



BOXING

COACHING HANDBOOK

PART 1



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INTRODUCTION:

Congratulations on deciding to become a qualified coaching assistant, a vital and rewarding journey and one that can have a positive effect on the lives of individuals, both young and old and from all walks of life. It can impact on people's lives both inside and outside the ring and what you will learn may bring out new skills that can influence every avenue of your life: at work, at home, in the training gym as well as the boxing ring.

1.1 WHAT IS A COACH?

At its simplest, someone who provides high quality sporting experiences but really good coaches do far more than teach boxing skills; they coach people and bring out the very best in each individual whether they are just starting to learn to box or whether they are competing at the highest level and striving to stand on the podium. Whether you are a newly qualified young coach or a highly qualified veteran of many years, you have an important role to play in developing boxers, in promoting the work of England Boxing (EB) and often in playing an influential role in the lives of young people.

The following quotes may help you to get a sense of what coaching involves; as you read them think about why you want to coach and how you would like to be seen as a coach:

"Sports coaching is central to developing, sustaining and increasing participation in sport. It drives better performances and increased success as well as supporting key social and economic objectives throughout the UK. At all levels of society coaches guide improvement in technical, tactical, physical, mental and lifestyle skills, contributing to personal and social development." UK Coaching Framework (2006)

"It is often the 'how to do' skills rather than the 'what to do' skills that make the critical difference between good coaches and great coaches" Dent and Reynolds

"Coaching is a process that enables learning and development to occur and so performance to improve" adapted Eric Parsloe

"The coach's job is to guide the athlete through the learning process"

"Coaching is the artful application of science" Antonio Minichiello, coach to Jessica Ennis



1.2 REASONS FOR COACHING

People get into coaching for all sorts of reasons, for example, to:

- give something back when they retire from competing
- share their passion for the sport
- help a particular individual or group achieve their potential
- make a difference to the life of the club and its boxers
- help people to be the best they can be.

There are also potentially negative reasons for getting into coaching, such as to control others or to live their boxing career through someone else.

Most boxers will never be champions so if your motivation is solely to develop elite performers, it's best to be realistic at the start. Boxing can be a positively life changing experience regardless of the amount of competitive success achieved. You can be a key figure in helping people to be the best that they can be and this is particularly true for children and young people. This is a privilege, demanding in time and energy and not financially rewarding; however it can be very satisfying.

EB believes that being a boxing coach is about giving young people and adults a safe, rewarding and enjoyable experience which allows them to be the best that they can be. It's about developing good technique, winning and losing gracefully and learning from both experiences. It's about developing people not just technically and physically, but emotionally and socially. However, whether sport and boxing in particular truly 'develops character' and life skills is dependent on the qualities, attitudes and motives of you the coach.

It is not essential to have been a boxer in order to be an effective coach; although it's true that many coaches have been successful boxers. Not all ex-champions make good coaches. Many excellent coaches have had limited competitive careers and the personal qualities which make for success in competition are not necessarily the same as those which make good coaches.

WHETHER BOXING TRULY DEVELOPS CHARACTER AND LIFE SKILLS IS DEPENDENT ON THE QUALITIES, ATTITUDES AND MOTIVES OF YOU, THE COACH.

1.3 LEVEL ONE BOXING COACHING ASSISTANT

As a Coaching Assistant you need to register with EB and will be qualified to assist more qualified coaches to deliver aspects of coaching sessions.

The level 1 Coaching Assistant programme will help you to be able to:

- prepare from your supervising coach's plan to deliver parts of sessions
- deliver practical coaching activities including:
 - warm-ups and cool-downs
 - technique and skill development using bags and pads
 - circuit training exercises
- keep participants safe
- adapt your coaching when working with children
- build rapport with participants and other coaching staff
- provide explanations and demonstrations
- coach in line with EB ethical coaching practice
- give basic advice on nutrition, hydration and safe weight management practices
- review and develop your coaching practice.

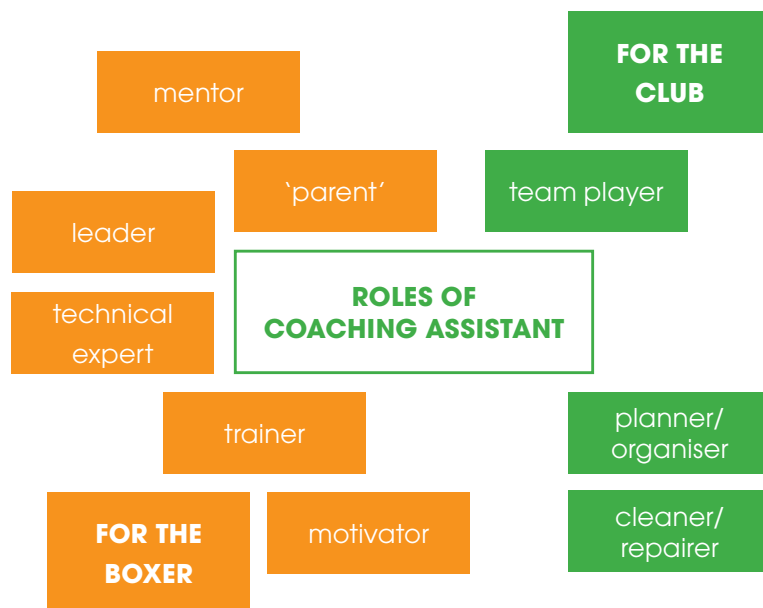
PLEASE NOTE:

- all contact boxing activity must take place within an EB affiliated club and in accordance with the rules and regulations of EB
- coaches that do not register with EB operate outside the governing body's rules and regulations and do so at their own risk.

1.4 ROLE AND QUALITIES OF THE COACHING ASSISTANT

The boxer/coach relationship is one of the most personal in sport. The health and well-being of boxers comes first and you are there to protect boxers as well as to offer opportunities for them to improve and develop. There must be a balance between the development of performance and meeting the social, emotional, mental and physical needs of the boxer. Coaching is about working with and developing people and you will need to play a range of roles to meet the needs of different individuals and situations; from 'technical expert' (at a basic level) through mentor and 'parent figure', to punch bag repairer and toilet cleaner. A willingness to be a team player and fulfil both the more and less glamorous roles is essential.

The sort of qualities required to meet these diverse roles include being empathetic, approachable and trustworthy.



EMPATHETIC, APPROACHABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY

GOOD INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

ANALYTICAL SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNIQUE AND RULES

DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS IN AND OUTSIDE THE RING



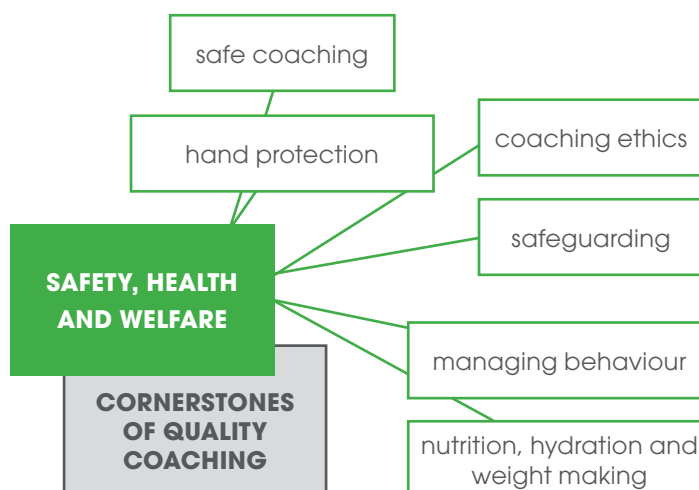
1.5 CORNERSTONES OF QUALITY COACHING

The diagram adjacent sums up the cornerstones of quality coaching and the Level 1 Coaching Assistant programme is built on this foundation:



1 SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE:

Coaches must place the safety, health and welfare of the boxers before anything else; six key areas are included in this quadrant.



2 PARTICIPANT-CENTRED APPROACH:

where coaches recognise the unique nature of each individual and adapt their coaching accordingly; this is where the needs of the individual are placed above those of the club or the aspirations of parents or coaches. Seven key areas are included in this quadrant.

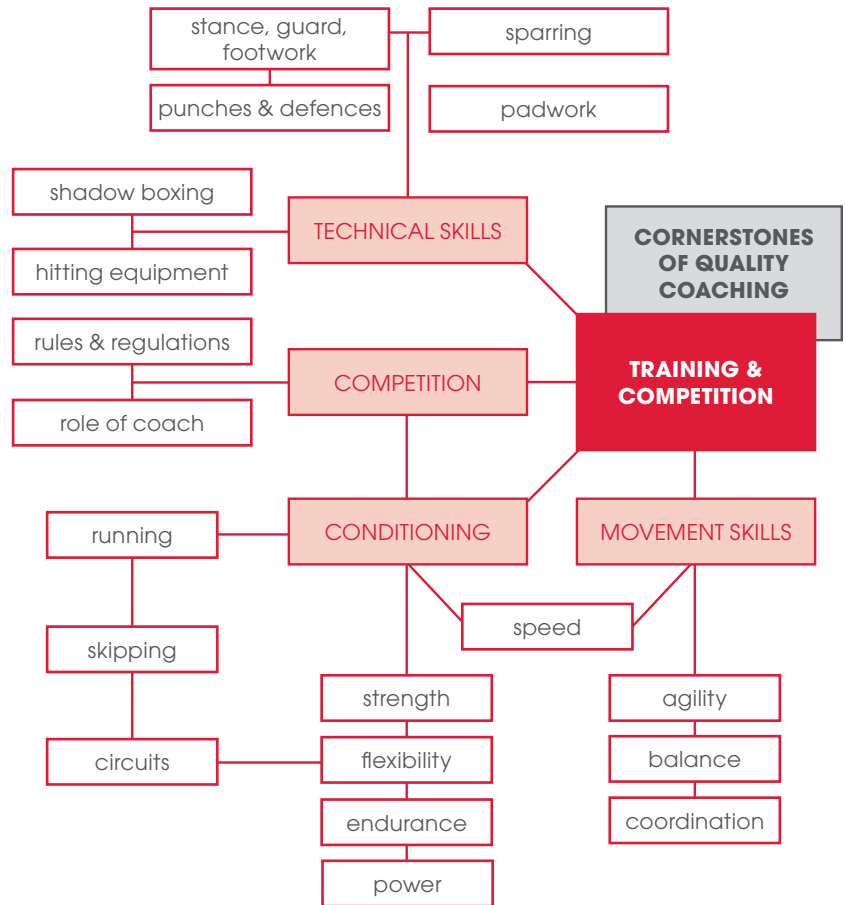


3 TRAINING AND COMPETITION:

Effective boxing Coaching Assistants need a good grasp of;

- basic technical skills
- underpinning movement skills (eg agility, balance)
- competition
- conditioning.

You will need to be able to help more qualified and experienced coaches to develop these in the training environment and apply them in the competitive environment.



4 EFFECTIVE COACHING SKILLS:

It's often how people coach rather than what they coach that differentiates good from great coaches. You will be encouraged to focus on the way you coach, on how you build relationships, how you communicate, how you observe, analyse and develop skills and provide feedback.



1.6 SECTION SUMMARY

- **Being a coach means always putting the boxers' welfare and long-term interests first**
- **Coaches should make sessions welcoming to all**
- **Coaches need to balance good technical 'what to coach' abilities with good 'how to coach' skills**
- **Good people skills and the ability to work with others are essential to being an effective coach.**



**SAFETY,
HEALTH AND
WELFARE**

**PARTICIPANT
CENTRED
APPROACH**

**TRAINING
AND
COMPETITION**

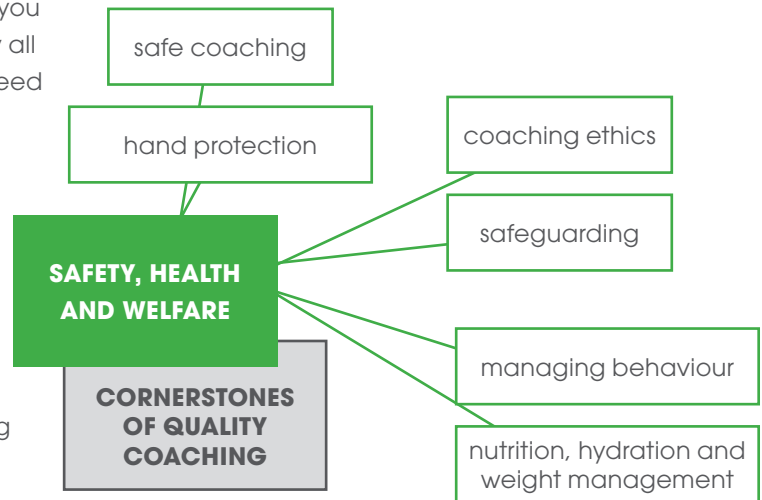
**EFFECTIVE
COACHING
SKILLS**

2.1: INTRODUCTION

A top priority for every coach is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all their boxers, especially those who are under 18 for whom you have an additional duty of care.

This section will help you to review all the areas you need to consider and the specific responsibilities you have as a Coaching Assistant. Don't be put off by all this but do take very careful notice of what you need to do and not do:

- Risk assessments (2.2)
- Insurance (2.2)
- Injuries and illnesses (2.2)
- Accidents and emergencies (2.2)
- Hand protection (2.3)
- Coaching codes of conduct (2.4)
- Good coaching practice and safeguarding of young and vulnerable people (2.5)
- Managing inappropriate behaviour (2.6)
- Nutrition, hydration and weight management (2.7).



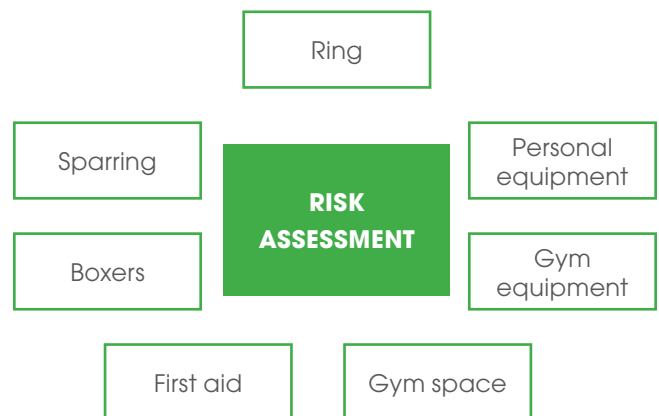
2.2: SAFE COACHING

The boxer/coach relationship is one of the most personal in sport. The health and well-being of the boxer comes first and you are there to protect boxers as well as to offer them carefully graded challenges to improve as well as to develop life skills. A number of factors need to be considered to ensure their safety and well-being. All the activities you deliver must be in line with EB's policies and guidelines (www.englandboxing.org).

Risk assessments:

Regular risk assessments are essential to protect both the boxers and the coach.

Every facility should have its own risk assessment checklist and procedure and you must be familiar with this. Lead coaches have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that formal risk assessments take place and they should direct you regarding your role in conducting them. Coaching Assistants should always undertake risk assessments for the activities they are delivering, even if this done in an informal manner. Things that should be checked are shown in the adjacent diagram and a sample risk assessment checklist is shown at the end of this section.



The ring

- Ropes, rope ties and turnbuckles: ropes should be securely fastened and not frayed.
- Underlay: in good repair and of sufficient thickness as stated in the rules of boxing.
- Canvas: tight, smooth with no rips or tears.

Personal equipment

- All equipment used must be appropriate for the number, age and level of boxer.
- Sparring gloves: should not be ripped and the foam should be of sufficient depth across the knuckles.
- Bag gloves: as previous.
- Head guards: secure straps / lacing, should fit the boxer correctly.
- Protectors: in good repair and a good fit.
- Gum shields: must be properly fitted; if young boxers have braces fitted on their teeth, a special mouth guard is necessary and an orthodontist's authorisation needs to be obtained and carried to competitions. NB there must be no red colour on mouth guard.
- Hand wraps: of the appropriate length and material.
- Footwear: in good repair and appropriate fit.

Gym equipment

- Always ensure there is sufficient space around the equipment for it to be used safely.
- Punch bags: sufficiently padded to not cause hand damage (ie no 'hard spots').
- Floor-to-ceiling balls: anchor point secure, elastics in good condition (tightened rubber ages quickly).
- Chains and fastenings: no broken links, no bent fastenings, securely tightened.
- Mats: no tears or rips.
- Skipping ropes: should have secure handles.
- Benches: splinter free, no broken components.
- Medicine balls: no splits in the leather.
- Weights, stands, bars and collars: secure collars, no damage to welds.
- Aerobic equipment (eg bikes, cross trainers) maintained in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

When assembling any equipment, it is important that the manufacturer's instructions are followed. When carrying / moving equipment, you should not try to lift anything beyond your capability and always use safe manual handling techniques to prevent injury (ie keep a straight back, bend at the knees, get help from a partner).

The gym space

- The floor is clean and free from clutter and has a non slip surface; blood and dirt can cause infection and illness and can be a slipping / tripping hazard.
- Gym equipment not in a hazardous position or blocking entry / exit points.
- Potential hazards to movement are minimised.

First aid

- You must hold an appropriate first aid certification as specified by EB and know where and how to access emergency help (ie the address and telephone number of the nearest hospital casualty department should be posted in the club; know the post code and address of your club/venue).
- There must be an accessible, fully equipped first aid box (the contents need to be monitored and date checked regularly) and at least one nominated person trained in first aid in addition to all the coaches.
- The accident/incident book is in place and accessible where injuries other than minor training injuries are logged.
- In the event of any illness or injury (other than a superficial training injury), it's the responsibility of the club to assign somebody to attend the casualty department with the boxer and, in the case of the young boxer, to notify the parent or significant other.

The boxer

- The medical status of all boxers must be known and this information should be recorded prior to any activity taking place, for example via a registration form.
- Emergency contact details for a parent / guardian must be held for each boxer.
- Any injury or illness during the training session needs to be logged in the incident book.
- Any injury from previous contests or sparring needs to be taken into account (an assessment of the severity of the effects and readiness for training).
- Correct bandaging of the hands needs to be taught and monitored.
- Hygiene and cleanliness of gear, including gum shield, to be stressed.
- No jewellery to be worn, especially in sparring.

Sparring

- **Supervising coach:** Coaching Assistants must not conduct any form of sparring. However, England Boxing encourages Level 1 Coaches to observe sparring sessions carried out by coaches who are Level 2 qualified or above. This will help to prepare them to coach sparring should they decide to progress to a higher coaching qualification.
- **Equipment:** sparring should only occur in a boxing ring with a Cushioned floor and Canvas, Secure ropes and Pad protected corner posts. Boxers must wear Gum shields, Head guards and Groin guards. Gloves must be a minimum of 10oz and in good condition.
- **Medical card:** best practice dictates that boxers should only participate in open sparring with an appropriate medical card.
- **Learning experience:** you must coach your boxers to understand the importance of control in 'conditioned' and 'technique' sparring; see it as a learning experience not a fight.
- **Themes:** suitable themes for age / development stage, experience and ability should be chosen.
- **Matching:** suitable matching must take place ie for age/development stage, experience, weight and height.

- **Exclusions:** a boxer must not spar during a medical suspension.
- **A range** of sparring experience is on offer, tailored to the needs of the boxers.
- **Timing:** sparring usually takes place near the start of a training session when boxers are well warmed up; it should be stopped when fatigue sets in. If a boxer is dehydrated (eg after a programme of conditioning where heavy sweating has occurred), there is a drop off in the ability to track a moving object and to process information necessary for decision-making; this makes it vital that sparring does **not** take place if the boxer is dehydrated.

Potential hazards and risks

Always be aware of these and if you have concerns, always:

- follow the club's / venue's procedures
- log it on the risk assessment / safety checklist
- ensure that nobody uses the equipment / space, repair or remove it if appropriate
- report to the person in charge (usually the lead coach)
- record any action taken according to the club / venue procedures.

Insurance:

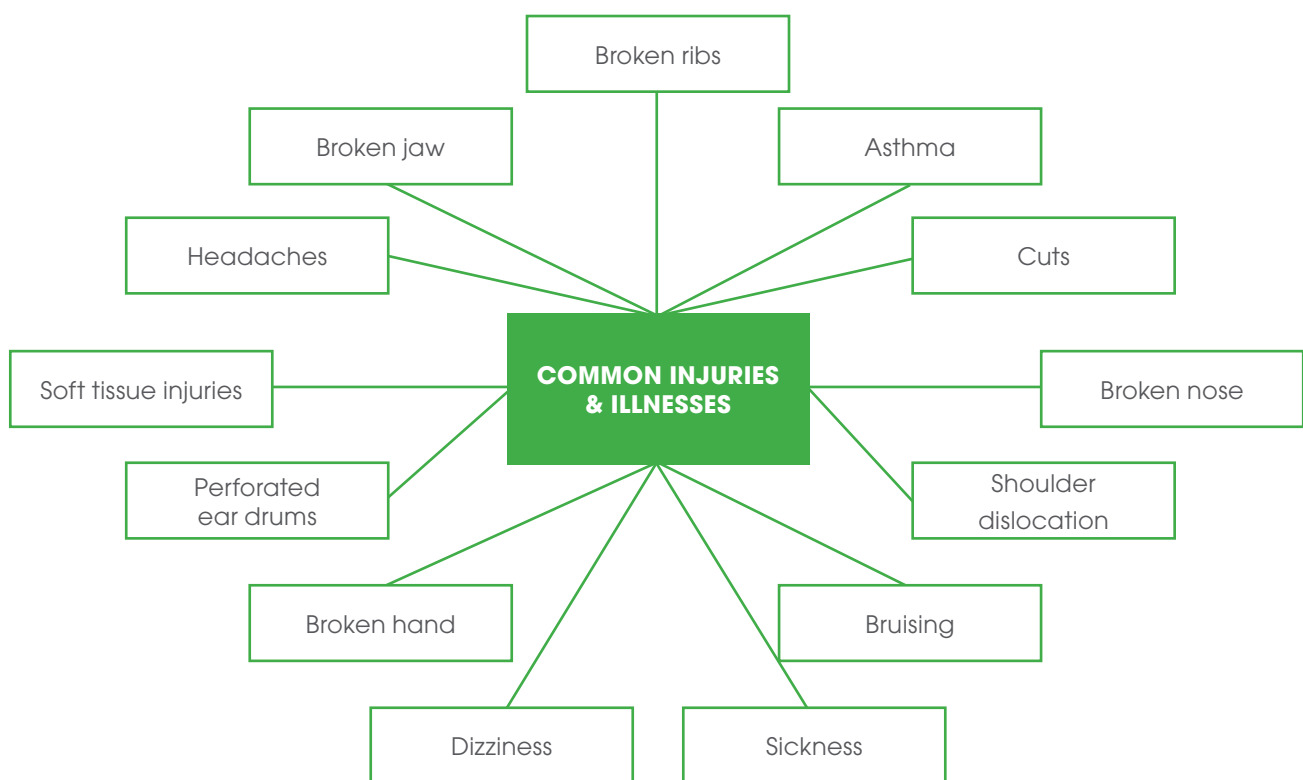
Appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance must be in place.

Common Injuries and Illnesses:

There are a number of common injuries and illnesses that can occur within boxing (see diagram).

Accidents and Emergencies:

It's important that injuries and emergencies are dealt with quickly and calmly so that any distress is kept to a minimum and to prevent the situation from escalating (see flow diagram and club's specific procedures and guidance).



Stay calm, observe and assess situation and act swiftly as necessary

Make sure the area is safe

Ensure that injured person and first aiders are not at risk of further injury

Listen to what the injured person is saying

Alert the first aider who should take appropriate action for minor injuries

In the event of an injury requiring specialist treatment, call the emergency services

Deal with the rest of the group and ensure that they are adequately supervised

Do not move someone with major injuries

Wait for the emergency medics

Contact the injured person's parent / carer

Complete an incident / accident report form

RING

Ropes, rope ties and turnbuckles in good repair & ropes securely fastened and not frayed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Underlay in good repair and of sufficient thickness as stated in the rules and regulations	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Canvas is tight, smooth and with no rips or tears	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments / actions taken or required:		

BOXERS' EQUIPMENT

All equipment is appropriate for the number, age and level of boxers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gloves are in good repair without rips, foam of sufficient depth across the knuckles	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Headguards should fit the boxers correctly and have secure straps / lacing	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Groin protectors are in good repair and are a good fit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gum shields are properly fitted	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Handwraps are of the appropriate length and material	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Footwear is in good repair and is a good fit	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments / actions taken or required:		

GYM EQUIPMENT

Sufficient space around equipment for it to be used safely	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Punch bags are sufficiently padded to not cause hand damage i.e. no 'hard spots'	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Bag chains and fastenings are securely tightened and in good repair with no broken links or bent fastenings	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Floor-to-ceiling balls have secure anchor points and elastic is in good condition	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Mats have no tears or rips	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Skipping ropes have secure handles and are in good condition	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Benches are in good repair and are splinter free	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Medicine balls are in good condition with no splits	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Weights: stands, bars and collars are all in good condition with secure collars and no damage to welds	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Aerobic equipment (bikes, cross trainers etc) is maintained in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments / actions taken or required:

BOXERS

Medical and emergency contact information has been collected for all boxers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Boxers are suitably attired and are not wearing jewellery	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Any injuries are taken into account when planning and conducting activities, which must be suitable	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments / actions taken or required:	

SPARRING (carried out by Level 2 Coaches and above only)

All boxers that participate in sparring hold an appropriate medical card	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sparring only takes place when a full coach or higher is present	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Correct equipment is worn at all times during sparring ie head guard, mouth guard, protector, gloves, hand wraps	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Boxers and coaches must understand the need for control in conditioned and technique sparring and understand that it is a learning experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Boxers are matched suitably according to age/developmental stage, experience, ability, weight and height	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Suitable themes are chosen relative to age, experience and ability	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
A range of sparring opportunities are on offer, tailored to the needs of the boxers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments / actions taken or required:	

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND FIRST AID

All coaches hold appropriate first aid qualifications	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency procedures are published and available for all to see, and all coaches are aware of them	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
A working telephone is available	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency access points are checked and operational	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
A fully equipped first aid kit is available at all sessions	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
There is an accident / incident book in place and accessible in which injuries other than minor training injuries are logged	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments / actions taken or required:	

Signed:

Name:

Date:

REMEMBER:

- Regular risk assessments are important to protect the safety of both boxers and coaches.
- You should check all equipment that is to be used as well as the gym space, the ring and the boxers.
- Coaching Assistants cannot conduct open sparring and can only conduct technique and conditioned sparring when a Full Coach (Level 2) or higher is present; coaches under the age of 18 cannot conduct any form of sparring.
- Coaches must follow the club's procedures when dealing with any accidents or emergencies.



ACTION:

Check out the risk assessment strategies, emergency procedures, injury report systems and insurance status at the club where you coach.



2.3: HAND PROTECTION

Hands are not made for hitting

Hands are made for grasping and manipulating objects. If they are used for hitting, they will soon be damaged unless precautions are taken to reduce the risk of injury. The hands are easily damaged and can be slow to heal. Indeed a boxer that experiences a hand injury can be plagued with difficulties for many years. The obvious precaution is that boxing gloves are worn. However it is also vital that the hands are properly wrapped (bandaged) whenever the striking of an opponent, a sparring partner, pads or any piece of hitting equipment is likely to occur.

Competition gloves

If you feel the gloves provided at a tournament are damaged or worn in any way, they should be returned to tournament officials and replaced with a suitable pair.

Punch bag gloves

Hitting heavy bags with gloves with inadequate padding is a common cause of hand injuries. If punch bag gloves are used in a gymnasium, they should regularly be checked for suitability. A glove that looks in good order may well be unsuitable. The main area for inspection is the padding across the knuckle. Many clubs prefer to use sparring gloves or competition gloves for punch bag work because there is less padding and support in the punch bag gloves. However, sparring and competition gloves are more expensive and easily damaged by a heavy workload.

Sparring gloves

There are no formal regulations for the use of sparring gloves. However prior to sparring, you should ensure they are of an appropriate size and weight and in good condition. The padding across the knuckles should be checked prior to any sparring taking place.

Handwraps / bandages

For training there are no rules. However it is just as important that the hands are properly wrapped to protect both boxers. Training bandages should always have sufficient 'give' or elasticity to shape and protect the hand without restricting blood flow or deforming the hand.



KEY RULES:

- All boxers must wear crepe type bandages or AIBA approved wraps when competing
 - A bandage must not be longer than 4.5 metres and not shorter than 2.5 metres
 - The bandage should be 5.7 cm (2") wide
 - No other kind of bandages may be used
- The use of any kind of tapes, rubber or adhesive plaster as bandages is strictly forbidden.
- A single strap of adhesive not to exceed 7.6 cms (3 in.) long in length and 2.5 cms (1in) wide but in no case to exceed 5 cm width may be used on the upper wrist to secure the bandages.



Tips for effective hand wrapping

- The hand should be held out with the fingers slightly spread.
- A wrap of the thumb with a slight pull inwards will reduce the risk of injury to the thumb.
- When wrapping, there should always be a slight tension on the bandage but if the hand is wrapped too tightly it can restrict the flow of blood and make it difficult to make a fist.
- If the hand wraps don't 'feel right', they should be redone.
- Hand wraps have a top and bottom. Some hand wraps are clearly marked "This Side Down". The reason is that the velcro should be face up when finished. If you started with the wrong side down this isn't a problem, on the last step around the wrist twist the wraps over.
- Hand wraps should be regularly washed. Filthy hand wraps will harbour bacteria and boxers should be told this. Hand wraps can be machine washed; use a small nylon net to avoid tangling.
- Rolling the hand wraps back up when finished makes wrapping at the next training session much easier.
- For smaller hands, avoid wrapping too many times around the palm because the hand wraps will bunch up on the palm. For very small hands you might need to include a couple of figure 8s and extra times around the wrist.
- The size of the hand needs to be taken into account when wrapping it. A 4.5 metre bandage on a small hand of a schoolboy will simply be too long to allow a correct fist to be made; a 2.5 metre bandage on a senior heavyweight may not provide adequate protection.
- Wrapping between fingers is commonplace in professional boxing. It will make it less likely that the wrap will 'ride up' but the inevitable spreading of the fingers makes risk of injury more likely.



REMEMBER:

- The hands are not made for hitting and can be easily damaged and slow to heal
- Hands should be protected at all times when punching through correct wrapping and the use of appropriate gloves that are in good condition



ACTION:

Check the condition of the gloves used by your boxers.



2.4: COACHING ETHICS

All governing bodies have a code of conduct for coaches that all coaches are expected to follow. This section outlines the ethical standards upon which these are based. You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of everybody. You must treat everyone equitably and sensitively, regardless of ability, gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion or political affiliation. Boxing must be open and welcoming to all who wish to participate in it. EB's Code of Conduct for Coaches and Volunteers can be found in the Best Practice Guide at www.englandboxing.org and the key areas are shown in the diagram below with explanations in the text.

Relationships

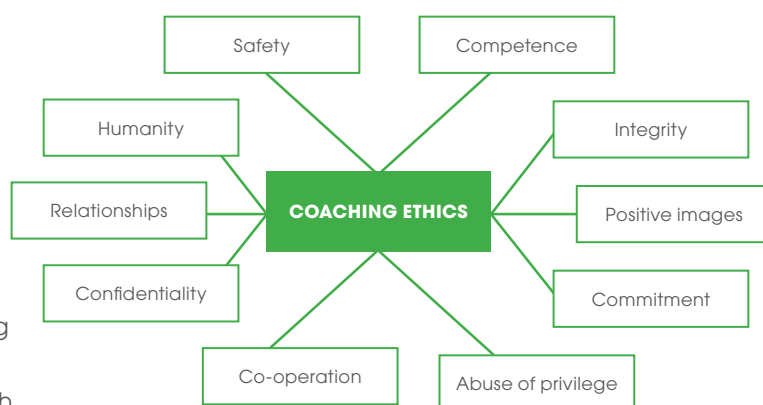
- You will be primarily concerned with the well-being, safety, and sporting development of the individual. There must be a balance between the development of performance and the social, emotional, mental and physical needs of the boxer.
- A contact sport such as boxing can lead to a very close relationship between coach and boxer. You are responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries between a working relationship and friendship in accordance with the governing body's safeguarding children policy (see subsection 2.5 in this section).
- The relationship between coach and performer relies heavily on mutual trust and respect. This respect must be earned by both parties.

