

Born to BOX

For Steve Burke, owner of The Armoury Boxing Club, boxing is much more than a means to get fit and toned.

exercise
BY: KRISTEN BIRCH

You bring the heart and we give you the training and tools to get you in the ring

‘The benefits of boxing go beyond the physical,’ says Steve. ‘It has the most benefits mentally – it is a transformational experience of mind-blowing proportions, and a story of adversity; the fears you have to overcome in order to fight are life-changing.’

Growing up in the UK, Steve felt he would never meet his father’s expectations that he follow in his boxing footsteps. So he gave up the idea and joined the British army, becoming an officer in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

‘The IRA suddenly called a ceasefire, and we had to withdraw the men to base. They sat around doing nothing for a long time. But they had to stay occupied and keep up their fitness, so I decided to get them boxing. They ended up winning the army’s boxing championships.’

Steve was then asked to manage the British Army boxing team – a boxing club in its own right and one of the oldest in the world.

‘We had seven international boxers come out of there. I always found it strange to be so involved but never actually box myself.’

That was until he moved to SA years later, and watched a friend fight at one of the first white-collar fight clubs. Seeing this was an inspiration. At the age of 47, Steve had his first fight.

White-collar boxing is about using the sport for personal

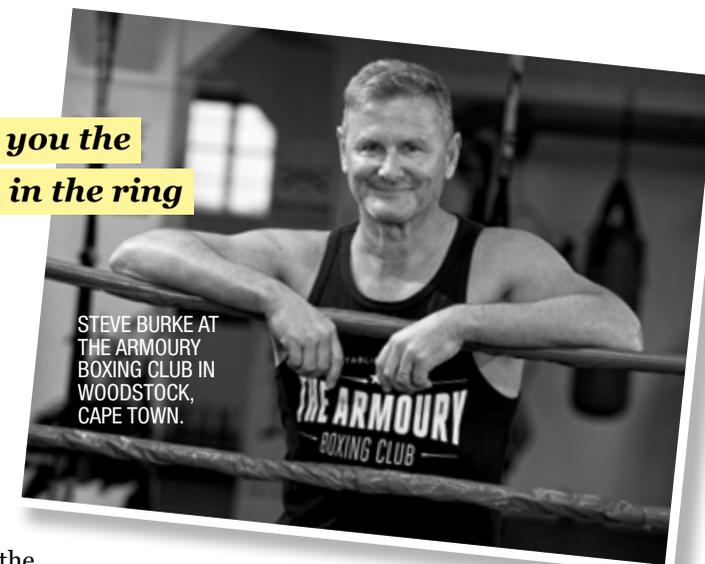
development. Steve recognised its revolutionary potential, and The Armoury Boxing Club opened in April 2010 with the intention of making boxing and boxing-related physical training available to enthusiasts regardless of age, sex, race, economic status or fitness level.

Today the club offers group work, one-on-one coaching and time in the ring, and has a charity initiative, providing boxing lessons to children from poorer communities and schools so they

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too can experience the physical and emotional benefits.

‘You bring the heart and we give you the training and tools to get you in the ring. It is a clever sport that teaches you patience and self-control. It is actually the



STEVE BURKE AT THE ARMOURY BOXING CLUB IN WOODSTOCK, CAPE TOWN.

opposite of what some might assume a fight looks like – if you lose your cool, you’re going to get hit.’

So, what about its physical benefits?

At The Armoury, Steve and his team are all about training that is both purposeful and rewarding.

‘We have had some amazing transformations: people come in heavily overweight, but they succeed because of the humble environment, which is in contrast to the harsh, sterile environment found at some gyms. Boxing draws on everything – skill, fitness and heart.’

The Armoury offers various types of training as well as special courses such as the popular Ladies that Punch programme, and the Zero to Hero boxing course for financial services and professional services industries. It also hosts three Fight Night events a year for those who would like to get in the ring. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
go to: armouryboxing.com

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BOXING MOVES

to get you going

Steve offers expert tips on how to build stamina and develop your technique and hand-eye coordination so you can go toe to toe in the ring.



1 WARM-UP

Skipping is a useful warm-up and can be incorporated in interval training to increase the intensity of workouts. It also improves your rhythm and coordination, for faster, lighter feet.



SHADOW-BOXING IN THE MIRROR

2

The mirror is the first piece of equipment you'll use when learning to box because you can assess your technique and posture. You can practise without dumb-bells, but if you have been boxing for a while, the dumb-bells will help to increase shoulder strength and stability. Shadow-boxing also develops your hand-eye coordination before moving on to pads or bags.



3

SPEEDBALL PUNCHING

The speedball improves hand-eye coordination and rhythm. Boxers are like dancers, except that we also punch. Without rhythm or flow, you won't be able to box properly.



4

CONDITIONING & ENDURANCE

Working the heavy bag is great for conditioning and will increase your fitness level quickly. We use it mainly to build endurance so that you last your full rounds in the ring. And, of course, punching a heavy bag is a fantastic stress reliever!