behaviour and Discipline
One of the guiding principles to promote the enjoyment of boxing to a group of beginners is the exclusion, where humanly possible, of pain and discomfort during the early learning stages. Participants should feel good about themselves and what they are accomplishing in the gym. It is essential, therefore, to ensure that each participant has a clear understanding of the Club's philosophy, and the coaching staff display the appropriate attitudes and behaviours.

To achieve this, constant discipline is necessary within the group to protect the less experienced boxers, and to ensure that advantage is not taken of them by misguided participants whose behaviour could be unethical, for instance through a misuse of their superior skill or experience while sparring. The coach must encourage good sportsmanship and conduct on the part of every boxer.

Given the nature and the demands of the sport of boxing, there should be zero tolerance for bullying attitudes or behaviours. It is also important that everyone in the group accepts that, at no time outside the gym or competition ring, will he or she make inappropriate use of boxing skills.

Although they are not necessarily safety-related, other elements of discipline to instill in the group include social aspects such punctuality, respect and politeness, and responsible behaviours which help

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the coach's task considerably if adhered-to by the participants. For more information, consult the NCCP Creating a Positive Sport Environment course.

The following table outlines an example of a Boxing Code of Conduct that could be presented to beginner boxers. Coaches and athletes should engage in open discussions about the specific implications of each statement, and coaches should be clear about their expectations and about the consequences in case of infraction or non-respect by an athlete.

Table 3.4.1 Sample code of conduct for club boxers

AT ALL TIMES, I MAKE COMMITMENT TO DO THE FOLLOWING TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY:
1. Listen to the coaches and apply their instructions in a timely manner.
2. Do my best in training and in competitions.
3. Be courteous and display a positive attitude towards the others and the sport.
4. Wear all my protective equipment, verify that it is in good condition and well adjusted.
5. Respect all the rules in training or in competition, and never attempt to execute an illegal or forbidden blow or move.
6. Never attempt to injure another boxer deliberately.
7. Never use techniques or moves that are too advanced for my training partner or could represent an unfair challenge for him or her.
8. Remain in control of my emotions and actions.
9. I am refraining from using my boxing skills outside the gym.
10. Use gym equipment correctly, safely, and in a responsible manner.
11. Report any injury or health-related condition that could impact my boxing to the coach.
12. Be ready on time.

Health Status of the Participants

Each boxer registering with Boxing Canada must pass an annual medical examination. At the time of weighing in for a competition, a boxer is also required to go through a pre-bout medical examination. At any time during the boxing program, the coach should not hesitate to request a full medical examination if he or she has doubts about the health status of a participant.

In addition, athletes should be encouraged to report injuries or medical conditions to the coach before each session. The coach should then decide whether or not the participant can be involved in the activities or make adjustments to accommodate the particular condition of the athlete.

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Prohibited Blows

Coaches must be clear with their boxers that prohibited blows are totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. These blows are against the rules, reflect a complete lack of sportsmanship, and can lead to serious injuries. Table 3.4.2 outlines a few key points concerning prohibited blows, including potentially dangerous consequences. This information should be discussed with the boxers.

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Table 3.4.2 Some prohibited blows and their potential consequences

PROHIBITED BLOWS	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES
Blows with the inside or the edge of the glove or with the open glove	These blows, especially to the face, tear the skin and may cause bleeding wounds (eyebrow injuries, etc.) which, in turn, may result in the interruption of the match and the disqualification of the guilty boxers. These wounds are often relatively slight, but they are completely unnecessary. However, many more serious injuries can be caused to an eye it is hit with the thumb.
Butting	Butting is hitting the opponent's face or chin with the head. It is a most serious infringement of the rules. Dangerous wounds, and in some cases fractures (jaw, nose, etc.) may result of butting.
Butting while ducking	When attacking or defending themselves, some boxers have the habit of crouching so low that they can hit their opponent below the belt with their head. See below for more information.
Low blows or blows below the belt	The "belt" is taken to mean a line at the level of the edge of the hip bone through the navel. Blows below the belt are forbidden, and intentional low blows are strictly punished. All blows below the belt are extremely painful, and they can lead to serious injuries to the reproductive organs. The wearing of protectors is compulsory to protect the boxer against the risk of such injuries.
Blows to the kidneys	These blows are strictly prohibited as there is a risk of grave injuries and sometimes permanent damage to the kidneys (rupture of the kidney, hemorrhage, chronic problems, etc.).
Pivoting or swinging blows	These blows are delivered as cutting blows with the forearm against the neck and may result in the fracture of the spinal cord.

Matching of Partners

During training and simulated bouts, it is critical that boxers are properly matched. Participants must be paired according to the following criteria: size, ability level, experience, and fitness. Age and gender may also need to be considered.

One of the most important points to keep in mind when coaching boxers of any age group is that no athlete should ever be faced with an attack for which he/she has not learnt an adequate defense. Overmatching athletes in the gym or in competition is irresponsible, as it could lead to serious injuries, and can be a major cause of discouragement on the part of the less skilled or experienced boxer.

Group Control and Management

Teaching combat sports requires constant vigilance by the coach, as well as a certain formality to ensure an adequate level of control prevails at all times over the group. For instance, the coach must ensure that the behaviour of participants always meets expectations, and that drills are done as instructed. Boxers must pay attention to certain signals, and all activities should stop immediately upon request by the group leader.

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The coach must be careful not to involve certain participants in skills or types of punches that constitute a danger at the stage of learning. It is recommended to group the boxers by ability level, so that each group can focus on skills that are adapted to their experience and learning rate.

To assist in ensuring adequate control and supervision, each ability group should also have a leader. In addition, each pair within the group should be encouraged to help his/her partner and to provide his/her own insight into the skills being practiced.

Progressions

A paramount safety principle in Boxing is that a participant should never be involved in a competition until he or she is deemed sufficiently skilled and fit.

In training, specific progression should be used in the teaching of attacking and defense skills. As mentioned previously, no boxer should be faced with an attack for which he/she has not learnt an adequate defense. During the early stages of learning, the emphasis must therefore be on teaching the correct stance and fundamental defensive movements.

For beginners to acquire and develop a sound technique, boxing skills should be taught in the progressive sequence outlined in Chapter 5.

Sparring

Sparring is a highly specific form of training in which two boxers work in the ring to refine their skills and improve their stamina. The following are key safety points that apply to sparring:

- Boxers should engage in sparring sessions only when deemed skilled enough by the coach.
- Boxers must wear all their protective equipment during a sparring session, including sparring gloves, head guard, mouth guard, and if appropriate a groin guard.
- All sparring sessions should involve boxers who are suitably paired in experience, ability, and fitness level.
- All sparring should take place under the direct supervision of a registered coach. The coach must be in complete control at all times, and make sure that the boxers are working at a level that is appropriate for learning.
- At the initial stage of boxing development, only technical sparring should be permitted.
- A boxer should never progress to an “open” sparring unless the coach is satisfied that the boxer possesses the appropriate skills.
- The training partner must not be allowed to throw punches directly to the head or body until the learning boxer has mastered all the fundamental defensive skills. In the early stages of sparring, the palm of the gloved hand should be used as the target to simulate punches to the head.
- When the boxer’s defensive skills are deemed adequate, the coach should carefully integrate the “whole” target area into the sparring activities.

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Physical Preparation
General and specific fitness training activities must be incorporated into the boxing program to reinforce the develop of the various athletic abilities needed to support boxing performance.

A fit boxer will perform better, be able to train more effectively, and will also recover faster. Skill execution and technique tend to deteriorate with fatigue making a suitably conditioned boxer less at risk of being injured in training or competition.

Section 1 of this manual identifies the key physical performance factors involved in boxing. Section 7 outlines sample training activities to develop motor skills that support performance in Boxing. Physical preparation and conditioning for Boxing will be dealt with as part of the Competition Introduction manual.

3.5 Emergency procedures

An adequately maintained first aid box is a must for all boxing gyms. There should also be at least one individual qualified in the area of first aid present at all times in the gym.

Given the nature of the sport of boxing, each gym must have a thorough emergency action plan (EAP) in case of accident requiring professional assistance. The EAP is a plan designed to assist coaches in responding quickly and effectively to emergency situations. The idea behind having such a plan prepared in advance is that it will help group leaders respond in a clear-headed way if an emergency occurs. For more information on EAP's, consult the NCCP Emergency Action Plan course.

3.6 Injuries to the head

Head injuries and concussions can occur during training or competitions. Because of the potentially grave consequences, coaches must take certain precautions and should enforce strict safety measures when dealing with head injuries.

For more information on how head injuries, consult the NCCP Making Head Way in Sport course.

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3.7 Safety considerations in boxing: Summary

The following tables present a summary of the key points concerning safety and risk management discussed in this section.

TABLE 3.7.1 – Main safety measures to reduce the risks of injuries in boxing

RISKS	SAFETY MEASURES TO REDUCE RISK FACTORS
FACILITIES	• Gym floor is kept clean, dry, and free of obstacles. • All suspended gym equipment (bags) is inspected before each session.
EQUIPMENT	• In addition to athletic clothing and footwear, boxers must wear specific pieces of protective equipment to reduce the risks of injuries. Those include: o personal headgear for competition and training o personal cup protector o chest protector (female boxers) o personally fitted mouth guard o bag gloves o spar gloves • The boxer's equipment is regularly inspected to ensure proper fit and adjustment, and must be worn whenever the athlete is engaged into boxing situations with a partner. • Laces are inserted into gloves to avoid eye injuries, and gloves with Velcro attachments are used whenever possible. • Hands are bandaged to reduce risks of wrist sprains and metacarpal damage.
HUMAN FACTORS	• Group size is controlled during training to avoid collisions between boxers and to ensure coaches can offer adequate supervision. • A philosophy is in place within the club: o the rules of Boxing are taught, and must be respected at all times o boxers with more experience must refrain from using their superior skill in an unfair manner when paired with less experienced boxers o boxers are to remain in control of their emotions and behaviours at all times o boxers must show respect to their partner or their opponent o aggressive behaviours, attitudes, and bullying are not tolerated in the club • Participants are not involved in any competition until they are deemed sufficiently skilled and fit. • During training and simulated bouts, participants are paired according to size, ability level, fitness, experience. • Specific progressions are used when teaching attacking and defence skills. • The training partner is not allowed to drive blows to the head and to the body until the learning boxer has mastered all the fundamental defensive skills. • General and specific fitness training activities are incorporated into the boxing program to reinforce the body.
INJURIES	• An emergency action plan is in place in case of a serious injury in the gym. • Athletes must report injuries or medical conditions to the coach before each session. • Injured athletes are not permitted to compete; depending on the nature of the injury, training activities may be adjusted or put on hold until the athlete has recovered. • Return to training is done progressively following an injury. • Specific procedures are in place in the case of injuries to the head and concussions.

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TABLE 3.7.2 –Important boxing rules related to safety in competition

THERE ARE SPECIFIC RULES CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS IN BOXING	
EQUIPMENT	• The boxers must wear all the protective equipment required: head gear; mouthpiece; athletic suspender and protective cup; female chest protector (optional), competition gloves - 10 or 12 ounces depending on the athlete's weight division.
TYPE OF BLOWS ALLOWED	• No unfair blows can be given (i.e. with the inside of the gloves; below the belt; in the kidneys; back of the head or neck; hitting while holding the opponent; hitting while the opponent is down; kneeing over the opponent; hitting with the head).
DECISIONS BY THE REFEREE	• A qualified Referee must be present in the ring to make decisions about the proper conduct of the fight; one of key aspects he or she is responsible for is the prevention of injury.
LENGTH OF ROUNDS	• The length of rounds will be determined according to age and experience and weight as per Boxing Canada rules.
APPROPRIATE MATCHING OF OPPONENTS	• Participants are matched in categories, according to body weight.
	• The bout is stopped if one boxer is clearly at a disadvantage and could be seriously injured by his or her opponent.

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4. Teaching principles and guidelines

Note: This section outlines some basic teaching principles that have been proven effective for coaches. Boxing coaches will be exposed to these principles in greater detail, and to several other aspects of teaching, when they attend the NCCP multisport module about Teaching and Learning.

4.1 Structure of a training session

Roles and Responsibilities of Instruction Beginner coaches
During the early stages of their involvement with a Club, Instruction Beginner coaches are *not* expected to be responsible for the *planning* of the boxing program, or even of specific boxing sessions. This should be the responsibility of the Head Coach.