Commitment

- You must display a commitment to the boxers and the club and reliability is essential. The boxer should commit to the training required and the coach must set out clearly what is expected.
- You should clarify in advance with boxers and/or parents the training required to achieve the boxer's goals and you as the coach will provide the necessary expertise and guidance. Expectations should be realistic and progress should be regularly reviewed.

Co-operation

- You should communicate and co-operate with other coaches and with sports and associated professions in the best interests of your boxers; for example seeking of educational and career counselling for young performers whose involvement in sport affects their studies.



Integrity

- You must not encourage performers to violate the rules of boxing and should discourage and condemn such action.
- You must not promote or allow measures that could lead to unfair advantage. You must not adopt practices to enhance performance that might jeopardise the safety and well-being of the boxer and must never advocate or condone the use of banned performance enhancing substances.
- You must treat opponents and officials with respect in victory and defeat, and should encourage your performers to do the same. You should prepare boxers to respond to success and failure in a dignified and sporting way. Leading by example is an excellent first step.
- You must accept responsibility for the conduct of your performers and discourage inappropriate behaviour in training, competition and away from the sporting arena.

Confidentiality

- Coaches gather a great deal of personal information about boxers such as medical conditions and contact details and this should be treated confidentially.
- Confidentiality does not prevent disclosure of information to those with a right to know, for example:
 - for evaluation for competitive selection
 - in pursuit of disciplinary action within the sport
 - for legal and medical reasons
 - in making recommendations to parents/family where the health and safety of performers might be at stake
 - in pursuit of action to protect children from abuse.

Abuse of privilege

- The coach is privileged to have regular contact with the boxers and on occasion may travel and share accommodation with them. You must consistently display high personal and professional standards and abide by the sport's code of conduct and safeguarding children policy (see sub-section 2.5 in this section).

Positive images

- Personal appearance is a matter of individual taste but you have an obligation to display a positive image of health, cleanliness and professionalism, and to observe the requirements for personal dress set out in the Rules and Regulations of Boxing.
- You should never smoke while coaching and should not drink alcohol before coaching as it may affect your competence to coach, compromise the safety of the performers or obviously indicate you have been drinking.

Safety

- Boxing coaches have a responsibility to ensure, as far as possible, the safety and well being of their boxers. All reasonable steps should be taken to establish a safe environment and in keeping with the recognised practices of the sport as determined by EB.

- The activity undertaken should be suitable for the age, physical and emotional maturity, experience and ability of the performers (see 3.5 and 3.6 in Participant-centred Approach Section).
- Coaches have a duty to protect children from harm and abuse (see sub-section 2.5 in this section).
- The boxers should have been suitably prepared for the activity and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety.
- You should ensure you have adequate insurance to cover all aspects of your coaching and should always operate within EB's guidelines.

Competence

- You must coach in accordance with what your qualification as a Coaching Assistant allows you to do.
- You must be able to recognise and accept when it is in the best interests of boxers to refer them to other coaches or agencies. It is your responsibility, as far as possible, to verify the competence and integrity of any other person to whom you refer a boxer.
- You should welcome feedback on your coaching by colleagues and be able to account to performers, EB and colleagues for what you do and why.
- You have a responsibility to yourself and your performers to maintain and keep your own skills and knowledge up-to-date. You should recognise when your own expertise is lacking and have a responsibility to seek support and guidance.

Code of conduct

EB's code of conduct is reproduced on the next page; reflect on your own coaching practice as you read it through.



EB BEST PRACTICE

CODE OF CONDUCT: Coaches and Volunteers

- 1 Always work in an open environment, for example avoiding secretive or unobserved situations and encourage open communication.
- 2 Always ensure you do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child(ren) away from others.
- 3 Always challenge injustice.
- 4 Always treat children and young people equally, affording respect and dignity.
- 5 Always put the welfare of each child or young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- 6 Always recognise the developmental capacity of the children and do not push them against their will or train them excessively.
- 7 Always maintain a safe and appropriate distance with athletes; for example, it is not appropriate for adults to have an intimate relationship with a child or young person or to share a room with them. In cases of emergency where you must enter their room, always have another adult present and leave the room door open.
- 8 Always seek to build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children and young people to share in the decision making process.
- 9 Always make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- 10 Always ensure that if any form of manual physical support is required, it is provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a child or young person is constantly moving in training. Where physical contact is practised in sport on a frequent basis (for instance gymnasium exercises); the parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- 11 Always keep up-to-date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- 12 Always involve parents and carers wherever possible.
- 13 When supervising children and young people in changing rooms, always work in pairs and in these circumstances never supervise children and young people of the opposite gender.
- 14 Always ensure you have details of a child's medical needs if any, while the child or young person is under your supervision (see Parental Consent Form, A linked Document).
- 15 Always remember that you are a 'role model' and never condone the use of any performance enhancing drugs.
- 16 Always ensure that appropriate seat restraints are used when travelling with children and young people.
- 17 Never invite a child or young person to your home without a parent, guardian or appropriate adult present.
- 18 Always ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- 19 Always ensure that at tournaments or residential events, adults do not invite children into their rooms.
- 20 Always be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol or using foul or inappropriate language in the company of children and young people.
- 21 Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- 22 Always secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- 23 Always keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- 24 Always request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars, which should be done by at least two adults.
- 25 At tournaments, dissent towards officials / results will not be tolerated.
- 26 Coaches should at all times be respectful to officials; if legitimate complaint is justified, it should be aired in a dignified manner away from public gaze and in the absence of athletes.

Coach / Athlete Ratios

The following are the recommended ratios:

- For groups including children under 11 years of age: 1 : 8
- For groups comprising of children over 10 years of age: 1 : 10
- There must be at least 2 adults present at any one time for groups of 4 or more
- For mixed gender groups of any size, there must be at least one male and one female present.

The following practices should never be sanctioned:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay with a child or young person.
- Share a room with a child or young person.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person, even in fun.
- Upset or reduce a child or young person to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child or young person.
- Do things of a personal nature for children, young persons or adults; whether disabled or not; that they can do for themselves.

REMEMBER:

The ethical boxing coach:

- has the safety and welfare of the boxer as the number one goal
- is committed to the coaching role and is reliable and consistent
- follows EB's code of conduct and child protection policy
- is accepting of a wide range of social and personal backgrounds
- doesn't have favourites and is welcoming of a wide range of ability
- works well with other coaches and respects others' opinions
- matches boxers appropriately; doesn't over or under match
- is honest about the record and the standard of performance when matching the boxer
- ensures dangerous weight making practices are avoided
- ensures that boxers (and their parents) are given proper advice, for example on nutrition and hydration (see sub-section 2.7 in this section)
- ensures that training programmes are appropriate to the individual (see sub-section 3.5 and 3.6 in Participant-centred Coaching Section)
- uses praise and criticism appropriately and avoids humiliating boxers, especially in public (see sub-section 2.6 in this section)
- doesn't use physical activity as a 'punishment' (see sub-section 2.6 this section)
- respects the opponent, the opponent's coach and officials, and teaches dignity in victory and defeat
- keeps up-to-date with training/coaching knowledge and practice and accepts expert advice in areas where expertise is lacking
- reviews his or her performance and is realistic and honest in self appraisal.



ACTION:

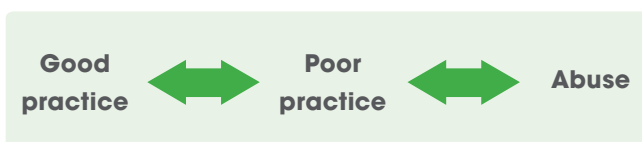
It's easy to get into bad habits so take time to re-read the codes of conduct regularly and reflect on your coaching practice.



2.5: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Please note that throughout this sub-section, statements referring to children also relate to young people and vulnerable adults. In this context a child is considered to be everyone under the age of 18.

Good practice



The preceding sub-section identified ways to ensure coaching practice is good ethical practice and there are very many examples of good practice throughout boxing coaching and boxing clubs. However there are sadly some examples of poor practice where coaches fail to meet the standards set and sometimes this poor practice can slip into abuse, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Everyone's responsibility

While most children enjoy their sport in safety, some are at risk of abuse from individuals who target sport to gain access to children, or who use their position in sport to develop inappropriate relationships with children. There is a need to prevent inappropriate people from accessing sport and to create a culture in which abuse cannot be allowed to happen and where concerns are raised and acted upon. Adults working in sport are in a unique position to identify and act on concerns for children that arise outside the sporting environment. Every coach has a responsibility to act on any concerns that they have regarding a child.

Coaches have a moral and legal requirement to protect children and should comply with the good practice recommendations to protect themselves from any potential allegations.

Types of abuse

There are five main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** where adults or other young people physically hurt or injure children, by for example hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating or drowning. Examples of physical abuse in sport include when children are forced into training and competition

that exceeds the capacity of their immature and growing body; or where children are given drugs to enhance performance.

- **Sexual abuse:** when adults (male or female) or other young people use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include: full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, fondling, showing children pornography (books, videos, pictures) or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner. In sport, coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing. Isolated 1-1 contact, for example while away at competitions, provides an environment within which sexual abuse may occur and the coach may 'groom' the athlete to gain such contact.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of children, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve communicating to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in terms of meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make them nervous and withdrawn. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always cause some emotional abuse. Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm or bullying. Putting them under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.
- **Neglect:** is when adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing to

ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give children love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect. Examples of neglect in sport could include failing to ensure that children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or heat or failing to protect them from unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Bullying:** is another form of child abuse that can be carried out by adults (including coaches) but more frequently by other children. It can include racism and other types of discrimination and you need to recognise the impact and extent of bullying and discrimination in the lives of young people. Bullying can be psychological, verbal or physical in nature. It involves an imbalance of power in which the powerful attack the powerless, and occurs over time rather than being a single act. Examples of bullying behaviour include:
 - name calling, insults and verbal abuse
 - deliberately embarrassing and humiliating a child
 - being made to feel different or like an outsider
 - being lied about
 - being physically assaulted or threatened with violence
 - being ignored.

Recent NSPCC research has shown that in sport, peers are the most common perpetrators of all forms of harm, with coaches sometimes failing to challenge it effectively. **It is your responsibility to monitor and address bullying and other inappropriate peer behaviour.**

Particular risks within boxing

All coaches need to be aware of particular risks in boxing and their responsibilities:

- A coach hitting or bullying a child (when developing boxing skills, very low intensity punching using coach spar pads is considered an acceptable part of the sport).
- The nature and intensity of training exceeding the capacity of the child's body.
- Weight control involving dehydration and malnutrition.
- Advocating or allowing the use of performance enhancing drugs.
- Excessive sparring or sparring with others that are older, of a higher standard or heavier unless very closely controlled and appropriately conditioned.
- Exposing the child to sexual behaviour/ attitudes/discussions or pornography.
- Subjecting a child to direct sexual advances by members, coaches or others.
- Exposing a child to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform.
- Subjecting a child to ridicule or punishment following poor performance or bribing him or her by offering excessive reward for winning.

Common signs of abuse

You need to recognise signs of possible abuse but remember it is not your responsibility to determine whether or not it is abuse; it is your duty to report a concern. Only safeguarding professionals can determine whether or not abuse is taking place and this is complicated because every child is unique so behavioural signs of abuse will vary from child to child. However, there are some behaviours (or combinations of behaviours) that are often seen in children and young people who have been or are being abused:

- The child appears distrustful of a particular adult, or a parent or a coach with whom you would expect there to be a close relationship.
- He or she has unexplained injuries such as bruising, bites or burns; particularly if these are on a part of the body where you would not expect them.
- He or she has an injury which is not explained satisfactorily or properly treated.
- A deterioration in his or her physical appearance or a rapid weight gain or loss.
- Pains, itching, bruising or bleeding in or near the genital area.
- A change in the child's general behaviour, for example they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn or unexpectedly aggressive. Such changes can be sudden or gradual.
- If he or she refuses to remove clothing for normal activities or wants to keep covered up in warm weather.
- If he or she shows inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour for chronological age.
- Some disabled children may not be able to communicate verbally about abuse that they may be experiencing or have witnessed. It is therefore important to observe these children for signs other than 'telling'.

These signs should be seen as a **possible indication** of abuse and not as confirmation. Changes in a child's behaviour can be the result of a wide range of factors. Even visible signs such as bruising or other injuries cannot be taken as proof of abuse. You have neither the expertise nor the professional responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, however, if you are concerned about a child or young person **there is a responsibility to act** on those concerns.

Listening to and responding to concerns

Coaches and other sports staff are in a position of trust and influence with children and young people and are ideally placed to recognise if a child is being abused, whether during sports activities, at home or in the community. A child or young person may also try to tell you directly about abuse. It is very important to listen carefully and respond sensitively. Failing to respond to concerns or responding in contravention to EB guidelines could have serious implications for the future handling of a case. The basic procedure for dealing with concerns is as follows:

- Listen / observe.
- Record what was said or what you observed (evidence not opinion).
- Report your concern to Child Welfare Officer in your club.
- Follow EB policy and procedures (www.englandboxing.org).

If children try to talk to you about something that is worrying them, it is important to listen carefully and respond sensitively using the guidance below:

- If children tell you about abuse they are experiencing, listen carefully to what they tell you.
- Don't ask direct questions and avoid 'Who?', 'What?', 'When?', 'Where?'
- Reassure the child and encourage him or her to talk: 'Do you want to tell me about this?' but do not pressurise the child.
- Keep calm and even if you find what they are saying difficult or painful, keep listening.
- Be honest with them about what you can and cannot do. Tell them you are not able to keep what they have told you secret and that you will try to find them the help they need.
- When they have finished, make a detailed note of what they have said, using an incident record form if possible. Report what was said in the child's own words and not an interpretation of them.

- As soon as possible, pass the information to the designated welfare officer or someone in a position of authority within your club.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Do not contact or confront the alleged abuser.
- Find someone you trust to talk to about the situation or to support you but remember not to name or identify those involved in the allegations. You can call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.
- If you have serious concerns about the immediate safety of the child contact the Police or Social Services. Record the name of the person you spoke to and tell your designated welfare officer what you have done.

REMEMBER:

- You must abide by EB's Child Protection Policy at all times
- Every coach has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- By following good practice guidelines to protect children, you will also be protecting yourself
- Abuse can take different forms and you should be able to recognise common signs of possible abuse. Remember that peers are the most common perpetrators of all forms of harm and you must challenge this behaviour
- You must avoid any practices that could be considered to be poor or abusive practice
- If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child and/or the behaviour of an adult within boxing, you have a duty to act on those concerns by reporting them in accordance with the EB's Child Protection Policy and Procedures (see www.englandboxing.org).



ACTION:

Stop to reflect on the peer behaviour in your club and act on your observations.



2.6: MANAGING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

You need to manage and maintain appropriate behaviour in your group; this will ensure the safety, enjoyment and positive learning experience of everyone.

Encouraging positive behaviours

Participants in your session will come with different ideas about what is acceptable behaviour. Do not make assumptions; find out more about them and check medical information. Recognise that some children will be brought up with different expectations, boundaries and modelled behaviour. There are some things you can do to encourage positive behaviours:

- **Be a role model:** for example, by being punctual, organised and professional; having a positive attitude and showing respect for all.
- **Establish ground rules:** for example about your expectations of them regarding attention and listening, safety rules, hygiene, positive behaviour to others. It's a good idea to involve the group in setting the ground rules and the associated sanctions.
- **Reinforce and reward** the behaviours you want; for example praise when someone does something right rather than always criticising when they misbehave; selecting a difficult child to demonstrate when s/he has done something well and recalling that behaviour in the next session.

Causes of misbehaviour

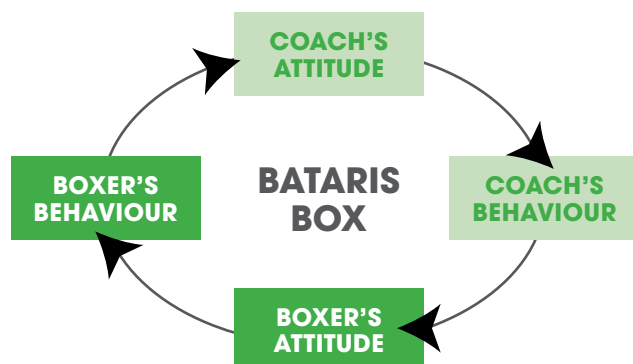
All coaches are likely to have to deal with negative behaviour at some time. The key to managing behaviour is prevention based on creating a positive environment within which boxers are less likely to misbehave. Some of the many common reasons why young people tend to misbehave are shown in the adjacent panel. Many of these are under your control; for example you can and should:

- make your sessions more interesting, varied and appropriately challenging
- treat people fairly and equitably (see subsection 2.4 in this section)
- show respect and ensure participants respect each other as well as other coaches.



Managing misbehaviour

It is clear that there are many things that are within the coach's control when it comes to managing behaviour. The Bataris Box highlights that the attitude of coaches will affect their behaviour, which will in turn affect the attitude and behaviour of the boxers. A positive attitude on behalf of the coach is therefore very important.



Prevention before cure:

To prevent misbehaviour, there are a number of things that you as coach can do:

- Have clear rules that everybody understands from the start; the boxers may be involved in setting the rules to give them greater ownership of them.
- Have clear consequences for misbehaviour.
- Run enjoyable, appropriately challenging and varied sessions.
- Treat boxers with respect.
- Listen to the boxers' opinions.
- Offer individual praise and constructive criticism to boxers.
- Reward those that display the behaviours that you want to encourage, reinforcing these behaviours.
- Set a positive example.

Dealing with negative behaviour:

When addressing negative behaviour, you will need to be even-handed, fair and consistent. Discipline should be administered as soon as practically possible and should be explained to the person (and parent / carer if appropriate). Methods that may be used include:

- ignore negative behaviour (if safe and appropriate to do so) and reinforce every alternative positive behaviour
- 'time out' from the activity

- reparation where the person has to make amends in some way
- de-escalation of the situation by talking through with the person in question
- increased supervision by coaches, officials and volunteers
- use of individual 'contracts' or agreements of acceptable future behaviour for continued participation
- sanctions or consequences such as missing an event
- seeking additional specialist support by working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that the individual's needs are met, for example referral for support to children's social care, discussion with the child's key worker if they have one, or speaking to the child's school about management strategies (all require parental consent unless the child is felt to be 'at risk' or 'in need of protection')
- temporary or permanent exclusion.

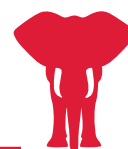
You should never:

- use or threaten physical punishment
- refuse to speak to or interact with the person
- deprive the person of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities
- use verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

REMEMBER:

- Many reasons for misbehaviour are within the control of the coach (eg boredom and lack of challenge)
- Your attitude and behaviour will affect the attitude and behaviour of the boxers; it is important that you adopt a positive and professional attitude, that you are an excellent role model

- You should always seek to prevent misbehaviour by setting clear rules and consequences of misbehaviour, running enjoyable sessions and establishing a positive coaching environment where boxers are treated with respect
- When dealing with misbehaviour, you should always be even-handed, fair and consistent when applying any sanctions.



ACTION:

When managing difficult behaviour, look first for the things that you can control such as the quality of your sessions: are they enjoyable, purposeful and varied? Are the participants engaged, motivated and achieving some success? Are you modelling a positive, enthusiastic and professional approach? If not, change what you're doing.



2.7: NUTRITION, HYDRATION AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

This section introduces coaches to the basic elements of good nutrition and hydration and aims to dispel some common myths.

Elements of Nutrition

Carbohydrate is our main source of energy and the most important fuel for boxers. Carbohydrate can be classified as either 'simple sugars' or starches ('complex carbohydrate'). Simple sugars are rapidly absorbed and give a quick energy boost (followed by a big dip in energy). Starches take much longer to break down and absorb and don't result in a sugar 'rush' followed by an energy crash.

Protein is essential to the growth and repair of muscle and other body tissues but is not an important fuel for energy. Boxers in training need more protein than

inactive people since training and competition place extra demands on the ability of the body to repair itself.

Fat can be a source of energy when in the form of body fat. It can be burned for energy during long periods of low intensity exercise. Dietary fat is an essential nutritional element and can be classified as 'saturated' and 'unsaturated'. Saturated fat is generally from animals and in large quantities can cause heart disease and needs to be kept to the minimum in the healthy boxer's diet. Unsaturated fat, the 'plant oils', is a more 'healthy' fat and is a better way of taking the necessary proportion of fat in the diet.

The table below shows the recommended amount of each nutrient in the healthy diet, as well as the energy value per gram and food example sources.

Nutrient	Proportion of diet	Energy Value Per Gram (calories / kilojoules)	Sources
Carbohydrate	60%	4 cal / 17 kj	Simple sugars: honey, jam, sugar, sweet drinks, confectionary. Complex: rice, bread, pasta, cereals, fruit, and vegetables including potatoes.
Protein	20%	4 cal / 17 kj	Meat, fish, poultry, dairy produce, eggs, legumes, nuts.
Fat	20%	9 cal / 38 kj	Saturated: butter, lard, fat on meat. Unsaturated: sunflower oil, olive oil, margarine.

Fibre is a form of carbohydrate that the body is unable to digest and has no real nutritional value; however that does not mean that it has no value. Fibre absorbs water and when present in faeces makes it easier to pass through the digestive system. It also increases bulk in the diet without adding calories. Sources of fibre include whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts and legumes.

Vitamins are used in the chemical processes which make the human body function.

Minerals are vital to healthy body function. Mineral deficiencies can lead to health problems, for

example a deficiency of calcium is implicated in osteoporosis where the bones become brittle.

Water is crucial in maintaining a healthy body. The various parts of the human body are largely composed of water and it is essential in transporting the nutrients on which healthy body function depends.

Water, vitamins and minerals have no calorific value and are not 'fuel' in the same sense as carbohydrates, fats and proteins; they are vital to the process by which these fuels are burnt for energy and make the motor of the body run.

The 'Eatwell Plate'

The 'eatwell plate' (devised by the Food Agency Standards) can help your boxers to follow a balanced diet. It makes healthy eating easier to understand by showing the types and proportions of foods that are needed for a healthy and well balanced diet.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Counting calories (weight loss and weight gain)

The basic facts are simple:

- We gain weight when we take on board more fuel in the form of calories than we burn through our daily activities.
- We lose weight when we take on board less calories than we need to maintain our bodyweight.

It should be remembered that eating lots of 'calorie dense' fatty foods (especially when combined with sugar) means that the target calorie intake will likely be exceeded very quickly; possibly at the expense of the carbohydrate needed to fuel intense activity and the protein needed to repair body tissue.

An increase in regular exercise will help to increase expenditure of calories and the more physically active a person, the more calories they burn. If physical activity is increased and food intake remains the same, the extra energy needed will be provided from stored body fat when low intensity long duration activity is undertaken (eg jogging or brisk walking).

Balanced and healthy diet

Base meals on starchy foods: encourage your boxers to include at least one starchy food with each main meal. Some people think they are fattening but they contain less than half the calories of fat. There needs to be an awareness of what fats are added when cooking and serving these foods because this increases the calorie content. Wholegrain foods are a good option as they contain lots of fibre.

Eat lots of fruit and vegetables: encourage your boxers to eat five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables per day. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, tinned or juiced.

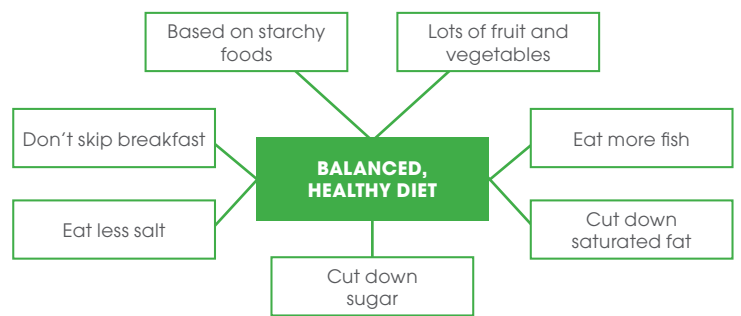
Eat more fish: encourage your boxers to aim for at least 2 portions per week including one oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, fresh tuna or sardines. Fish is an excellent source of protein and contains many vitamins and minerals.

Cut down on saturated fat: encourage your boxers to eat these foods less often and in smaller amounts. Foods containing high saturated fat include meat pies, sausages, meat with visible white fat, hard cheese, cakes and biscuits, cream, butter and lard. A high amount of fat would be considered as more than 20g per 100g, low fat is 3g or less per 100g. High saturated fat is considered as more than 5g per 100g and low is 1.5g or less per 100g.

Cut down on sugar: encourage your boxers to eat sugar less often and in smaller amounts. Many sugary foods are also high in calories. A high amount of sugar is more than 15g of sugars per 100g, low is 5g or less per 100g. On food labels sugars may be listed as either sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, hydrolysed starch and invert sugar, corn syrup or honey. If one of these is near the top of the list it is likely to be high in added sugars.

Eat less salt: encourage your boxers to eat less salt as too much salt can raise blood pressure; around 75% of the salt we eat is already in the food that's bought. A high amount of salt is considered as 1.5g per 100g, low is 0.3g or less. No more than 6g should be eaten per day.

Don't skip breakfast: reinforce the importance of eating breakfast as it provides the energy needed to face the day and contains many vitamins and minerals



that are good for health. Some believe that skipping breakfast will help with weight loss but missing meals isn't good for people as they can miss out on essential vitamins and minerals. There is some evidence to suggest that eating breakfast can actually help people to control their weight.

Weight loss and gain

The equation is simple, if your boxers burn more calories than they consume, they will lose weight; if they consume more than they burn, they will gain weight.

Managing Weight: extreme dieting hurts performance. Coaching Assistants should not take responsibility for decisions regarding a boxer's weight, however you must be aware of good practice and be prepared to challenge poor practice.

Reduction of 'body fat' rather than weight: coaches and boxers need to think of body fat reduction and not simply weight reduction, especially when that weight reduction is through dehydration.

One size does not fit all: a successful weight loss plan is one that is tailored to the individual circumstances of the boxer, taking account of his or her age, physical characteristics, lifestyle and training patterns. Boxers are individuals, one size does not fit all.

Up to 1kg of weight loss per week: sport scientists and dieticians generally agree that weight loss of around 1kg per week is the maximum any athlete should aim for in order to remain healthy and capable of the intense training required by boxers.

Weight loss and the adolescent: in the case of the adolescent boxer, whose body is still maturing, the greatest care needs to be taken to avoid unhealthy weight loss programmes (which can follow a period

of eating an unbalanced 'junk food' diet high in sugar and fat). Starvation diets, especially when the adolescent boxer is going through a growth spurt, are unethical as well as potentially damaging to the growing child. They are unacceptable and should form no part of a boxer's preparation.

Sauna suits are of limited use: training in sauna suits has a very limited use for losing up to 1 kg prior to a

championship weigh-in for senior boxers only. The weight lost through the use of these suits is fluid that will be replaced when the boxer drinks. Some believe that by wearing sauna suits it is possible to burn more calories and this may be true; however it also leads to earlier fatigue (physically and mentally) therefore reducing the amount and quality of work that is done, and ultimately reducing the number of calories burnt and the ability to recover and train again.

As a general rule regarding weight management for adolescents, the "normal" training weight should be the boxing weight.

Hydration

Monitoring water intake is crucial; becoming seriously dehydrated is dangerous and even mild dehydration impairs skilled performance. Coaches need to monitor water intake before, during and after training especially where sparring is concerned. Sparring after already losing a lot of water in sweating and having failed to drink sufficient fluid will result in poor learning, impaired performance and the risk of injury.

Performance declines with dehydration: boxers who rely on fast reactions and highly skilled movements, need to be aware that a loss of only 2% of bodyweight in sweating leads to a reduction of up to 20% in the ability to track visually an object (such as a punch), to concentrate, make decisions and execute skilled movement, especially learning new skills. As a guide, 2% of bodyweight translates as 1-2 kilos.

Before and after weighing: it is crucial that you monitor the amount of water weight which the boxer loses in a typical training session by 'before and after' weighing. Weighing the boxer after a training session is a very poor indicator of normal weight since so much water has been lost.

Quick hydration tips

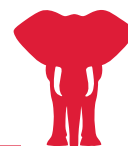
- After exercise aim to drink 1.2 to 1.5 litres of fluid for each kilogram of bodyweight lost.
- Start each training session well hydrated; 0.6 litre (20 fluid ounces) 1 hour before the training session.
- Limit fluid losses to less than 1% to 2% of body weight.

Frequently asked questions

Question	Answer
Where does body fat come from?	Fat is produced by the body when an excess intake of calories occurs. When the diet provides the body with more calories than it needs for maintenance and its current level of physical activity, this excess energy is stored as body fat.
Can I target fat removal from a specific part of the body?	No. If you exercise a specific part of the body, the muscle under the fat will become firmer and make the overall appearance of that region simply look better. Long duration low intensity 'fat-burning' exercise will reduce overall body fat but not from any specific areas of the body, this is dependent on where the individual stores excess fat. There is a myth that lots of sit-ups will target weight loss from the abdominals.
Does muscle turn into fat after we stop training hard?	No; they are completely different substances and one cannot 'turn into' the other. When boxers stop training and still eat the way they did to fuel their training, they are taking in more calories than they are burning off and a gain in body fat is inevitable.
Can I sweat off excess weight in a steam room, sauna or sauna suit?	The weight lost through excess sweating in the sauna or steam room is not fat but water. This weight returns as soon as the boxer drinks. Consequently if two and half pounds are lost in a session in the sauna, it will be replaced with approximately the next two pints of water drunk (1 pint of water weighs a pound and a quarter).

REMEMBER:

- A healthy, balanced diet that contains the appropriate proportions of each element of nutrition is an important part of boxer preparation.
- Weight-making should follow sensible limits of up to 1 kg per week.
- Starvation diets are unethical and potentially harmful to the boxer, especially growing, adolescent boxers; moreover they could be considered to be abusive.
- Sweat suits are of limited use and any weight loss is in the form of fluid that needs to be replaced to prevent dehydration.
- Adequate hydration is vital for effective performance and to prevent dehydration which is very dangerous to the boxer.
- Before and after weigh-ins should be conducted and fluid that is lost during the session should be replaced.



ACTION:

Ensure you stick to the premise that normal training weight should be the boxing weight for adolescents; check your practice and help your boxers and their families to adopt good eating habits all the year round.



2.8 SECTION SUMMARY

- 1 Never compromise on safety issues; the health and welfare of your boxers must always be your top priority.
- 2 Reflect on why you want to coach and ensure your attitudes and behaviours match those advocated by EB and its code of conduct for coaches; like it or not, you will be a role model for those you coach so your attitudes and behaviours must be exemplary.
- 3 Follow the guidelines for good coaching practice; remember poor practice can slip into abuse; never condone any form of bullying, always address it straight away.
- 4 Look first to your own behaviour and attitudes if participants are misbehaving.
- 5 Ensure you dutifully follow the guidelines for good nutrition and proper hydration; these are essential for good health, effective training and quality performance.

