

What is Muay Thai?

Muay Thai is referred to as "The Science of Eight Limbs", as the hands, shins, elbows, and knees are all used extensively in this art. A master practitioner of Muay Thai thus has the ability to execute strikes using eight "points of contact," as opposed to "two points" (fists) in Western boxing and "four points" (fists, feet) used in the primarily sport-oriented forms of martial arts.

Like most competitive full contact fighting sports, Muay Thai has a heavy focus on body conditioning. Muay Thai is specifically designed to promote the level of fitness and toughness required for ring competition if the student decides work toward that goal. Training regimens include many staples of combat sport conditioning such as running, shadowboxing, rope jumping, body weight resistance exercises, medicine ball exercises, abdominal exercises, and in some cases weight training.

Training that is specific to a Muay Thai fighter includes training with teachers and working with student partners on Thai pads, focus mitts, and also working individually on a bag circuit, which includes heavy bags, speed bags, etc. Thai pad training is a cornerstone of Muay Thai conditioning which involves practicing punches, kicks, knees, and elbow strikes with a teacher or student partner wearing thick pads which cover the forearms and hands. These special pads are used to absorb the impact of the fighter's strikes and allow the fighter to react to the attacks of the pad holder.

Focus mitts are specific to training a fighter's hand speed, punch combinations, timing, punching power, defense, and counter-punching are may also be used to practice elbow strikes. Heavy bag training is a conditioning and power exercise that reinforces the techniques practiced on the pads.

If the student desires to move to a level of fighting, sparring is a means to test technique, skills, range, strategy, and timing against a partner. Sparring is often a light to medium contact exercise because competitive fighters on a full schedule are not advised to risk injury by sparring hard.