However, Instruction Beginner coaches must be familiar with the *structure* and *components* of a well-organized training session, as well as with the *general characteristics* of the activities that should be offered in each part of the session. This information will help the coach to effectively implement and manage the activities they are responsible for leading.

Note: Before the session begins, the Head Coach or the Instruction Beginner should always:

- *Inspect the gym, and check the equipment for defects*
- *Organize the equipment*
- *Greet each athlete*
- *Assess the energy level of each athlete*

The Parts of the Session and the General Characteristics of the Activities
Table 4.1.1 shows the *structure* and the *components* of a well-organized session, as well as the *general characteristics* of the activities that should be offered. These aspects are discussed extensively in the NCCP Multisport module entitled Planning a Practice.

Sample exercises and games that can be used for a boxing warm-up are listed in Appendix 2.

Order of the Activities in the Main part of the Session
Often, the main part of a session will feature several activities aimed at developing a variety of skills or athletic abilities.

Paying attention to the order in which these activities are scheduled will increase the probability of achieving the desired training goals.

Some general guidelines to that effect are offered in Table 4.1.2.

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Table 4.1.1 Structure of a training session and general characteristics of the activities

Structure of a Training Session and Key Elements of Each Part
1- INTRODUCTION **Duration**: variable, but short (2-3 minutes). **Purpose**: to greet athletes and let them know what will be taking place. • Review the goals of the practice and the activities planned • Give general safety instructions regarding the activities planned
2- WARM P.-UP **Duration**: 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the length of the session **Note**: A longer warm-up may be necessary if very high-intensity efforts will be performed in the main part. **Purpose**: to prepare the body for the demands of the main part. The warm-up should be in two parts: General warm-up: • General, dynamic exercises or games to loosen muscles and raise body temperature **Note**: Stretching to improve flexibility is <u>not</u> recommended for warming-up as muscles are not yet warm Boxing-specific warm-up: • Brief activities that athletes already know and mimic some movements that will be performed in the main part (may even be the same activity, but at lower intensity) • A gradual increase in intensity that will not tire the athletes **Note**: There should be a quick transition between the end of the warm-up, the explanations/instructions given for the first activities of the main part, and the activities themselves
3- MAIN PART **Duration**: Variable; usually 30-60 minutes, or more **Purpose**: to engage athletes in activities that will help them to improve skills and fitness. 3 or more activities linked in the proper order: • Activities that challenge the athletes so that they can learn and improve while enjoying themselves • Athletes engaged most of the time in an activity (i.e. not standing around or waiting in line) • Athletes allowed lots of practice for each activity • Activities that are adapted to the age, fitness, and ability levels of the athletes
4- COOL-DOWN **Duration**: 5-10 minutes **Purpose**: to initiate the recovery process. • A gradual decrease in intensity • Stretching, especially of those muscles most used during the session
5- CONCLUSION **Duration:** 3-5 minutes **Purpose**: to debrief and inform about next practice or competition • Provide and ask for feedback on what went well and suggest how improvement can be made • Inform about the next practice or competition (e.g. logistics, goals and emphasis) • Lead team cheer **Note**: The coach should speak with each athlete before he/she leaves.

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Table 4.1.2 Optimal order of the activities in the main part of the session

EARLY IN THE MAIN PART OF THE SESSION ...
Athletes are not fatigued, so try to plan for: ● Activities to acquire new techniques, skills, or motor patterns. ● Activities to refine techniques, skills, or motor patterns already acquired. ● Activities that develop or require coordination or balance. ● Activities that develop speed.
THEN CONSIDER ...
● Activities to develop speed-endurance. ● Activities to develop strength. ● Activities to develop strength-endurance.
LATER IN THE MAIN PART OF THE SESSION ...
Athletes may be more fatigued, so try to plan for: ● Activities to consolidate skills already acquired (i.e. make the athlete capable of executing them correctly even when tired). ● Activities that develop aerobic endurance. ● Activities to develop flexibility.

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4.2 The teaching Process

1- Organization and Set-up

- Includes safety measures, and how the activity starts and finishes
- Requires at least 50% motor involvement
- Coach is able to move around and supervise

2- Explanations and Demonstrations

- Describe the aim of the exercise
- Outline *what* is to be done and *how*
- Describe points of reference/cues
- Identify criteria of successful performance

3- Observation

- Ensure that the athletes are actively engaged and achieve a good rate of success
- Move around without interfering with athletes
- Observe both individual and group

4- Intervention and Feedback

- Identify the cause of failure/error
- Adapt the activity as needed
- Help athletes by reassuring them when needed, or by providing clear/specific information about key aspects of their performance
- Explain and demonstrate again if necessary.
- Question athletes

5- Assess the Effects of the Feedback

- Give athletes time to practice again
- Check whether they have acted on the feedback

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4.2.1 Organization

When organizing an activity:

- Think about how to *begin* and *finish* the activity or a drill.
- Take into account the safety issues of the activity or drill.
- Plan for the equipment that will be necessary *before* the activity, or the drill takes place. The equipment must be verified for safety before the session and prepared ahead of time so that it is available at the time of the activity.
- Organize the activity in a way that allows each athlete to remain active during at least 50% of the practice time allowed; more is desirable, unless pauses are required for recovery.
- Ensure athletes can progress at their own pace whenever possible.
- Ensure participants can begin the activity quickly and efficiently after the instructions are given.
- Ensure individual boxers, pairs, or groups have sufficient space to perform the training task safely and correctly.

Set up the environment in such a way as to allow yourself to move around and see every boxer without interfering with the activity.

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4.2.2 Explanations and Demonstrations

1- Control potential distractions – Position athletes with potential distractions behind them. Example of distractions: Sun in the eyes, Activity in the street, other athletes training or talking, spectators, etc.

2- Choose an effective formation for the group – See examples on the back.

3- Explanation - The *explanation* serves to:

- Describe the aim of the movement, exercise, or activity about to be performed
- Outline *what* is to be done and *how*
- Describe key points of reference/cues for the athletes

The explanation often comes *before* the demonstration. It should be brief, clear, and use words all athletes can understand.

The athletes must have a clear idea of *what they should be trying to do* during the activity or the movement (the *intention* behind the action).

4- Demonstration - The purpose of the *demonstration* is to *show* athletes how a particular skill or activity should be done, and to give them a good visual model.

- The skill or movement must be demonstrated as accurately as possible, a few times, and from a variety of angles and speeds. This will ensure that a mental Image of the movement, and of the speed and accuracy required, is left with the group.
- A few key descriptive points about the execution movement should also be emphasized verbally as the demonstration is being performed, as well as how it should be performed.
- A few key criteria of successful performance or execution should be emphasized.

Coaches do not have to perform the demonstrations themselves all the time. Sometimes, it is preferable to use an athlete, a video, etc.

Avoid repeating the demonstration too many times, as athletes who have already seen it enough may “switch off”.

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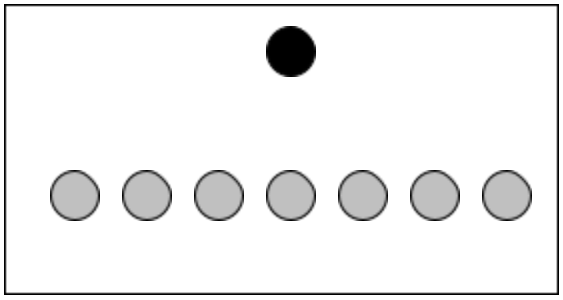
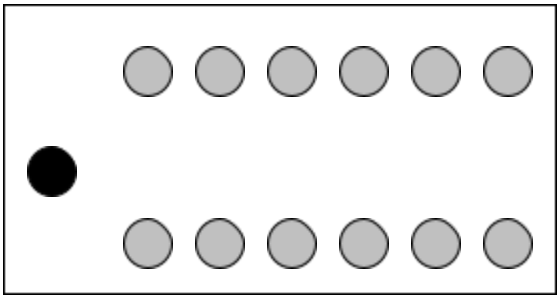
Group formations that can be used with athletes during explanations and demonstrations.

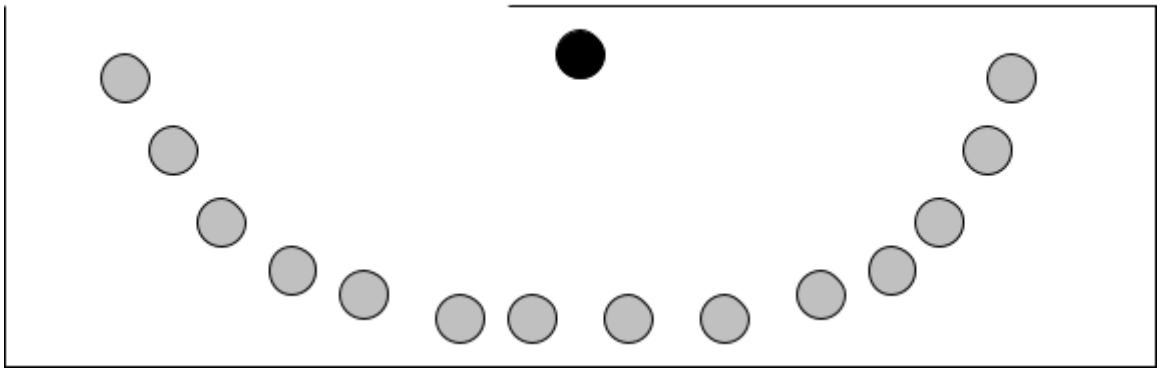
Straight line



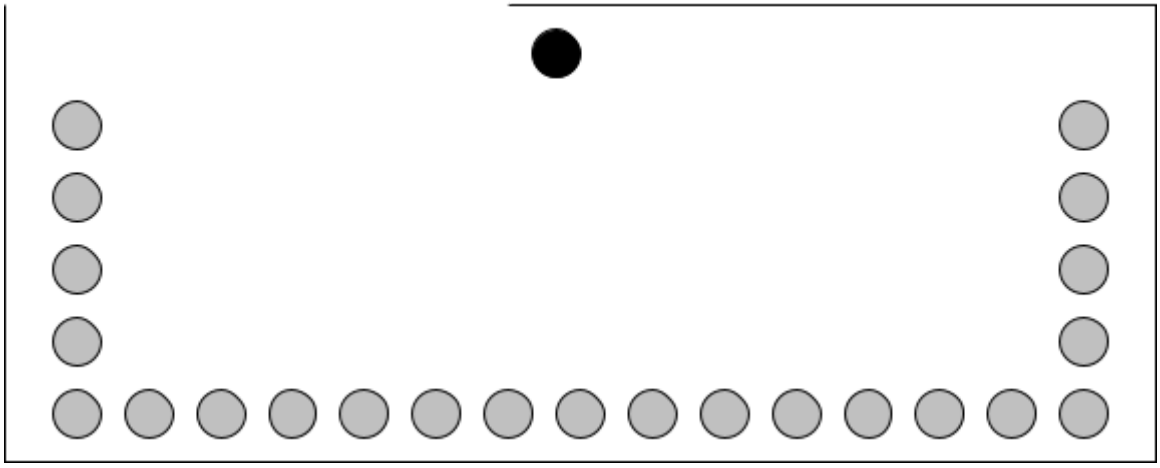
Two lines



Semi-circle



U formation



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4.2.3 Observation

During the activity, observe what is going on, i.e. ***what*** the athletes are actually doing and ***how*** they are doing it.

Things to look for:

- athletes get involved in the activity quickly (rapid transition)
- athletes have a clear understanding of the task at hand, in view of the instructions that were given (they do what they should be doing)
- the activity is running safely and no participant is at risk
- the activity or drill is appropriate for the skill level of the participants, and that it is not beyond their current abilities
- there is a good rate of success among the athletes, i.e. most of the athletes are able to achieve the desired outcome
- athletes have fun - they are not bored or discouraged

Coaches must as well:

- Scan the group and move around to watch what is going on from different vantage points.
- Watch each athlete, so to be aware of the individual differences in performance.
- Determine whether or not an intervention/clarification/correction is necessary.
- Be prepared to make adjustments to the activities to ensure:
    1. Safety standards are respected.
    2. Training and learning objectives are being met.
    3. Participants remain focused and interested.