ACTION:

What will you now start doing, stop doing, do more or do less?





**SAFETY,
HEALTH AND
WELFARE**

**PARTICIPANT
CENTRED
APPROACH**

**TRAINING
AND
COMPETITION**

**EFFECTIVE
COACHING
SKILLS**

3.1: INTRODUCTION

Boxers come in all shapes and sizes: tall and short, heavy and light, male and female, mature and less mature, technically accurate and somewhat unorthodox; skilled and less skilled, highly competitive and those more interested in skill mastery. They come from different races, cultures and religious backgrounds. They are motivated in different ways: some by winning and being the best, others by improving their skill and fitness, some come through pressure from family or friends, others have a genuine passion for boxing. They like to learn in different ways, they respond to coaches and peers in different ways; they cope with success and failure in different ways. They are all unique and different and your coaching needs to take account of this and be tailored to the needs of each participant.

Participant-centred coaching simply means:

- placing the needs of each participant before your interests
- everyone is welcomed to participate, is valued and encouraged to achieve his/her potential
- recognising the importance of providing a fun and safe environment
- encouraging participants to be involved in their own development and empowered to take greater responsibility for it.

This is in stark contrast to a very coach-centred approach where the session is run entirely your way, where communication is one way, where individual motives, needs and differences are neither noticed nor met; where the coach is centre stage all the time. You need to use a range of approaches to suit each individual and different situations. Learning and enjoyment are much more likely when you coach as much as possible in a participant-centred way.



This section will help you to explore some of the things you can do to help make your coaching more participant-centred:

- Create a positive learning climate (3.2).
- Welcome and treat people from diverse backgrounds and cultures equitably (3.3).
- Ensure sessions and activities are fun and purposeful (3.4).
- Recognise participants' different motives and aspirations and the need to adapt your coaching accordingly to the stage on the recreational or performance pathway (3.5).
- Acknowledge the fact that children grow and develop at different rates and the need to tailor your coaching to their developmental stage as well as their actual age (3.6).
- Coach using a range of different styles along a continuum from coach to participant-centred (3.7).

3.2: WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Learning is unlikely to take place unless participants feel emotionally and physically comfortable and enjoy the experience. This means that you need to build an effective relationship with each participant and create an environment that is emotionally supportive, safe and rewarding, so allowing individuals to be the best they can be. While the head coach is ultimately responsible for this, you need to contribute especially when assigned a small group to coach.

To build an **effective relationship**, you need to:

- make the effort to get to know each person about their motives for boxing, their friends and family, their school or work and so on
- follow the four tips on the glove.

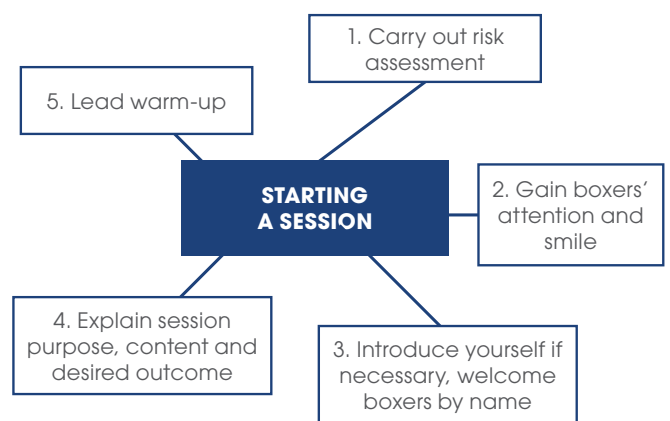
Your supervising coach should normally **introduce the session**, share the aims and content of the session at the outset and be responsible for risk assessments and pre-session checks, for example on individual's injury and health status, clothing and equipment (this is covered in Section 2: Safety, Health and Welfare). You may well be assigned specific tasks such as completion of attendance registers, checking equipment and/or leading a specified warm-up.

You need to create a **positive and supportive climate**, where participants feel emotionally as well as physically safe, where mistakes are accepted as a necessary part of learning and where each person is respected as an unique individual and provided with a coaching session appropriate for his or her age/stage (see sub-section 3.6 in this section) ability, needs and interests. You need to:


- smile, be enthusiastic, inclusive and equitable
- set appropriate goals for the session, the activity and for each individual
- motivate each participant
- encourage participants to make decisions for themselves where appropriate
- differentiate between ability and effort, and reward effort wherever possible.



The how-to-coach gloves are based on a concept developed by Apollinaire, www.apollinaire.co.uk



ACTION:
Think of one participant you know less well or who is more difficult to coach and make a point of getting to know him or her better



3.3: EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

The way you deal with boxers and others (eg parents, fellow coaches and officials), needs to be grounded on clear ethical principles based on honesty, trust and mutual respect (see coaches' code of conduct in subsection 2.4 in Safety, Health and Welfare Section). These principles should be reflected in everything you do and say as a coach inside and out of the ring. You need to avoid favourites and give everyone equal time and attention. You must give all participants the advice and encouragement they need to reach their potential, which may be beyond what you (or the participant) ever thought possible.

You need to follow **equitable practice** for legal and ethical reasons. You must not discriminate on any basis, including age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, pregnancy, religious belief, social status, sexual orientation or political belief. You need to **value diversity**; the rules of the sport govern who can compete in terms of age and which medical conditions/disabilities will prevent individuals from competing. **All** are entitled to train and to serve as a coach, official or administrator. You must avoid stereotyping and treat everybody as an individual with individual needs. Diverse individuals will bring different skills and experience from which the sport of boxing can benefit.

You should assess your own **club's equity policy and effectiveness** by considering the following questions:

- What is the demographic make-up of your club (age, gender, ethnicity)?
- What initial impression would your club make on potential new members and their families? Can people come and 'have a go'? Will all new members receive a warm welcome?
- Does your club have any promotional material? How is it distributed? What impression does it give?
- What sort of a role-model are you and other coaches in your club? Do you inspire young people into coaching and leadership? Do you have female coaches to whom girls can relate?

'Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structures of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to all members of society, whatever their age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or social/economic status'

Sport England Club for All programme.

- How accessible and welcoming is your club (appropriate timing, transport, parking, lighting, ramps, doorways, quality of changing facilities)?
- How affordable is membership? Can members pay in instalments? Do you offer family membership? Do you offer discounts for juniors and people on low incomes?
- What do you do to attract new members? Do you have promotional material? Do you have a website, is it attractive and up-to-date? Do people respond to queries quickly and warmly? Do you effectively network in the community with other clubs (eg gymnastics, rugby clubs) and personnel (eg local authorities, sports development officers)?

ACTION:

Think about one or two things you could do to reduce inequalities, improve accessibility, promote fairness and fair play, remove prejudices and promote your club more favourably and effectively.



3.4: MAKING BOXING ENJOYABLE

Boxing is a tough sport but that doesn't mean that sessions shouldn't be enjoyable and satisfying. It's really important to make boxing enjoyable and you need to consider that what's fun for one person is not necessarily for another. For example, some people enjoy competition more than others; some are more aggressive and assertive, others less confident; some are more motivated by winning, others by learning skills. However there are a number of key points to consider which will ensure that everyone is likely to enjoy the experience of boxing (see glove).

ACTION:

identify one thing you could start doing, do more of, or stop doing that would make your coaching enjoyable for everyone



3.5: PERFORMANCE AND RECREATIONAL PATHWAYS

If you are to make sessions enjoyable and purposeful, you need to be aware of individual differences in age/developmental stage (see sub-section 3.6 in this section), different dreams, expectations and motivations. Some people want to compete, others to use boxing to develop fitness; some have ambitions to compete at the highest level, others see boxing as a recreational club activity. It's really important that coaches match their programmes, sessions and competition opportunities to meet the ability, interests and motives of each participant.

There is a growing belief that children should be nurtured and allowed to mature in their own way and at their own pace. This is true whether their aspirations are to become a committed club member or an Olympic medallist. Irrespective of their ambitions and motives, it is sound practice to provide all young people with a broad general movement base before specialising too much in a single sport or competing seriously too soon. Think about it; top athletes in almost any sport have often started being successful in a range of sports and are often multi-talented. They have had a good general grounding in movement skills.

The performance and recreational pathways on the next page have been developed to help coaches with these challenges. Most clubs tend to take boxers from the age of 10 so EB's pathway really starts at the learning to train and practise stage. Ideally children will have had a sound **'active start'** which focuses on the joy of play provided through informal learning opportunities at home and in pre-school environments. Its purpose is to develop early fundamental movement skills and an enjoyment of physical activity.

During the **fundamentals** stage (6-9 years), there should have been an emphasis on providing a fun, positive learning environment with the purpose of developing a broad range of fundamental movement skills in a free play or semi-structured playful context. In addition, the use of carefully selected activities should have developed aspects of fitness (such as strength and speed), as well as some core mental skills and attitudes. These key fundamental skills build basic competence and confidence and play an important part in contributing to participation in sport and developing more advanced skills in children's later years.



EB stages on the recreational and performance pathway are as follows:

- Learning to train and practise (10-13):** This stage provides participants with appropriate fun opportunities to sample a wide range of different sports, activities and skills and so develop sound foundational sports skills. It continues to build competence, confidence and starts to encourage problem solving and decision-making skills. In the boxing club, there should be an emphasis on developing technical skills and conditioning within a fun learning environment. The focus should not be on winning but on learning, enjoyable practice, laying down good basic boxing technique while developing:
 - movement skills such as agility, balance and coordination (ABCs)
 - aspects of fitness (such as strength and speed) through carefully selected activities
 - mental skills and attitudes such as confidence, concentration and sportsmanship.

Competition here is used as a vehicle for applying technique and developing technical,

tactical and mental skills, with results being of lesser importance.

Some boxers may choose to stay on the recreational pathway; some will elect to try the competition pathway and strive to compete in the high performance environment and so move to the training to train stage; some will change their minds and cross from one to the other. Some participants will opt to participate more recreationally and so enter the developing and sustaining participation phase.

- Developing and sustaining participation (14+):** The aim of this stage is to provide opportunities for young people and adults to be involved in lifelong sport and regular boxing activities. In this way the sport and clubs thrive and participants enjoy the sport, maintain fitness, develop skills, enhance their health and well-being, generate self-assurance and are encouraged to interact socially. There should be a balance of technical skills practice and movement skills activities; with an increasing percentage of time spent in technical skills practice if they wish to progress onto the performance pathway.

For those choosing the competitive pathway, there are no short-cuts. It takes significant training and practice (often estimated to be 8-10 years) to achieve the level of 'expert' performer and behind every 'genius' or 'natural athlete', there are hours and hours of dedicated practice. Training that promotes short-term pay-offs in terms of results may not be in the best-interests of the long-term development of the boxer, and may lead to burnout and loss of interest in the sport.

- Training to train stage (13-15 in girls, 14-16 in boys who typically mature later):** This stage is for those participants who wish to take the sport of boxing more seriously and engage in more sport specific training. There is still a stronger focus on training and learning rather than competitive outcome. Some will have the ability and motivation to continue up the performance pathway, others may elect the recreational pathway.

- **Training to compete stage (16-17 years in girls and 17-18 in boys):** Athletes need high intensity sport specific training all year round if they are to achieve their potential. The focus now is on achieving the desired competitive outcome as well as training.
- **Training to win stage (from around 17/18):** The emphasis is on maximising physical, mental, technical and tactical capacities to attain full potential to be able to produce maximum performance for the major competitions.

REMEMBER:

- Treat each boxer as an individual and be aware of their position on the recreational or performance pathway and adapt your approach and coaching accordingly
- People's motives can change; there will be some cross over from recreational to performance pathways and vice versa
- Ensure there is a balance between the:
 - very intensive drills to develop technique and conditioning and
 - the equally purposeful but less intense activities that may include more fun and game like activities.

The proportion of each will be determined by the stage on the recreational or performance pathway

- There's a need to commit time to and focus on developing fundamental movements skills (eg agility, balance and coordination), conditioning work (eg strength and speed) and mental skills and attitudes (eg confidence, self-esteem, decision-making, coping with success and failure).



ACTION:

Try to place some of the participants in your club on the recreational or performance pathway.



3.6: COACHING CHILDREN

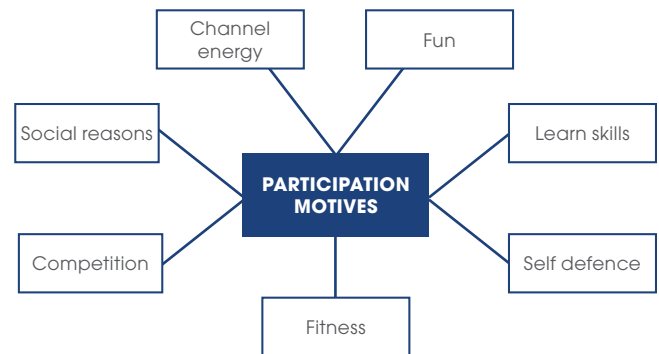
It will be clear from the previous subsections that children are not mini adults and need to be treated very differently. Children may want to box for a number of reasons (see panel) and it's important that you find out why the young people are participating; their **participation motives**. Check they want to be there and are not there just because the parent/guardian thinks "it would be good for them".

Boxing can provide great opportunities for children and young people to learn skills, get fitter and learn about themselves in one of the most challenging and rewarding of all sports. 'Every child matters' is a government initiative launched in 2003 and its aims are shown in the panel. Boxing believes that boxing through skilled, committed coaches, can help children to achieve these aims.

As a coach, you need to be aware of how children grow and develop so you can adapt your coaching accordingly. It may help to think of **three ages**:

- **chronological age**, their actual age from birth
- **biological or developmental age**, their physical, emotional and social development in comparison with other individuals of the same age
- **training age**, the number of years they have been specialising and training in a specific sport.

For example, a twelve year old boy (chronological age) might be physically quite mature (eg physical developmental age of 14); emotionally a little immature (eg emotional age of 10) and been in serious training for 2 years (training age). Another 12 year old boy might have a physical age of 11 (immature physically compared with her peers) but an emotional age of 14 (more mature emotionally), intellectually bright (more like a 15 year old) and is not yet in serious training (training age of 0). It is important to remember that children of the same chronological age may differ quite dramatically in their developmental or biological



Every Child Matters

Aim is for every child to have the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being

age. All must be treated as individuals and your expectations need to match their developmental or biological age rather than their actual age.

Growth and development: the table on the next page provides some broad brush physical descriptors for different age bands:

- physical (including bone growth, muscle development)
- emotional (feelings of joy, frustration, anger, satisfaction, mental toughness)
- social (ability to interact with others at home, school)
- cognitive (mental, thinking and remembering).

ACTION:

As you read through the panel, identify children and young people you know (within or outside boxing) that fit these descriptors and reflect on your expectations of them.



	Physical	Emotional	Social	Cognitive
8-10 year olds	<p>Children more susceptible to heat loss and gain</p> <p>Head proportionally bigger in younger children (impact on balance) and limbs proportionally shorter</p>	<p>Emotionally immature, tears likely if things don't go right</p>	<p>See selves as centre of the universe</p> <p>Self-centred</p> <p>Small group of close friends</p>	<p>Unable to distinguish between effort and ability i.e. believe that if they try hard, they will be successful</p>
11-13 year olds	<p>Children more susceptible to heat loss and gain</p> <p>Growth spurts in girls, increasing height then weight and body shape; can be clumsy and uncoordinated (peak about 12)</p> <p>Onset of puberty</p>	<p>Shyness and embarrassment at puberty particularly in girls</p> <p>Becoming more self-critical</p> <p>Puberty brings emotional stresses, mood swings and emotional outbursts</p>	<p>Concerned about the opinions of others</p> <p>Wider circle of friends, less self centred and beginning to work better together</p> <p>Peer pressure beginning</p>	<p>Able to distinguish between effort and ability</p> <p>Increasing logical and abstract thinking</p> <p>Increasingly aware of own and others' skills</p>
14-16 year olds	<p>Growth spurts in boys increasing strength, height and body weight and shape; can be clumsy and uncoordinated</p> <p>Onset of puberty</p> <p>Girls full height by about 15, boys by 17</p>	<p>Puberty brings emotional stresses, mood swings and emotional outbursts</p>	<p>Concerned about the opinions of others, adopt values of group rather than adult values</p> <p>Peer pressure strong</p>	<p>Gaining ability for logical and abstract thinking</p>

Good coaches of children should:

- consider children as people first, boxers second; they should support their development as people as well as as boxers
- adopt an individual approach; the balance of fitness training, skill learning and competition is an individual matter and the art of coaching is matching the learning process to the needs of the individual. What suits one young person will probably not suit another in quite the same way
- create a positive learning environment; children are naturally curious; they want to learn and acquire new skills
- ensure the challenge is appropriate; if they do not succeed, they quickly become frustrated and lose interest
- define success; success for the really talented may be in the form of regional and national titles, but for the many it may be improved skills, fitness, an overall winning record and 'being the best they can be'
- reward effort more than ability, especially with younger children
- provide sessions that are fun and enjoyable (see how to make it enjoyable glove in subsection 3.4 in this section)
- set appropriate goals with children to provide motivation and through success, build self-esteem and ensure enjoyment
- encourage children to make decisions for themselves
- help children to develop good ethics through following rules and teaching good sportsmanship
- ensure competition is a positive learning experience, a test of personal skill and progress rather than always about winning
- adapt sessions according to biological and training ages not their chronological age
- listen to young people and accommodate their needs
- provide a duty of care (see subsection 2.5 in Safety, Health and Welfare Section).

Role of Parents/Guardians: you need to be aware of parents' motives as well as the young person's; these may affect the child's training, degree of focus and how often they come to the club. For the majority of children and young people, their experience in the family and with friends outside the club will be critical to the progress they make. They are in the club a very small proportion of their lives and outside influences may be far more powerful than the coach's influence. It is important that you are able to develop good relationships with parents and guardians as well as with each individual boxer.

REMEMBER:

- Treat children according to their developmental stage as well as their actual age
- Coach the child not the boxer, always put individual needs before those of the competition or club
- Keep sessions and activities fun and purposeful, rewarding effort more than outcome.



ACTION:

Reflect on how child-friendly your club is; does it provide a welcoming and appropriate climate for children? What one thing might need to change to make it more child-friendly?



3.7: COACHING STYLES

If you put all the preceding advice into practice, you will be a participant-centred coach who places the needs of each individual above those of the sport, the club or the parents.

A coaching style is a relatively consistent pattern of coaching behaviours and methods. The preferred style you use is often strongly influenced by your personality and your experience of a particular coach. You will probably have heard of a number of different coaching and teaching styles such as authoritarian, democratic, easy-going. Whatever terminology, styles typically fit along a continuum from coach-centred (autocratic) to participant-centred (democratic).

Boxers will vary in how well they respond to different styles so it's important that you can recognise the impact that your coaching style can have on your ability to communicate and coach effectively. Good coaches need to be able to use every style along the continuum, not just the one in which they feel most comfortable. You need to select a delivery style that is appropriate for the the individual and the situation.

You need to:

- know how you like to learn as this will influence the way you typically coach or teach
- find out how your participants learn best (eg through demonstration, cue words, having a go) and then adapt your coaching methods to optimise their learning and motivation.



The following table suggests the pros and cons of varying styles along the continuum.

Style	When to use	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coach-centred (tell) style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use more with a new or large group when discussing safety issues when explaining the outcome or a particular activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> easier to control behaviour easier as you are in control of the content and direction of the session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited participant input discourages personal responsibility and decision-making encourages boxers to be coach-dependent more experienced boxers may resent such a controlling approach where they have little input discourages peer support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'selling' style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> when you understand what's required (eg number of sessions per week to achieve boxer's goals) and need to convince someone else (eg parent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> you can guide direction while encouraging more ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> you may not convince them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'sharing' style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with elite boxers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage boxers to accept more responsibility for goal-setting and development encourages boxers to share experiences to solve problems encourages peer support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some boxers may be reluctant to take responsibility some may hesitate to make decisions but this is essential in competition demand excellent technical ability to be able to cope with opposing views or alternative approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participant-centred style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with participants you know well with smaller groups or individuals where the environment is safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage personal responsibility and decision-making encourages peer support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> more demanding on the coach who has to adapt to individual needs some boxers may be reluctant to take responsibility and make decisions demand good questioning and listening skills (see Section 5: Effective Coaching Skills)

Encouraging peer support: for many boxers identifying with the club is an important support for them; it's almost a second family. Boxers in a good club should be encouraged by the coaches to support one another. By training and sparring together, boxers learn to solve problems together and accelerate technical and tactical development while building team spirit.

Research suggests that people benefit most from coaches who are supportive and encouraging and adopt a more participant-centred approach; they then tend to like the sport more and develop more positive self-images. The better you are able to adapt your style to support the learning needs of your participants, the more effective relationships you will build and the better learning environments you will create.

REMEMBER:

- A participant-centred style usually results in more learning and research shows that most people prefer a coach who is supportive and encouraging; this results in more enjoyable participation, improved confidence and self-image
- A more coach-centred style may be required when coaching larger or new groups, and when safety needs are paramount (eg in sparring)
- The very best coaches are able to operate along the whole range of styles so they can adapt their coaching to the specific needs of the individual and the situation.



ACTION:

Reflect on your preferred position on the coaching style continuum and identify one thing you might do to help you spend more time closer to the participant-centred end.



3.8 SECTION SUMMARY

- 1 Every boxer is different and needs to be coached differently.
- 2 Children are not mini adults, they do not all develop at the same rate and you need to adapt your coaching accordingly.
- 3 Purposeful fun must be a cornerstone of every session; think about how to implement the four key principles on the how to make it enjoyable glove while achieving the outcomes of the session or activity.
- 4 The very best coaches coach the person not just boxing; they can adapt their style according to the needs of the individual and the situation; work on being able to adapt your preferred style.
- 5 You need to adopt an equitable approach in which all participants are welcomed and encouraged; and all are helped to achieve their potential wherever they may lie or choose to lie on the recreational or performance pathways.

ACTION:

What will you now start doing, stop doing, do more or do less?





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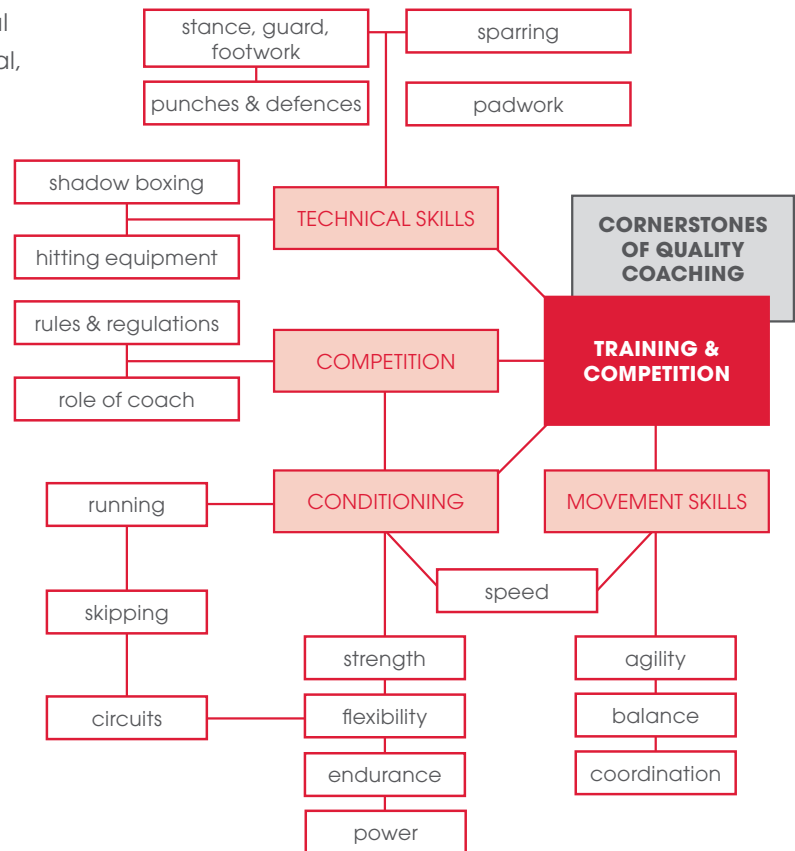
SECTION 4: TRAINING AND COMPETITION

4.1: INTRODUCTION

Successful performance requires the successful coming together of physical, technical, tactical, mental and lifestyle skills at the right time. This demands effective training regimes and practices that prepare for the competitive environment.

This section covers the basic fundamental, technical and conditioning requirements that underpin the successful boxer:

- Fundamental movement and mental skill and attitudes (4.2)
- Effective warm-up and cool-downs (4.3)
- Developing boxing techniques and skills (4.4)
- Conditioning principles and practice (4.5)
- Good competition practice (4.6)



4.2: FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

All movements are made up of basic actions. These skills are the basis for learning more difficult movement skills later on, whether or not these are related specifically to boxing. The building blocks include both movement and mental (emotional and cognitive/thinking) skills.

Movement Skills

Fundamental movement skills can be grouped in different ways to make them more memorable:

ABCSs:

Agility: the ability to move quickly, lightly and easily in different directions.

Balance: the ability to maintain a steady and stable position.

Coordination: the ability to synchronize muscle groups so they work together to produce smooth and efficient movements.

Speed: the ability to move rapidly or to move different body parts rapidly.

Strength: the ability to manage own body weight, using strength to control someone else.

RJT:

Running: to move swiftly on foot so that both feet leave the ground during each stride.

Jumping: the ability to spring off the ground through muscular effort.

Throwing and catching: the ability to propel an object through the air with a motion of the hand or arm; the ability to slow and stop the motion of an object in flight.

KGBS:

Kicking: to strike or propel an object with the foot.

Gliding: the ability to move in a smooth effortless manner.

Buoyancy: the capacity to remain afloat.

Striking: the ability to hit an object using an implement (eg hitting a ball with a bat) or with the body.

It is especially important that younger children develop these skills, particularly during the fundamentals stage (this was explained in subsection 3.5 in Participant-Centred Approach section) to provide a firm foundation upon which to build good sport-specific skills. The pathway diagram is reproduced here and some key points repeated below:

The fundamentals stage (6-9 years): typically the boxers joining your club will have passed through this stage. However information about this stage is included because it is often neglected by coaches working with younger children and you may find your young boxers have not developed good fundamental skills. You will therefore need to do some remedial work, providing a fun, positive learning environment with the purpose of developing a broad range of fundamental movement skills; the benefits of providing the broadest possible movement experience cannot be over-estimated:

- Young people will be more likely to continue participation in sport as they will have developed sufficient broad movement skills to give them the confidence and competence to take part successfully. Their positive attitudes to sport and physical activity have significant health benefits. There is evidence to support the notion that primary school children are most receptive to learning these fundamental movement skills.
- These basic movement skills underpin all advanced sport specific skills and so are essential to the longer term development of all athletes including boxers. Without well development movement skills, boxers will not achieve their potential.

It's important therefore that boxing coaches working with this age group include lots of activities that



specifically develop these key movement skills and do not only focus on technical boxing skills. Time should also be given to developing these in all subsequent stages. While the natural ability to develop these may gradually be lost as children move towards puberty, work to address basic movement weaknesses as well as maintenance work can still be advantageous.

These fundamental movement skills can be developed in a variety of fun and purposeful ways, for example through:

- game activities such as tag games, agility relays, dodge ball (See Appendix Purposeful Game Activities)
- specific activities such as skipping, hopping, bounding
- carefully selected warm-up activities that focus on specific movement skills.

Mental Skills

In addition to fundamental movement skills, boxers like all other athletes also need effective mental skills such as confidence, concentration and emotional control. Again it makes good coaching sense to start to develop these skills alongside the fundamental movement skills. In the same way you can design or select activities to improve a movement skill such as agility, you can also do the same for a mental skill such as managing losing. They need to be both planned for (see Appendix on Purposeful Games) and capitalised upon if opportunities arise. Be alert for teachable moments.

REMEMBER:

Spend time with young participants on developing fundamental movement and mental skills as well as boxing technical skills; it will pay dividends on participation levels and on the achievement of a boxer's full potential.



ACTION:

Take time to select warm-up activities that not only prepare your boxers for the forthcoming session but also work on a specific movement and/or mental skills .



4.3: WARM-UP AND COOL-DOWN

You and your boxers need to view warm-ups and cool-downs as an essential part of training and competition. The benefits shown in the panel are so great that it makes little sense that they are often given less time and attention than they deserve.

The benefits of effective warm-up are to :

- increase heart rate in preparation for beginning work
- increase blood flow through active muscles
- reduce pre-workout muscle stiffness through dynamic mobilisation
- raise temperatures to help muscles work more efficiently
- enhance quality/fluency of movement from warmed muscles
- sharpen mental focus on the forthcoming training and competition

Warm-up

An effective warm-up should prepare body and mind for the forthcoming training or competition. Hitting the pads is not enough and the full benefits can only be achieved through a 10-15 minute warm-up consisting of:

- 1 skipping, jogging or game activities that raise body temperature
- 2 dynamic mobility work
- 3 boxing specific drills or game activities such as shadow boxing, footwork drills, leg and upper body mobility drills and hitting drills.

To get the most out of training boxers need to be prepared mentally and physically for the forthcoming session. Performance will also suffer if boxers go into a contest 'cold' as they need to move as well as hit, to prepare for rapid movement and for the changes of pace, tempo and angle necessary for top performance. This is especially true if the boxer has been training in a small ring and is confronted by a full sized ring in a championship.

The most effective warm-ups are those that:

- make the most of the space available and
- are tailored to what is to follow.

For example, if the training session is focused on improving footwork, it's obviously particularly important to prepare the muscles and joints of the legs as well as to prime the heart and lungs for the work to be undertaken. Prior to competition the warm-up should maximise the physical and technical advantages the boxer possesses and to counter the strengths of the opponent.

All warm-ups have the same fundamental requirements of getting the mind and body ready for intense work with minimal risk of injury and maximum potential to learn, improve and perform. It's important to make warm-ups interesting and ideally fun. For children, warm-ups may appear to be a dull routine that just delays the fun part of the session; you should use fun games to raise the body temperature and increase the heart rate. This can also be a chance to work on the fundamental movement skills. The internet is a good source of ideas and children themselves may also come up with good ideas for fun warm-ups for example, warm-ups that they use in PE lessons. Even with adult and talented/elite boxers, try to be innovative and ensure warm-ups are different; this way you bring a fresh feel to the training room and an excitement about what is to follow.

Once the mind is focused and the body temperature raised, the dynamic mobilisation work can begin. Dynamic mobilisation is not slow stretching; sports science research shows that for a dynamic and explosive sport such as boxing, the use of slow 'static' stretches before a workout or competition actually **reduces** the capacity to release power. It also suggests that it does not reduce the rate of injury. The emphasis in the warm-up should be on controlled movement through increasingly extended ranges of motion.

Controlled motion: exercises should be appropriate to the movements the boxer will be using and should be carried out in a controlled rhythm through an increasingly full range of motion without strain. This does **not** mean going into the stretched position and then bouncing to 'get greater range of movement'. This will have exactly the opposite result to what is intended.

Head to foot mobilisation: simple joint rotations are a good way to start, beginning with the extremities and working down the body finishing with the feet and toes. The exception is the neck. Here circular rotations are **not** recommended but rather flexion and extension forwards and backwards and side to side. The panel below and on subsequent pages illustrates mobilization exercises for the major joints.

EXAMPLE MOBILISATION EXERCISES

1. Neck mobility

- Flexion / extension: tuck chin into chest, then raise it upward as far as possible
- Lateral flexion: lower left ear toward left shoulder; right ear to right shoulder
- Rotation: turn chin toward right shoulder, then rotate it toward left under control.