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4.2.4 Feedback

Feedback is used to inform the athlete or the group about: their performance (what to improve, and how to do it if necessary). There are 3 types of feedback:

Evaluative	The coach assesses the quality of the performance; he/she makes some kind of assessment or judgment	• That's fine! • Good job! • No, not like that!
Prescriptive	The coach tells the athlete how to execute the skill next time	• Higher! (general) • Get your left arm higher! (specific)
Descriptive	The coach describes to the athlete what he/she has just done	• The move was too slow (general) • Your arm was really well extended (specific)

- Timing is everything for giving feedback: the athlete needs to be open to hearing it, and near enough to hear the coach.
- To promote skill improvement, the information provided must be directly linked to the most important aspects of the skill or the behaviour to be improved.
- The amount of information provided must be adequate. It must be as easy to understand, as accurate and as specific as possible.
- Let the athletes practice without always interrupting them. The more you talk, the less they can practice! Although feedback is important and contributes to learning, giving feedback too often, or too much at any one time, should be avoided.

COACHES: ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS DURING AND AFTER THE PRACTICE-

WAS MY FEEDBACK...

- **Specific**, not general, for example: "You did _____perfectly!" instead of "That's fine!"?
- **Positive and constructive**, not negative and humiliating?
- Directly linked to the **skill** or **behaviour** to be improved?
- Informative and relevant to the most important performance factors?
- **Balanced**, i.e. it contained information on what has been done well, and also on what still has to be improved? For example: "Your _____(movement) is better than last time. The next thing to do would be to _____ (add another level of complexity to the movement, or a particular piece to refine)"?
- **Clear, precise and easy to understand** by the athlete, e.g. did I use simple words?

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4.3 Factors influencing the quality of interaction with athletes

Communication and Respect
Coaching is about helping others to become better. It involves forming a relationship with the participants, as individuals or as part of a group. With this comes the interaction of different personalities, and effective communication is critical for success. The coach should communicate in a manner that is firm, yet supportive and friendly. Depending on the situation, a coach may use humor, remain calm, or show excitement to convey his or her message. The negative emotions of anger and sarcasm have no place in the coaching process. Rather, coaches should use encouragement and praise as teaching methods to motivate their athletes and avoid resorting to criticism.

Appearance
Hand in glove with the demeanor of the coach is his/her appearance. The wearing of appropriate sport clothes conveys an air of professionalism. Their posture should also be upright and active, reflecting that he/she is interested in what is going on in the gym. A slack or slovenly posture indicates a somewhat careless attitude, and hence a less effective coaching standard.

Effective Use of Voice and Choice of Words
The appropriate use of the coach's voice is critical for quality teaching and communication in a gym environment. The following factors are most important in the effective use of the voice:

- Volume – it should be adjusted to suit the situation and to emphasize specific points
- Speed – many coaches are inclined to speak too quickly – slow down
- Clarity - every word must be audible
- Expression and tone – to promote interest from the listeners, it is important to provide variation in tone

Coaches must always keep in mind that athletes learn from a combination of doing, seeing, and listening. With this in mind, when communicating with athletes, coaches should use words and actions that are clear, concise and specific.

Participant's Enjoyment
One of the most important factors in the learning process is enjoyment. The coach must aim to make each boxing session as interesting as possible and help his or her athletes find enjoyment in the rhythm of skillfully executed movements.

Coaches should know which activities or training conditions participants enjoy the most and, where possible, take this information into account when planning or implementing activities.

Coaching Ethics
Coaches are role models. They are in a position of authority, and as such assume significant responsibility over (1) what boxers do while involved in their programs, and (2) what happens to the participants. Coaches must therefore exercise good judgment, be clear about their values, and behave ethically at all times. Boxing Canada adheres to and follows the NCCP Code of Ethics developed by the Coaching Association of Canada. Instruction beginners coaches should take the time to become familiar with this code and the related principles. A process as well as ethical principles that coaches can use when making important decisions are explained and dealt with in detail in the NCCP multisport coaching module entitled Make Ethical Decisions. In order to become certified, Boxing coaches are required to complete this module, and successfully pass the evaluation process.

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5. Teaching Basic boxing skills

The primary purpose in boxing is to strike the opponent with the knuckle part of the glove (Image 5A) on a given target area (Image 5B) without being struck in return.

Photo 5A- Striking area of the boxing glove

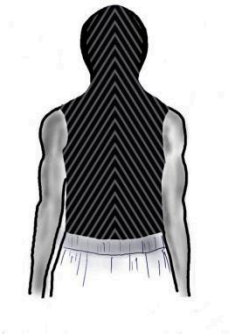

Photo 5B- Opponent's target zone

This chapter covers the fundamental boxing skills that should be taught to beginners. Skills are presented and described in the recommended order of teaching:

- Basic boxing stance
- Footwork and balance
- Pivot and punch mechanics
- Jab and power punches to the head and to the body
- The defences against jab and power punches to the head and to the body

One of the most important roles the Coach plays in providing support to an athlete is the *analysis of his or her performance*. Performance analysis should occur *before* the coach makes an intervention. Analyzing the athlete's performance allows the coach to:

1. detect possible technical or tactical errors,
2. identify the potential causes of such errors,
3. rank potential causes in order of priority for intervention,
4. select and implement appropriate corrective measures,
5. decide what type of intervention is best suited, and how best to provide feedback.

Skill Analysis Process

In the case of Instruction Beginner coaches, performance analysis will focus on basic boxing skills, and the interventions will be limited to the key technical factors. A more comprehensive performance analysis model will be presented during the Competition introduction workshop.

Table next page outlines a process for effective analyses and correction of skills.

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A process for analyzing and correcting skills

Step 1: Have a clear Image of what the desired performance should be	The coach must *know what the desired outcome* of the performance should be. In other words, the Coach must know exactly *what* the athlete should do in order to perform the skill effectively, and *how* this should be done. This information becomes the point of reference, or the *referent* used by the Coach in the analysis. The information presented throughout Chapter 5 represents a series of referents for specific boxing skills.
Step 2: Observe the athlete's performance	The Coach must observe the performance from an appropriate vantage point, in order to see clearly the various components of the skill(s) being executed by the athlete.
Step 3: Compare the athlete's performance with the referent	As he or she observes the performance, the Coach makes a *mental comparison* between (1) what the athlete is actually doing and (2) the "referent" for the skill in question, i.e. what a "good performance" should be.
Step 4: Decide whether or not to make an intervention *	As the Coach compares the athlete's performance with the referent i.e. the "desired performance", he or she must answer the following question: *"Does the gap between the athlete's performance and the referent justify an intervention?"* and make a judgment call. If the answer is "no" or "not yet", then the coach should not intervene, and the athlete should continue to practice. However, if the answer is "yes", then an intervention should be made.
Step 5: Select and implement corrective measures	In the last step of this basic skill analysis process, the coach selects the appropriate corrective measure(s) and decides how best to implement them. For instance: what should the athlete do to improve skill execution; how can the activity be modified or adjusted to allow the athlete to succeed; what type of intervention is best suited; how best to provide feedback.

* The key question is, of course, *''When does the gap between the athlete's performance and the reference model become large enough to warrant intervention?"* There are no easy answers here, and it is only with experience that coaches will get to learn "where to draw the line" and establish their own "threshold for intervention". However, as a general rule, coaches should intervene when:

1. The safety of the participant may be at risk. In this case, the activity the boxer is involved in should be stopped immediately.
2. Fundamental aspects of the skills are missing, or incorrectly executed.
3. Behaviours that can lead to "bad habits" are repeated over and over by the boxer.

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5.1 Boxing stance

Importance of Balance in Boxing
There is an age-old boxing adage saying that “any fool can fight, but very few can box”.

At the root of this statement is the critical principle whereby a boxer must adopt a stance that will enable him/her to effectively move in the ring, and to both attack and defend while constantly remaining in a balanced position.

The success of nearly all boxing skills depends upon the stability of a boxer’s fighting stance, or base. If a boxer loses balance, even momentarily, he/she is in no position to attack or defend and becomes extremely vulnerable.

Balance: General Concepts
Balance is the ability to control his or her equilibrium or stability. As a boxing coach, you need to know and understand two types of balance:

1- **Static balance:** The ability to control the body while the body is stationary. *Example A boxer uses static balance when he or she prepares for driving a punch.*
2- **Dynamic balance**: The ability to control the body while in movement. *Example* A boxer uses dynamic balance when he or she moves the body to avoid a punch.

To achieve adequate balance while boxing, the athlete must:

1. flex his/her knees.
2. ensure his/her support base is adequate; this is done by keeping a sufficient gap between his/her feet, and by keeping one foot ahead of the other.
3. “slide” with his or her knees flexed when moving, as opposed to “hopping”.

Coaches should always pay attention to these technical aspects: if the legs are straight and the feet kept close together, the boxer will not be able to maintain proper balance.

Technical Aspects of the Boxing Stance

Position of the feet
One of the most critical aspects of any hitting sport is the base or platform formed by the feet. From his or her base, the boxer should be able to produce a wide variety of punches without disturbing his/her balance.

From a standing position with feet shoulder width apart, the boxer takes a striding pace forward with the front foot turning the body, and the rear foot in a sideways position (Image 5.1.1).

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Image 5.1.1- Correct foot position.

In this position:

1. The weight is on the balls of the feet, and bodyweight is evenly distributed between both feet.
2. The rear heel is raised slightly and offset from the midline of the body.
3. Both knees are slightly flexed. A short period of trial and error will enable the boxer to find the individual foot spacing best suited for their optimal balance.

Body Position

The boxer is concerned with protecting his or her own target area (see Image 5.1.2) and making it as small as possible for his/her opponent, yet at the same time optimizing his/her own reach.

The trunk should be slightly bent forward, with the center of gravity exactly between the feet. The front shoulder should afford comfortable protection for the chin.

Position of the Hands and Arms

The following are key points about the positioning of the hands and the arms:

1. The lead hand must be carried at shoulder height, in the same plane that will enable the boxer to pivot and to punch. The knuckles should be loosely clenched and turned slightly inwards.
2. The rear hand should be offset from the rear collar bone, with the palm slightly open for catching an opponent's blow, yet constantly ready for punching.
3. Both elbows should be comfortably tucked in to protect the ribs.

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Image 5.1.2- Front view of basic position

Head Position

The head should be still, with the boxer watching his or her opponent “through the eyebrows” to avoid lifting his or her chin and exposing it to a blow.

Note: In the initial learning stages, boxers should regularly check their stance in the mirror, using a mental checklist of the appropriate technical elements.

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Table 5.1.3 Skill analysis and correction grid: Boxing stance

Desired outcome: Boxer can maintain balance at all times to ensure that he or she can defend or attack in static and dynamic (pendulum movements) positions.

KEY POINTS ABOUT THE SKILL	COMMON ERRORS	TECHNICAL CORRECTIVE MEASURES
Lower body position • Standing position with feet shoulder width apart • Body weight is evenly distributed between both feet (centered) • Rear heel is raised and should be offset from the midline of body • Both knees are slightly flexed with the rear knee flexed at a greater angle than the front knee. • Feet are offset at approximately 45° in relation to the opponent.	Athlete unable to maintain precision or consistency in assuming the correct stance. One or more key performance factors are deficient (see left column). For instance, the stance may be too wide – this will inhibit movement ability. The athlete assumes a correct stance in the static position but cannot maintain the correct stance while moving.	Use demonstrations to reinforce appropriate key factors. Provide feedback explaining key factors enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill. Place athlete in front of a mirror, so he or she can see his or her body position, and experience what the correct position should “feel” like. Begin by focusing on the position of the lower body and ensure the athlete is positioned correctly. Then, while maintaining the proper lower body position, work on shoulders, head, and then hand position.
Shoulder position • The trunk should be kept as upright as possible with the front shoulder slightly elevated to protect the chin.		
Head position • Should be still with the boxer watching his opponent “through the eyebrows” to avoid lifting his or her chin.		
Hand position • The forward hand is carried at shoulder height in the same plane that will enable the boxer to pivot and punch, with the knuckles loosely clenched, and turned slightly inwards. • The rear hand is offset from the collar bone, with palm slightly open for catching yet ever ready for punching • Wrist straight for both hands. • Both elbows should be comfortably tucked in to protect the ribs		

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5.2 Footwork

Importance of Footwork
Having established a comfortable stance which allows the body to move forward or backward as a unit and without loss of balance, the boxer must next acquire the skills of transporting and moving his or her base effectively within the confines of the ring.

This is critical in order to be in a position to attack or defend effectively during a fight.

Executing Elementary Footwork
Four elementary footwork skills should be taught to beginner boxers: advancing, retreating, moving left, and moving right.

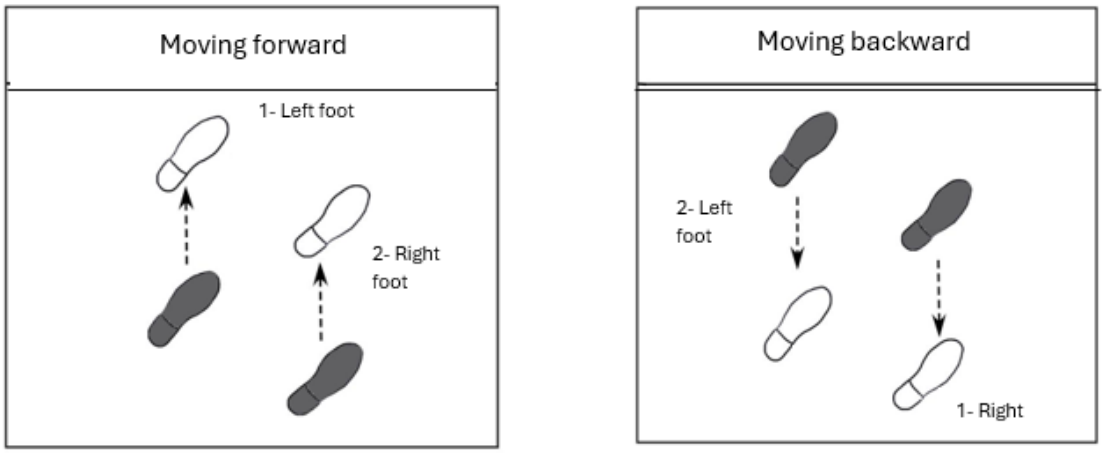
Image 5.2.1 shows basic footwork movements for an orthodox (i.e. right-handed) boxer.

1. Advancing – The stability of the boxer's body weight must not be disturbed when advancing. The movements of the feet should be short and dynamic, one foot being in contact with the floor at all times. Pushing off with the ball of the rear foot, the boxer slides the lead foot forward following with the rear foot quickly to assume the original stance position. The boxer should not hop.
2. Retreating – The boxer pushes off the ball of the front foot, and then moves the rear foot backwards. The front foot then slides back into the boxing stance position to maintain balance.
3. Moving side to side – The left foot leads off first with a short shuffling step if moving to the left side, and vice versa when moving to the right side.

At no time should the feet cross or come together during the above movements.

Note: When the boxer performs a punch, both feet must be planted.

Image 5.2.1- Basic footwork when moving by a right-handed boxer.



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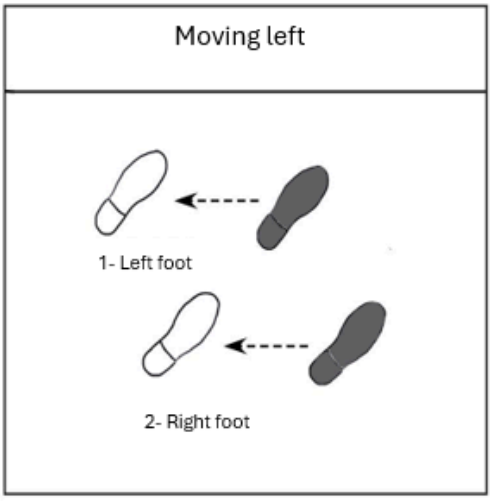

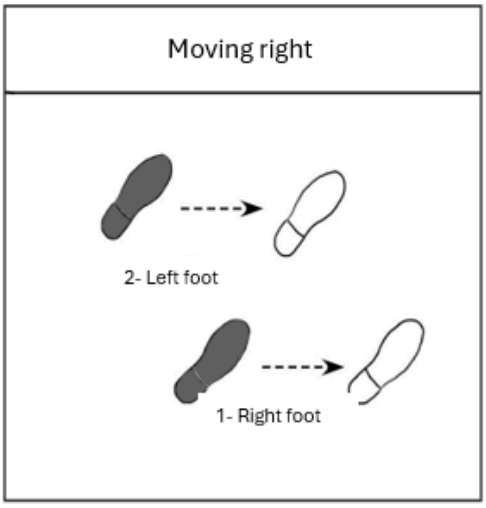

Educational for foot play

In the initial learning stages, the coach should introduce partner games to stimulate interest and enjoyment. For instance, dodging a mark with boxer A (the attacker) trying - with effective footwork - to keep his or her leading foot within striking distance of boxer B throughout the drill (Image 5.5.2).

Image 5.2.2- Example of educational footwork

Pendulum Steps

Pendulum steps are a more advanced footwork skill that requires good timing and coordination on the part of the boxer. For this reason, it should be used sparingly by beginners.

When performing pendulum steps, the boxer is bouncing back and forth, as though he or she were skipping. The hops are small and controlled, and the boxer is in constant movement: forward and back, forward and back, hence the term “pendulum”.

To perform pendulum steps the boxer:

- Shifts weight back and forth while remaining on the balls of his or her feet.
- Pushes off the ball of the rear foot when moving forward, and off the ball of the front foot when moving backward.

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- Performs small steps: approximately one inch (3 cm) of movement with each forward or backward shift of weight.

Teaching tips:

- During the initial stages of learning, the boxer should move slowly and feel the shifting of his or her body weight from the front foot to the rear foot, and vice versa.
- Pendulum steps should be practiced in the boxing stance.
- Coaches should always emphasize that modern boxing is *mobile boxing*. A boxer should never stay still, because he/she then becomes vulnerable to an opponent's attack and is unable to initiate a quick appropriate defense.
- Compared to basic footwork, the boxer expends more energy when using pendulum steps. However, this technique can be very effective at delivering a powerful jab that will catch the opponent off guard.

When teaching a boxer to jab while using pendulum steps, the following points must be kept in mind:

- The boxer initiates the jab as he or she begins to drive forward or backward
- Ideally, the jab should land on the target at the same time as the foot lands

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Table 5.2.3 Skill analysis and correction grid: Basic footwork

Desired outcome: Boxer can advance, retreat, move laterally and circle in all directions to achieve a balanced position in which to attack or defend.

KEY POINTS ABOUT THE SKILL	COMMON ERRORS	TECHNICAL CORRECTIVE MEASURES
Advancing • The foot movements should be short, one foot being in contact with the floor at all times. Pushing off with the ball of the back foot, slide the front foot forward bringing the back foot up quickly into the original stance position.	One or more key performance factors are deficient (see left column). Incorrect stance to begin with. Proper stance is not maintained when moving. Boxer is unable to maintain precision or consistency when executing the skill. Boxer crosses legs. Boxers hop while moving.	Use demo to reinforce appropriate key factor. Explain key factors enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill. Adjust or simplify activity to ensure key factors are performed successfully. Ensure proper stance throughout. Have the boxer go through various footwork drills to improve coordination and agility. Work on the athlete's balance (see guidelines in Section 7.5). Have the boxer focus on keeping the knees flexed, and on sliding the feet when moving.
Retreating • Push off the ball of the front foot, the rear foot takes a slightly longer sliding pace back than in the equivalent forward movement. The front foot slides into position to maintain the balanced stance.		
Moving right (Lateral / Circling) • Push off of left foot while right foot shuffles laterally. To circle, the right foot rotates slightly counterclockwise, and the left foot is slid back into boxing stance.		
Moving left (Lateral / Circling) • Push off of the right foot, while left foot shuffles laterally. To circle, the left foot rotates slightly clockwise, and the right foot is slid back into boxing stance.		

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5.3 Fundamental aspects of the straight punch

Introduction

Early on, beginner boxers must learn the correct execution of the straight punch, as well as the defences against straight punches, as these are two of the most fundamental boxing skills. Good balance, footwork, and straight punches are the main tools of a technically sound boxer.

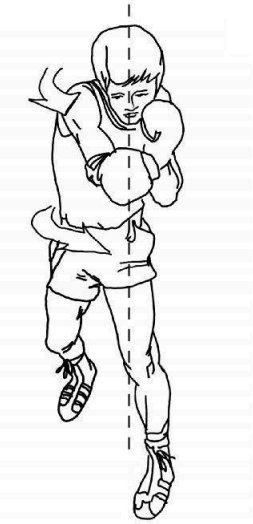
The correct execution of a straight punch involves a series of movements by separate parts of the body, and each must work in a certain sequence. As mentioned in Chapter 1, some coordination is required for effective execution.

There are two types of straight punches: the *jab* and the *straight power punch, which is commonly referred to as the cross*. However, they all have the same mechanics. The information provided in this section is therefore valid for all types of straight punches.

Basic Mechanics of the Straight Punch: The Pivot

In punching, the arm and the hand act as the vehicles of force transmission. The explosiveness of the movement comes from a sharp pivot of the hips and shoulders.

To project the fist at maximum speed, the torso rotates around the vertical axis, as the knees flex to lower the center of gravity. The rear leg is in contact with the floor, and its drive assists the rotary movement of the torso (Image 5.3.1).



To get the feel of the pivot principle, boxers should imagine a rod running through the head, down the spine and into the floor.

A rod so placed would allow one movement: a turning or pivot of the body to the left or to the right. The rod would prevent swinging, swaying or bending at the waist in any direction.

It is important to make the boxer understand the basic mechanics of the pivot. This movement must be practiced over and over until it becomes perfect, and natural.

Image 5.3.1- Pivot when executing a straight punch.

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Key Components of the Straight Punch

Images 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 show front views of punches correctly executed. During the execution, both sides of the body remain firm, yet relaxed. Each Image outlines a straight punch to the head.

Image 5.3.2- Straight punch with the right hand.

Image 5.3.3- Straight punch with the left hand.

When executing the straight punch:

- The boxer must make the fist by folding the thumb comfortably on the outside between the first and second joints of the forefinger (Image 5.3.4).
- The arm is extended after the hips and shoulders have turned through the central axis (pivot).
- For straight punching, the boxer rotates the forearm inward, toward the center line. Contact is made with the back knuckles, with the wrist slightly flexed.
- The punch must be made directly to the target. The hand returns to the punching position on the same line, and the boxer bends the arms so that the elbows are close to the ribs, as in the normal stance.

Image 5.3.4- Fist position.

Image 5.3.5.- Correct position of the wrist.

The following key points about punching should be emphasized to new boxers:

- Power and precision in punching comes from shifting the body weight so that the links of the body – hip and shoulder – *precede* the arm to the center line of the body.
- The arms are the *vehicles* of force transmission: arm action alone *cannot* give power to punches.

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Teaching the Mechanics of the Straight Punch: Progressions

When teaching the basic mechanics of the straight punch to beginners, coaches can break the skill into parts and provide instructions as the boxers execute the movements. For instance, coaches can instruct participants to:

- Assume the boxing stance and hold the fists so that the thumb side is pointing upwards.
- Select the target (the head or the body).
- Plant both feet to initiate the drive of the straight punch.
- Pivot the body at hip and shoulder about the central axis.
- Punch *through* the target.
- Turn the forearm as the punching arm extends. At impact the thumb side of the hand is in, and the knuckles are up.
- Return to the initial boxing stance quickly and remain in balance.
- Keep the lead hand high in a guarding position.

The sequence can be repeated several times, until the arms can drive forward like pistons.

During the learning stages, boxers can also *accentuate* the movement by *stepping forward with the front foot* as they perform the punch. In doing so, the center of gravity will move *over* the front leg. A screwing action of the ball of the rear foot should initiate the drive from the rear leg, and the pivoting heels should be kept close to the ground.

When the basic mechanics of the punch can be correctly performed without a “real target”, beginners should move on to a punching bag, wall bag, or the palm of the partner’s gloved hand.

Note: In a progressive program of boxing skills for participants aged 11-14 years, there is considerable support to the view that punches with the leading hand (i.e. the jab) as well as the associated defences, should be taught first, and emphasized throughout the initiation stage. The discovery of rear hand hitting power too soon may result in the neglect of acquisition of other boxing skills, whereas early concentration on a lateral stance and work with the leading hand will benefit the technical development of the young boxer in the long term.