2. Shoulder circles

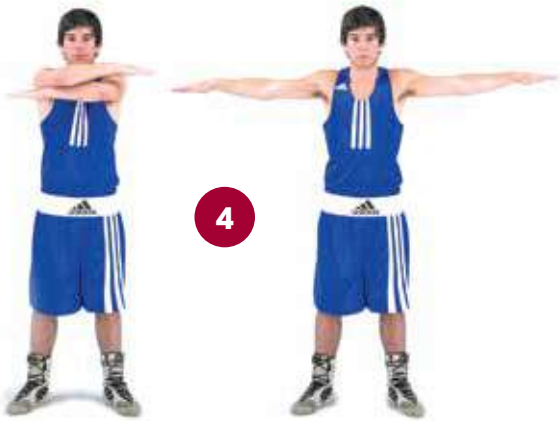
- Raise right shoulder towards right ear then take it backwards, down, forward and then up again to ear in smooth action
- Repeat with left shoulder and finish with both shoulders together.



3. Arm circles

- Start by standing straight with feet shoulder width apart; arms straight out to sides, so body forms a T
- Slowly start by making small circular motions with both arms on either side. After few repetitions of small circles, enlarge circles and do the same amount of reps.



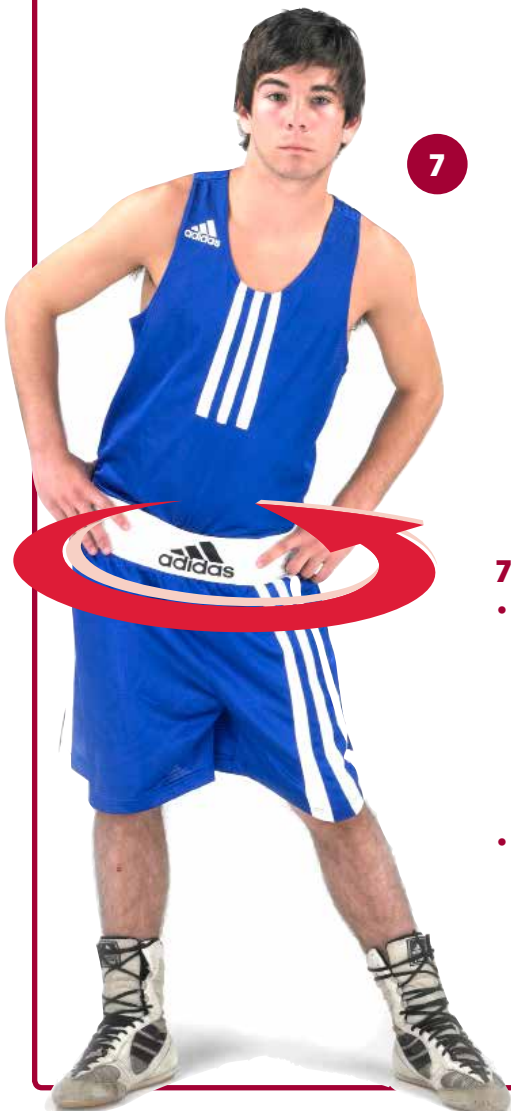


4. Arm swings

- With straight back, swing each arm and then both arms together to overhead position and then forward, down and backwards. Try to brush ears with shoulders as arms swing past head
- Side/front crossover: swing both arms out to sides, then cross over in front of chest. Aim for rhythmic movement which gradually increases range of movement and a flinging arms back with force.

5. Finger and wrist mobilisations

- Fingers are best mobilised using simple flexions and extensions
- Wrists are best mobilised using simple rotations.



7. Hip circles and twists

- Circles: with hands on hips and feet wider than shoulder width apart, rotate hips in clockwise, then anti-clockwise direction
- Twists: with arms extended to sides, slowly twist torso to left, then to right; with a transfer of weight to left or right foot.



6. Side bends

- With hands resting on hips, lift trunk up and away from hips and bend smoothly first to one side, then other. Don't lean either forward or backwards
- Maintain a slow rhythm, breathing out on sideways bend and in on return.



8. Half squats

- With hands out in front for balance and feet slightly wider than shoulder width, bend knees till thighs are parallel with floor
- Ensure head looks straight ahead with neck and upper spine in natural posture
- Ensure back is kept 'flat', heels stay on floor
- Knees should 'follow' toes which are slightly turned out
- Breathe in on way down and out on way up
- Arms can also be crossed, parallel to ground so each hand grasps opposite shoulder
- A third variety, the 'prisoner' squat, places interlocked hands on top of the head
- Do exercise in a slow and controlled rhythm, no bouncing.



9. Leg swings

- Flexion/extension: stand sideways to wall, place 'near' hand on wall for balance
- With weight on 'far' leg, swing free leg with slow and controlled motion
- Change legs by facing opposite way and leaning on other leg, steadying with other hand
- Cross body flexion/abduction: leaning slightly forward with both hands on wall and weight on one leg, swing other leg in front of body pointing toes upwards at the farthest point of travel; then in a controlled swing across body, return to farthest point of travel with toe pointing up. Change legs.



NB: when working in pairs, it's possible to use partner as support to perform leg swings. It's vital that supporting partner provides a solid base.

10. Lunges

- From standing position with head up and feet slightly wider than shoulder width, keep back leg straight and take a stride forward
- Front thigh should be parallel to ground and lower front leg vertical
- Spring back into start position and repeat with other leg.



11. Overhead lunges

- Hold light bar or broom handle overhead or with arms extended above head directly over centre of gravity, maintain an upright body and lower into the lunge position
- The bar (if used) is grasped wider than shoulder width and the arms push upwards to keep elbows locked
- As flexibility increases the bar can be gripped with an increasingly narrow grip.



12. Walking lunges

- As for lunges but boxer strides forward with rear leg once it has recovered to start position
- Overhead walking lunges are a progression and emphasise flexibility and mobility in lower trunk and shoulders.



13. Lateral walking lunges

- As for lunge but now take large stride out to the side with arms used for balance, flex stepping leg till knee bend is 90 degrees
- Knee shouldn't reach out beyond toe
- Other leg remains straight, in lunge position foot will initially rest on its side but as ankle mobility increases, 'static' foot will remain flat on ground
- Recover to neutral stance and repeat with other leg.



14. Rotational walking lunges

- As for walking lunge except reach back with both arms together by rotating torso towards rear leg
- Return to start position, then lunge forward with alternate leg, once again rotating torso towards rear leg with both arms outstretched.

15. Ankle flexion

- Lean forward with both hands on wall and weight on balls of feet (or work with a partner to provide support)
- Rise on toes with both legs at same time until heels are 2 inches from ground. Then do exercise with one leg at a time.



COOL-DOWN

A cool-down is important to accelerate recovery mentally and physically and ensure that flexibility and mobility are not compromised by the training routine (especially resistance training).

To achieve these benefits, it needs to include:

- 5 – 10 minutes of jogging, light calisthenics (form of simple, rhythmical aerobic exercises such as bending, jumping, swinging, twisting or kicking, using the body's weight for resistance), circuit type exercises or walking; whatever activities they should gradually decline in intensity
- developmental or static stretching which can increase mobility and range of movement; these stretches should be held for 10 seconds for cool-down purposes or 20-30 seconds if wanting to increase flexibility.

Flexibility is vital for boxers and cool-downs can be used to improve the range of movement.

Examples of stretching exercises are shown in the following panel. Remember they should be carried out with a relaxed body and keeping stretches slow and controlled with no bouncing

The benefits of effective cool-down are to:

- help the heart rate to recover to its resting rate
- reduce the level of adrenaline in the blood
- diminish the potential for 'delayed onset muscle soreness' (DOMS)
- reduce waste products such as lactic acid in the blood.

1. Chest stretch

- Hold arms out to sides parallel to ground with palms facing forward
- Stretch arms back as far as possible without pain and discomfort.



2. Frame pectoral stretch

- Stand up straight, place one arm against frame (or open doorway) so palm is open and forearm vertical.
- Place right leg across left and ease body away from frame making sure open palm and forearm remain in contact with frame
- Repeat with other arm.



3. Biceps stretch

- Hold arms out straight to sides, parallel with ground and with palms facing forward
- Rotate hands so palms face to rear
- Stretch arms back as far as possible.



4. Upper back stretch

- Interlock fingers and push hands as far from chest as possible, allowing upper back to relax.



5. Shoulder stretch

- Place right arm parallel with ground across front of chest
- Bend left arm up and use left forearm to ease right arm closer to chest.



6. Shoulder and triceps stretch

- Place hands above head, then slide hands down middle of spine.



7. Side bends (torso mobility)

- With hands resting on the hips, bend slowly to one side to point of tension
- Come back to vertical and bend to other side
- To increase sideways leverage, place one palm against side of head and let other slide down opposite leg.



8. Abdominal and lower back stretch

- Laying face down in prone position, lift body off ground till supported only by forearms and toes.
- Elbows will be on ground and almost directly below shoulders, forearms and hands will be on ground pointed straight ahead, toes and feet will be shoulder width apart and head in line with spine
- Contract gluteal muscles gently and hold for 10 seconds
- Lift right arm, straighten it and point straight ahead for 10 seconds, then return to start position
- Repeat with left arm and return to start position
- Keeping back straight, lift right leg and hold for 10 seconds, then return to start position
- Repeat with left leg and return to start position.
- Lift right arm and left leg simultaneously and hold for 10 seconds and then return to start position
- Repeat with left arm and right leg for 10 seconds and then return to start position.



9. Hamstring stretch

- Sit on ground with both legs straight out in front
- Bend left leg and place sole of left foot alongside right knee
- Allow left leg to lay relaxed on ground
- Bend forward with straight back
- Repeat with other leg.



10. 3-point quadriceps stretch

- From standing position, bring left leg back till instep is resting on bench
- Bend left knee so left heel touches buttocks
- Now bend front (right) leg till thigh is parallel to ground and foot is flat on floor
- Ease rear (left) leg back till knee is pointing straight down and ease erect torso back.



11. Erector stretch

- While lying on back, bring both knees up towards chin, raising shoulders off ground
- Grasp knees, easing them towards chin while head moves forward to meet knees and back rounds into 'ball' shape.



12. Pike calf stretch

- Get into pike position with head between extended arms, palms on floor and rear feet placed on ground so that buttocks are elevated
- Start with ball of left foot on floor with right instep crossed against left heel
- Keeping the left leg as straight as possible lower the left heel till it is flat on ground
- Repeat with right leg.



13. Standing calf stretch

- From standing position cross right leg in front of left
- Make sure knees are slightly bent and heels are on floor
- Bend forwards and reach towards the toes
- Repeat with other leg.



14. Adductor stretch (1)

- Stand upright with feet shoulder width apart
- Bend right leg and gently lower body, keeping back straight and using arms for balance
- Repeat with left leg.



15. Adductor stretch (2)

- Sit upright on ground
- Ease both feet towards body and place soles of feet together, allowing knees to come up and out to sides
- Resting hands on lower legs, ease both legs towards ground.



16. Front of trunk stretch (dorsal raise)

- Lay face down on ground with arms fully stretched out
- Bring arms to sides of shoulders and with hips firmly pressed into the ground, ease chest off ground.



17. Iliotibial band stretch

- Sit upright with legs stretched out in front
- Bend right knee and place right foot on ground to left of left knee
- Turn shoulders to face to right and use left hand against right knee to ease body further around, place right hand on floor for support
- Repeat with other leg.



18. Quadriceps stretch

- Lay face down on ground with head resting on right hand
- Press hips firmly into floor and bring left foot up towards buttocks
- Take hold of left foot with left hand and ease foot closer to buttocks
- Repeat with right leg, resting forehead on left hand.



REMEMBER:

- A warm-up is necessary to prepare boxers physically and mentally for forthcoming activity
- A good warm-up should include pulse raisers (eg skipping, jogging), dynamic mobilisation and boxing specific drills
- A cool-down is required to aid recovery and develop flexibility
- A good cool-down should include exercises to gradually lower the heart rate and stretching to improve flexibility.



ACTION:

Plan carefully what you will do in the warm-up and cool-down to ensure they are purposeful, varied and fun.



4.4: BOXING TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

Good technique is essential if boxers are to enjoy their boxing, develop their potential and achieve their goals. Good technique is not the same as good skill (see sub-section 5.7 in Effective Coaching Skills section). To develop good technique, you will need to use drills but remember that too much emphasis on repetitive drills can become boring and may drive people out of the boxing club and away from the performance pathway. There needs to be an appropriate balance of serious drill and purposeful enjoyable activities, particularly for children (see subsection 3.5 in Participant-Centred Approach section and 4.2 in this section); the latter can develop good technical habits through good planning, careful selection of activities and skilful coaching.

Coaching of Stance, Guard and Footwork

As a Coaching Assistant, you must be competent and confident in coaching individuals and groups in the correct stance and guard, good footwork and the foundations of coordinated and balanced movement in attack and defence.

Stance: a solid stance is the foundation upon which everything else is built. Without it, boxers will not achieve their potential and you need to be confident in dealing with both orthodox/right handed boxers (left hand as the lead hand) and left handed or southpaw boxers (the right hand is the lead hand).

Principles of stance

- Good balance is fundamental
- Ability to move quickly in any direction
- Minimise target area
- Width and depth between feet



The following table shows the key coaching points and common errors when these are not followed:

Key coaching points	Common errors
Feet should be a little wider than shoulder width apart, knees are slightly bent.	If feet are too wide, boxer cannot initiate rapid foot movement necessary for attacking and defending and reacting to opportunities. If feet are too narrow, there will be poor base of support for punching and body movement.
Rear foot is offset from the front foot, with rear heel slightly raised off floor.	If back heel is flat, rapid and fluent foot movement is hindered.
Front and rear foot are aiming at 45 degrees.	If stance is too 'square on' to the opponent, boxer is offering a large target.

Guard: a sound guard position is the cornerstone of good defence and the foundation for effective and efficient punching technique.

Principles of guard

- Protect the target area
- Stay relaxed
- Get back to guard position quickly



Key coaching points	Common errors
Drop arms to side, then bend at elbows to bring hands up, with the thumbs in line with the cheek bone.	Hands are held too low, exposing chin.
Hands are closed, but not clenched.	Clenched hands results in shoulder tension.
Keep chin down, falling forward, and look at opponent through eyebrows.	Leaving chin exposed by holding chin in air and allowing chin to rise in moving forwards or backwards. When chin forced down, tension results the shoulders.
Forearms should be vertical.	Elbows are held out to sides exposing body.
Hold lead hand level with the lead shoulder and slightly advanced.	Hands are too high, exposing body. Hands too far in front of face leaving opening for a hook.
Keep non-punching hand in guard position when punching	Letting free hand wander from guard position when punching.

NB: if there is too much tension in the arms it can help to raise the arms above the head, then bend at the elbows and bring the arms down into the guard position.



Footwork: the fundamental principle of good footwork is that good balance is maintained at all times to move into and out of range and to throw punches from a solid base of support. It's important to avoid the 'concrete feet' phenomenon by developing fluency and rhythm in foot movement and making sure that the rear heel is not rooted to the canvas. The key elements of footwork are maintaining good width and length between the feet so that the boxer can change distance and direction, especially changing the angle to the opponent, and changing tempo.

Beginners may become too focused on the techniques of punching and lose sight of the fact that effective punching begins with good footwork. Coach your boxers to realise that getting into position with excellent footwork is essential in order to throw successful punches and to use defences effectively. When working with boxers on the pads, focus on the position of the boxer's feet and not just on the impact of the punches on the pads.

Principles of footwork

- Being balanced at all times
- Maintaining good length and width of base
- Being able to move effortlessly and quickly in all directions.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On balls of feet, push against front toes to move back and back toes to move forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing rear heel to stay 'rooted' to floor making rapid foot movement impossible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feet should move as a unit, ensure same distance is kept between feet, maintaining base, not crossing legs or bringing feet together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing base by narrowing stance, especially when moving back by bringing front foot back towards rear • Losing base by overextending stance when moving forward with lead hand • Allowing feet to come together when moving right (orthodox) and left (southpaw)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move forward and back and then side to side using short, smooth, sliding movements with minimal bounce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing footwork drills in slow and mechanical manner which does not relate to boxing • Drifting after throwing a straight lead hand (drifting to left for orthodox boxer and to right for the southpaw)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use feet to get in range to throw punches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to use feet and leaning into shots, losing balanced base by putting bodyweight onto front leg and falling into opponent • Reaching for opponent by big stride forward thereby losing balanced base



REMEMBER:

- A solid, well-balanced stance and sound guard position is the foundation on which everything else is built
- Boxers need to be able to move quickly and fluently in all directions while maintaining good balance at all times
- Good footwork is essential for getting into position to throw effective punches and for using defences.



COACHING PUNCHES AND DEFENCES

As a Coaching Assistant you must be competent and confident in coaching individuals and groups in basic technique for a limited range of punches and defences. You should understand and be able to communicate the idea of **powerlines** (ie basic punch mechanics) and the real punch repertoire (ie RPR, those punches and simple punch sequences which are actually going to be of use in the contest). You need to be able to coach 'single shot' counters and basic 'switch of attack'.

Scoring Blow

KEY RULES:

- To have a score value, each hit must, without being blocked or guarded, land directly with the knuckle part of the closed glove with either hand on any part of the front or sides of the head or body above the belt with force
- The following are not scoring blows:
 - (i) hitting while infringing any of the rules (an index of foul blows is contained in the appendices)
 - (ii) hitting with the side, the heel, the inside of the glove or with the open glove or any part other than the knuckle part of the closed glove
 - (iii) blows which land on the arms
 - (iv) blows that merely connect, without the weight of the body or shoulder.



STRAIGHT PUNCHES:



BENT ARM PUNCHES



DEFENCES



Real punch repertoire (RPR): these are the planned punches to be used in any contest based on what the boxer can deliver with frequency, with a high success rate, against all styles of opponent and contest situations, without leaving him/herself open to counters. The RPR for beginners will be quite restricted. Coaching complicated, multi-punch combinations (especially on the pads) to novice boxers who have not yet mastered the basics is ill-advised as the opportunities to use them effectively in a contest simply won't arise. The novice's judgment of when to use the combinations and the movement and balance which underpin them, are not good enough to provide either the opportunity to use the combinations or a good base of support to complete them. Coaching complex sequences of punches may make the coach feel good; it doesn't help the novice boxer.

Often a lack of variety in punch selection and low success in the contest is not a matter of lack of technique but of poor positioning, tactics and adaptability. The boxer fails to get the 'why', 'when' and 'where' questions right.

Sometimes the 'favoured' punch which looks so devastating on the bags or pads never actually lands in the ring, the arena for which it has been developed. Perhaps it is telegraphed and the opponent can predict and evade it. Every time it is thrown and fails to connect, the boxer is sent off balance and can't finish a combination or move effectively to defend against the counter. It's therefore not a useful punch in competition, no matter how impressive it looks in training.

Effective punching is about more than punching technique

Success in training doesn't always translate to success in competition

PRINCIPLES OF PUNCHING

Punch mechanics

All the major punches have the following principles in common:

- The body 'drives' the punch with rotation around the axis
- The drive comes from leverage from the floor (from a good base built on a good stance)
- Relaxation of the arm until just before the final moment of impact
- Snap, acceleration and rotation of the hitting hand, hitting through the target
- The wrist should be kept straight to prevent injury
- The boxer should breathe out as the punch is thrown.

The powerline

It is important from an early stage that boxers understand where power comes from and how it is used in punching:

- The straight punches: drive from the floor, rotate around the central axis, firing a relaxed arm to the target; the powerline is a straight line through the target
- The bent arm punches (hooks): drive from the floor with a fast rotation of the hips around the central axis, firing a relaxed bent arm to the target; the powerline is an arc through the target
- The bent arm punches (uppercuts): drive from the floor with an upward surge of the hip and trunk, the arm is driven on a vertical path; the powerline is an upward surge.

The Straight Punches



The **straight lead hand to the head** is the most important punch in boxing; contests can be won with a good straight lead hand and, together with movement of the feet, it is the primary 'range

finder' to set up the more powerful rear hand. The straight lead hand to the head is also a key part of defence. It can frustrate the onrushing aggressive hooker and can disturb the opponent's balance, not allowing him or her to 'get set'.



Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From good base of support and with rapid quarter rotation of hips, extend relaxed arm, accelerating through the movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushing / flicking punch with arm and shoulder rather than using quarter rotation of hips to 'drive' shot Tension in shoulders hindering rapid movement of arm which tends to be stiff Insufficient extension of arm Punching from square stance thereby losing range Signalling punch by 'cocking' hand in preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotate wrist 90 degrees at last moment before contact with fully extended arm so palm faces floor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to turn wrist over at last moment before contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuck chin in behind shoulder, keeping rear hand in defensive position at side of chin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letting rear hand drift from guard position or drawing it back to use it as counterbalance to forward transfer of weight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep chin down, looking through eyebrows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving chin exposed by holding chin in air and allowing chin to rise in moving forwards or backwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On contact, return lead hand to 'on guard' position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not returning to guard position quickly enough and letting lead hand 'lay', allowing opponent the opportunity to counter



The **straight lead hand to the body** is an effective but often neglected punch that can be an excellent point scorer. It can form part of a combination

involving a switch of attack from head to body and vice versa. Full extension of the arm is critical in allowing the boxer time to defend against the counter, especially by using a trunk defence

such as the lay back. The **rear hand**



Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From guard position, bend knees so that shoulder is in line with target, keeping the back straight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bending at waist instead of knees and leaning into opponent's range Not lowering level of body so shoulder is level with point of impact and punching down, exposing the chin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From good base of support, with quarter rotation of hips drive arm to full extension, accelerating through movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushing / flicking punch with arm and shoulder rather than using quarter rotation of hips to 'drive' shot Tension in shoulders hindering rapid movement of arm which tends to be stiff Insufficient extension of arm Punching from square stance thereby losing range Over committing forward momentum, thereby narrowing defensive options (eg making any layback defence against counter difficult to achieve)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn wrist 90 degrees at last moment before impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to turn wrist over at last moment before contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuck chin into shoulder, keeping rear hand in defensive position at side of chin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letting rear hand drift from guard position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep chin down, looking through eyebrows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving chin exposed by holding chin in air
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On contact, return hand to guard position and unbend knees, standing up while still in guard position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not returning to guard position quickly enough allowing opponent the opportunity to counter



The **straight rear hand to the head** is the classic 'power shot', usually set up by a lead hand, singly or in a sequence. It can also be an effective point scorer when thrown as a lead, especially when following

a feint with the lead hand. Excellent balance and very fast hands are vital for success. It has further to travel than the lead hand and is within the opponent's line of sight all the way and is therefore easier to defend than a shot which comes from outside the field of vision (eg a lead hook). A good base is essential to generate the rotation of the body which supplies the power.



Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From guard position, rotate rear foot a quarter turn about ball of foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaning in and losing rear foot contact with floor and so losing base Keeping rear foot planted with heel down and failing to benefit from turn of rear foot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With fast rotation of hips, generate power through body and out through fist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No rotation of hips and just throwing an 'arm punch'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend rear arm, rotating wrist 90 degrees so palm faces floor at last moment before impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to extend arm Not rotating wrist at last moment before impact Over committing on punch, rotating body too far and punching across central line with loss of balance and inability to throw further shot in combination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After contact, return to guard position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not returning rear hand to guard position with elbow tucked in after throwing shot, allowing opponent opportunity to counter Letting lead hand wander from guard position, allowing opponent opportunity to counter



The **straight rear hand to the body** can be devastating, especially if delivered with power to the solar plexus. It will almost invariably be part of a combination involving a switch of attack since

without disguise or set up sequence, the lowered body position and long travel path will expose the boxer to the risk of a counter.



Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From guard position, bend knees so that shoulder is in line with target, keeping the back straight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bending at waist instead of knees and leaning into opponent's range Not lowering level of body so shoulder is level with point of impact and punching down, exposing the chin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With slight turn of the rear foot and with fast rotation of hips generating power through body and out through closed fist, fully extend rear arm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping rear foot planted with heel down and failing to benefit from turn of rear foot Lack of rotation of hips leading to an 'arm punch'. Insufficient extension of arm Punching from square stance thereby losing range Over committing on punch, rotating body too far and punching across central line with loss of balance and inability to throw further shot in combination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotate wrist 90 degrees just before impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to turn wrist over at last moment before contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On contact, return to guard position and straighten knees, standing up into upright guard position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not returning rear hand to guard position with elbow tucked in after throwing shot, allowing opponent opportunity to counter Letting lead hand wander from guard position, allowing opponent opportunity to counter

Bent Arm Punches



The **lead hand hook to the head** (mid range) can be a devastating punch since it comes from outside the defender's field of vision. It is, however, a technical challenge

to the beginner and needs careful coaching under various conditions of practice. It is particularly effective as a counter and as part of a combination, since the technique of the well executed lead hand hook will transfer the weight back onto the rear leg and allow the boxer to keep the balanced stance.



Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From guard position, make a drive off front foot while lifting heel and raise lead arm so elbow is level with shoulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telegraphing the punch; punch needs to be thrown from where hand is and not drawn back
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explosive rotation of the hips generates power through the body from a good base and out through closed fist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stiff shoulders and immobile hips working against the rapid rotation of the body and relaxed hitting arm Arm stiffening early in the arc of the punch Overthrowing causing a loss of the base of support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For orthodox boxer, use right side of body as a firm hinge and let rotation of body pull relaxed arm through until just before impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arm straightening before the arc has been completed Weak legs and hips offering a poor rotational base and inadequately firm 'hinge'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure palm is facing floor when punch lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hitting with the inside of the glove; not turning the wrist over just before impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep eye on target and chin protected by shoulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising chin leaving it exposed as the punch is thrown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On contact, return hand to guard position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to return to guard position allowing opponent opportunity to counter



uppercut is obviously of major benefit in close quarter work and in dealing with on-rushing opponents, especially if their balance is poor and they have too much momentum and/or weight

on the front leg. Like the lead hand hook it has the advantage of coming from outside the defender's field of vision. The mobile upper body and head, based on a foundation of good balance, will allow transfer of weight to trigger the uppercut.



Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From guard position, transfer weight to rear foot and at the same time, turn wrist of rear hand so palm faces inwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winding up to prepare for shot, so telegraphing it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the rear knee bent slightly, lift the rear heel then, using legs and hips to drive up, throw short punch through raising forearm, keeping forearm vertical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to use legs and hips to drive up, resulting in an 'arm punch' Overhitting causing loss of base of support Driving across rather than upwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep eye on target and chin protected by shoulder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throwing head back to generate extra momentum leaving chin exposed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On contact, return hand to guard position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to return to guard position leaving opportunity for opponent to counter

DEFENCE

Principles of Defence

- Predicting the likely attack and making good decisions about defensive strategies
- Ensuring that the target area is protected
- Seeking opportunities to counterpunch following a defensive move
- The moving target is much harder for the opponent to hit. This can be through:
 - o the feet, taking the boxer in and out of range
 - o the torso, based on a strong 'core' which makes the upper body flexible
 - o changing the 'level'
 - o changing the angle of defense and attack, and
 - o keeping a strong base of support all the time and providing a launch pad for counters.

Head movement is strongly related to upper body flexibility. The skillful defensive boxer can move the head and shoulders in a way that confuses the aim of the opponent while still keeping both eyes on the opponent to judge distances effectively (a boxer with one eye damaged can't make these fine judgments of distance and won't be allowed to continue a bout).

Creating opportunities for counter attacks: it's important that defensive moves open up options for counter attack as far as possible. This will usually be because the defensive move transfers the bodyweight in such a way that it's possible to 'trigger' a counter delivered with the power of the body and not just the arm. Defensive moves of the trunk, hands and feet will be well controlled and often small so as not to disturb the balanced stance.

The importance of lateral movement: where possible in defences based on foot movement, it's important to move out of a direct line of attack by lateral movement, rather than always working in predictable straight lines.

A good range of defences is key: effective defence like successful attack is unpredictable, and as the boxer's skills develop beyond the basic moves which follow in this section, defences involving foot and body movement will involve feinting, disguise and changes of angle in order to set up effective attacks.

Hand Defences



The **block to the lead hand** is perhaps the most basic defence for the beginner to master. It has the advantage that because it is carried out in the opponent's range, it allows a fast counter with the lead hand, since the rear hand has performed the block and the body is already in position. The block involves a small movement of the hand from the guard position.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">From the guard position, place rear hand in front of on-coming punch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Blocking hand moves out too far to meet punch, thereby offering chance for opponent to feint, drawing defensive move and then hooking defender to head.Losing tucked elbow position by raising elbow away from body.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Turn rear hand and stiffen arm so palm of glove blocks opponent's punch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Block is made too close to face so impact causes defending hand to make contact with face.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Return hand to guard position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Failure to return to guard position leaving opportunity for opponent to counter





The **outside parry** like the block, allows the defender to operate in the opponent's range and gives good opportunities to counter attack. The use of the rear hand to parry the opponent's lead hand allows the defender's free lead hand to counter. This defence has the added advantage that the parry can affect the balance of the attacking boxer, especially if his/her technique is poor and they have transferred the weight forward or across.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In guard position, using short rotation inwards, deflect opponent's punch at wrist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too big a lateral movement of parrying hand. Elbow moves out from guard position. Parrying hand reaches for incoming shot.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return hand to guard position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to return to guard position leaving opportunity for opponent to counter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For orthodox boxer, use right hand to parry opponent's left hand and left hand to parry right. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When using the outside parry against straight shots to the body the arm sweeps downwards making contact with the palm of the glove against the opponent's wrist and pulling across the torso; a slight step with the front foot will move the boxer outside the line of attack. 	





The **elbow block** is a standard way of dealing with body punches. It will be learned early in the boxer's career and will be effective against both straight and bent arm punches; a front hand to the body, in particular, can be well defended by the rear elbow, freeing up the defender's front hand for a counter. It can be used to both absorb and deflect punches.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the hands by the side of the face and the elbows tucked in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letting the hands drop leaving the head exposed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn the torso to block or deflect the body punches with the elbows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mistiming the body roll.• Allowing the body to 'square up' and opening the target when defending straight punches• Becoming 'passive' in defence.





Trunk Defences

The **lay back** has the potential to be a very effective response, especially to an opponent's lead hand. It requires only a small movement for success and an effective straight rear hand counter can easily be launched given the way the bodyweight moves to the back leg. Should the opponent allow the lead hand to 'lay' or shift the balance too far forward in throwing the jab, the boxer employing this defence can counter with a powerful right hand to the undefended chin. This defence needs courage, timing and excellent judgment of distance since the defender is not moving out of the opponent's range by a large margin.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">From guard position, straighten front leg, bend rear leg and lay back away from target, taking head out of range.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initial movement is too slow.Squaring up to opponent.Moving too far causing loss of base of support, centre of gravity goes too far back and head comes up in air.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep correct guard position with chin down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leaving chin exposed by dropping lead hand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recover to balanced stance.	





The **duck** involves not just the trunk but the legs as well; bending the knees is crucial. Bending the trunk forward and ducking into the opponent's effective striking range without a knee bend is an invitation to be hit.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">From guard position, bend at knees so head ducks under opponent's punch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bending at waist instead of kneesDucking into countering uppercut.Ducking too low (against the rules)Mistiming duck, going too soon or too late.Allowing centre of gravity to move to front leg.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep hands in defensive position and eyes on opponent at all times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Letting head/eyes drop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Move back into upright guard position.	





The **outside slip** is one of the most 'attacking' of the defensive moves, however it demands hours of practice to perfect and so will not be the first defence taught to the beginner. It offers significant advantages to the more experienced boxer for it provides the defending boxer with an opportunity to operate within the attacker's range and to exploit any loss of balance or form with a counter. The movements are small and subtle and will maintain the defender's balanced position, so offering a good platform for the counter. Initially the slipping moves are often too large but with correct practice, they can be reduced to prevent disturbing the defender's balance and offering a platform for an effective counter.