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5.4 The jab to the head

Sound technical boxers rely heavily on the use of the jab. This straight punch is performed with the front hand. This punch, and its many variations, is really the foundation on which to base the boxer's attacking technique.

Image 5.4.1- Jab to the head (side view)

Image 5.4.2- Jab to the head (back view)

The main purpose of the jab is to keep the opponent off balance, and to expose him/her to a series of more punches (Image 5.7.1).

Successful jabbing depends upon judgment of distance, timing and deception.

When teaching the jab, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Aim for the chin of the opponent.

  Keep the jabbing hand relaxed and snap it away from the body with a slight pivot at hip and shoulder.

- Rotate the forearm in the last third of the distance to the target.
- Punch at the target, landing with the knuckles; as with the straight power punch, the wrist of the jabbing hand must be slightly flexed
- Hold the rear hand in a guard position, with the elbow tucked in to protect the body.
- Retract the jabbing hand quickly, along the same path as the delivery.
- Perform smooth movements throughout and remain in a balanced stance.

Note: *The jab should be thrown at maximum speed.*

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Table 5.4.3 – Skill analysis and correction grid: Jab to the head (attack)

Desired outcome: Boxer attacks / engages opponent while maintaining range / distance to put defender in a vulnerable position to enable opportunities to score points (connect) with dominant hand.

The skill may be observed in technical sparring, bag work or focus pads, or technical drills with a partner

KEY POINTS ABOUT THE SKILL	COMMON ERRORS	TECHNICAL CORRECTIVE MEASURES
The Boxer: • Aims for the opponent's head with the back knuckles • Points the knuckles down by slightly flexing wrist • Snaps the jabbing arm with a slight pivot at hip and shoulder • Rotates forearm inward in the last third of the distance to the target • Slides front foot forward before impact • Guards chin with dominant hand with elbow tucked in to protect the body • Retracts the jabbing hand quickly along the same path as the delivery • Ensures proper footwork to maintain a balanced stance • Recognizes opportunity to continue attack or retreat	One or more key performance factors are deficient (see left column). Incorrect stance to begin with. Chin too high. Proper stance is not maintained when executing the jab. Boxer is unable to maintain precision or consistency when executing the jab. Boxer lowers his or her rear guard. Chin is not protected with dominant hand. Jabbing shoulder too low. Stance and footwork fail or is not maintained (i.e. front leg straightens). Incorrect knuckle position on contact.	Use demo to reinforce appropriate key factor. Explain key factors enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill. Adjust or simplify activity to ensure key factors are performed successfully. Work on maintaining a proper stance throughout. Have the boxer go through various footwork drills to improve coordination and agility. Work on the athlete's balance (see guidelines in Section 7.5).

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5.5 Defenses against the jab to the head

During the early stages of learning, coaches should focus on teaching the basic defensive actions that are described in this section. The boxer cannot be expected to make significant progress until he or she masters blocking with the guard hand or parrying to the outside.

When teaching guard hand blocking, coaches should ensure that athletes:

- Use the open palm of their back hand to receive or "catch" their opponent's jab.
- Keep the forearm rigid, so that the force of the impact does not redirect the glove into their face.
- Do not try to reach for the opponent's jab.

Image 5.5.1- Blocking with the left hand.

When teaching the outside parry, coaches should ensure that athletes:

- Let the opponent's jab land close to the target (a few cm).
- Make a slight pivot and move the forearm and the palm of the back glove so as to deflect the jab towards their front shoulder. The palm of the rear glove must be very rigid when performing the parry.

Image 5.5.2- Parrying on the outside

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Table 5.5.3 – Skill analysis and correction grid: Defence against the jab to the head
Desired outcomes:
Block: Boxer protects head by using the palm of dominant hand to intercept opponent punch (jab) and avoid getting hit or scored upon.
Parry: Boxer protects head by using dominant hand to direct opponent's punch (jab) away from the scoring area.

Skill may be observed in technical sparring, work on focus pads, or technical drills with a partner.

KEY POINTS ABOUT THE SKILL	COMMON ERRORS	TECHNICAL CORRECTIVE MEASURES
Block – The Boxer: • Moves his or her dominant hand from guard and rotates it outwards with the palm facing opposition jab. • Intercepts the opposing jab in the open palm of dominant hand. • Keeps the forearm rigid so that the glove is not forced back into the face. • Keeps glove close to chin during interception. • Ensures proper footwork and maintains a balanced stance. • Recognizes opportunity to counter-attack or to retreat.	Both Block and Parry: Athletes are unable to maintain precision or consistency when executing skill. One or more key performance factors are deficient (see left column). Head throws back / flinch / head moves up. Stance and footwork fail or is not maintained (i.e. balance shifts too far to rear leg). Parry: Over rotation of pivot / over extension of parry hand / ineffective redirect of opponent punch.	Use demo to reinforce appropriate key factors. Explain key factors enabling the boxer to progress further with the skill. Apply defence teaching progression principles (see Chapter 7 of Reference Material). Reduce the speed of attack to ensure key factor is performed successfully. Work on maintaining a proper stance and footwork throughout, to enable effective block or counter punch. Have the boxer go through various footwork drills to improve coordination and agility. Work on the athlete's balance (see guidelines in Section 7 of the Reference Material).
Parry - The Boxer: • Allows the opposing jab to within a fraction of the target • With a slight pivot, moves the forearm and rigid palm of the rear hand across the body to deflect the jab. • Deflects at the opposing wrist • Ensures the parry remains in the center line, with minimal movement.		

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5.6 Jab to the body

Image 5.6.1- Jab to the body.

The main purpose of the Jab to the Body is to bring the opponent's hands down, thus exposing the head. To perform this skill, the boxer:

- Bends their knees sharply to drop the shoulders in-line with the opposing body target.
- Drives the jab from the shoulders to the target. The punching arm must be extended, and perpendicular to the target. Be careful not to aim the punch in a downwards path.
- Punches at the target, making contact with the back knuckles. Here again, the wrist must be slightly flexed.
- This can be an exposed position, so the boxer should withdraw the jab quickly. At this point, he or she can follow up with additional punches, or retreat according to the situation.
- When a boxer jabs to the body, the coach must insist that, as a precaution, that he or she keeps (1) the chin tucked behind the front shoulder, and (2) a high rear guarding hand.

5.7 Defense against the jab to the body

To defend the jab to the body, the boxer uses the elbow blocking technique. To do this, he intercepts the opponent's jab using the front or back elbow, depending on the situation. When performing this maneuver, the body rotates and meets the blow. The hands must remain high and ready to retaliate, while the center of gravity always remains in the center of the base of support to ensure good balance.

Image 5.7.1- Blocking with the right elbow

Image 5.7.2- Blocking with the left elbow.

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5.8 Straight rear hand punch to the head

Note: Arguably, the premature discovery of the rear hand's hitting power is one of the biggest handicaps for a learning boxer to overcome. Coaches should be aware of this, and always emphasize correct execution over the sheer power of the blow.

Introduction

The straight power punch is a hard punch, which should be used sparingly in a competition. It is essentially a counter punch or follow-up punch when the target has been opened up with the leading hand.

Technique and Key Points

Effective power punching with the rear hand is obtained from a strong contraction in the rear leg, which in turn initiates a powerful rotation of the hip and shoulder around the imaginary central axis. The front side of the torso acts as the hinge, as the rear hand drives to the target.

- After driving off the rear foot, the boxer's hips and shoulders rotate explosively, using the forward side of the body as a hinge.
- The boxer's body weight is quickly shifted to the front foot, and the back arm extends completely as it is being driven to the target in a powerful movement.
- On impact, the boxer's forearm rotates: the knuckles are facing up, and the thumb side of the fist is turned inward.
- Throughout the execution, the boxer keeps the leading hand high in a guarding position.
- The "T" shape formed by the shoulders must remain horizontal, and balance must be maintained throughout the execution.

Image 5.8.1- Straight rear hand to the head.

Initially, the straight rear hand to the head should be practiced on a punching bag, wall bag, or into the palm of the partner's gloved hand

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5.9 Defense against the straight rear punch to the head

Introduction

In theory, the good boxer should rarely be caught by a rear hand straight rear punch to the head, as (1) it has further to travel to the target than the jab and (2) it usually remains in the line of vision on the way. However, because this punch is very powerful, the aspiring boxer must acquire and develop a sound defense against it in the early stages of his or her learning.

Techniques and Key Points

The defenses against the Straight Power Punch to the head are the *Forearm Block* (Image 5.9.1) and the *Parry* (Image 5.9.2).

Image 5.9.1 – Forearm block.

Image 5.9.2 – Parry.

To execute the Forearm Block, the boxer:

- Rotates his or her body slightly.
- Intercepts the opponent's Straight Power Punch with his or her forearm.
- Keeps the chin down and his or her rear hand high in guarding position throughout the movement.

To execute the Parry, the boxer:

- Uses his or her front hand, and deflects the punching hand of the opponent.
- Keeps the chin down and his or her rear hand high in guarding position throughout the movement.

When learning the Parrying technique, the movements of the attacker must be slowed down until the defender can cope with punches executed at normal speed.

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5.10 Straight rear hand punch to the body

Image 5.10.1 Cross to the body

The execution of the straight rear hand punch to the body has some similarities with the straight rear hand punch to the head. When teaching this skill, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Bend the knees and drop their body, so that their shoulders are in line with the target.
- Pivot the hips and shoulders to drive the rear arm to the target.
- Rotate the forearm when extending the arm, hit with the rear knuckles, and keep the thumb side of the fist turned inward at the moment of impact.
- Carry the front hand in a guarding position.

***Note**: The Straight Power Punch to the body is considered a counterpunch against the attacking opponent.*

5.11 Defense against the straight rear hand punch to the body

Photo 5.11.1- Blocking with elbow

To defend against the Straight Power Punch to the body, boxers should use the Elbow Block.

When teaching this technique, coaches should ensure that boxers:

- Rotate the body slightly and intercept the Straight Power Punch with either the right or the left elbow.
- Keep their chin down and carry the rear hand in a position to counter.

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5.12 Basic combinations with the jab

When he or she is confident that the boxer's fundamental technique is adequate, the coach should introduce the principles of combination punching. A combination is a series of punches thrown in a particular sequence.

The novice boxer should be introduced to combinations with the jabbing hand, building up a rhythm as the punches fall into a natural pattern. The following progressions are recommended:

The Double Jab to the Head
When performing this combination, the boxer:

1. Scores with an explosive jab to the head.
2. Retracts the jabbing hand quickly.
3. Jabs a second time – even if the first one misses the opponent.
4. Adjusts his or her range according to the situation.

Jab to the Chin – Jab to the Body
When performing this combination, the boxer:

1. Delivers an explosive jab to the head.
2. Bends his or her knees and throws the jab to the body maintaining the center of gravity well within the support base for good stability.

Jab to the Body – Jab to the Head
When performing this combination, the boxer:

1. Bends his or her knees and throws the jab to the body maintaining the center of gravity well within the support base for good stability.
2. Returns to the boxing stance, and jabs quickly to the head of the opponent, keeping the back hand guard high.

5.13 Basic combinations using the straight rear hand punch

The coach should restrict the use of combinations to the double jab and to the simple variations listed in the previous section until they are thoroughly mastered by the boxer.

When he or she feels the athlete is ready for more advanced skills, the coach should introduce basic combinations using the Straight Power Punch to the Head in order to add variety to the boxer's repertoire. Two examples are described in this section. When teaching these combinations, coaches must always insist on the basics of balance and mechanics of punch.

The One Two (Jab and Straight Power Punch)
This combination consists in the following moves: A fast jab, quickly followed by a pivot, and then a dynamic Straight Power Punch to the head

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Double Jab and Straight Power Punch to the Head
This combination consists in: A double jab, with the emphasis on speed of execution, quickly followed by a fast straight Power Punch to the head

5.14 Counter punching with the straight power punch

Although beginner boxers must be taught not to rely too heavily on the Straight Power Punch to the Head during these early stages of their development, coaches should allow them to practice the three following basic counters:

- Lead hand parry followed by a rear hand counter to the head (Image 5.14.1).
- Elbow block, and rear hand counter.
- Straight Power Punch to the body against the opposing jab.

In the initial stages of learning, the partner's gloves and forearms should be used as the targets. These skills should also be practiced slowly at first, with an appropriate progression to full speed.

Image 5.17.1- Counter with the cross with rear hand to the head.

5.15 Covering up

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Photo 5.15.1- Covering the body with both arms.

Coaches must teach their boxers how to cope with an attack from both hands. As a last resort against a series of punches thrown by the opponent, the boxer must learn the skill of covering up.

This defence is a temporary measure and will enable the boxer's target to be protected until the opportunity to counterattack arises. To perform this skill, the boxer should:

- Protect his or her body with the elbows and forearms.
- Hold the gloves against the cheek bones to protect the chin and face.
- Watch the opponent at all times, ready to turn defense into attack.
- The guard can be practiced with partners during technical sparring. Coaches must stress the need for the boxer to keep the eyes fixed on the attacker at all times when using this defense.

5.16 Using pads effectively in the gym

What are pads?

Pads are mitts that fit on the hands of the coach. They come in many styles. Generally, they are oval shaped with a flat surface and marked with a white circle in the center of the pad. In recent years, manufacturers have come out with pads that have a concave mitt section that is of a better design that the traditional mitts used in the past. There are also pads which combine a real pad and boxing glove.

Some coaches do not use pads, and prefer to use a pair of boxing gloves. This allows them to throw punches at the boxers and reduce chances of cuts or abrasions that may result from accidental contact with the edges of the traditional type pads.

Type of work that can be done with pads, and benefits of this method

The terms "focus pads", "target pads", "punch mitts" etc. that are often used to describe "pads" reflect the various methods and styles in using them. In the hands of an experienced, fluid and moving coach, pads can be a very effective tool to refine the boxer's technique. To the observer, a well-lead pad session is a little bit like watching a couple dancing, working together in unison, and producing a rhythmic practice of technical skills which is very close to actual sparring or to competition. However, in the hands of an inexperienced coach, the effect can be quite different, and the results even counterproductive.

With the experienced coach working the pads, workouts can range from being extremely exhaustive and demanding to being an extensive skill lesson in which either basic or more complex skills can be developed.

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The main reason why a pad workout can be so valuable is that the coach, being so close to the boxer, can provide him or her with immediate and regular feedback. This is obviously very effective for correcting technical flaws and improving skills, regardless of the level the boxer is at. Pad work builds on timing, eye hand coordination, and punching accuracy. It also contributes to the development of boxing skills such as punching in combination, remaining in balance, moving effectively around the opponent, etc. Because pad work can have demands that are similar to actual sparring, the athlete can also work on his or her decision-making and improve reaction time to certain cues.

Fairly rapid improvements can be made by the boxer who has access to quality pad sessions, making this a time-efficient method in the process of developing skills. This method is therefore particularly effective with young boxers, because it allows the coach to monitor the development of each athlete on an on-going basis. For instance, the coach can set individualized goals for the athletes in areas such as punches and defensive tactics, and with the advantage of one-on-one work, carefully supervise the rate at which the athlete is progressing, while making adjustments as necessary.

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How to use pads in the boxer's program

Below are some key points coaches should know about the use of pads:

- Pad work may focus on skill development or refinement, but it can also be used for punching power. In this case, the coach must be extremely concentrated at all times in order to avoid injuries to himself or herself.
- The boxer should always wear gloves when involved in a workout with pads.
- When using pads to instruct technical skills, the coach should select only one type of punch (e.g., the jab and its variations), and concentrate on this particular aspect during the pad session.
- Coaches must always keep in mind that, for every offensive tactic, the appropriate defensive skills must also be taught.
- Pad work should always be viewed as quality work. Coaches should therefore try to do work with pads *early* in the training session, when the boxers are not fatigued, and are therefore most alert and able to execute skills correctly and at high speed.
- Regardless of the level they are at, many boxers seek pad work daily from coaches and are often upset or disappointed when they do not have the opportunity to do so. Both athletes and coaches must know that pad work is not necessary every day, and that it should be incorporated in a planned and purposeful manner into the boxer's programming. For instance:
    - When the boxer attends the gym in the general preparation period, the pads can be used once a week, with the emphasis being on endurance or technical improvement.
    - As the competing boxer moves on to the sport-specific phase of his or her program, pads become more important and should be used on a much more regular basis for technical work.
    - In the final preparation phase for a competition, pad work is essential due to its highly specific nature, and periods of work should be set aside with the coach every time the boxer is in the gym. The duration of each workout with pads should be shortened during the final preparation leading to a competition.

Caution for coaches

- Boxers should be cautioned about the power they are delivering their blows prior to working on the pads. There were many instances of the coaches being injured by novice and also by experienced boxers who either delivered pushing type or misdirected powerful punches. Boxers should be informed about the dangers of throwing these types of punches, which could cause hyper extension injuries both to them and the coach. This is especially the case in younger, inexperienced athletes.
- It is important that the athlete should know that the technical aspect of working with pads outweighs the power factor when working on skills. It is not necessary for a boxer to punch too hard when working on pads, unless the coach is prepared along with the boxer to work at this level.
- It is important that the athlete should know that, when doing work with pads, the technical and skill aspects far outweigh the power factor. It is not necessary for a boxer to punch hard when working on pads, unless the coach specifically asks him or her to do so.

Common mistakes

- Many coaches hold the pads too far apart from each other. Remember that there is only one target if the punches are delivered to the chin, so there is no point in presenting two targets to the boxer. This is especially important when practicing combination with straight punches and hooks.

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- Coaches must make sure that all the punches are thrown to the same spot. If one pad is extended too far forward, all hooks will be too short and will never hit the target during the actual bout. This also creates bad habits which will be difficult to correct later on in the heat of a fight.

Practical tips for coaches

- When working pads, coaches should always begin with the basics of boxing, and then increase gradually the level of technical difficulties. The coach should always have an objective to achieve, and pads should not be used simply to please a boxer.
- Unless the coach specifically asks for it, the boxer should never hit hard on the pads. Boxers can hit a heavy bag as hard as they want, but when working pads they have to follow the coach's instructions.
- The coach should force the boxer to keep moving. This will improve his/her footwork and mobility while hitting.
- The coach must create only one target, except in the case of the combination, which includes the punches to the body and to the chin.
- Protect yourself all the time.
- Do not overdo pad work with a few individuals; there are so many boxers who need, want to do, pad work with the coach.

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6. Training Young, Beginner Boxers: Reminders

Boxing clubs should make every effort to offer programs that are adapted to the specific needs of young boxers, and that are consistent with the long-term athlete development principles outlined in Section 2. This means that, even when they are involved in boxing programs, young athletes should be provided with opportunities to acquire and to develop a variety of general and sport-specific skills. In addition, what gets emphasized in the young participants' programs should vary according to their age and sport background:

- All-around motor skills to improve balance, coordination, and agility should be emphasized with younger participants aged 9 and below. Older participants should also work on these important athletic abilities, particularly if they were not exposed to a variety of motor development and sport experiences earlier in their lives.
- General sport skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and catching should then be progressively emphasized, while continuing and refining the all-around motor development.
- Once the participant has a solid general athletic foundation, basic boxing skills can then be introduced.

As was emphasized in Section 2 in LTD, skill learning and development must occur in a fun and enjoyable environment; otherwise children will likely not remain involved in the sport.

Coaches should also appreciate that the child and young adolescent's boxing programs require a completely different approach to that of the dedicated competitor or aspiring elite boxer. It is therefore both inappropriate and ineffective in the long term to involve young participants in adult-type boxing activities.

6.1 Developing General Motor Skills

This section outlines key principles that should be used to develop balance, coordination, and agility, examples of activities and exercises are also provided. Some of these activities can be used during the warm-up.

Balance

To improve balance, the athlete should perform activities where unusual or difficult positions must be assumed and maintained for some time.

Image 6.1.1- Upright position, balanced on one foot. **Image 6.1.2-** Leaning forward, standing on one foot.

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Familiar movements are performed in unusual *positions* (e.g. walking backwards or in a “squatted” position or *conditions* (e.g. walking on a narrow beam; standing on one foot with the eyes closed, walking backwards with the eyes closed; etc.)

Balance is challenged by external factors, in such a way that an effort is required to stabilize the body and maintain balance during the execution of specific movements.

The use of large exercise balls (known as Swiss or stability balls), balance boards, or other pieces of equipment such as half-round foam rollers or BOSU balls may significantly increase the stability requirements when performing certain exercises. This piece of equipment can help athletes improve their balance and, to some degree, their coordination as well.

Image 6.1.3 Swiss ball.

Image 6.1.4- Styrofoam rolls (round and semi-round).

Image 6.1.5- Balance board.

Image 6.1.6- Balance board with roller.

Two types of balance boards: the one to the left (Image 6.1.5) creates a balance challenge in all directions, the other (Image 6.1.6) primarily from side to side.

Image 6.1.7- BOSU Ball.

BOSU balls (Image 6.1.7) can be used to do specific balance drills (Image 6.1.8), but they can also be used when performing certain resistance training exercises (Images 6.1.9 to 6.1.11). In the latter case, the extra challenge may not only represent a very effective way of improving balance, but it also serves to

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overload specific muscle groups that are responsible for maintaining a proper body position when boxing.

Image 6.1.8- Single-leg support on a BOSU ball.

Image 6.1.9- Leg curls and extensions on a balance board.

Image 6.1.10- Flexion and extension of the legs, each foot resting on a small balance board.

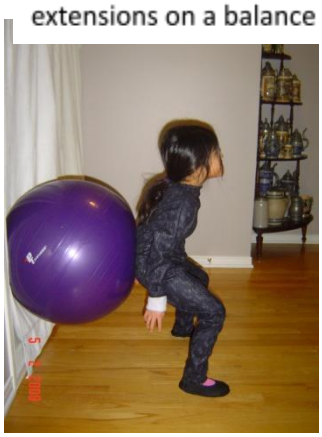

Image 6.1.11- Leg curls and extensions supported by a Swiss ball.

Working harder to maintain a stable body position when performing a particular exercise does several things for an athlete's balance:

1. It promotes the ongoing involvement of specific muscles in the legs, feet and core that serve to stabilize the body, teaches them to work together, and helps to strengthen them.
2. It trains the proprioceptors in the joints and muscles. Proprioceptors convey information relevant for posture from the musculoskeletal system to the brain. Balance training enhances the response of these receptors, which helps the athlete maintain a proper body position during exercise without the need for conscious control.
3. It forces the athlete to *look ahead* while performing the exercise, not *down at the ground*; this helps the athlete to use and to process visual clues to remain balanced.

Coordination

To improve coordination, activities must involve a sequence of movements that are to be performed in a given order.

The level of difficulty of activities used to develop coordination depends mainly on the *number* of movements that must be performed in a row, how *familiar* the sequence is to the performer, the *speed*

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at which each movement must be performed, as well as the *number of movements that must be executed within a given time* (e.g.: once every second).

Movement sequences can be designed for specific body parts (e.g., arms only), for several body parts at a time, or for the entire body (e.g. squat thrust movement). Coordination activities can also take the form of agility games (e.g., follow the leader).

The general guidelines below should be followed when designing activities aimed at improving coordination:

1) Athletes must perform movements correctly, as the neuromuscular system learns the motor patterns athletes *actually perform*. For this reason, it is important to start with movements performed at low speed or intensity and to *progress* to full speed.

2) It's a good idea to create conditions that require athletes to perform movements in various directions or to use their weaker side.

Activities can be made more challenging by adding the following variations gradually, after the basic sequence has been mastered:

- Increase the speed of execution
- Add new movements to the sequence
- Modify the order in which movements are performed
- Combine various actions already mastered, but perform them in an unusual manner (e.g., dribble a ball while squatting)
- Add restrictions or constraints (e.g., less time, less space, less stable environment)
- Add uncertainty (e.g., perform the action with the eyes closed)

Activities specifically used to enhance coordination should be performed when the athlete is not tired from other forms of training.

It is preferable to do short training sessions for motor abilities more often than to do long sessions separated by several days. For example, two 5-minute sessions four times a week are likely to be more effective for motor learning than one 40-minute session once a week.

6.2 Developing general sport skills

Young boxers should be strongly encouraged to participate in a wide range of sports to acquire and to refine a variety of skills. Such sports include hockey, most ball games (including soccer for improving control and coordination of the feet), skating, skiing, swimming and other aquatic sports, gymnastics, racquet sports, etc. Even though some of these sports are not necessarily highly "specific" to boxing, they will nonetheless foster a balanced over-all athletic development in the participants, which is important in a long-term approach.