The **outside slip** should be learned before the inside slip as it is a safer option, taking the defender outside the line of the attacking punch. The inside slip is a more advanced move and not for beginners; it needs to be linked to a counter since the defender will move within the attacker's range and, having come inside the line of the punch, is automatically potentially vulnerable to the opponent's free hand. Boxers should be able to slip to both left and right so that they can use the outside slip against the opponent's line of attack (both orthodox and southpaw opponents).

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From guard position, with slight bend of knee, rotate at waist to move head and shoulders to outside of punch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Losing balanced base by too big a slipping movement. Leaning square rather than inwards or back.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep hands in defensive position at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Losing guard position by letting hands wander.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move back into guard position.. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When slipping outside of straight lead hand, weight shifts to back foot which was offset from front foot in basic stance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaning square.





Foot Defences

The **push away** should be among the first defences that beginners learn; it will take boxers out of their opponent's range and can allow for a change of angle of attack. It is a very basic defence with which all beginners need to be familiar, but it has the potential to be negative unless you also stress the opportunities to come back with an unexpected attack. With increasing experience, better balance and footwork, boxers can change the angle to the opponent after using this defence, and so avoid working in predictable straight lines.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">From guard position, push away from target with front foot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pushing away too far and going a long way out of range.Leaving chin exposed with head up.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make sure feet move as a unit and that base is maintained by first stepping back with rear foot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Loss of base of support by bringing front foot back to meet rear which fails to move back much at all.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recover by pushing off with rear foot and stepping forward to move back into guard position from which you can take offensive again.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Losing guard position by letting hands fall.Loss of base by bringing rear foot to front foot.





The **side step** is a sideways defensive movement that should be introduced once the boxer is competent in moving forward and back while moving the feet as a unit. No one will ever out run an oncoming train, stepping out of its way is a better strategy! It's important, however, that the same principles of balanced and co-ordinated movement are maintained in moving sideways. Changing the angle of attack can spring directly from the side step and attacking boxers are never comfortable when the target suddenly shifts to the side, especially when they are countered from outside the field of vision.

Key coaching points	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">From balanced stance, orthodox boxer moving right pushes off from ball of left foot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Beginners take too large a single step to side, over-extending base.'Single step' to side opens up stance, especially with step to right.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Boxer steps off with right foot before bringing left foot to follow, maintaining base.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">To recover by sidestep to left, press off from right foot, step to left. Right foot follows, maintaining base.	



COUNTER PUNCHING

As a Coaching Assistant, you should focus mainly on developing single punch counters to straight punches to head and body. These counters may involve a switch of target from head to body and vice versa, but a simple block or parry to a straight lead hand to the head can be effectively countered with a straight lead hand to the head. Equally a successful rear elbow block to the straight lead hand to the body can be countered by a straight lead hand to the head. The layback as a defence can be a launch pad for the straight rear hand to the head. The following table shows principles for effective counter punching.

Principles for counter punching	Details
Using weight transfer and body position	Good counter punching is based on very fast reactions and quick hands and any of the defensive moves covered can be followed by a counter attack. The best defences are those where the counter attack 'flows' from the body position and bodyweight transfer of the defensive move.
Tailored to differing physical characteristics	Coaches should develop individual training programmes tailored to the boxer's physical characteristics. The short stocky boxer will need to learn to duck, slip and roll effectively as a launch pad for the counter(s). The taller boxer, with long limbs, will often use foot and body movement and change of angle to make openings for the counter.
'Hands free' defences, a launch pad for counters	Defensive moves using the feet and trunk are the easiest from which to counter, as long as balance is good, as they leave both hands free to provide options for counter punching. For beginners however the block and (especially) the parry can still be an excellent basis for counter punching. With increasing confidence, the novice will become more comfortable using the layback to launch a lead or rear hand counter.
The real punch repertoire (RPR) applied to counters	Whatever the physical characteristics and tactical preferences of the boxer, every beginner needs to learn the basic mechanics of a variety of defences and counters. The developing boxer needs to have various options to respond to the unexpected, and to have defensive and countering options and a wider RPR than is necessarily used on a regular basis.

Switch of attack and punch selection

Disguise and deception can draw the opponent into a position where attacks can be countered successfully. Switching the attack whether to head or body using straight shots, or changing the angle of attack by circling (both ways) and side stepping, will avoid predictability and promote effective counter-punching even with beginners.

The successful boxer is the unpredictable boxer

It's important to teach beginners to use the balanced stance and fluent movement as a springboard for switching the attack to head and body. For example, a lead hand to the head followed by a rear hand to the body is based on proper body positioning and the throwing of one punch doesn't disturb the balance for the other.



Combination Punching

Having mastered the basic punches, boxers must move towards combination punching, throwing 'punches in bunches'. These combinations or punch sequences must allow the boxer to finish on balance and in control in order to have options for offensive or defensive movement, particularly a change of angle of attack.

When coaching beginners, ensure the combinations are kept simple (2-3 punch combinations) at the appropriate range and that balance and 'flow' are maintained. Beginners need to hone their RPR and build it up slowly towards more complex sequences. Over-enthusiastic and over-complicated pad work using multi-punch combinations too soon will result in loss of balance almost immediately. It may look impressive on the pads but it has no relevance to the real bout.

Don't get carried away!

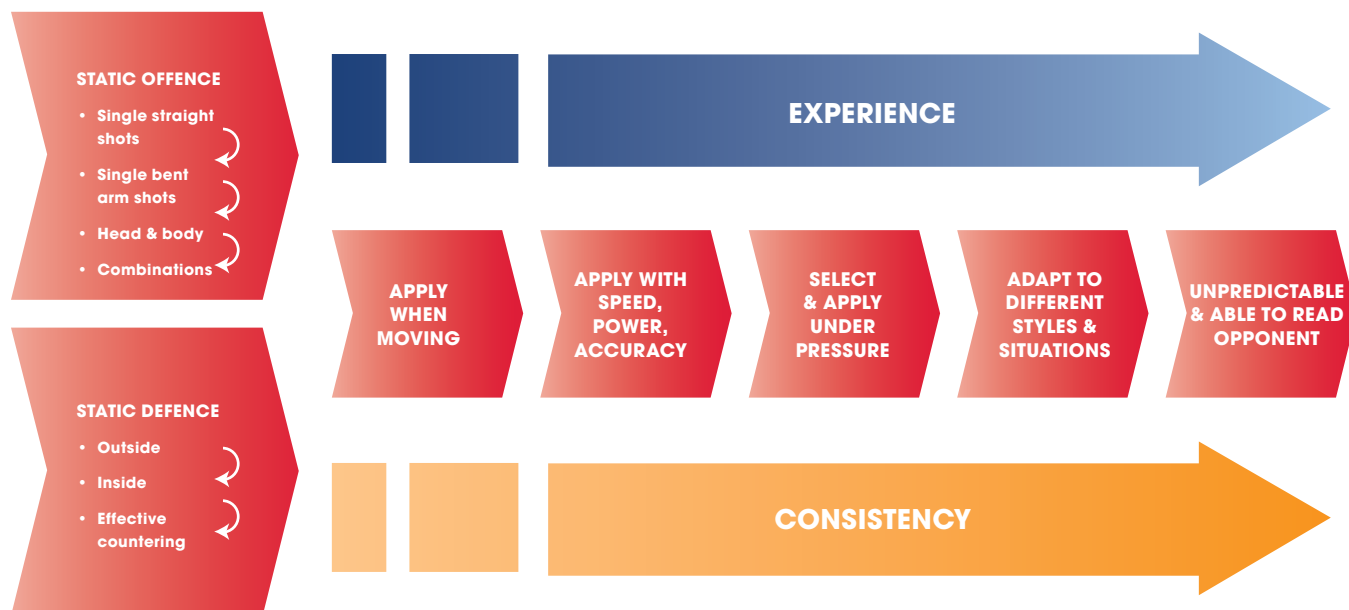
Common errors in coaching combinations

- Throwing combination as a series of single shots.
- Failing to allow body to 'flow' as one body position sets up next.
- Over-committing to a punch in the middle of a sequence and losing balance.
- Failure to maintain base of support and finishing off balance.
- Failure to adjust feet during the combination as opponent alters position.
- Failure to observe principle 'throw when you know' (ie get in position to give a good chance of success and when you 'know' that some (or all) of the combination will get through)
- Being too ambitious; forget the 10 punch combos

Coaching Boxing: from Techniques to Skills

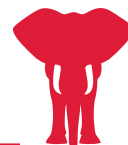
Coaches will help boxers to learn correct boxing techniques and to turn these into skills that can be applied successfully in competition. Developing skill is covered in detail in section 5.8. The Boxing Skills Progression figure shown below highlights the stages through which techniques are turned into basic and advanced skills.

BOXING SKILLS PROGRESSION



REMEMBER:

- Teach boxers the mechanics of quality punching and the concept of power lines.
- When coaching punches, be conscious of the RPR which will inevitably be limited for beginners.
- Movement is a key ingredient of a successful offense and defence.
- Teach your boxers to look for opportunities to counterpunch following a defence.
- Help your boxers develop a good range of punches and defences to prevent them being predictable to opponents.
- As a Coaching Assistant, be confident in both recognising and praising correct technique and identifying and correcting faults.



ACTION:

Look back through all the techniques described and identify the ones you feel confident you could demonstrate accurately, and which ones you need to work on to be able to provide an accurate demonstration.



HITTING EQUIPMENT

Coaches need to make effective use of punch bags and other hitting equipment. Punch bags are prevalent in all boxing gyms but often not used to their full effect; it is vital that the coach controls and supervises their use. The punch bag is the place where faults in technique are so easily grooved into bad habits. Correct punching and footwork is essential at all times. Unfortunately in many clubs it is commonplace for punch bag work to form the core training, with boxers working for round after round 'on the bags'. Using punch bags as gym- or time-fillers is poor coaching practice; you need to be clear about why they are being used.

Benefits

Punch bags and hitting equipment can be used to improve:

- hand, eye and foot coordination
- punching technique and power
- strength
- general fitness.

Safety and risk assessment

Coaches must check all hitting equipment prior to use. Flying hooks and D rings can hit the eye. A heavy bag can fall and break bones. Hard spots on punch bags can cause hand damage. Check:

- are the hanging chains secured?
- are rubber straps split or aged?
- are hanging brackets solid and securely fixed?
- do punch bags have any spots which are too hard to punch safely?

Variety

Variety in the type of hitting equipment used will maintain interest and avoid boredom for the boxer. It is good practice in a punch bag session to encourage the boxers to move to a different punch bag after each round. The following sections illustrate some of the hitting equipment available and highlight benefits and possible drawbacks.

Types of punch bags and other hitting equipment

3 in 1 bag

Useful for working on straight punches, uppercuts and hooks to both head and body. The weight and elastic securing of the bottom simulate the feel of hitting an opponent well. The disadvantage is that they need to be set to a correct height to suit the stature of the boxer for maximum benefit.



Floor to ceiling ball

These are excellent pieces of equipment for developing hand and eye coordination and improving reflexes and timing. However boxers tend to not move their feet as they use them and overuse can stifle footwork as boxers tend to be so static when using them. They also need to be set to a height to suit the stature of the boxer.



Straight punchbags

These bags tend to be cheap and readily available. They suit a range of boxers in terms of height and stature. They are best for focusing on straight punches and footwork. They have no real value in terms of uppercuts and they have a tendency to encourage boxers to throw lead hand hooks with the thumb up.



Angle bags

These bags have similar use as straight bags but have the added benefit of being the correct shape for uppercuts and angled hooks.



Wall pads

Despite their static nature, wall pads are good for developing 'in and out' footwork and changes of angle of attack. The full range of punches can be developed on them. Ideally they need to be raised or lowered to suit the height of the boxers using them.



Maize balls

These are excellent for developing hooks and uppercuts. Conversely, boxers tend to neglect straight punching when using them. The swinging action has some benefit for developing timing and distance judgement.



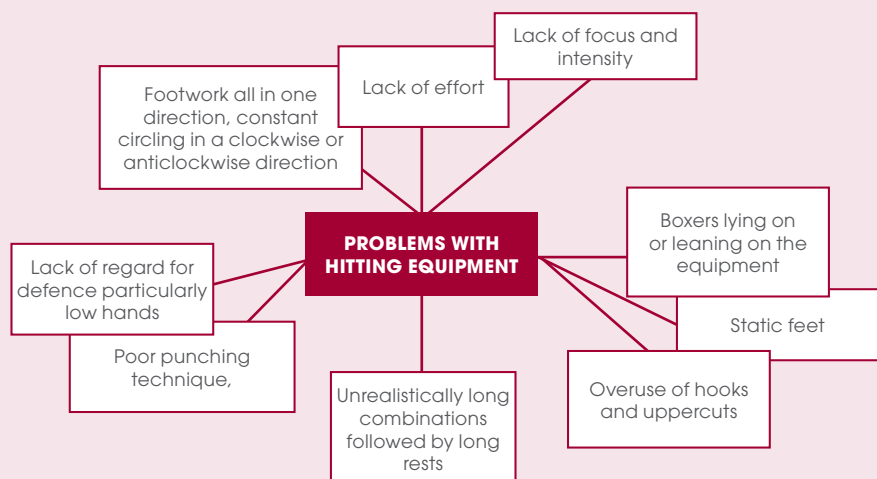
Speed balls

While popular with many boxers, speedballs have questionable value in the boxing gym. When using them, footwork tends to be non-existent and the punching techniques used bear little relation to those used in competition. Hand and eye coordination can perhaps be improved and the proficient use of a speedball may perhaps develop the confidence and self esteem of a boxer.



Hitting equipment problems

You need to supervise the use of all hitting equipment very closely and beware of the problems shown in the panel.



Coaching the use of punch bags

The use of punch bags needs to be coached and demonstrated. The following guidelines will provide guidance for you:

- Always explain why each piece of equipment is used and its benefits.
- Provide a good demonstration of effective use.
- Do not allow novices to hit punch bags unless they have had some basic coaching in punching technique.
- The longer the round, the more likely a decline in technique will be seen. Keep round times low for beginners.
- Ensure boxers retain an opponent 'in the mind's eye'; this will ensure they maintain focus.

Organising hitting equipment sessions

Hitting equipment sessions need to be organised if they are to be of significant benefit to the boxer. The following guidelines should enable you to plan effective sessions.

Theme the rounds: there are many strategies for themes for each round of hitting equipment work, including the following:

- Suggest a different type of opponent for the 'mind's eye' to see: such as southpaw, counterpuncher, strong left hooker, swinger.
- Specify punches, combinations and footwork to use; the number of punches in a combination, the type of punch thrown, the order of punches thrown such as:
 - Three punch combinations only
 - each combination includes a left hook to the body
 - must push out the bag in between combinations
 - 90 degree angle change between combinations
 - every fourth punch must be to the body
- Tempo change during the round: steady, increased pace, maximum work rate.

Duration: Hitting equipment sessions should mimic the timings of competition. For example, the open class senior would usually work three minute rounds for three rounds (with perhaps a fourth round as overload). The schoolboy boxer would normally work for three one and a half minute rounds with perhaps a fourth round as overload. In most cases the gap between rounds should be one minute. If hitting equipment is being used with an 'interval approach', then round times could drop to one minute with thirty seconds recovery or perhaps even to just thirty seconds with recovery times of just fifteen seconds. The number of rounds would depend on the fitness level of the boxer.

REMEMBER:

- Hitting equipment is essential for developing boxers if used correctly and there are a number of different types that can be used
- You must ensure hitting equipment is used to develop correct technique and beware of boxers developing bad habits
- You should theme sessions so they: have a clear purpose; develop techniques and skills that will be useful in competition; they should not be used as mere 'time-fillers'
- The duration of sessions should be relevant to the boxers; as boxers get tired, technique will decline



ACTION:

Consider how often your boxers have a clear purpose when working on the bags. Identify ways to improve this.



SHADOW BOXING

Shadow boxing is a very common activity in boxing. It can be useful to practise punching and footwork skills but it can also be an activity where faults in technique are 'grooved' into bad habits. Correct technique is vital at all times during shadow boxing and your guidance and feedback is very important.

Benefits of shadow boxing:

- 'Grooving' of skills
- Hand, eye and foot coordination
- Overall fitness development
- Increase in strength, speed and power.

Strategies for effective use

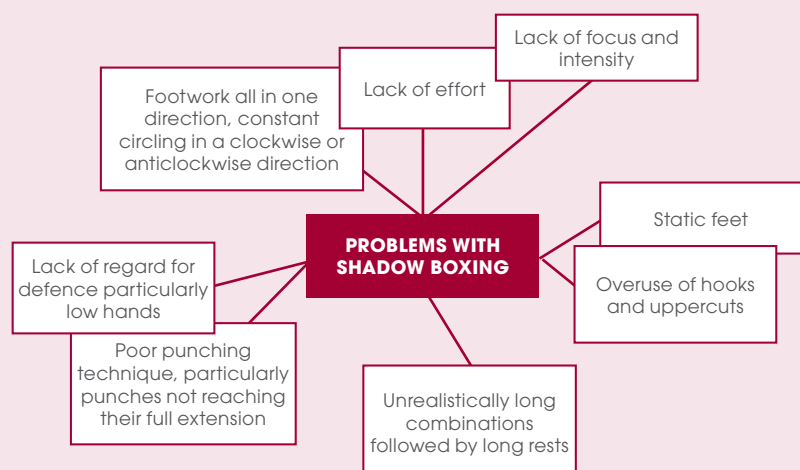
It's important to ensure variety in the type of shadow boxing to avoid boredom and maintain interest. It is good practice to time shadow boxing in terms of rounds. This section suggests a number of strategies that may be used to make shadow boxing effective.

- 1 Resistance band / shadow boxing harness shadow boxing:** the use of elastic bands can add a resistance element to shadow boxing. This will improve strength, speed and power. It encourages the hands to be brought very quickly back to the 'on guard' position. Simple bands can be purchased for a few pounds. Shadow boxing harnesses are a little more expensive. However, ensure that bands are not too strong for young children to use safely.

- 2 Shadow boxing with a mirror:** this is commonplace but problematic, in that the boxer will tend to neglect footwork and put too much emphasis on punching. Tape lines should be placed on the mirror and on the floor:
 - A vertical line can emphasise that rotation about the central axis is vital.
 - A tape box can be used to emphasise that the guard must be maintained with vertical forearms, high hands and the chin tucked in to the chest.
 - An image of an opponent can be drawn on to a mirror to simulate an opponent and provide a theoretical target.
 - Tape lines on the floor can be used to emphasise the importance of changing the angle of attack and moving in and out of distance.
- 3 Shadow boxing with dumbbells:** weights will add some benefit to strength training; however the weights should normally be low as high weight will result in reduced quality in technique and possibly poor use of footwork. Strength gains are very much a secondary aim to technical development.
- 4 Partner shadow boxing (dry sparring):** if two boxers shadow box together, the focus of the boxers is usually intensified. Punches are thrown towards a real target but all punches must fall short. This style of shadow boxing will also encourage boxers to use defences as they shadow box.

Problems associated with shadow boxing

You should closely supervise shadow boxing and recognise the problems shown in the adjacent panel.



Coaching shadow boxing

Effective shadow boxing needs to be coached and demonstrated. The following guidelines are important:

- Explain why shadow boxing is used and its benefits.
- Provide a demonstration of effective shadow boxing.
- The longer the round, the more likely a decline in technique will be seen; keep round times low for beginners.
- Ensure the boxer retains an opponent 'in the mind's eye'; this will ensure they maintain focus when shadow boxing.

Organising shadow boxing sessions

Like all aspects of training, shadow boxing needs to be well organised if it is to be of significant benefit to the boxer. The following guidelines should enable you to plan effective sessions:

Theme the rounds: there are many strategies for themes for each round of shadow boxing including the following:

- Suggest a different type of opponent for the 'mind's eye' to see: such as southpaw, counterpuncher, strong left hooker, swinger.
- Specify punches, combinations, footwork used: the number of punches in a combination, the type of punch thrown, and the order of punches thrown. Examples:
 - Three punch combinations only
 - Each combination includes a left hook to the body
 - 90 degree angle change between combinations
 - Every fourth punch must be to the body
- Tempo change during the round: steady, increased pace, maximum work rate.

Duration: shadow sessions should normally mimic the timings of competition. For example, the open class senior would usually work three minute rounds for three rounds (with perhaps a fourth round as overload). The schoolboy boxer would normally work for three, one and a half minute rounds with perhaps a fourth round as overload) In most cases the gap between rounds should be one minute.

REMEMBER:

- Shadow boxing is a good method of practising techniques and skills and developing fitness.
- It's important to theme shadow boxing to ensure it is purposeful and to prevent boxers becoming bored and losing concentration
- Resistance equipment can be used to enhance the conditioning aspects of shadow boxing.
- Mirrors and tape are often used to enhance shadow boxing but make sure that footwork isn't neglected due to an over-emphasis on punching.
- Closely supervise shadow boxing to ensure that correct technique is maintained throughout



ACTION:

Observe boxers shadow boxing in your gym and consider which are participating in purposeful, realistic shadow boxing, and which are 'going through the motions'.



PADWORK

Coaching pads are a vital coaching tool as they can help a boxer make rapid progress and in an enjoyable way. However, poor quality padwork can ingrain serious faults of balance, coordination and punching technique which will lead to a failure to build up the repertoire of punches and defences on which competitive success depends. You need to pitch the degree of complexity of movement skills and punching and defensive techniques taught on the pads at the right level for each individual boxer, depending on their experience and stage of development. This demands good judgement from you.

The **objectives** of the padwork need to be clear or the session will be ineffective:

- Is the session concerned with learning new techniques or patterns of skill?
- Is it primarily about developing fitness, perhaps through interval work?
- Is it sharpening before a contest?
- Is it about fault correction after a failed spar or competition?

Pads can be used for a variety of reasons as shown in the adjacent diagram:



Basic pad positions:

When 'taking pads', you should normally take a boxing stance and guard as a starting position.

Straight shots to head:

- Should be taken on the right pad from orthodox boxers and the left pad from southpaws.
- The pad centre should be held at the level of the boxer's nose.
- The palm should face the boxer.



Straight shots to body

- Should be taken on the left pad from the orthodox boxer and the right pad from southpaws.
- The pad centre should be held at the level of the boxer's solar plexus (just above the navel).
- The palm should face the boxer.
- The padman's elbow should be lifted to own shoulder level to aid this.



Lead hand hook to the head

- Should be taken on the left pad.
- The pad centre should be held level with the boxer's nose.
- The pad palm should face towards the coach's right.



Rear hand uppercut

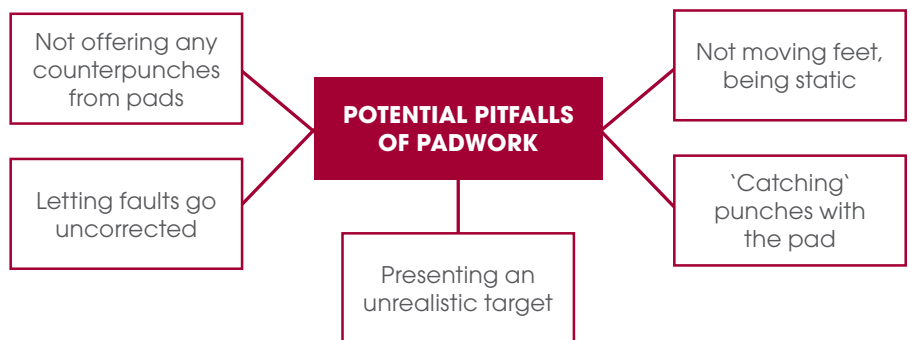
- Should normally be taken on the left pad.
- The palm facing towards the boxer at an angle of 45 degrees.
- For short range uppercuts, the palm should face the floor.



These are the principle positions but there are many situations where these guidelines will not be appropriate. You need to select the best pad positions to provide a realistic target to address the desired purpose of the session.

Potential pitfalls

The effective coach needs to beware the potential pitfalls when using padwork, shown in the adjacent diagram.



Keeping it real

- The coach should take an 'on guard' position.
- The target must be realistic.
- The coach controls the tempo, intensity and range of punches to be thrown.
- The target should not be moved towards the punch, preventing the punch from travelling its full distance.
- The coach usually needs to move like a boxer.
- The punch cue may be physical or verbal.

TYPES OF PADWORK

Set technique: a particular punch, defence or sequence is practised, initially at a slow speed which is increased as the technique is learned and the skill develops. Fault correction can be focused on a set technique or skill pattern.

General padwork: a boxer's skills are generally tidied up while some conditioning work is done. This may be most appropriate in the 'off season' while the boxer is ticking over.

Tactical: in the season, you can simulate a particular style of opponent while strategies and techniques are developed to overcome such opponents.

Sharpening: a pre-contest warm-up or at a time very close to a contest where a boxer is mentally preparing for combat, not pushing hard, sharpening skills and developing speed.

Conditioning: the focus is on high work rate. Work time will vary, with one minute rounds with 30 seconds rest being common. This allows the heart rate to be raised and lowered repeatedly which has a strengthening effect on the heart.

REMEMBER:

- Coaching pads are a vital tool which can bring significant benefits to the boxer
- Padwork sessions should have clear objectives
- Pads need to be used correctly otherwise there is a risk that poor technique can be ingrained
- You need to keep it real by presenting a realistic target, moving like a boxer and allowing the punch to travel its full distance.



ACTION:

Think of padwork sessions that you may have experienced as a coach or boxer; did the sessions have a clear purpose and were they realistic?



SPARRING

Sparring is a vital activity for boxers and arguably the most important part of training. However, it needs to **be carefully managed** as it is relatively high risk and has the potential to impede learning as well as enhance it. The boxer who is intent on survival is not a learning boxer.

The idea that a novice boxer must 'learn to take it' runs counter to the sport's ethics which **puts the welfare of the boxer first and foremost**. Nevertheless the point at which the novice starts to spar and experience the fact that boxing involves getting hit as well as hitting is a crucial point in psychological development; the novice will need careful coaching to negotiate this critical stage.

This section acts as a guide to Level 1 Coaches who are encouraged to observe sparring sessions that must be supervised by coaches holding a Level 2 qualification or above.

Coaches need to supervise sparring; it demands a high degree of concentration and control on your part.

Sparring is **about learning**, skill development and coping with progressively more difficult problems in the ring, under increasing conditions of intensity in contest preparation. You need to judge how to increase the intensity and pose problems of increasing difficulty so the boxer continues to learn and develop.

Types of sparring:

There are 3 types of sparring, identified in the continuum below:



- **Technique sparring:** where a specific skill is developed. Usually the speed is controlled and the sparring partner acts in a semi passive role, for example, lead hand to the head with a block as a defence. Technique sparring is vital for the beginner.
- **Conditioned sparring:** in conditioned sparring, you set a condition (or several conditions) that each boxer must follow. The speed is more realistic than a technique spar but the power is usually kept quite low. The sparring is generally aimed at skill development for an individual. **Typically 80% of sparring is conditioned.** An example of a conditioned spar is:
 - Boxer A is only allowed to throw a straight lead or rear hand to the head
 - Boxer B may only use hand defences
 - After a period of practice swap roles.
- **Open sparring:** where the range of punches and defences are unlimited. Punches and footwork are at full speed. Even in open sparring, the power is often reduced. Coach feedback and correction is given 'on the move' so that the flow is uninterrupted. Open sparring is not a contest, it is still a learning experience under conditions which start to approach the intensity of a contest.

Safety considerations: it's important to be very aware of safety factors during sparring. The key points in the panel are reproduced from subsection 2.2 in Safety, Health and Welfare Section.

Sparring

- **Supervising coach:** Coaching Assistants must not conduct any form of sparring.
- **Equipment:** sparring should only occur in a boxing ring with a cushioned floor and canvas, secure ropes and pad protected corner posts. Boxers must wear gum shields, head guards and groin guards. Gloves must be a minimum of 10oz and in good condition.
- **Medical card:** best practice dictates that boxers should only participate in open sparring with an appropriate medical card.
- **Learning experience:** you must coach your boxers to understand the importance of control in 'conditioned' and 'technique' sparring; see it as a learning experience not a fight.
- **Themes:** suitable themes for age/development stage, experience and ability should be chosen.
- **Matching:** suitable matching must take place for age/development stage, experience, weight and height is carried out.
- **Exclusions:** a boxer must not spar during a 28-day medical suspension.
- **A range** of sparring experience is on offer, tailored to the needs of the boxers.
- **Timing:** sparring usually takes place near the start of a training session when boxers are well warmed up; it should be stopped when fatigue sets in. If a boxer is dehydrated (eg after a programme of conditioning where heavy sweating has occurred), there is a drop off in the ability to track a moving object and to process information necessary for decision-making; this makes it vital that sparring does not take place if the boxer is dehydrated.



REMEMBER:

- Sparring has many benefits and is the closest thing to actual competition; it must therefore be carefully managed and supervised
- The boxer's welfare must always come first and you must ensure that all safety considerations are followed
- The focus of sparring should be learning and development; the majority of sparring should be conditioned
- As a Coaching Assistant you must not conduct open sparring, and may only conduct technique and conditioned sparring when supervised by a Full Coach (Level 2) or higher; coaches under the age of 18 cannot conduct any form of sparring.



ACTION:

Think about the sparring that takes place in your club and consider how much is technique sparring, how much is conditioned and how much is open.



4.5: CONDITIONING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Boxers need all of these aspects of fitness (see adjacent diagram). They need fast hands, fluent foot and body movements and the strength and endurance (stamina) to maintain performance throughout the contest. They need to be able to react quickly and make decisions.

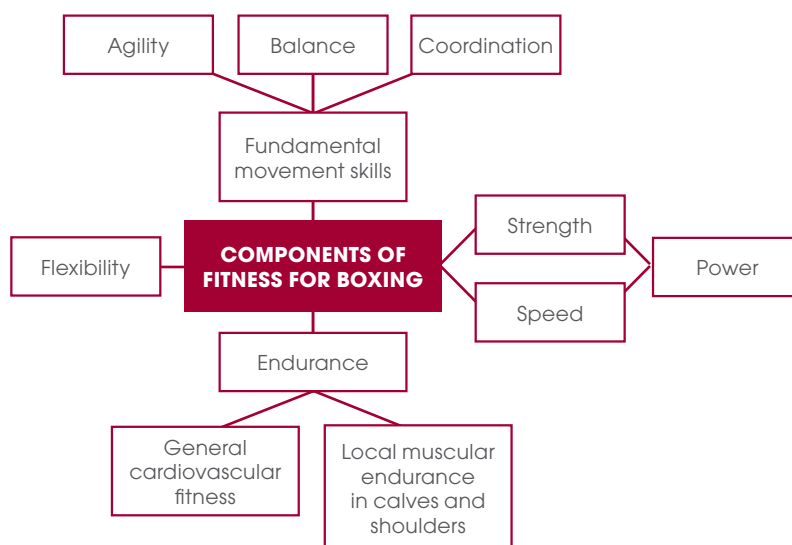
Boxing is a sport based on power, the ability to deliver strong punches in succession at maximum speed. Some parts of the body, such as the neck and the trunk, need to be strong to withstand punches to head and body. The core muscles (eg abdominals) need to be strong to keep the body in position to deliver the power.

Boxing requires high intensity bursts of explosive power-based activity with short rest intervals. Senior boxers typically have three 3-minute rounds with one minute rest between; young boxers might box for three 1.5 minute rounds again with a 1-minute rest between. Work to rest intervals are therefore 3:1 for seniors and 2:1 for younger boxers. Conditioning is crucial to achieve the appropriate levels of fitness for optimal performance.