6.3 Progressions When Teaching Punches

A series of *progressions* are proposed for teaching the basic punch techniques. For the mechanics and the specific aspects pertaining to the *execution* of the various types of punches, refer to Section 5.

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1. The proper mechanics of the movement should first be learned in *controlled and easy conditions*, with the boxer practicing the technique individually and at slow speed. At this stage the boxer normally receives feedback and comments from the coach, or from a partner. Gloves are not worn at this stage.
2. Then, the boxer should perform the movements *at progressively higher speeds* in front of a mirror. At this stage, he or she still works alone.
3. Depending on the type of punch, the boxer can then move on to a heavy bag, bean bag, or wall bag, and perform various repetitions of the punch in controlled conditions, varying the speed/power of the blows. On the wall and heavy bags, the target of each punch can also be varied. Gloves should be worn.
4. When the boxer has a reasonably good mastery of the technique for that particular punch, he or she can work with a partner. *At this stage, all blows should be aimed at the palm of the gloved guarding hand of the partner.* Both boxers should wear their protective equipment for this type of exercise, as they should alternate roles. Alternatively, the punch can be practiced with the coach or the partner using focus pads.
5. The boxer should then progress to learning the appropriate defensive moves against the punching technique he or she has learned (see next section for more details).

Progressions When Teaching the Defense Against a Particular Punch

In this section, a series of *progressions* are proposed for the teaching of the defense against a particular type of punch. For the mechanics and the specific aspects pertaining to the *execution* of specific defensive moves, refer to Section 5.

1. The proper mechanics of the movement should first be learned in controlled and easy conditions, with the boxer practicing the technique individually and at slow speed. At this stage the boxer normally receives feedback and comments from the coach, or from a partner.

2. The boxer should then practice the technique in stable and predictable conditions, with a partner executing the punch at a slow, controlled speed. At this stage, the defending boxer should know what the target of the punch will be *before* the attacker executes it. At this stage the head must be completely excluded from the target area.

3. The speed of the attacker's movements should then be increased progressively, but the defending boxer should still know what the target of the punch will be before the attacker executes it. At this stage the head must continue to be excluded from the target area.

4. Some elements of uncertainty can then be progressively added in the attack (e.g. the defender does not know when it will take place, or what the target will be). At this stage the head must still be excluded from the target area, and the speed of the attack must be controlled, i.e. not maximal.

5. When the boxer's defense is deemed sufficiently stable and effective against a particular punch, the head of the defender can be included as a possible target, but attacks to this part of the body should be done at controlled, less than maximal speed. Initially, the defender should also

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know when the attacker will attempt a blow at the head.

6. Elements of uncertainty can then be added.

7. When this type of progression has been followed, the attacker can punch at full speed and the defender should be in a position to counter his or her moves effectively. However, the attacker must always be prepared to stop if he or she realizes that the partner cannot cope with the attack.

Using the Right Type of Gloves

For youngsters, the gloves used should be 8 or 10 oz. No purpose is served by using gloves that are too heavy for the arms of the young boxer, as this makes the correct execution of the skill unnecessarily difficult. Heavy gloves only encourage swinging and a corresponding neglect of the proper mechanics of the skill.

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7. The duties of the second during a competition

The purpose of this section is to outline the key roles and responsibilities of the Second during Boxing competitions.

7.1 Introduction

During a competition, a boxer can be supported by up to three coaches, although club shows, and smaller tournaments may only allow two in the corner. Typically, these individuals are the Lead Coach, and his or her assistant(s). The people who assist the Lead Coach during a fight are referred-to as the "Second".

Instruction-beginner coaches will often be involved as "Seconds" during competitions, and they must therefore be familiar with the key roles and responsibilities of this position.

7.2 Roles and duties of the second

The principal duty of the Second is to see that the boxer gets the necessary support during the intervals between the rounds. Some Lead Coaches may assign specific duties to the Second, so it is important that the coaching team have a corner plan in place before each bout.

The Second must remain calm and project a reassuring attitude at all times. He or she must also be well organized, and efficient when performing their duties because the time between rounds is limited to one minute.

During the bout, the Second will often talk with the Coach, and discuss how the boxer and the opponent are doing. However, the Second should keep in mind that the person ultimately in charge is the Lead Coach.

7.3 Equipment

The Second typically uses the following equipment when providing support to a boxer:

- Latex or rubber gloves to protect himself/herself and the boxer against infections. This is an important safety precaution, as the hands of the Seconds may become in contact with body fluids, blood, or open wounds. Gloves should be changed after each fight.
- A bucket.
- A towel. A clean towel should be used for each boxer.
- A fresh bottle of water that is in a clear container. Note sport drinks are not allowed in the corner.

Note: While the Second may choose to bring medical supplies into the corner during competition, there is always a qualified physician present who has the necessary medical and first aid equipment.

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7.4 Procedures Followed by the Second

The following measures should be taken by the Second during the rest intervals:

1) The Second places the stool in the corner immediately after the end of the round.
2) The boxer's mouth guard is taken out and rinsed.
3) The boxer is dried delicately with his or her personal towel. Rough dabbing should be avoided, especially in the face.
4) Using the boxer's personal water bottle, the Second assists the boxer in drinking.
5) The Second examines and tidies up of the boxer's clothes and protective equipment.
6) The Second puts back the mouth guard and gives a last word of encouragement to the boxer.
7) The Second removes the stool from the ring.

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8. Basic Ringcraft, rules and tactics

6.1 Introduction

Ringcraft is the ability to effectively solve problems posed by an opponent in the ring.

The experienced boxer is quick to assess the weakness and strength of an opponent's style and can adapt his/her tactics accordingly. The key word here is "experience". It must be impressed upon the novice boxer that:

- this particular type of boxing knowledge and ability is based on both experience and an adequate physical condition, and
- it is not something that he/she will be endowed with overnight. The coach should also stress from the outset that there is no special "ringcraft method". Rather, ringcraft consists in the:
    1. proper and timely application of a series of well-proven principles, and
    2. ongoing analysis and decision-making by the boxer during the fight.

6.2 Fundamental ringcraft principles

The following ringcraft or tactical principles should be taught to beginner boxers as they prepare to participate in competitions:

1. Boxing is a thinking game. Out-think the opponent, and you can outscore him/her.
2. Learn all the basic moves and puzzle the opposition with a variety of them. Never overplay one particular move. Do exactly what the opponent does not want you to do.
3. Do not punch until you are into range. When the opening presents itself, punch quickly. Do not wait. The lead hand being nearest to the opponent is the safest lead.
4. Remember that a straight punch will "beat" a hook. The feet should be anchored when punching.
5. Keep the hands high and the chin down. Avoid making wasteful or unnecessary movements, yet be wary of presenting a sitting target. Keep the feet under the body while moving – when off balance the whole target area is exposed to attack.
6. Try and note any mannerisms that an opponent may show preceding a particular move or punch.
7. Be in good physical condition, because skill execution deteriorates with fatigue. Relax, because tension slows down reaction time and brings on muscle fatigue.
8. Appear confident all the time. Try not to show it if you are tired or hurt. Your opponent is probably just as tired as you.
9. Never stop trying: one punch could turn the contest your way.

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6.3 Understanding the scoring system used in boxing

Introduction
In amateur boxing competitions, the winner of a bout is determined, in the majority of cases, by judges assessing the performance of the contestants through “scoring” the delivery of correct hits.

In order to prepare their boxers to compete successfully, coaches must be familiar with these fundamental criteria and with both scoring methods. To find out more about the scoring system, please consult the most recent copy of the rule book posted on Boxing Canada’s website.

6.4 Boxing tactics and the scoring system

It is important to ensure the boxer’s tactics and ringcraft are adjusted accordingly. Important points for the coach to keep in mind are listed below:

- “10-Point must” system: in each round, the boxer that displays more quality blows, ring generalship, aggression and tactical advantage will be awarded 10 points while the loser of the round receives only 9 points. As warnings are given, the points are deducted in each round which can give the loser a score of 10-8. This score can also be a result of being ‘out-classed’ where the winner is dominant in their delivery.
- Defense is as important as offence. The boxer must always try not to give the opponent an opportunity to score. Avoiding a blow is as important as scoring a blow.
- A warning gives the opponent two points – which in a close bout are difficult to make up. The boxer must always box clean, to the rules and avoid warnings.
- The landing of a blow must be clearly visible to the majority of judges in order to result in an accepted score. Blows thrown from the “outside” in the center of the ring, with the boxer facing a corner, have the best chance of being seen to land by the majority of judges. Wild, inaccurate or sloppy punches, especially those thrown near the ropes and in close range of the opponent, have the least chance of resulting in accepted scores.
- The area near the red corner is a “blind zone”, where punches cannot be seen by more than one or two judges. Consequently, it can serve as a “safe zone” for the defending boxer, and the attacker can waste a lot of energy for nothing in this part of the ring.
- The boxer who is ahead in points after two rounds must concentrate on maintaining his/her margin and protecting his/her lead, i.e. he or she must focus on defence. He/she does should not make a stationary target of himself/herself, should not “slug it out” but rather should keep moving and stay away from the center of the ring.
- The boxer who is behind in points after two rounds must concentrate on attack, on landing clean and clearly visible scoring blows, and, if possible, on boxing in the center of the ring.

Given the specific characteristics of the scoring system, the following principles should therefore influence the boxer’s ringcraft and tactics:

- Defence is as important as offence throughout each bout.
- When attacking, the focus must be on clean scoring blows easily identified by all judges.
- Fouls and warnings must be avoided at all costs.
- Physical conditioning is a must for the “extra efforts” that may be required in the last round.

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- The boxer must know and exploit to his or her advantage the locations of the ring where it is easy or difficult for judges to see a blow land.

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6.5 Basic points concerning left-handed boxers

- Left-handed boxers are often called *Southpaws*.
- Southpaws put their right foot forward when they assume the basic boxing stance, jab with their right hand, and throw power punches with their left hand (which in their case is the rear hand).
- To an "orthodox" or right-handed fighter, a southpaw's punches are therefore coming from the opposite side. When a right handed and a left handed boxer fight each other, their lead foot is almost on top of the other person's.
- For the most part, Southpaws tend to be good counter punchers.
- In most cases, left-handed boxers move around the ring to the right, i.e. *circling away* from the right hand of the orthodox boxer.

Images 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 show some Southpaw moves against a right-handed boxer

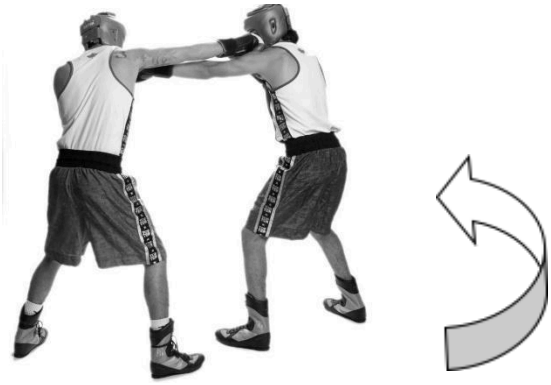

Image 5.3.1- Left-handed boxer moves to the right, crossing his right-handed opponent's jab.

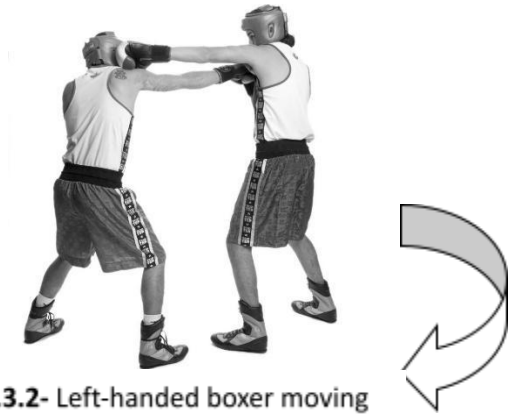

Image 5.3.2- Left-handed boxer moving to the left, striking the right inner side of his right-handed opponent.