COMPONENTS OF FITNESS

The key components of fitness are:

- **endurance:** this is the ability to maintain activity for a long period of time, it also includes the ability to resist and recover from injury or fatigue. It can be divided into:
 - local muscle endurance which is the ability of a single muscle to sustain work (eg punch bag work)
 - cardiovascular endurance which is the ability of the heart to deliver blood to working muscles and their ability to use it (eg skipping).
- **speed:** this is the quickness of movement of a limb (eg speed of the legs and feet in footwork, hand speed in punching) .
- **strength:** this is the force with which muscles can contract
- **power:** this is the ability to exert maximum muscular contraction instantly in an explosive burst of movements. The two components of power are strength and speed (eg in a punch).



- **flexibility:** this is the ability to achieve an extended range of motion without being impeded by excess tissue such as fat or muscle.

CONDITIONING

A common misconception in sport is that people get into shape by just taking part in that sport. This will however simply keep the person at that level of fitness; conditioning programmes are needed to make improvements.

Improvements can only be made by overloading the body, increasing the work rate so it is increasingly making greater demands on the body in terms of working harder and/or longer. The body then adapts to the greater load placed on it during the recovery period. The amount of overload is crucial, too much overload and not enough recovery results in no progress or over-training, too little overload and there will be no improvements. Typical conditioning methods used in boxing are described below.

RUNNING

Running is an excellent method of conditioning. Although you will not be responsible for the setting of running training programmes, you need to have a basic awareness of types of running and some good practice principles.

Other activities like rowing, swimming, cycling and using cross training machines have their place in a conditioning programme (eg for heavyweight

athletes whose joints may react badly to running or for boxers with an injury to the knee or

Traditional roadwork is not enough

ankle where impact work is impossible), but running is fundamental to boxing conditioning. Given the physical demands of boxing and its bursts of high intensity activity, 'traditional' long steady roadwork which develops aerobic fitness is not enough on its own. There are different types of running activity and levels of intensity that boxers use to develop the overall physical fitness requirements.

Types of running:

- **Steady state** running is used to develop good general endurance in boxers by developing the capacity of the heart and lungs and by helping boxers to lose weight. An example would be a 3-5 mile steady run at a pace that is comfortable for the boxer.
- **Interval** running uses running of varying intensity and duration to develop boxers' ability to work at a high intensity and at speed. For example 3 sets of 3 x 100 m sprints with a 100 m jog or walk recovery with a longer recovery between sets.

Basic principles of running

Running terrain will affect the amount and type of running the boxer can do if injury is to be avoided. Pavements are convenient but are not leg-friendly and you may recommend any of the following alternatives:

- running track
- artificial turf pitches
- grassy areas
- hills
- soft sand.

Boxers need to wear **shoes** specifically designed for running; those that are well cushioned with good shock-absorption. It may be worthwhile for the boxer that runs frequently to seek specialist advice regarding the type of shoe that is most suitable for their personal running style or 'gait' and foot shape. Specialist running shoe shops can advise on what suits the individual.

Treadmills can be a useful part of the running programme and offer a good alternative particularly in poor weather. Boxers should be made aware that

running on a treadmill that is flat is a poor substitute for actual running outdoors, as the treadmill does a significant amount of the work. Only by using the treadmill at an incline of at least level 1.5 (and preferably level 2), can the 'real' running effect be re-created. Boxers should also be prevented from running on treadmills in their boxing boots. Running shoes are necessary to avoid injury.

It's important when **sprints** are used that the distances are such that it is possible for the boxer to sprint for the whole distance. This means that the distances are likely to be 100 m (or less) for senior boxers and less than 50 m for junior boxers. The stage of the season and the proximity of the forthcoming contest will also influence how much, how far, how fast and how hard the boxers run. It's important not just to achieve training objectives but also to avoid staleness and boredom by putting some variety into the running venues and the type of running.

REMEMBER:

- Running is fundamental to boxing conditioning
- Boxing is an explosive, high intensity sport and traditional long, steady roadwork is not sufficient for the required fitness
- As well as steady state running, a running programme should include interval training that develops the boxer's ability to work at high intensity and at speed
- Running should take place on appropriate terrain using suitable footwear.



ACTION:

Consider what types of running your boxers mainly use.



CIRCUIT TRAINING

An important way to develop fitness in the gym is by using the boxer's own bodyweight and simple apparatus. This can be organised into circuit training through individualised programmes and group work.

Benefits of circuit training

- **Easy to organise, practical and inexpensive:**
 - no need for expensive equipment
 - space demands are low
 - can be carried out in even the most basic gym space
 - possible to have a number of boxers (even of different fitness levels) working together.
- **Caters for individual differences:** you can readily change the degree of difficulty to account for individual differences and provide a progressive routine where each boxer can be challenged.

- **The exercises are generally familiar:** while the exercises are generally well known, the fact that they are familiar doesn't necessarily mean they are carried out with good style. Poor technique means reduced:
 - effectiveness of the exercises
 - risk of injury.

Key features of circuit training

Group work with bodyweight exercises can be done in a variety of ways depending on:

- number of coaches
- number of boxers
- space available
- range of boxers' ability.

You need to manage the exercises so technique doesn't get sacrificed for speed. If you set the repetitions beyond the capability of the boxer, the quality of the exercise will be impaired. If the number of reps is too low, the potential gains will be missed.

Two examples of fixed load circuits are shown in the following panels:

Colour Circuit

- Exercises are carried out in a pre-arranged sequence
- The difficulty level is indicated by colours marked on exercise cards which are set out at a number of stations around which the boxers move
- The various colours can represent the number of repetitions to be carried out at each station so the colour circuit can offer the chance for boxers of differing standards to work together, for example with Boxer A carrying out 5 repetitions of the exercise, Boxer B, 8 reps and Boxer C, 10 reps.

Ton-Up Fixed Station Circuit: 10x10x10

- 10 exercises are performed in 10 sets of 10 repetitions
- There is no need to move from station to station as the boxers can occupy the same space throughout the circuit
- The exercises and their sequence can either be written on a board or copies given to each boxer
- To monitor progress, the circuit can be timed, with a fastest time being recorded and set as a target (timing performance needs to be managed to avoid sacrificing technique for speed)
- A possible variation on the fixed load ton-up circuit is to vary the difficulty by setting a fixed time period within which the boxer works on each exercise (a target circuit).

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR CIRCUIT TRAINING

- **Equipment:** simple apparatus such as medicine balls, kettlebells or dumbbells can be set at particular stations (and should be appropriate to the age, experience and level of the boxers)
- **Mixed ability groups:** mixing different standards of boxers needs to be handled with care so that traffic jams do not slow down the boxers' progress from station to station
- **Managing the range of resistance:** in a mixed group with differing ages and stages of development, the same resistance will not be suitable for all. Resistance in the form of medicine balls and weights needs planning and management
- **Organise exercises in a logical and practical sequence:** movement from station to station should be logical (ie not working the same muscle groups consecutively), and practical in terms of using the available space safely and effectively
- **Varying duration of exercises:** exercise duration needs to be carefully planned since the same time period will not be appropriate for all exercises. The massive exercises using the legs and trunk can generally be carried on for longer than those using the smaller muscles of the arms and shoulders, where tiredness sets in more quickly
- **Mixing static and dynamic exercises:** exercises should be sequenced so boxes get a chance to rest the small muscle groups, such as arms and shoulders, by including a dynamic large muscle group exercise after one which tires the small muscles
- **Incorporating skipping with circuit training:** circuit training can incorporate a skipping programme where you add intervals of skipping between exercises. This can provide an excellent mixture of fitness demands suitable for all ages and abilities.

Some common circuit training faults

- The training **space** and floor need to be managed to ensure **safety** and to avoid loss of balance and collision.
- Exercises that allow boxers to stop short of full range of motion need to be monitored as boxers will cut corners to make for faster times and to make the exercise easier. This will result in poor mobility, reduced range of motion and muscular imbalance. Some traditional exercises (eg straight leg sit up) also pose a potential risk of lower back strain and should be avoided.
- **Full range of movement and good form are essential:** it is short sighted to allow poor technique to develop with young boxers who may struggle to execute the exercises in the correct way. They may lack the strength to do so. It's possible to adapt a number of the exercises to achieve improved fitness and strength and to ease into the full movement as capacity grows.

BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES

Following are some examples of bodyweight exercises that can be used in circuit training sessions, the areas that they mainly work and some common faults. You need to be aware that the ability to complete these exercises will be influenced by the boxer's age/developmental stage, experience and level of physical maturity.

NB this is just a selection of the many exercises available. Some are very explosive and use the largest muscles of the body, some relatively less dynamic. These can be combined in a variety of ways to be appropriate to the age, training history and fitness level of a wide range of boxers.

Press ups (chest, shoulders and back of the upper arm)

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boxer takes a prone position resting on toes and hands with extended legs, arms straight and back flat Core muscles of the trunk are engaged and back remains flat as arms flex and extend and body is raised and lowered Hand spacing influences which muscles are worked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest when hands wider than shoulder width Shoulders when hands substantially wider than shoulder width Arms when fingers almost touching with hands turned in. 	<p>More difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevate feet. <p>Even more difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add hand clap, requiring a very powerful extension of the arms so that the boxer leaves the ground to execute the hand clap. <p>Easier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who lack the strength to complete a full press up, the body can rest on the knees rather than the toes; with increased strength the knees can be taken further and further back until the boxer is resting on the toes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not achieving full range of motion of the arms: stopping short of full arm extension at the top and flexion at the bottom of the exercise are very common, often due to attempting too great a speed and sacrificing quality for quantity. Losing the correct position of the spine: with less fit and younger boxers the flat spine position can be lost by letting the hips sag, or easing the strain on the core muscles by raising the hips. Neither should be allowed to become a habit since the benefits to the core muscles will be lost.



Sit ups (hip flexors and abdominals)

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lie on back with feet flat on floor and knees bent at 90 degrees, boxer flexes at the hips and raises the upper body towards knees Return to start position while keeping hands lightly touching sides of head and elbows pointing forward and slightly out. <p>NB: Full range sit ups are of limited use for strengthening the abdominals but valuable for the hip-flexors and are an excellent functional exercise for boxers.</p>	<p>More difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute with a twist of the torso so elbows touch opposite knee in 'sit up' position, working oblique abdominals. <p>Even more difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hook feet, with bent knees, into an incline board and execute with or without a twist, at increasing degrees of incline. <p>Easier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner holds feet, or tuck feet under a bench. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching for the knees: beginners who lack strength in hip flexors may use arms to reach for knees, starting with arms extended behind head and using momentum of bringing them forward over head to assist sit up motion Pulling the head forward: it's important not to clasp hands behind head and pull it forward onto chest to assist the sit up movement Not keeping the legs bent: the knees should always be bent to relieve pressure on the lower back, preventing back strain Not targeting the correct muscles: using the hip flexors and not the abdominals.



Crunches (abdominals)

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt same starting position as for sit up • Upper body is raised off ground and 'crunched' towards knees (ie abdominals and not hip flexors) • Shoulders only rise a few inches from ground and hands, as in the sit up, are held lightly alongside head. 	<p>Variety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise can also be performed by sliding extended arms along ground towards ankles of bent legs or up thighs towards elevated knees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching for the knees: beginners who lack strength in abdominals may use arms to reach for knees, starting with arms extended behind head and using momentum of bringing them forward over head to assist sit up motion • Pulling the head forward: it's important not to clasp hands behind head and pull it forward onto chest to assist the crunch • Not keeping the legs bent: the knees should always be bent to relieve pressure on the lower back, preventing back strain • Not targeting the correct muscles: using the hip flexors and not the abdominals.



Squats (thighs and hips)

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stance slightly wider than shoulder width, with toes turned slightly out and heels on ground • Squat down till thighs are parallel with ground (or as far as possible while still keeping heels on ground) • Back must be kept flat and knees should follow angle of toes and mustn't be allowed to 'collapse inwards' as the boxer descends into or recovers out of the squat. 	<p>Novice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms out in front will help boxer balance while correct movement is learned. <p>More experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arms crossed in front of the chest. <p>Very experienced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Prisoner squat' with hands on head which encourages an upright body posture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure back does not 'round' or chest and shoulders collapse forward: it may be helpful to encourage the boxer to shrug shoulders back before beginning descent • Keeping the feet on the floor: heels coming off floor because of inadequate flexibility in ankle joints and achilles tendons are frequently a problem and developmental stretching can help • Leaning forward: flat back and relatively upright body should be encouraged to mimic flexing of knees in defensive 'ducking' movement. You wouldn't encourage boxers to change their level by ducking forward into opponent's punch, similarly the boxer should not lean forward when squatting.



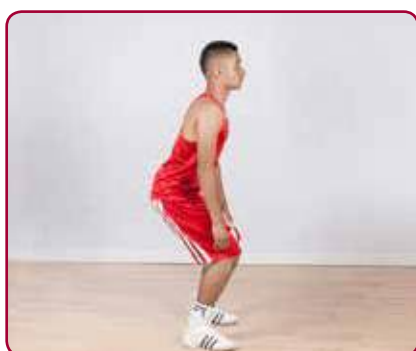
Lunges and split squats (thighs and hips)

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunges and split squats are very similar in body position and alignment Split squat involves flexion and extension of thigh and hip from a static position Lunge is more dynamic and involves repeated 'stepping' motion with same or alternate legs from standing position Boxer begins with feet a little wider than shoulder width apart and forward step is such that legs are well split and body upright Front knee should not extend past front toe in flexed position and knee of bent back leg should not touch ground. In fully lunged position, front leg will be parallel to ground. It may help balance if front toe is turned in slightly In the lunge, boxer pushes against front leg to recover to standing position with feet apart before stepping into next repetition with same (or the other) leg In the split squat, step forward takes boxer into same position as lunge but here there is no recovery to standing position until required number of repetitions has been done. Instead, each repetition of split squat involves pushing against front leg to recover to original position before flexing it yet again to point where front thigh is parallel to ground. 	<p>More difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bulgarian split squat involves raising rear leg onto bench where it rests on front of foot. From this position boxer takes a stride forward and with front toe turned slightly in, flexes at hip and knee till front thigh is parallel to ground. The boxer will have to experiment to find stride length which will allow this parallel position. <p>Variation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lateral lunge where boxer starts with feet a little wider than shoulder width before stepping to side while torso still faces forward. Front leg flexed till thigh is parallel to ground and rear foot will initially rest on its side until sufficient ankle flexibility has been achieved, at which point it will rest flat on ground. <p>Variation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overhead lunge encourages mobility and flexibility in hips, lower back and shoulders. Basic lunge is carried out with arms vertically above head pushing against real (or imaginary) broom handle. Objective is to develop habit of changing level (as in the defence of ducking under the opponent's punch) while maintaining upright body and avoiding 'ducking into' opponent's uppercut. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not maintaining correct form (base of support, knee position and leaning): problems can arise where base of support is too narrow and where front knee extends far in front of foot, putting knee at risk of injury Letting torso lean forward is another common problem and is addressed through making the hips and lower back more flexible. This can take time and needs specific developmental stretching. An overhead split squat or lunge can help develop this mobility at the hips and shoulders.



Tuck jumps (hips, thighs and calves)

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with feet shoulder width apart, upright body with arms hanging by sides Maintaining a flat back, take a shallow vertical dip and drive into a powerful leap upwards bringing knees up towards chest. Drive will come from extension of ankles, knees and hips which is like the extension which drives the punch Landing should be cushioned so ankles flex and knees bend to absorb downward momentum before exploding upwards again. 	<p>More difficult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a double arm 'punch' which will help to develop co-ordination as well as powerful upper body movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not raising the knees: knees may not rise sufficiently into tucked position because boxer may lack explosive power in legs and necessary core stability to keep body in alignment Shoulders should not be allowed to round nor chest to collapse, flat back position is vital.



Dorsal raise (lower back and core)

Exercise	Adapting exercise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start position is prone, face down on mat/floor and movement is a limited one, raising head and upper torso off mat. 	<p>Easier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing hands by sides is a good place to start for beginners. <p>More difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most challenging position is with hands behind neck.



Single and double squat thrusts (hips, thighs and core)

Exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Squat thrust can be executed in a single (alternating) leg style or with both legs together Start position is as press up Initial movement will bring legs, either together or individually, up to chest before thrusting them back once again to full extension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacrificing form for speed: there is a tendency to shorten extension of legs to get more repetitions in a faster time and this defeats main objective of exercise; better to perform slightly fewer squat thrusts with full extension Not maintaining correct spine position: younger and less strong boxers may lack the strength in the lower back and core to maintain the neutral spine position in the squat thrust. The lower back may sag when legs are fully extended. This core strength can be developed using prone plank and side plank together with dorsal raises and abdominal and hip flexor work.



Burpees (hips, thighs, calves and core)

Exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start position is same as for squat thrust but added vertical leap creates a much more challenging and dynamic exercise From the start position with legs extended and back flat, legs are brought forward vigorously with knees reaching to chest From this crouch position, next movement is a powerful vertical leap using extension of ankles, knees and hips so boxer leaves the ground with shoulders shrugged high towards ears and arms hanging by sides The upward extension needs to be powerful, rather like heading a football Flat back should be maintained when legs are fully extended back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phases of movement are cut short Not reaching for height: there is tendency to cut down height reached, instead of reaching up to head the football boxer hunches shoulders, barely leaves the ground and typically has a rounded back. This may spring from a lack of leg power and hip strength which will need to be developed.



SAMPLE TON-UP CIRCUIT SEQUENCE

Below is a sample sequence of exercises:

- 1 Wide-arm press-ups (shoulders)
- 2 Sit-ups (abdominals)
- 3 Squats (legs)
- 4 Narrow press-ups (triceps)
- 5 Dorsal raise (lower back)
- 6 Burpees (legs)
- 7 Medium width press-ups (chest)
- 8 Crunch (abdominals)
- 9 Lunges (legs)
- 10 Squat thrust (legs)



Training the core

A strong core is crucial for moving and punching effectively. The power produced by rotating the torso must be founded on strong core muscles which are capable of sustaining a high workload. Mobility and flexibility of the trunk muscles is critical and the boxer must also be able to withstand body shots. The muscles on the surface of the abdominal area are important but the core muscles that are buried behind them are even more so. The muscles of the lower back and the muscles at the side of the abdominal area are also critical.

Key core exercises which build stamina in the abdominals and lower back are the prone and side plank but many of the exercises which are listed earlier will also have a high core training content. These core exercises should be carried out at the end of the circuit training session.

Prone plank		
Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt press up position with body resting on toes and elbows with forearms flat on ground and spine flat (neutral) • Contract abdominals and lower back and hold position without sagging or raising body for a defined period of time • Beginners will struggle to keep a completely flat back for more than 15/20 seconds but a mature athlete can hold the position for several minutes without letting the back sag or raising the buttocks. 	<p>Progressions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This exercise can be progressed by raising an outstretched arm, raising a leg or raising arm and leg simultaneously (opposite limbs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing the back to sag • Raising the buttocks.



Side plank

Exercise	Adapting exercise	Common errors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest on one elbow and forearm with body held sideways to floor and supported on side of foot Hold this position for defined period of time with no sagging or raising of body as fatigue sets in. 	<p>Progressions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be made more difficult by elevating free arm so it's held vertically in air. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing trunk to sag.



REMEMBER:

- Circuit training offers a number of benefits: the exercises are easily learned, effective in developing fitness, not demanding of space or equipment and are able to be adapted to cope with individual differences
- Circuit sessions are ideal for all gyms and all standards of boxer when managed creatively and well executed
- You should always ensure that exercises are carried out correctly and that form is not sacrificed for speed.



ACTION:

Observe a circuit training session in your gym and notice how many of the boxers are completing the exercises with correct form.

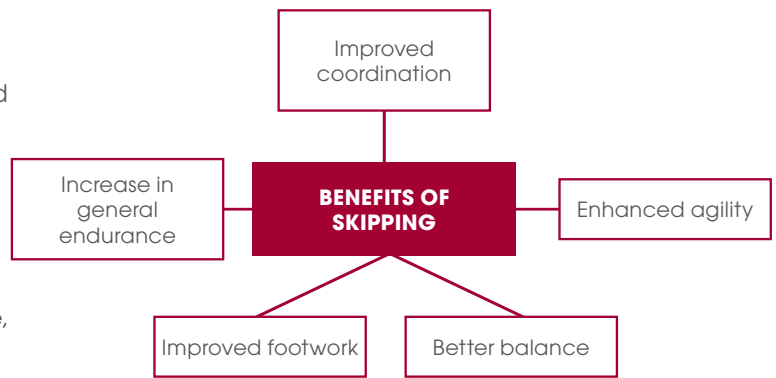


SKIPPING

You can walk into any boxing gym in the country and you will hear a few familiar sounds. A ringing bell, the thud of fists hitting punch bags and the whir of a skipping rope cutting through the air coupled with the rhythm of feet landing on the floor. Skipping is a staple in a typical boxer's conditioning programme but why?



The **benefits** of skipping are shown in the adjacent diagram. These **benefits** are particularly true for the novice boxer. However it should also be borne in mind that the benefits are reduced once a boxer becomes a very proficient skipper. If this is the case, the skipping programme needs to be modified and its intensity increased.



The **rope** needs to be of the correct length. As a guide, if the boxer stands on the middle of the rope with both feet together, the handles should reach the armpits.

Younger beginners will benefit best from a lighter plastic rope (commonly known as a speed rope). However these are less durable and prone to both rapid wear and sudden breakage in cold weather.



Leather ropes are far more durable and their additional weight makes them more appropriate for senior boxers and experienced younger boxers.

Jumping

- Stand up straight with knees slightly bent, shoulders back and head up
- Jump approximately 5 cm off the ground on the balls of the feet with arms slightly in front of hips
- Learn to jump with a double bounce (a normal jump followed by a rebound jump)
- Progress to single bounce from double bounce

Skipping training sessions

The following are examples of skipping sessions:

5 X 1 minute rounds with 1 minute recovery, suitable for children beginning to learn skipping

15 minutes non-stop suitable for seniors in the pre- and early-season

4 x 2 minute rounds with 1 minute recovery suitable for most novice boxers in early- to mid-season

4 x 3 minute rounds with 1 minute recovery suitable for most intermediate and open class boxers early to mid season

8 x 1 minute rounds with 30 seconds recovery, skipping with an interval approach for conditioning of senior boxers

Teaching beginners

It is not easy to teach someone how to skip. You can demonstrate the technique, or get a proficient boxer to, and make the following key points:

Choose the correct length:

- Stand in the middle of the rope; the handles should reach just under the armpits
- Don't tie knots in ropes, adjust the handles

Arm position

- Stand with elbows close to body
- Point hands outwards horizontally
- Hands should be about 20cm away from body

Hand movement

- Move hands back up and over in a circular motion
- Simultaneously swivel the wrists
- Keep wrists at about waist height in front of the body

Advanced skills

Many boxers take real pride in their skipping skills. Complex skipping routines are very much a badge of honour in the boxing gym. The following instructions can be used to support boxers as they attempt to enhance their skipping skills.

Side Swing:

- 1 Put hands together, while holding handles, and swing rope from one side of body to other.
- 2 Keep repeating step 1.
- 3 When ready open hands, swing rope down and jump.

Skier:

- 1 Jump side to side as if skiing down a steep hill.

Tuck jump

- 1 Do tuck jumps / jumping jacks as you skip.

Ali shuffle

- 1 Jump with one foot in front and other in back.
- 2 Jump and switch positions of your feet.

Doubles

- 1 During every jump, turn rope at high speed so two turns of rope accompany each jump.

Heel exchange

- 1 Jump and touch heel to ground in front of you.
- 2 Switch feet and touch other heel to ground in front of you.
- 3 Keep repeating steps 1 and 2.

Toe exchange

- 1 Jump and touch toe to ground behind you.
- 2 Switch feet and touch other toe to ground behind you.
- 3 Keep repeating steps 1 and 2.

Reverse skipping

- 1 Just turn rope backwards.
- 2 Lifting toes will help rope to turn without fouling on feet.

Front cross

- 1 With first turn of rope, jump a regular jump.
- 2 With the second turn of the rope cross your arms and jump through the loop that you made with the rope.

Behind the back cross

You need to be really flexible for this one.

- 1 Start with a single bounce.
- 2 When you cross, cross with both arms behind the back.
- 3 Jump the rope and quickly uncross arms.
- 4 Your arms should have gone behind back while you jumped the rope.

Stance skipping

- 1 Get in to your normal boxing stance.
- 2 Skip and move the feet in all directions as if you were shadow boxing.

River dance

- 1 This is an 8 step skill.
- 2 With first turn of rope, land on one foot and tap the other foot out to the side.
- 3 With second turn of rope, land on same foot and tap other foot out in front of body but slightly out to side.
- 4 With third turn of the rope, land on same foot and tap other foot out in front of body.
- 5 With fourth turn of rope, land on same foot and bend other leg so ankle is in front of knee.
- 6 Next four steps do the same thing on other side.

Squat skipping

- 1 Rather than skipping in the upright position, bend legs at knees and skip in squat position.
- 2 Move arms out to side a little and commence skipping; this is hard work!

Skipping themes

Boxers left to skip on their own with no advice or instruction will tend to just plod along going through the motions. As a proactive coach, theme the skipping as you would for most other aspects of training.

Examples:

- Tempo change: the numbers 1, 2 or 3 are called 1 meaning slow skipping, 2 being the medium pace, 3 meaning skipping as fast as possible
- Within a round of skipping: 30 seconds on left leg only, 30 seconds on right, 30 seconds high knees, 30 seconds double turns of the rope per jump
- One round steady skipping, one round stance skipping, one round squat skipping, one round speed skipping
- Follow the leader: one boxer is selected to lead the skipping and rest of group try to follow them.

REMEMBER:

- Skipping is a staple part of a boxer's training and it has many fitness benefits
- It's important to theme skipping sessions and by introducing more difficult techniques you will help you to ensure boxers continue to get maximal benefit from skipping.



ACTION:

Think about what you will do to make skipping sessions interesting and effective.



In 2013 EB adopted International, AIBA rules. Coaches should refer to: www.aiba.org/aiba-technical-competition-rules/

EB frequently posts on its website clarification and application of rules and technical judgements. See: www.englandboxing.org

4.6: GOOD COMPETITION PRACTICE: MATCHING, PREPARATION AND SECONDING

Competition eligibility

The eligibility rules are shown in the following panel.

Types of Competition:

- **Open competition** where the opponent will depend on the luck of the draw in any weight class and age group. For those with the potential to become elite performers open competition is essential.
- **Matched competition** at inter-club shows where age, weight, experience, style and ability are taken into account and the record of the opponent is known or can be verified.
- **Skills bouts** are for inexperienced boxers and no decision is given; they are an excellent apprenticeship to real competition.

They provide the psychological and physical challenge of a bout, away from the familiar gym, in front of a crowd of strangers and with an unknown opponent but without the stress of winning or losing. They are for the development of the boxer and to enable him/her to bridge the gap between gym work and competitive boxing; aggression and heavy punching are discouraged and referees and coaches must ensure this is strictly adhered to.

Developing the young and novice boxer:

Some young and novice boxers will reach a standard where open competition is a good route to developing skills and increasing experience. For the majority of young and novice boxers, matching on club shows is the best option. This involves a lot of time, energy and requires a good network of trusted matchmakers from other clubs in seeking out appropriate opponents.

Putting boxers into open championships before they are ready simply to gain 'prestige' for the coach and the club is short sighted; it can lead to boxers leaving the sport and is against the sport's ethical code. Coaches who are excessively brave on behalf of the boxer are failing in their duty of care. Many boxers will never be ready for championship conditions and the only way out of a potentially dangerous mismatch will be withdrawal or retirement and that isn't likely to help the boxer's psychological development. **Careful matching** is important.

Most boxers will respond best to careful matching on **club shows and skill bouts**. With beginners in their early teens, a skill bout programme will be the best option to get them used to boxing in public, without the pressure of winning and losing. It's also useful for you as coach to be able to work on developing the technique and confidence of the young boxer, without being under the pressure to produce a 'winning' boxer at too early an age.

Your requirements as coach

The following information outlines the requirements of the coach who is seconding a boxer in competition.

- **Rules and procedures** ie size of ring, regulations on hand wraps, number of judges, scoring system, number of bouts and running order, where the medicals are being carried out.
- **Correct weight management and hydration strategies** in the run up to the competition and on the day.
- **Prepare boxers** to bring them to the competition in peak condition both physically and mentally.
- **Competition logistics:** where the event is being held, how to get there and what time is needed to weigh in and prepare in such a way that the boxer has every advantage within the rules.

Preparation for the day of the competition

- Planning for the **type of competition:** open or club, single day or multi day event with a count-down in weeks and days.
- Correct use of **tapering** (the reduction in intensity of training as competition approaches) and sharpening in training so boxers don't leave their best performances in the gym.
- Taking account of **individual needs:** each boxer is different and needs individual physical and mental preparation. Previous contest experience will be

an influencing factor.

- Knowledge of the known or **potential opponent** and working on the **tactics** to be employed through conditioned and open sparring.
- Carrying out **test weigh-ins** to monitor the boxer's weight before and after training.
- Giving advice on **diet and hydration** as appropriate.

Day of the contest

Planning, including travel to and from the venue (ensuring that safeguarding children standards are being met), will involve the following:

- Ensuring the matching has been done carefully so the **bout is fair** in terms of experience, weight, age and ability; and in the case of junior boxers that the rules on age limits and weight allowances are observed.
- Establishing and agreeing in advance the **roles of the coaches**.
- **Checking weight** before setting off for the venue and ensuring that any weight loss necessary for junior boxers is safe, ethical and within the rules.
- Checking your **coaching equipment** (eg towels, water bottle etc.) ensuring that everything that is needed is provided, is clean and in good repair; ensuring enough skipping ropes, spare gloves and coaching pads are available for the warm-up.
- Checking the **boxer's personal equipment** including shorts, vest and boots, socks, protective gear, hand wraps, gum shield and red and/or blue head guard.
- Ensuring all the personal and coaching equipment **complies with the rules**.
- Checking the arrangements for **weigh in and medical exam** (eg when the scales close and if travel time is sufficient).
- Ensuring that the boxer has the **gum shield** and the coach has the **boxer's medical card** for the medical exam. If the young boxer has braces on the teeth and an adapted gum shield, ensure that the necessary authorisation letter from the orthodontist is available for the doctor.
- Ensuring that all coaches have their own **accreditation documents** as applicable.
- Ensuring there is access to appropriate **food and water** for the boxer(s) after the weigh in.

Pre-bout

- After the weigh in, if appropriate, **re-hydrate, fuel and relax** the boxer; perhaps taking a walk outside to get into the correct mindset, taking into account any superstitions on the part of the boxer.
- Ensure that enough time is set aside for **changing and bandaging the hands** and that the bandages have been inspected and stamped (in championships).
- Lead an individual **warm-up** which relates to the opponent, the size of ring and so on.

The bout

- Watch the opponent, round by round; work out the strengths and weaknesses in order to be able to advise your own boxer, and continually re-assess the tactics being used.
- Help your boxer to solve the problems posed by the opponent and impose him/herself on the bout by taking the initiative.

Intervals

- Get into the ring quickly and get the stool into the ring.
- Get the boxer into the preferred rest position (sitting or standing) and remove the gum shield.
- Check for and deal with any injuries and assess their effect on performance.
- Carry out the agreed corner drill with the fellow coach/second (eg washing gum shield, administering drink).

- Remain calm and give advice in the form of one or two key coaching points repeated two or three times. Reassure the boxer.
- Predict the opponent's response to the strategy you and your boxer are employing.
- Have the other coach monitor the time elapsed. Replace the gum shield and leave the ring, along with the stool, so as not to distract the boxer.

Post-bout

- Deal with injury, concussion together with event medical staff and ensure that any boxer who has suffered RSC(H) (Referee Stopped Contest: Head) or taken heavy head shots is escorted appropriately (home or hospital). If the boxer is escorted home, ensure that the procedures for dealing with post concussion trauma are well understood and followed by the boxer and their parents/guardian.
- Cool-down the boxer and supervise a light stretch, especially if in a multi-day competition.
- Deal with any complaints or queries with the supervisor, Club Secretary or the Head Coach.
- Retrieve the boxer's medical card from the Recorder once it has been properly marked up.
- Analyse the performance (in outline) but save the inquest for later.



4.7 SECTION SUMMARY

- 1 All boxing techniques are based on fundamental movement skills; spend time developing agility, balance and coordination as well as boxing techniques.
- 2 Warm-ups and cool-downs are an essential part of training and competition; plan them carefully so they contribute optimally to the programme and are enjoyable.
- 3 Good technique is not the same as good skill; use drills to develop technique but include a range of other activities to develop all the other factors that contribute to overall performance and enjoyment of boxing.
- 4 Teach your boxers the mechanics of quality punching, the concept of power lines and the importance of RPR.
- 5 Hitting equipment is essential for developing boxers; ensure you use it to develop correct technique and not bad habits.
- 6 Theme shadow boxing to ensure it is purposeful and to reduce boredom.
- 7 Ensure padwork sessions have clear objectives to reduce the risk of ingraining poor technique.
- 8 Long, steady road running will not develop the fitness requirements of the explosive, high intensity sport of boxing.
- 9 Circuit training is an ideal method of conditioning as it demands limited space and equipment and can readily cater for individual differences in ability and fitness.
- 10 Know the rules relating to competition and make sure that your boxers do too.

ACTION:

What will you now start doing, stop doing, do more or do less?





**SAFETY,
HEALTH AND
WELFARE**

**PARTICIPANT
CENTRED
APPROACH**

**TRAINING
AND
COMPETITION**

**EFFECTIVE
COACHING
SKILLS**

SECTION 5: EFFECTIVE COACHING SKILLS

5.1: Introduction

“It is often the ‘how to do’ skills rather than the ‘what to do’ skills that make the critical difference between good coaches and great coaches.” *(Paul Dent and Keith Reynolds)*

The best coaches do not just have good boxing knowledge; they have outstanding interpersonal, communication and analytical skills, combined with personal values that enable them to be boxer-centred and help individuals to achieve their potential. As a coach, therefore, you need to learn not just about boxing techniques, conditioning, tactics and rules (the ‘what-to-coach’ skills) but also to develop your ‘how-to-coach’ skills, such as how to observe and how to make sessions enjoyable.

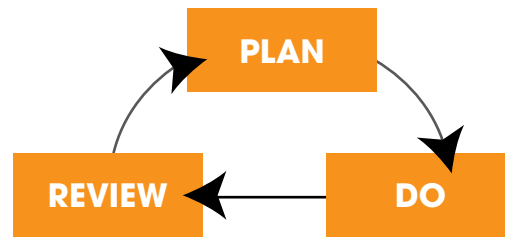
This section will help you to:

- know the difference between what-to-coach and how-to-coach skills
- prepare for and organise sessions (5.2)
- develop your communication skills, particularly your ability to provide effective explanations, use questioning and improve your listening skills (5.3)
- use demonstrations and modelling (5.4)
- develop your coaching eye (5.5)
- analyse technique and make decisions about what to do (5.6)
- provide feedback (5.7)
- identify ways to develop technique and skill (5.8)
- develop your how-to-coach skills (5.9).



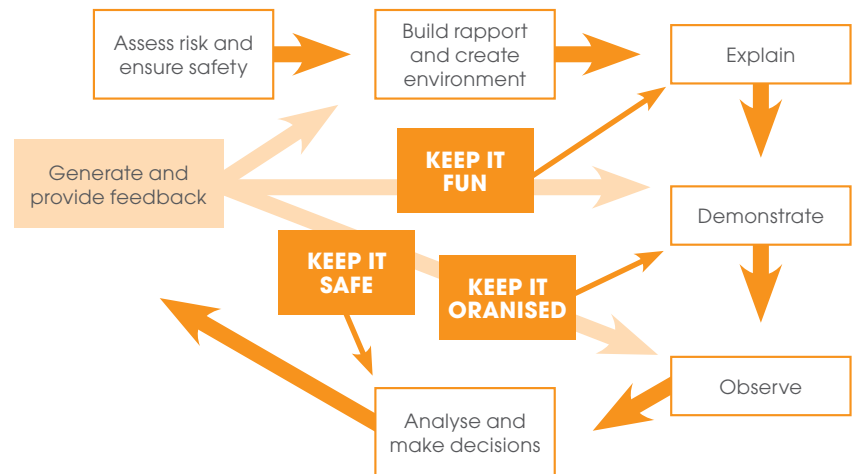
What to coach skills	How to coach skills
<p>The ‘what to coach’ skills are the technical skills needed to be an effective boxing coach (eg throw a straight lead hand to the head, use a trunk defence against a straight rear hand to the head)</p>	<p>The ‘how to coach’ skills are the organisational, interpersonal and analytical skills all coaches need to help people achieve their potential. They include skills such as the ability to build rapport, make sessions enjoyable, organise, keep activities safe, plan, explain and demonstrate.</p>

The coaching process simply refers to the various how-to-coach skills that form the basic toolkit of the effective coach. The sequence coaches often follow is based on the plan, do, review cycle; the lower diagram shows the sort of core skills that underpin the 'do' element of effective coaching at all levels:



- conduct a safety check
- build rapport and create a positive environment (see subsection 3.2 in Participant-Centred Coaching section)
- start a session with some sort of explanation (eg about what's going to happen in the session, safety points)
- set up a demonstration
- stand back to observe while boxers practise
- analyse their observations and decide how to move forward
- give feedback if appropriate.

HOW TO COACH SKILLS IN 'DO' PHASE



All the time you will be building good relationships, creating a positive learning environment that is enjoyable, keeping the session safe, organising equipment, teaching skills and using questions and good listening skills to encourage participants to take responsibility for their own performance and development.

5.2: PREPARING AND ORGANISING SESSIONS

As a Coaching Assistant, you will be delivering activities that form part of an overall session plan that has been designed by your lead coach. It is important that the activities you deliver (under a supervising coach) contribute to the aims of the overall session, in order to support boxers to achieve their desired results.

Planning and preparation

Good planning ensures that the time you spend with your boxers is used to best effect. Your supervising coach should have developed a programme of sessions and a session plan. An example follows on the next page.

EXAMPLE SESSION PLAN

PARTICIPANTS (number, level etc):	SESSION AIMS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 participants, beginner level, mixed gender, ages 13-14. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop straight punches and defences to straight punches Develop muscular endurance.
FACILITY/EQUIPMENT:	PERSONAL COACHING GOAL:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves, headguards, skipping ropes, dumbbells. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep feedback to 1-2 key points.

CONTENT	TIMING	COACHING POINTS
WARM-UP		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skipping Dynamic mobility, head to feet Game activities 	15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for correct form when performing stretches Raise heart rate and ensure that the warm-up is fun
MAIN CONTENT (SKILLS)		
Developing straight punches and defences to straight punches Stage 1: Static: straight lead and rear hand shots to head Stage 2: Add movement, forwards and backwards Stage 3: Add lateral movement Stage 4: Defence to single straight shots Stage 5: Defence to double straight shots Stage 6: Light technical spar using skills learned	20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All punches begin and end in correct stance/guard position Rotation, extension and recoil when punching Work on punches preferably as partner work but could be with bags or coach pads Progression through stages when the boxer is ready.
MAIN CONTENT (CONDITIONING)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circuit: 1 minute per exercise, 1 minute rest: Straight punching with light dumbbell Sit ups Squats Conditioning pads Dorsal raises Squat thrusts. 	15 Mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure correct technique throughout Technique must not be sacrificed for speed Adaptations: exercise time (30 secs / 90 secs / 2 mins); recovery time (30 secs / 90 secs / 2 mins); number of sets (1 or 2).
COOL-DOWN		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light skipping / jogging Developmental stretches, upper to lower body. 	10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradual lowering of heart rate Ensure correct technique when stretching Hold for 20 seconds.

SESSION EVALUATION:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall good technique demonstrated by boxers throughout, need to make sure that all punches are thrown from a correct stance Realised that not everyone could execute conditioning circuit exercises correctly, need to work on this Felt I talked too much; took too long to set up and explain things and they got bored Need to make sure that I check for understanding after giving feedback to boxers Did manage to keep feedback to a couple of points most of the time, now need to ensure I check for understanding.....

EXAMPLE SESSION PLAN

PARTICIPANTS (number, level etc):		SESSION AIMS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 participants, beginner level, mixed gender, ages 13-14. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop straight punches and defences to straight punches Develop muscular endurance. 	
check correct length rope, elbows close to body wrists at about waist height		PERSONAL COACHING GOAL: Keep feedback to 1-2 key points	
stop watch for circuit		remember, no static stretches, all mobility work, start at head & work down to ankles	
CONTENT		COACHING POINTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skipping Dynamic mobility, head to feet Game activities 	15 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for correct form when doing stretches Raise heart rate and ensure that the warm-up is fun 	
MAIN CONTENT (SKILLS)			
Developing straight punches Stage 1: Static: straight punches to head Stage 2: Add movement backward Stage 3: Add lateral movement Stage 4: Defence to on-coming punch. Turn rear hand and stiffen arm Stage 5: Defence to on-coming punch. Turn rear hand and stiffen arm Stage 6: Light technical spar using skills learned	20 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All punches begin and end in correct stance/guard position Rotation, extension, retraction, punching Work on punches but could be with progression through Progression through 	
check space available beforehand stress: rapid quarter rotation of hips, extend relaxed arm, accelerating through the movement NB place rear hand in front of on-coming punch. Turn rear hand and stiffen arm		NB. Feet little wider than shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, Rear foot offset from front foot, rear heel slightly raised. work out pairings carefully	
MAIN CONTENT (CONDITIONING)			
match fitness levels for pairs, start each at different station, show correct action first NB. head straight, back 'flat', heels on floor	15 Mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure correct technique throughout Technique must not be sacrificed for speed Adaptations: exercise time (30 secs / 90 secs / 2 mins); recovery time (30 secs / 90 secs); number of sets (1 or 2). 	
remind them about this at start		NB. head straight, back 'flat', heels on floor	
COOL-DOWN			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light skipping / jogging Developmental stretches, upper to lower body 	10 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gradual lowering of heart rate Ensure correct technique when stretching Hold for 20 seconds. 	
ask about what learnt during cool-down		NB. head straight, back 'flat', heels on floor	
SESSION REFLECTION:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall good technique demonstrated by participants, need to make sure that all punches are thrown from a correct stance Realised that not everyone could execute conditioning circuit exercises correctly, need to work on this Felt I talked too much; took too long to set up and explain things and they got bored Need to make sure that I check for understanding after giving feedback to boxers Did manage to keep feedback to a couple of points most of the time, now need to ensure I check for understanding..... 			

SESSION PLAN TEMPLATE

PARTICIPANTS (number, level etc):	SESSION AIMS:
FACILITY/EQUIPMENT:	PERSONAL COACHING GOAL:

CONTENT	TIMING	COACHING POINTS
WARM-UP		
MAIN CONTENT (SKILLS)		
MAIN CONTENT (CONDITIONING)		
COOL-DOWN		

SESSION EVALUATION:

Before planning a session, you need to collect certain information including data about the participants. Some of this may be gained from registration forms and session registers. Please note personal information is confidential, such as contact details and details of medical conditions. This should only be shared with others on a need-to-know basis and with the understanding and consent of the boxer and /or his/ her parents/guardians (if under 18). Confidential information must be stored securely, for example in a locked filing cabinet or electronically with access via a secure password.

The planning process must consider:

- **who the session is for:** number, experience, ability, gender, motives, fitness, maturity, work rate, attention span
- **where it will take place:** the venue, actual space and equipment available
- **the duration of the session:** taking into account all aspects of the session
- **what outcomes need to be achieved:** based on the needs of the individuals and the overall programme
- **exactly how these outcomes can best be achieved:** including details of the session organisation and the key coaching and safety points
- **your personal goals:** for example to adopt a more participant-centred approach or spend less time talking and so more time for boxers to practise.

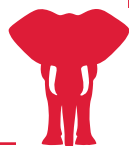
Ask your supervising coach for details of the session plan and to identify what you will be delivering and with whom. You can then prepare by considering the content and coaching points and thinking about your organisation:

- **Working space:** where (eg gym, a school, a community centre), amount (eg is it sufficient for activity and safe?), safe (eg risk assessed, hazards secured), distractions (eg other boxers, people passing by, sun in eyes, noise).
- **Equipment:** sufficient quantity, condition, suitability for participants, efficient and safe placement.
- **Your position:** to ensure safety, maintain control, maximise communication and optimise their learning.
- **Groupings/pairings:** by size, ability, friendship; this will depend on the nature of the activity.

All equipment should be stored safely and securely to prevent theft and damage. Storage areas should be kept clean and tidy to ensure that equipment is maintained in good repair and so equipment can be easily found when needed. This will help you ensure your sessions run smoothly and minimise any time that boxers are kept inactive through waiting for equipment.

REMEMBER:

It's not your responsibility as a Coaching Assistant to plan sessions but it is essential that you prepare well for the elements you have been designated to deliver by your supervising coach.



ACTION:

Reflect on when and how you currently prepare and identify one thing you could do better that would make your coaching run more effectively.



5.3: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Coaches' success in developing boxers depends to a large degree on how well they can build relationships and get their message across. Coaches need to be able to:

- build rapport with their participants, other coaches, officials, administrators and parents/guardians
- provide explanations to help boxers to understand what to do, how to do it and why they are doing it
- use questions to gain information and help boxers to make decisions and take responsibility
- listen to understand others and their needs, motives and beliefs.

The skill of building rapport was considered earlier (3.2 Welcoming environment) and the key principles are shown on the adjacent build rapport glove..

Poor explanations can lead to confusion and lack of understanding which can result in poorly run sessions, limited learning and ultimately poor performance. Study the key principles shown on the explain glove:

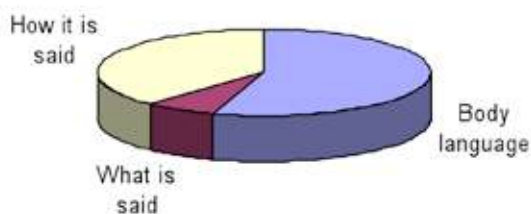
- Plan what to say in advance.
- Gain attention before starting.
- Keep it short, simple and accurate: avoid overly 'technical' language which may feed a coach's ego but won't help get the message across; avoid information overload and focus on giving 'need to know' information rather than 'nice to know'. Too much information may cause the boxer to switch off.
- Check for understanding, for example by asking members of the group to explain back to you what you have told them (if you ask if they have understood the likelihood is that they will merely nod, even if they haven't understood).

You may need to adapt the way you provide explanations when coaching:

- **younger children:** keep language simple and short, provide visual pictures where possible
- **people with hearing difficulties:** face the individual and pronounce your words carefully to facilitate lip reading
- **those with learning difficulties:** again keep language simple and short and check for understanding.



As you can see from the pie chart, less than 10% of a message's impact depends on the words used; much more important is how you say it and the **body language** used, often unconsciously (eg expressions, gestures, posture). Body language counts for over 50% of the impact of communication and is one of the most powerful ways of getting your message across and making an impression on others.



You need to communicate using a variety of methods in order to cater for the needs of different boxers and situations, for example:

- words
- demonstrations (see Section 5.4)
- non-verbal information (eg signals, gestures, expressions)
- video.

Notice that effective communication is a two-way process, it's about sending and receiving messages. Receiving means **listening** with your eyes as well as your ears. If a large proportion of the impact of a message is in the non-verbal signals, you need to notice each boxer's body language, notice what is not being said as well as what is being said. This will help you to understand their attitudes, motivation, fears and behaviours. Study the listening tips on the image below.

Acting on suggestions from boxers will show them that their input is valued and give them a greater sense of responsibility for their own development.



Asking questions is an important part of effective communication; they can help to:

- Build rapport.
- Gain information, for example about their knowledge.
- Check understanding.
- Involve boxers in their own learning by inputting to the session and keeping them alert and motivated.
- Most importantly to help boxers to think, reflect and make decisions.
- It's poor practice to use questions that the boxers won't be able to answer to assert your authority and expertise. Questions need to be well structured to be effective
- Limit the number of closed-ended questions (ones that demand a yes/no or short factual answer); too many can feel like an interrogation.
- Avoid leading questions (eg 'do you think it would be a good idea to ...?' or 'wouldn't it be better if...?'); these are really veiled instructions; it's better to tell.
- Use more open-ended questions (ones that require a more expansive and individual response) if you want to encourage your boxers to think, reflect and make decisions; these typically start with 'what...?', 'how....?' or 'tell me...?'

REMEMBER:

- How you say something has greater impact than what you say, check your body language.
- The best coaches listen more than they talk; they have excellent listening skills which helps them to ask better questions, build rapport and provide more effective explanations.



ACTION:

Either video yourself coaching or ask someone to watch you and analyse how much time you spending talking compared with the time spent by your boxers doing.



5.4: DEMONSTRATION AND MODELLING

Providing a visual picture of the desired action or behaviour can be a powerful aid to learning for many boxers, particularly those with a visual learning preference. As the old saying says, 'a picture paints a thousand words' and this picture can be in the form of a photo, a clip of video, a live demonstration or simply observing and then consciously or unconsciously copying what has been seen.

When using a **live demonstration**, ensure you follow the four key points in the panel and:

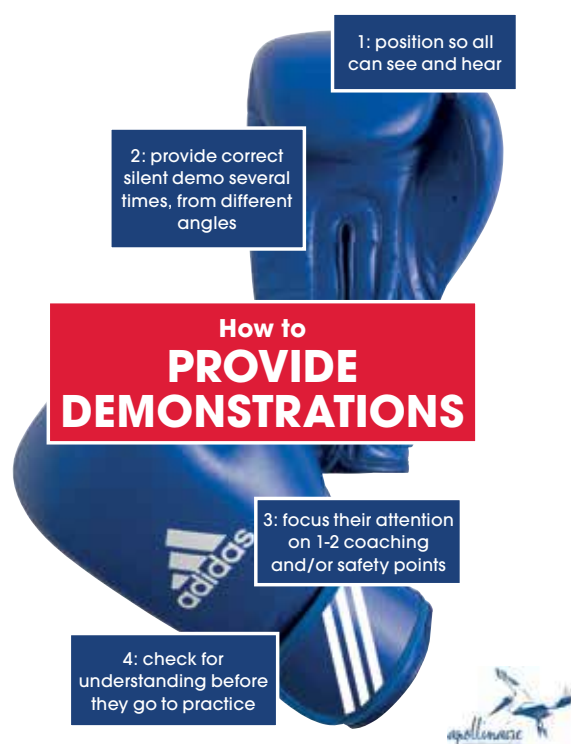
- Position the demonstration (either by you or someone who can execute the action correctly) so that all can see it and you can be heard.
- Provide the correct action several times, from different angles so each boxer can see clearly and the body doesn't mask the key points; research suggests it's better to do this in silence (ie talk first, then execute the action without speaking) so that boxers' attention is drawn to the desired movement and not to your face.
- (After a couple of demonstrations), pick out 1-2 key coaching points and ask the boxers to focus on these; they cannot possibly pick up all the available information so ensure you direct them to what's important.
- Then check for understanding, perhaps by asking what they noticed about the points you picked out, again avoid the 'do you understand?'; question which leaves you in the dark about their understanding.

Sometimes it may be appropriate to **slow down** the demonstration so that movements can be more readily seen. Always finish by showing the action at full speed. If you choose to **use video**, try to follow as many of these key principles as possible.

It has been shown that people learn, often unconsciously, by **watching others**. For this reason it can be good practice to have more experienced boxers training alongside less experienced or younger boxers. Remember however, that they will pick up on less than good practice or behaviours, as well as the correct behaviours; it may be best therefore to highlight particularly good behaviours (eg 'notice how balanced Joe is when he's working'; 'watch Georgina

and you'll see her position her hands in just the way we've been discussing').

Don't underestimate the power of **role models** and recognise that you too will be a role model, whether or not you like it. Ensure your behaviours are always exemplary for boxers will, albeit unconsciously, pick up on what you say, what you do, the values you portray and the beliefs you hold. Your influence may be a lot more powerful than even their parent/guardian's so you carry considerable responsibility even as a novice coach.



REMEMBER:

- Demonstrations are only effective if the boxer needs a picture of the correct action and if you follow the points on the demonstration glove
- Don't underestimate the power of learning by watching others; plan for this rather than let it happen by chance.



ACTION:

Use the demonstration glove to help you reflect on how effectively you provide each demonstration; ask yourself also whether the demonstration was necessary, appropriate and effective.



5.5: COACHES' EYE

Developing your 'coaching eye' to identify the things that will make a big difference is a really important coaching skill. Even at the beginner/novice stage, where errors may be more obvious, it's important to become an expert observer; this isn't easy as boxing movements are often fast and there's a lot going on at the same time. The four tips in the 'How to observe glove' will help you to develop your coaching eye:

- Look at the whole action.
- Then break it down to focus on one body part, one phase or one coaching point at a time.
- Look from different angles, you will see different things.
- Observe enough times to build up an accurate picture of what's happening; looking just once or twice may give an inaccurate snapshot of what's happening consistently.

Only when you have a really accurate picture in your head should you move from observation to analysis (see Section 5.6). As you begin to coach more expert boxers, your coaching eye has to become even more discerning for as the standard of opposition improves, the things which will make a difference may be very subtle and may be as much mental as physical.

5.6: ANALYSIS AND DECISION MAKING

Once you have this accurate picture of the boxer you can start to analyse, to compare what you have observed with your picture of what the technique, action or behaviour should look like. This involves identifying where the two match and where there are mismatches, and then making a decision about what to do (analyse and make decision glove).

Once you have your matches and mismatches, deciding the correct action is a central coaching skill and perhaps the hardest. You could decide to:

- reinforce or praise a 'match', what the boxer is doing well; this might be a good decision to ensure each boxer can experience a reasonable amount of success and can build confidence
- correct a 'mismatch', something that is incorrect; If there are several errors and you decide to correct one (don't overload),



ACTION:

Discipline yourself to watch an action at least twice before before analysing what you see and making a comment.



see if you can identify a root cause of other errors so that by correcting this one, others will automatically improve. If errors seem unrelated, focus on correcting the one that is likely to make the biggest difference to performance

- do nothing, note and act at a later stage.

Coaches need to be able to focus on the things which will **really** make a difference. The 80/20 rule applies for beginners; focus on the things which give 80% of the benefit for 20% of the effort.

REMEMBER:

You don't always have to correct errors; sometimes it's better to reinforce something the boxer is doing well or wait and provide the correction at a later stage.



ACTION:

Notice how often you look for mismatches/negatives/corrections and challenge yourself to spend some time in every session focusing on what your boxer is doing well (the matches that you can then reinforce).



5.7: FEEDBACK SKILLS

Ensure you have observed for long enough to build an accurate picture of what's happening consistently, then carefully analyse before deciding if, when and how to provide feedback. Feedback is essential to learning and can be divided into two main types:

- **Intrinsic** feedback through sensors in the eyes, ears, muscles, joints. This is always available to the participant but not always used.
- **Additional extrinsic** feedback provided by some external source (eg coach, spectator, video).

Both are important. Feedback should not be given all the time; more at the early stages of learning. Although it might produce rapid short term gains, constant feedback delays long term learning by making the participant coach-dependent. If it is to be effective, feedback needs to be given in the right way by following the tips on the feedback glove:

- Ask a question to find out what the participant noticed; if you jump in too quickly with your own comments, you will interfere with the boxer's own readily available intrinsic feedback.
- The feedback you give needs to be limited to 1 to 2 things, perhaps one positive reinforcement and one correction; it can be about effort and

behaviour not just technique. Any more than 2 bits of information and it will be too much for boxer to process and use.

- Keep it specific, simple, honest and positive (not critical); avoid vague empty comments such as 'well done' and provide information 'well done, you moved your feet much more quickly that time'

How to GENERATE AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK

- 1: ask 'what did you notice about...?' to promote self analysis first
- 2: limit information to 1-2 key points
- 3: keep it very specific, simple, honest and positive
- 4: check understanding: 'what will you now do?'



- Use an open question (eg what will you now do, rather than a closed question such as do you understand) to check whether the feedback has been taken on board and they know precisely what to practise.

Think carefully about the feedback you give during a competition; if you lose composure and give negative feedback to a boxer under pressure, the boxer is unlikely to turn things round. Take care when to give feedback following competition; if emotions are still running high, a full analysis of performance might be better saved for the next training session.

REMEMBER:

Most coaches give too much feedback too often; think before you offer it. Make habit of asking them before giving your feedback.



ACTION:

Reflect on when, how and how often you provide feedback; check if you have really observed and analysed first or whether you tend to jump in too often and too quickly with your comments.



5.8: DEVELOPING SKILL

Technique is different from skill:

- **Technique** refers to the specific correct actions required to execute the task to be accomplished
- **Skill** is the ability to execute these techniques at the right time and place.

A boxer with good technique isn't necessarily a skilful boxer. Technical ability may be shown in the gym while shadow boxing or working on bags; however the skilful boxer is the boxer that can successfully apply this technical ability in the fast-moving, high-pressured, variable conditions of the contest. Coaches need to be able to teach techniques and as soon as possible, turn these into skills.

Teaching and learning are also two different things; you may think you have taught a technique really well but unless your boxer has learnt this, your coaching has been unsuccessful. You know learning has occurred when there is a relatively permanent improvement in performance over time. It's not always easy to know whether improvements are a direct result of training or result from improved physical maturity, or are simply a

short term performance improvement (ie they have been able to perform the required movements but the boxer is not yet able to reproduce these in the same way repeatedly in the future).

When people learn, they typically go through three stages (see table on the next page):

- The **understanding** or cognitive stage, where they are trying to find out what the skill should look and feel like.
- The **practising** or associative stage, where they know what they are trying to do and need time to practise and become more consistent.
- The **maintenance** or autonomous stage which only some reach when they can execute the technique with skill and without conscious effort; they are now needing to finely tune and maintain the skill.

As a coach, you need to recognise where participants are on this skill ladder and so decide the best things to do to help them move towards the desired result, a consistent and efficient skill that can be reproduced and adapted even under pressure. Look at the following table.

Stage	Boxer characteristics:	Coaches should:
1: Understanding (cognitive): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trying to grasp the basics of the action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement looks awkward errors are large errors differ from one attempt to another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use tell and show style predominately provide demonstrations; novices need a picture of what's required provide explanations to guide them provide encouragement and informational feedback as athletes do not yet know what the action should look and feel like
2: Practising (associative): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> refining and develop the skill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> action is becoming smoother errors are fewer and smaller 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> place less emphasis on explanations and demonstrations as athletes know what action should look and feel like create different situations and different practice schedules to encourage learning encourage boxers to process their own feedback before sometimes providing additional feedback
3: Maintaining (autonomous): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> action can be executed without conscious effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to focus on other things such as tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide minimal explanations and demonstrations use plenty of questioning to raise awareness and help boxers work things out for themselves

Some like to learn by doing.

People have preferred ways of learning:

- Some like to learn by doing others like visual images
- Others attend strongly to sounds and visual cues (auditory preference)
- Some like to learn by doing (kinaesthetic preference).

It's a good idea to ask a boxer 'what will help you to learn this technique?' and then adapt your approach accordingly. Sometimes it may be appropriate to teach the skill as a whole, sometimes to break it down into individual parts and practise these before putting them back into the whole action. Generally it should only be broken down if the boxer cannot manage to produce the whole skill or to refine specific components.

Practical stages of skill development in boxing

The figure on the next page highlights the stages through which techniques are turned into basic and advanced skills.

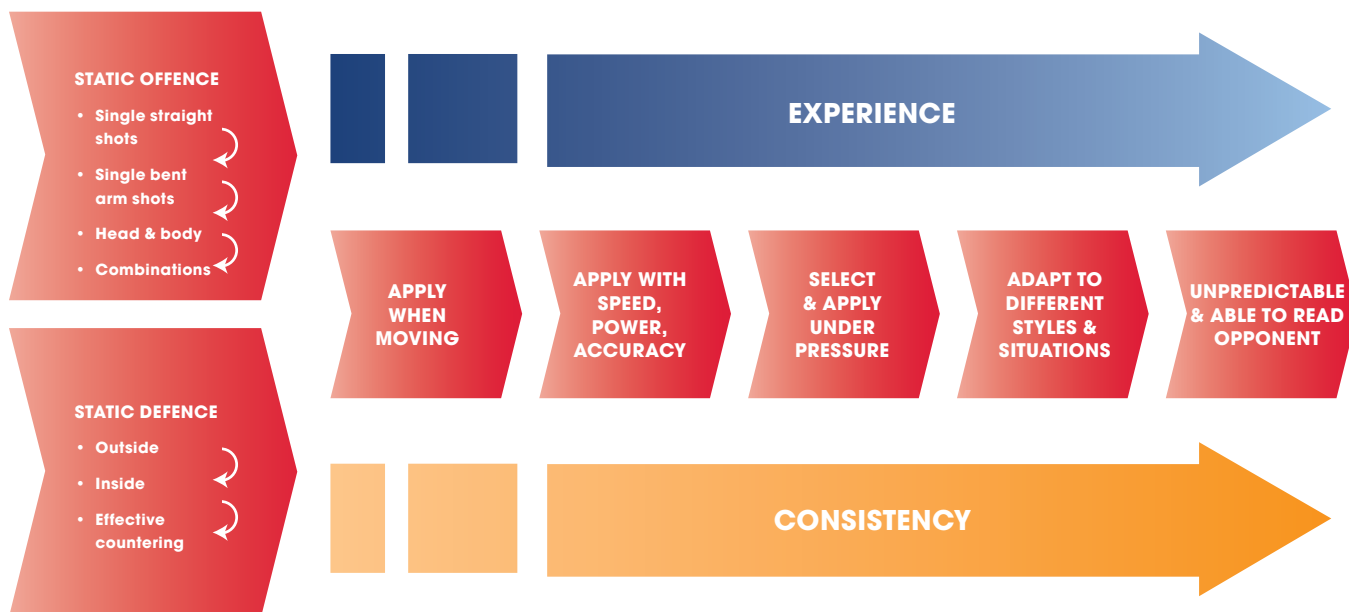
Between the gym based technique work and competition, there are a series of skill development stages which become more and more 'realistic' as the boxer develops in competence and confidence:

- 2-part work:** pad work with the coach can move from being mainly static as body positions and movement patterns are learned, through to very active sessions where you as coach can simulate targets and scenarios in a fast moving '2-part' routine.
- Partner pads:** where 2 boxers work together in a pre-arranged series of scenarios. This is a next logical step from the one-to-one work with the coach who will almost certainly lack the hand and foot speed (not to mention the fitness) of a live opponent.
- Technique and conditioned sparring:** you set the ground rules for the practice of specific techniques and conditions for the spar (eg boxer A is only allowed to use hand and trunk defences for a round and boxer B is only allowed to use the front hand). Open sparring, which approximates to actual competition, should be the exception rather than the rule where skill learning is the priority.

General guidelines to ensure practice is effective are to:

- get the group working quickly, don't talk too much
- keep practice periods short and frequent as this will accelerate skill learning
- ensure sessions are fun by making them varied (remember the enjoyment glove).