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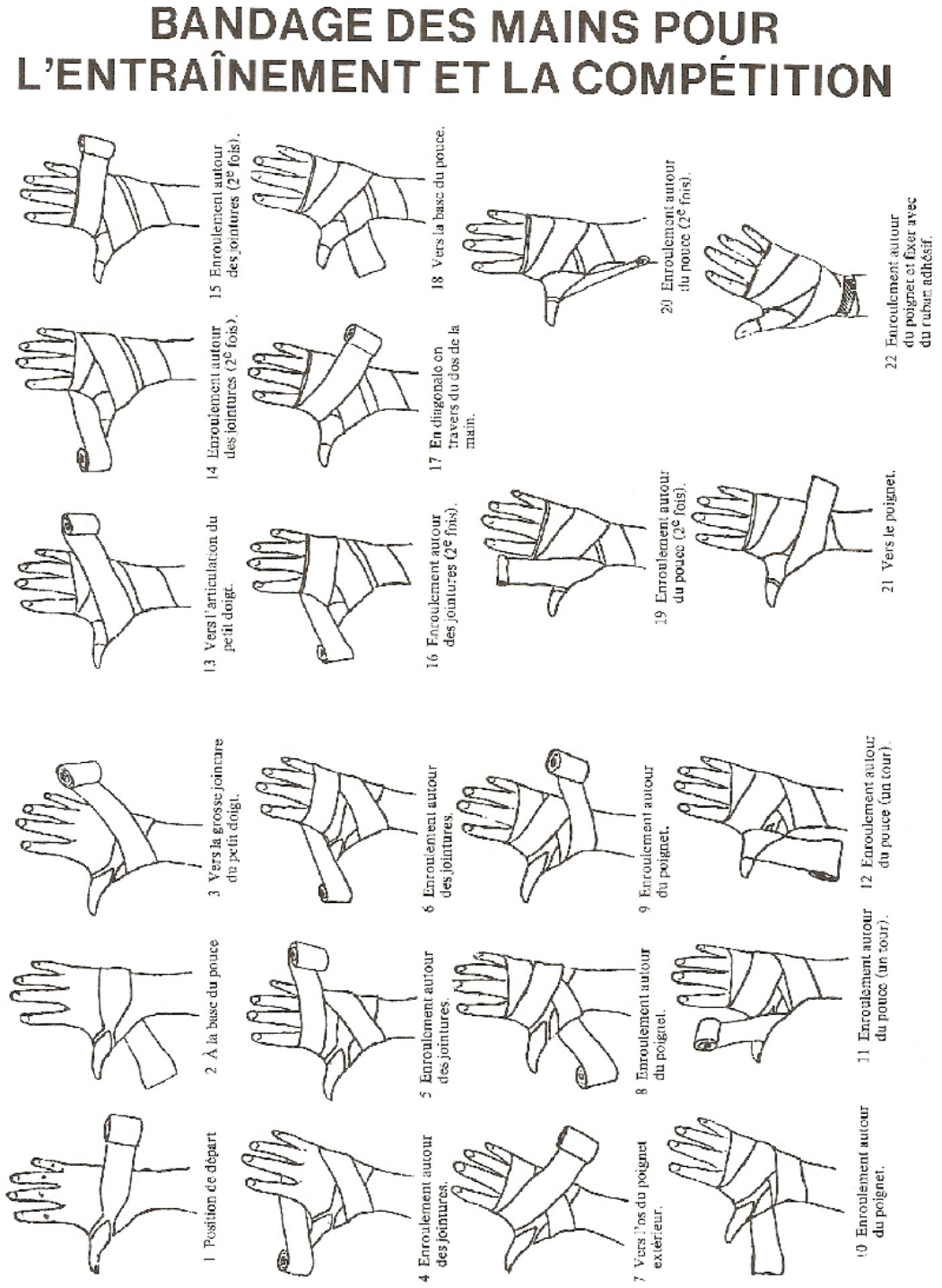
Appendix 1– Hand wrapping



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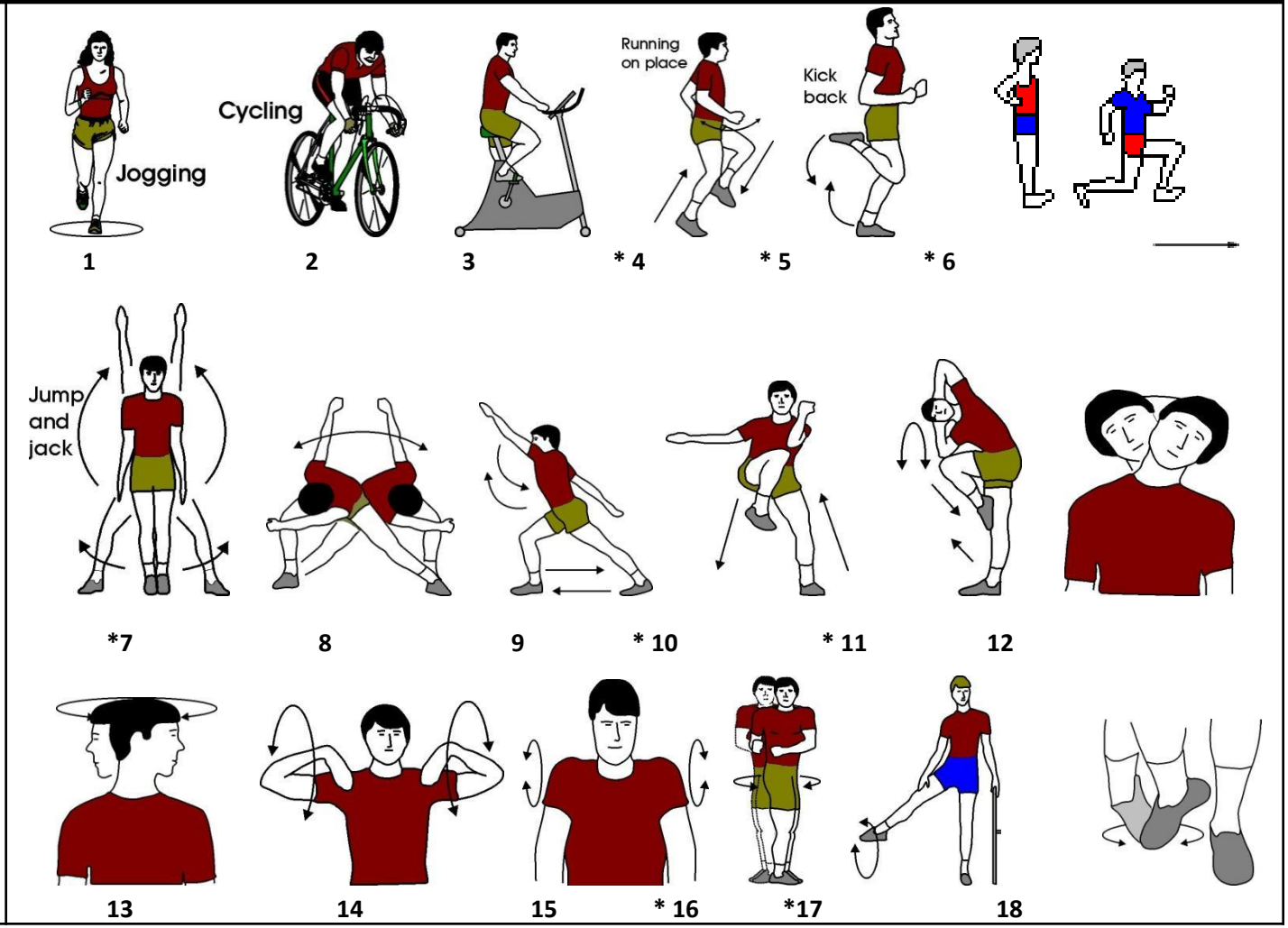
Appendix 2 Sample Warm-Up Activities

Sample activities for the general warm-up (Good for balance and/or coordination)***

- Running (1); *running backwards; cycling (2) or stationary cycling (3); *running on the spot: knees are raised progressively higher, with leg movements performed progressively faster (4)
- *Kickbacks (5)
- *Walking in a crouched position (6)
- *Jumping jacks (7)
- Side lunges, bent forward position with torso twists and arms movements (8)
- Forward lunge and arm extension (9)
- Cross lateral knee and elbow contacts (10)
- *Trunk flexions and twists while standing on one leg (11)
- Clockwise and counterclockwise rotations: head/neck (12; 13); shoulders (14, 15); *trunk (16); leg (17), ankles (18)
- *Skipping; * skipping while running on place with progressively higher knee elevation.



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Example of a game that can be used as part of the warm-up

Name and Purpose	Equipment and organization	Instructions, activity management, and variations
Name of Activity: Flag game **Purpose:** Development of footwork, utilizing the in/out movement **Note:** This game can also be used as a talent identification drill with young, beginner boxers, as it can reveal natural abilities such as coordination, quickness, hand-eye coordination, and decision-making. As boxers progress forward with the structured teaching of footwork, this game will be a good way of assessing whether they master basic footwork	Equipment ● A large surface that can accommodate several square zones of 5 feet by 5 feet each. ● Cones should be used to mark out each zone. ● Flags 2 x 16 inches. If flags are not available, 16-inch ropes can be used Organisation ● Participants are paired. ● Each participant is provided with one flag. ● Each pair is assigned to one of the 5 feet by 5 feet area marked off by cones. **Note:** The working areas can be located next to each other. When in the ring there will be a third person, a referee, that may at some point represent an obstacle; for this reason, young boxers should learn to cope with limited space or unexpected obstructions.	Instructions to the participants: ● Participants insert their flags into their trunks at the waist, and on the side. ● Flags must hang out about 30 cm outside a participant's trunks. They must flow loosely as the boxers move around and be easy to "steal." ● The intent of the game is to take as many flags as possible away from the other participant during the allocated time for each "period" or "round." ● Each "round" should last between 1 and 2 minutes, and the number of rounds should vary between 2 and 4 depending on the age and fitness level of the participants. There should be a 30 to 60 second break between rounds. ● Both boxers must square off in the centre of their assigned area. They must face each other in a competition stance, remain upright, and never lean over. ● Each round begins and ends when the coach gives a signal (e.g. whistle blow). ● Each round, boxers alternate the hip that is placed closest to the opponent. Management- During the activity, Coaches must ensure that: ● Flags are properly tucked into participants' trunks. ● Participants remain in their upright boxing stance. This will avoid boxers hitting their heads. ● The beginning and end of each round are clearly signalled. Additional comments: ● 2 to 3 coaches are ideal for this activity. Each is assigned an area of the gym to supervise. ● Anyone can do this drill, but participants should be paired according to size, skill, and fitness. Variations ● The first participant to steal 10 flag wins. ● Have the flags hanging behind the back. ● For first timers to this game, it is a good idea to plan for shorter rounds, until they acquire the skills and endurance to sustain the drill for 2 min or more.

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skills.		

Sample activities for the boxing specific warm-up (*Good for balance and/or coordination)

SPECIFIC WARM-UP - KEY POINTS	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES / EXERCISES
The specific warm-up follows the general warm-up. It must involve movements that are very similar or identical to those performed while boxing. The first few exercises of the specific warm-up should be executed in a controlled manner, and at a sub-maximal speed or intensity. Speed of movements should be increased progressively within a given exercise, and from one exercise to the next if it involves the same muscles. At the end of the specific warm-up, movements should be performed at the speed/intensity intended for the main part of the session. It is very important to ensure a proper warm-up for the upper body musculature: neck, shoulders, trunk, back, chest, and core.	• Wrist, arms, and shoulder rotations. • From the basic stance position, slow extensions of the arms in front of the body, as in straight punching. Right and left arms alternate. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal. • * Running on place while performing extensions of the arms in front of the body, as in straight punching. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal. • * Same as above but running backwards. • From the basic stance position, extensions of the arms *across* the body, as in punching to the left with the right hand, or vice versa. Controlled trunk rotation and stretch at the end of the movement and return to the initial position. Movements are performed to the right and left alternatively. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal. • Standing in the upright position, feet shoulder width apart. (1) arms are extended on each side of the body with palms facing forward; (2) both elbows are bent at 90°; (3) hands make fist so knuckles are pointing up and palms facing forward. In this position, arms are extended towards the ceiling alternatively, as in punching straight up. Cadence is increased progressively but remains sub-maximal. • Same as above but using a light resistance in each hand. • Footwork drills (ex. toe fencing with hands together behind the back. See Section 5.3). • Individual shadow boxing on place. The Boxing stance is assumed, and the boxer executes various types of punches with each hand. • Individual shadow boxing with short steps forward, backwards, or laterally, using effective footwork technique. • Shadow boxing while following the movements of a group leader.

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