BOXING SKILLS PROGRESSION



REMEMBER:

- 1 A boxer with good technique isn't necessarily a skilful boxer.
- 2 Teaching and learning are also two different things, true learning results in a relatively permanent improvement in performance
- 3 People learn in different ways; ask your boxer 'what will help you to learn this?'
- 4 There are a number of stages between gym-based technique work and competition, work systematically through these to build confidence and competence.



ACTION:

Think in advance about what coaching skills you might use taking account of the skill level of each boxer and their preferred way of learning.



5.9: DEVELOPING YOUR COACHING SKILLS

You can learn very effectively through experience but only systematically and effectively if you spend time thinking about:

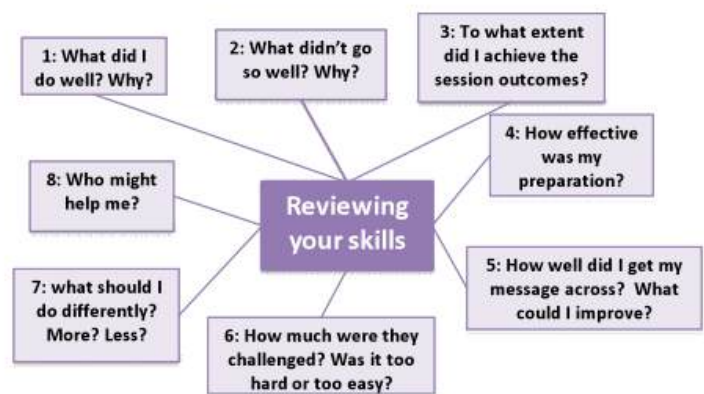
- **what happened:** brief description of the session, the activity, the event, the conversation
- **so what:** in relation to the plan, what worked and why, what didn't work and why, what would have happened if I had done things differently
- **now what:** what can I do more or less of, start doing or stop doing; ensure this is thorough so set yourself a new personal coaching goal for subsequent sessions.

Some questions to help you are shown in the adjacent diagram.

This process of reflecting will be enhanced if you also seek feedback from others: **the boxers, other coaches, parent/guardians**. It's important to ask for honest, constructive feedback and then avoid becoming defensive if there appears to be lots of criticism. This is natural and you need to work on seeing this as an opportunity to improve rather than a threat. Video is a wonderful tool, try turning it on yourself and then you can really learn about your coaching.

In addition to reflection, seek out opportunities to:

- watch more experienced coaches; critically analyse what they do, when they do it and how they do it
- talk to other coaches (even from different sports) and to boxers
- gain feedback on your coaching; for example you could ask a friend to time how much you speak and how much your boxers are active, or to record the questions you ask.



ACTION:

Make time to reflect after every coaching session; select one coach you respect and ask him/her to tell you 3 things you do well and 2 things you might do even better.



5.10: SECTION SUMMARY

- 1 Remember the best coaches are not just knowledgeable about boxing, they have excellent interpersonal, communication and analytical skills, combined with personal values that enable them to be boxer-centred and help individuals to achieve their potential within and outside the ring.
- 2 Plan to develop your coaching skills as well as your boxing skills and knowledge; you can do this by setting yourself personal coaching goals for every session, then evaluating and building on them. Learn from other coaches and never forget to ask your boxers for feedback on your coaching skills.

ACTION:

What will you now start doing, stop doing, do more or do less?



APPENDIX

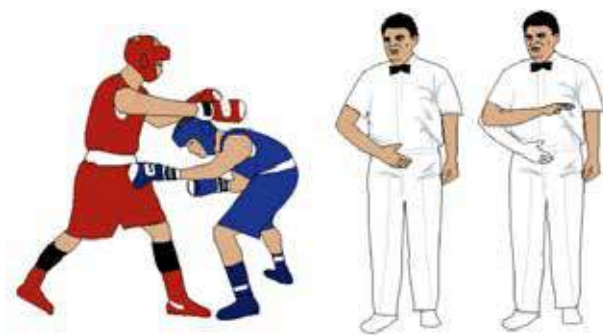
- FOULS
- PURPOSEFUL GAME ACTIVITIES
- BOXING JOURNEY

FOULS

A competitor who does not obey the instructions of the referee, acts against the boxing rules, boxes in an unsportsmanlike manner or commits fouls, can at the discretion of the referee, be cautioned, warned or disqualified without warning. Each coach is as responsible, as his/her boxer, for abiding by the rules.

THE FOLLOWING ARE FOULS:

1. Hitting below the belt, holding, tripping, butting and kicking with foot or knee.

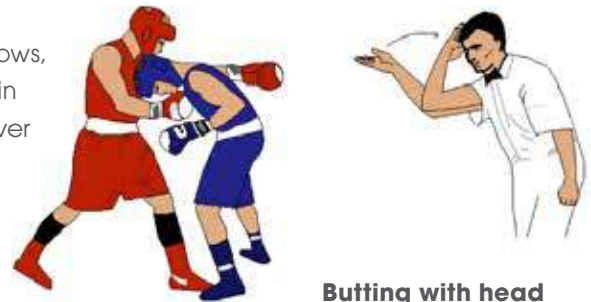


Hitting below the belt



Kicking with the knee.

2. Hits or blows with the head, shoulders, forearms, elbows, throttling the opponent, pressing with arm or elbow in the opponents face, pressing the opponent back over the ropes.



Butting with head



Open gloves

3. Hitting with the open glove, the inside of the glove, wrist or side of the hand.

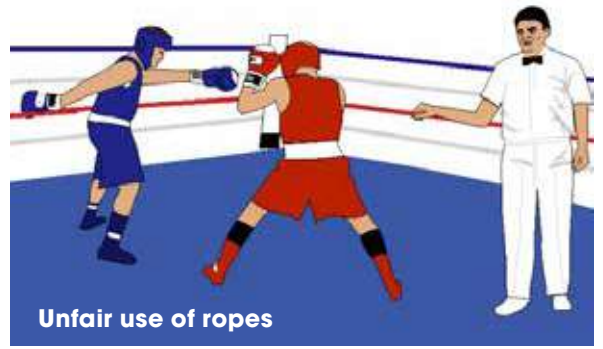


Blow on back of neck

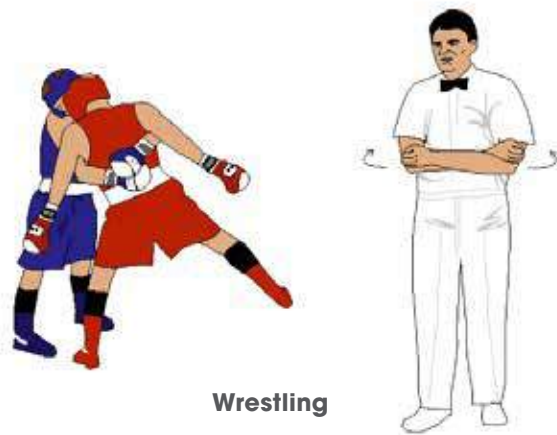
4. Hits landing on the back of the opponent and especially any blow on the back of the neck, head or kidneys.

5. Pivot blows

6. Attack while holding the ropes or making any unfair use of the ropes.



7. Lying on, wrestling and throwing in a clinch.



8. An attack on an opponent who is down or who is in the act of rising.



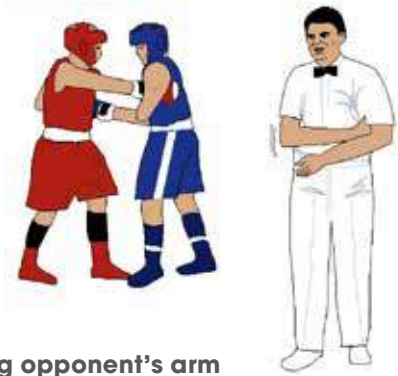
9. Holding.



10. Holding and hitting or pulling and hitting.



- 11.** Holding and locking the opponent's arms or head or pushing an arm underneath the arm of an opponent.



Holding opponent's arm

- 12.** Ducking below the belt of an opponent in a manner dangerous to the opponent. The belt is defined as an imaginary line across the lower part of the front of the body passing through the navel from hip to hip.



Ducking below the belt line

- 13.** Completely passive defence by means of double cover or intentionally falling to avoid a blow.
- 14.** Useless, aggressive or offensive utterances during the bout.
- 15.** Not stepping back when ordered to "break".
- 16.** Attempting to strike the opponent immediately after the referee has ordered "break" and before taking a step back.
- 17.** Assaulting or behaving in an aggressive manner towards a referee at any time.
- 18.** Deliberately spitting out of gum shield.
- 19.** Keeping the forward hand straight, in order to restrict the opponent's vision.
- 20.** Spitting in the ring.
- 21.** Deliberately treading on opponent's toes.
- 22.** Striking an opponent before or after the round.
- 23.** Making audible utterances while boxing.
- 24.** Trying to dislodge opponent's head guard.
- 25.** Striking an opponent before and after the bell.
- 26.** Biting an opponent.

Or any other act that the referee may deem improper.

NB: For further information or guidance regarding fouls, refer to EB rules and regulations.

PURPOSEFUL GAME ACTIVITIES

The grid below categorises the game activities by purpose; you can therefore identify what fundamental movement skill or what emotional/cognitive skill you want to develop and then search the grid.

Purpose	Example Game Activities
Agility	Game 3, Game 4*, Game 5, Game 6***, Game 7, Game 8*, Game 9*, Game 10, Game 11, Game 13, Game 14, Game 15, Game 16*, Game 17*, Game 18, Game 20*, Game 23*, Game 25*, Game 26*, Game 27*, Game 29, Game 30.
Balance	Game 1, Game 4*, Game 5, Game 6***, Game 7, Game 10, Game 12, Game 22, Game 24*, Game 26*.
Coordination	Game 4*, Game 5, Game 6***, Game 7, Game 11, Game 15, Game 20*, Game 27*.
Speed	Game 3, Game 5, Game 8*, Game 11, Game 14 (footwork), Game 16*, Game 18, Game 21, Game 29.
Strength	Game 1 (arm), Game 2, Game 3, Game 4*, Game 5, Game 10 (core), Game 12 (core), Game 19, Game 23* (core), Game 24*, Game 29.
Competitiveness	Game 1, Game 2, Game 3, Game 4*, Game 5, Game 7, Game 11, Game 14, Game 16*, Game 18, Game 19, Game 23*, Game 26*, Game 29, Game 30.
Concentration	Game 9*, Game 10, Game 27*.
Cooperation	Game 6***, Game 8*, Game 11, Game 13, Game 15, Game 20*, Game 21, Game 22, Game 23*, Game 24*, Game 25*, Game 27*, Game 30.
Fair play and respect	Game 3, Game 14.
Persistence	Game 1, Game 2, Game 11, Game 16*, Game 18, Game 19, Game 23*, Game 26*.
Problem-solving	Game 20*, Game 25*.
Self control	Game 7, Game 14, Game 17*, Game 18.
Teamwork	Game 25*.
Trust	Game 22.
Warm-up activity	Game 8*, Game 9*, Game 11, Game 12, Game 13, Game 15, Game 28.
Cool-down activity	Game 12, Game 15.

* denotes younger age group only

** denotes more experienced participants only

*** older children and adults

GAME 1: STANDING ARM WRESTLE

Purpose: balance, strength, competitiveness, persistence

Age: any age but ensure pairs are matched for strength and ability

Numbers: pairs

Equipment/space: fairly static, ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): stand with left feet touching, grip left hands (lock grip, NB no interlaced fingers), attempt to disrupt balance of partner, loser first to move feet. Change so working right foot and right hand

Coaching points: legs wide, knees bent to ensure balance, encourage thinking and use of pulling, pushing and twisting movement so counteract opponent

Safety points: ensure distance between pairs, keep to centre of mat

GAME 2: ARM WRESTLING

Purpose: strength, persistence, competitiveness

Age: any age but ensure pairs are matched for strength and ability

Numbers: pairs

Equipment/space: fairly static, ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): lie on stomach facing each other, same arm in front, grip hands to create lock grip, elbow touching mat, maintain V position, force opponent's hand/wrist to mat

Coaching points: keep elbows on mat, encourage them to experiment with different second hand positions

Safety points: no interlaced fingers

GAME 3: BULLDOG

Purpose: agility, strength, speed, competitiveness, fair play and respect

Age: any age

Numbers: minimum of 6

Equipment/space: long and narrow mat area

Overview (including variations): IT is chosen, rest start on one side of the area, IT starts the other; at the whistle, all players have to travel across area in a boxing stance using correct footwork; IT has to stop them by touching a shoulder using a straight lead hand; once tagged, player becomes an 'IT' until a winner remains.

Coaching points: correct boxing stance and footwork using smooth gliding movements

Safety points: participants should be of similar age and size

GAME 4: STANDING LONG JUMP RELAY

Purpose: agility, strength, balance, coordination, competitiveness

Age: 8 – 11 years

Numbers: equal teams (numbers, size and ability)

Equipment/space: long enough for relay

Overview (including variations): teams take it in turns to relay standing long jump. Player 1 performs SLJ, player 2 starts where P1 lands, winning team travels furthest. Mark starting and landing point with cones players who step or fall after jump will record a no jump.

Coaching points: feet shoulder width and knees bent, weight forward, back straight, head up, drive vigorously with arms upwards, long thin position in air, controlled landing by bending knees

Safety points: ensure landing area is clear

GAME 5: AGILITY RELAY

Purpose: agility, strength, balance, coordination, competitiveness

Age: any age

Numbers: equal teams (numbers, size and ability)

Equipment/space: long enough for relay

Overview (including variations): Player 1 from each team races length of mat and back to tag player; 2 different exercise each rotation (i.e. forward roll, backwards roll, cartwheel, bear walk, army crawl, heel to toe)

Coaching points: feet shoulder width and knees bent, weight forward, back straight, head up, drive vigorously with arms upwards, long thin position in air, controlled landing by bending knees

Safety points: Ensure sufficient space between teams to avoid clashes.

GAME 6: SQUARE HOPPING WITH MEDICINE BALL

Purpose: agility, balance, co-ordination, cooperation

Age: older children and adults

Numbers: groups of 3 or 5

Equipment/space: medicine ball, 3-5 metre triangle or square per group

Overview (including variations): Groups of 3s or 5s: 1 player each corner of 3-5 metre triangle or square remaining player is IT, one corner has a medicine ball IT stands between corners and jumps the ball feet together as it is rolled from corner to corner, IT has to move quickly to get between next corner and passing partner

Coaching points: to roll ball: bend knees, hand/s close to floor, straight swing back (pendulum), follow through in direction you want ball to go
IT: knees bent, watch ball, swing arms as extend legs, look up, controlled landing with knee bend
Running: small steps, head up

Safety points: Rolling by hands only (no kicking)

GAME 7: FROG HOP

Purpose: agility, balance, co-ordination, competitiveness, self-control

Age: any age

Numbers: pairs

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): start from squat position, move by squat bounce, on whistle, attempt to disrupt balance of partner by pushing hands to hands only, winner is last person to maintain balance. Progression: place one foot in front of the other to mimic the boxing stance and bounce from this position

Coaching points: start position: knees bent, feet, apart, back straight, head up and forwards
Bounce: weight on balls of feet, drive against opponent's hands, think about varying hand pressure to unbalance opponent

Safety points: Only push hand to hand

GAME 8: GEARS/SKI WITH PASSENGER/SYNCHRONIZED

Purpose: speed, agility, cooperation
Useful and purposeful warm-up game

Age: up to about 15 years

Numbers: singles or pairs

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Warm up game, gear 1 walking, gear 2 fast walking, gear 3 jogging, gear 4 fast jogging, gear 5 sprinting, 6 reverse

At each command change direction; additional could be hairpin (sharp turn), roundabout (drop to one knee and circle round), corner (different directions and angles), uphill (lean back), downhill (lean forward), sleeping policeman (jump knees to chest); traffic lights, low bridge)

Skiing variation (ski lift position/ slalom/ jump/downhill, mogul)

Coaching points: small steps, weight over feet, head up, quick changes of direction as required, lift knees on sprint.

Safety points: look where you are going to avoid collisions

GAME 9: SCARECROW

Purpose: speed, agility, cooperation
Useful and purposeful warm-up game

Age: under 11s

Numbers: minimum 6

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): IT has to tag player who then stands still, legs apart, arms to side, player can be released by another player crawling through legs

Coaching points: Running: small steps, head up

Crawling: weight forward, encourage weight on knees and toes, drive from legs not arms

Tagged player: feet apart, knees slightly bent so strong balance position

Safety points: look where you are going to avoid collisions; maintain strong position when someone crawling through legs

GAME 10: STATUES

Purpose: agility, balance, core strength, concentration/memory
Useful and purposeful cool-down game

Age: any age

Numbers: whole group

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Players walk around at the command adopt a pose



Coaching points: sufficient muscle tension (core stability) to maintain balanced position

Safety points: avoid overbalancing into someone else

GAME 11: DOMES AND DISHES

Purpose: agility, speed, coordination, cooperation, persistence, competitiveness
Useful and purposeful warm-up game

Age: any age

Numbers: 2 teams

Equipment/space: at least as many cones as participants

Overview (including variations): Even number of cones, half laid randomly as domes (convex side up) rest laid as dishes (concave side up). Team 1 turns all domes to dishes, team 2 turns all dishes to domes. use short time, can build from walking to jogging to fast jogging; can do on knees

Coaching points: small steps, head up, bend knees to turn cone, back straight

Safety points: watch for others and avoid collisions; keep control

GAME 12: BEAN GAME

Purpose: core strength, balance

Useful and purposeful warm-up (running) or cool-down (walking) game

Age: younger ages

Numbers: all

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): When a type of bean is called out class perform the associated action: runner bean (running), string bean (stand as straight as you can), broad bean (make yourself as wide as you can), french bean (say "ooh la la..."), chilli bean (shiver), jelly bean (wobbling around), jumping bean (jumping around), has bean (fall on the floor)!

Coaching points: sufficient muscle tension (core stability) to maintain balanced position

Safety points: watch for others to avoid collisions

GAME 13: MIRROR

Purpose: agility, cooperation

Useful and purposeful warm-up game

Age: any age

Numbers: pairs

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): In pairs 1 performs action, 2 copies move (either direct copy, or as in mirror). Example actions can range from generic i.e. animal impressions, to specific boxing techniques depending on age of participants

Safety points: aware of others and space required; care actions are within capability of partner

GAME 14: BALL ROLL (DODGE BALL)

Purpose: speed, agility, quick footwork, self-control, competitiveness, fair play and respect

Age: any age

Numbers: minimum 6

Equipment/space: soft balls, sufficient numbers to ensure everyone engaged

Overview (including variations): Two players start as ball rollers (1 either side of area), keep ball below knee or waist height; remaining players run the length of area trying to avoid balls rolled across the area (either count tags in time period, or swap to join ball roller) Could require rollers to roll from kneeling position to keep ball low

Coaching points: ball rollers: bend knees, release ball close to floor, follow through in direction you want ball to go

Other players: small steps, quick change of direction, head up, watch for others and the ball

Safety points: keep ball low to avoid injuries, only use soft balls

GAME 15: FOLLOW MY LEADER

Purpose: agility, coordination, cooperation

Useful and purposeful warm-up (more vigorous) game; or cool-down (slower movements)

Age: any age

Numbers: any numbers

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): leader moves around area (or stands still) performing movements rest of the group follows the leader. Examples: forward rolls, cartwheels, backward rolls, running on knees, bear walk, side shuffling. Change leader regularly, consider having several small teams rather than one big group to keep all engaged and active. Can progress to specific boxing techniques.

Coaching points: see handbook for specific coaching points

Safety points: watch for others, especially if having several different team working in parallel; work within ability of group

GAME 16: POP CORN

Purpose: agility, speed, competitiveness, persistence

Age: 8-11 years

Numbers: any, minimum 4-5

Equipment/space: container with bean bag or soft toys/balls (more soft toys than participants)

Overview (including variations): coach or player 1 (or more than one) attempts to empty the container 1 at a time, remainder tries to keep the container full, only take one bean bag 1 at a time.

Variation: crawling

Coaching points: small steps, bend knees, head up, quick change of direction

Safety points: Avoid clashes

GAME 17: STUCK IN THE MUD

Purpose: agility, stances, self-control

Age: under 11 years

Numbers: equal matched teams

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Divide into equally balanced red and blue teams. Players move in boxing stance, coach blows whistle, players stop, coach calls for team red or blue to find someone their size and push to check stance.

Coaching points: refer to handbook for stance / footwork coaching points

Safety points: Discourage aggressive pushing or run up

GAME 18: KNEE/SHOULDER TAP

Purpose: speed, agility, self-control, competitiveness, persistence

Age: any age

Numbers: pairs

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Attempt to score points by touching/tapping either knee or shoulder (without being tapped). Keep scores.

Coaching points: refer to handbook, for stance coaching points

Safety points: Discourage aggressive or hard taps

GAME 19: TUG OF WAR

Purpose: strength, competitiveness, persistence

Age: over 11

Numbers: pairs

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Players sit with legs apart and straight, soles of feet to opponent, both players grip with a lock or hook grip and attempt to pull opponent out of seated position

Coaching points: straight back, keep centre of gravity low, leaning back.

Safety points: No Interlinked fingers

GAME 20: DOG TAIL

Purpose: coordination, agility, cooperation, problem-solving

Age: under 11

Numbers: groups of 5+

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Group form a line holding waist of player in front, dogs head tries to tag the dog's tail, head becomes tail.

Variation: loose dog: 1 player unattached and tries to tag the tail and then join the tail. Head then becomes loose dog

Variation where groups are smaller and the head tries to build the longest dog by tagging tail of other dogs which are then added to his dog.

Coaching points: weight over feet, quick small steps.

Safety points: sufficient space

GAME 21: CUMULATIVE RELAY

Purpose: speed, cooperation

Age: any age

Numbers: Teams 3-4 (keep teams small to increase engagement)

Equipment/space: cone, ensure sufficient space for safety, long and thin mat arrangement

Overview (including variations): Place cone a distance away from team. Player 1 runs along and round the cone, on return links arms with player 2,3,..... when all linked player 1 dropped off followed by player 2,3,..... till all back home.

Coaching points: small steps, weight over feet, head up, work with partner/s

Safety points: watch for other teams

GAME 22: BLINDFOLD RELAY

Purpose: balance, trust building, cooperation

Age: up to 15

Numbers: Teams of 3

Equipment/space: 2 blindfolds per team, obstacles (eg cones, hurdles, ladders)

Overview (including variations): set out relay for each team. Players 1 and 2 put on blindfold, player 3 guides them both around the obstacle course. Change round

Coaching points: small slow steps working with partners; talk to team members.

Safety points: care as negotiate partner to avoid injury

GAME 23: BUTT CRAWL

Purpose: agility, core strength, cooperation, persistence, competitiveness

Age: 8/9+ years

Numbers: Teams 3+, bigger team more difficult

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Players sit feet facing the finish line and wrap legs around waist of player in front, rock and shuffle to the finish line (backwards butt crawl, players move backwards)

Coaching points: twist and lift buttock to one side then the other, cooperation with team members

GAME 24: OCTOPUS

Purpose: strength, balance, cooperation

Age: 8/9 + years

Numbers: matched pairs

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Pairs line up back to back link arms, player 1 leans forward, turns, stands up straight to move player 2 closer to finish. Player 2 does the same so progress across mat. Could compete against other team

Coaching points: high wrestling stance: knees slightly flexed, elbows back, head up, back straight, bend forward from waist, keep head looking forwards

Safety points: ensure matched pairs

GAME 25: BEAN BAG MELEE

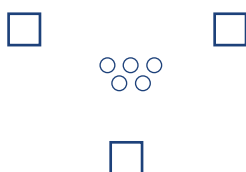
Purpose: agility, teamwork, problem-solving, competitiveness

Age: under 11 years

Numbers: 3 teams, not necessarily equal numbers

Equipment/space: 3 chairs, 5 bean bags (or soft balls or toys), ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations):



Divide everybody into 3 teams with each team standing by one of the three outer rings or points. Teams do not have to be even numbers. Each team selects a player to run each round.

The objective of the game is to get 3 bean-bags onto the chair or if boxes are being used into them. Players may take bean-bags from the centre OR from other player's chairs. Players may only take one bag at a time and bags may not be thrown, they must be placed on chairs or into the boxes. Players and other team members may not defend their bases and stop bags being taken.

Coaching points: small steps, quick changes of direction, head up and look where going, back straight as bend to pick up bean bag

Safety points: avoid clashing

GAME 26: CRISS CROSS

Purpose: agility, balance, competitiveness, persistence

Age: under 11

Numbers: 4 teams

Equipment/space:

Overview (including variations): Send each team into a corner. The object of the game is to see which team can get to the opposite (diagonal) corner the fastest, using the method the coach calls out (eg "hopping," the teams must hop to the opposite corner). This will create quite a "bottleneck" or "traffic jam" in the middle each time. Keep score of which team wins each crossing. First team to 5 wins.

Good crossing methods: hopping, wheel barrow (one person holding a partner's legs while they walk on hands), crab walk, sprint, backwards walk, skipping, crawling, army crawl, bear walk, boxing stance

Coaching points: dependent on method of crossing, ensure quality movement

Safety points: players must avoid bumping into each other

GAME 27: TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Purpose: agility, coordination, warm up/cool down, cooperation at times, concentration and memory

Age: under 11

Numbers: whole group

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Players move in a random pattern avoiding each other; have to respond to instruction. Coach builds in new ones gradually. Yellow: run on the spot; green: run around the area, roundabout turn round once, motorway: sprint (leave until a bit later in the warm-up); speed bump: jump and carry on; carpool: travel in groups of 2 or more; foggy weather: two learners pair up one behind the other - the one in front leads the one at the back who has his / her eyes closed; low bridge: everyone walks around hunched over / low to the ground; traffic Jam: walk or slowly jog; right or left: participants change direction; school zone: slow walking, stop and slow walking again; change lanes: change direction; reverse parking: walk backwards; roadworks: run in single file; breakdown: lie down until rescued; rain: use arms to mimic windscreen wipers; zebra crossing: gallop like a zebra; pelican crossing: walk and move arms up and down in front of your body (opening and closing like a beak) or move by sides like wings; lollipop person: children all put hands out in front of them and shout "stop"; traffic warden: children look at a pretend 'watch' and waggle finger saying "tut tut tut"; police car: sit on floor and spin round shouting "nee naw nee naw"; fire engine: run around pretending to have a hose in their hands.

Coaching points: according to movement, memory and concentration

Safety points: Must avoid contact

GAME 28: HIGH 5

Purpose: warm-up

Age: any age

Numbers: all

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Walk around shake hands with who they pass, increase to a jog and high 5 when they pass, add further moves i.e. forward roll, tuck jump, after the high 5

Safety points: head up to watch where going and avoid collisions; ensure sufficient space before starting move

GAME 29: THE CHASE

Purpose: agility, balance, competitiveness

Age: any age

Numbers: matched pairs

Equipment/space: cone per pair, ensure sufficient space for safety

Overview (including variations): Players sit back to back and a cone is placed a distance from Player 1; at the command Player 1 has to stand and run to cone before Player 2 can catch and tag them. The further the cone is placed, the more time to be caught/or get away. Movement using boxing footwork as a progression from running

Coaching points: onto knee, feet close and drive off fast

Safety points: watch for other pairs

GAME 30: CONNECTION TAG

Purpose: agility, cooperation, competitiveness

Age: any age

Numbers: whole group

Equipment/space: ensure sufficient space for safety

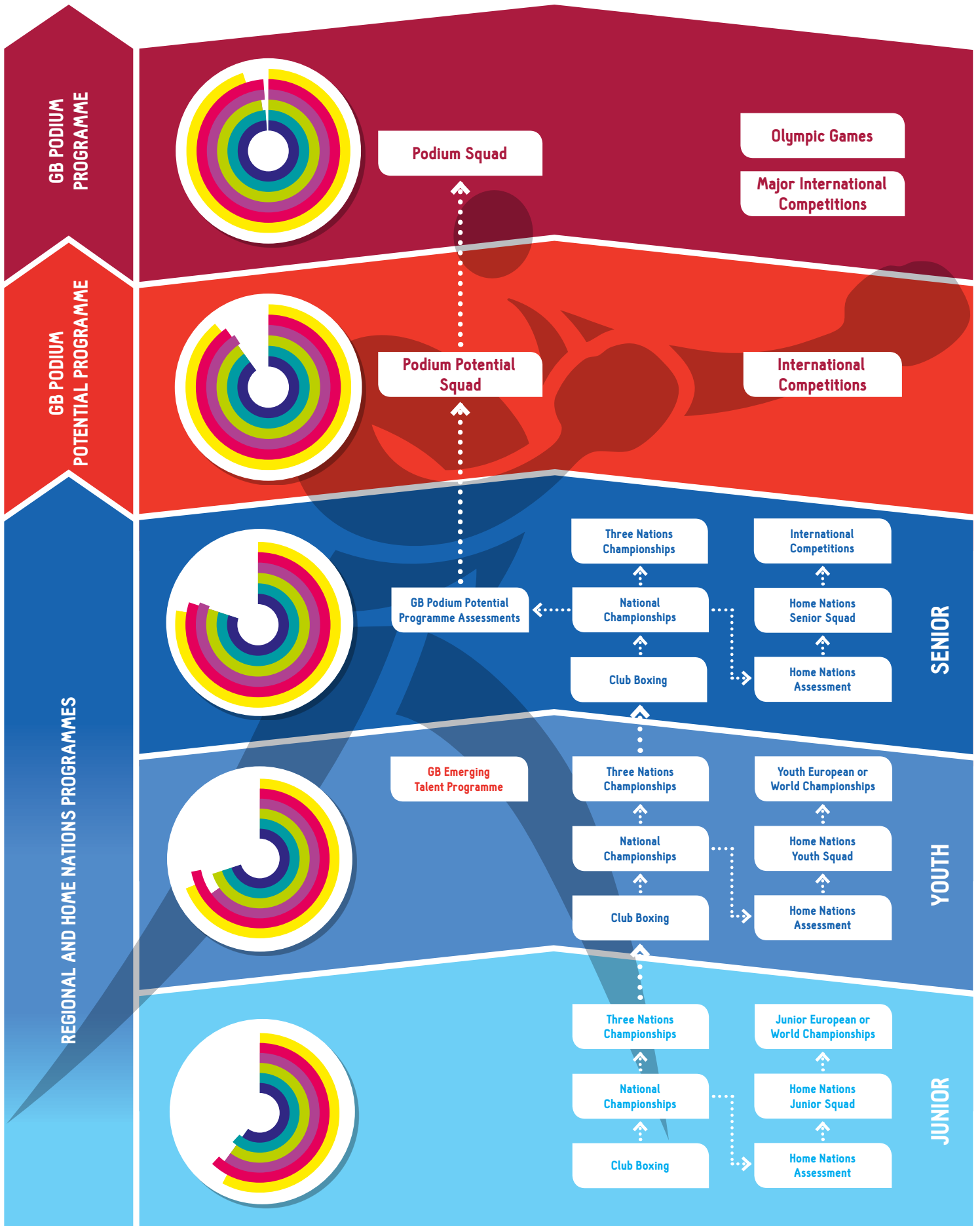
Overview (including variations): One player starts off as 'it'. When a player is tagged, they must link up by the arm with the 'it' and now they both become 'it' (linked up). The game continues like this until only one player/the winner remains. The link can break up at any time (minimum links of 3 people) and can also rejoin at any time.

Coaching points: small quick steps and changes of direction; cooperation with team taggers (its)

Safety points: head up, watch for others

GB BOXING JOURNEY

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