KICK BOXING
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MASTERING THE ART
Eddie Cave
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Joe Lewis, the first Professional Karate Association (PKA) World Heavyweight Kickboxing Champion, was a pioneer of full-contact karate and fought in the prototype full-contact bout in Long Beach, California in January 1970. It was Lewis who contacted karate innovator Mike Anderson with a view to organizing and promoting the new sport of full-contact karate, as it was called in those days. Full-contact karate, now called kickboxing, was officially born in Los Angeles in September 1974 when Anderson, together with Don and Judy Quine, formed the first world sanctioning body for the new sport and named it the PKA. They then promoted the first full-contact World Professional Karate Championships, which saw the Americans Joe Lewis, Bill Wallace and Jeff Smith claiming world titles.

This was the beginning of modern kickboxing. By 1975 Bill 'Superfoot' Wallace had become the first superstar of full-contact kickboxing. Another world champion, Benny 'The Jet' Urquidez from the USA, promoted kickboxing by travelling to countries all over the world, including Asia, and then beating their best kickboxers in their own home towns under their rules.

Kickboxing spreads to Europe
George Bruckner from Germany, who was a close friend of Mike Anderson, pioneered full-contact karate in Europe. In 1975 Bruckner, together with other European martial artists, formed the World All Style Karate Organization (WAKO). Bruckner worked extremely hard to advertise and promote the sport of kickboxing all over Europe and promoted the first European Kickboxing Championships in Germany in 1976.

In 1978, Bruckner promoted the first WAKO World Championships in West Berlin, with 18 countries competing. Full-contact karate, or kickboxing, was by this time spreading globally and had become an international sport. Whereas the Americans had considered only the professional aspect of kickboxing, WAKO (which changed its name to the World Association of Kickboxing Organizations) is the world's leading amateur kickboxing organization. WAKO conducts kickboxing competitions in semi-, light- and full-contact, as
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Range

There are three different classifications of 'range' in kickboxing, namely long, medium and close range. The range at which you find yourself during an actual bout determines the type of strategy and the techniques you should use in order to defeat or get the better of your opponent. If you are tall and have a longer reach than your opponent, you should throw left jabs and straight rights, as well as front kicks, to keep him well away and at the end of your punches and kicks, thus preventing him from getting too close to you.

**Long range**

Long range (A) is used for explosive power punching and kicking. It is also the distance at which you can step in and fell your opponent with a straight punch or kick (B). You can also counter punch or kick from a long range when your opponent attacks you.
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**Hooks**

The correctly executed hook is a powerful weapon. An outside hook must be landed with the elbow pointed out away from the body while whirling your shoulder and hips with the punch. Hooks must not be thrown from the long range otherwise they will degenerate into a swing. Hooks to the face or body must be thrown at medium to close range (A).

**The left hook**

From your fighting stance, execute the left hook to your opponent’s head while rotating your shoulders, hips and left foot simultaneously as you drive your punch home (a). Make sure that, when you land your hook on target, you also twist your fist so that your thumb is pointing towards you. When you practise the hook make sure that you keep the elbow up and well away from your body. Properly done, the hook is an explosive, pure knockout punch that will not fail to produce results, especially when it targets the opponent’s stomach area (b).

**The right hook**

The right hook is thrown the same way as the left hook, except that you rotate your right shoulder and hip into the punch as you explode your right fist on the side of your opponent’s jaw or temple.

You should also practise throwing left hooks followed by right hook, whirling your shoulders from side to side with each punch.
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Jab to the face, jab to the body, right cross to head

In this combination you are first striking to the head (A), then to the body (B), and finally to the head again (C). This combination should be executed in a smooth and rhythmic motion, with the emphasis being on delivering the last right cross punch with explosive impact. The objective of this combination is to hit your opponent with your powerful right to the head. When you throw the left jab to your opponent's body you should bend your legs and lower your body. This creates the impression in your opponent's mind that you are concentrating your attack on his body, but instead you straighten up your body and throw the right cross over his guard.
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**Defence against punches**

→ **Blocking straight punches to the body**
To block a straight jab to your body, turn to the left and block the punch with your right forearm or your elbow (a). To block a straight right to your body, turn to your right and block the punch with your left elbow (A).

→ **Blocking a left and right hook to the head**
A left hook to the head must be blocked with your right forearm (b). You can then counter the left hook with a left uppercut to your opponent’s chin. A right hook to the head must be blocked with your left forearm (B). Counter with your own right shovel or uppercut.

→ **Blocking a right uppercut**
You can block your opponent’s right uppercut to the head or body by dropping your forearm or hand on to his upcoming fist or forearm (C). You can then counter with your own left hook to the side of the head.
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The roundhouse kick
The roundhouse kick is used more than any other kick in kickboxing. It is delivered with the instep or lower shin with full powered impact into the body or head. Explosive power is generated by pivoting your supporting foot and rotating your hips and body into the roundhouse kick.

⇒ Front roundhouse kick
To throw the left roundhouse kick to the body or head, lift your left leg about 45 degrees and point your knee to the area of your opponent where you would like to land the kick (A). Then pivot on your right foot and rotate your hips as you deliver the kick (B).

⇒ Rear roundhouse kick
As you throw the right roundhouse kick, lift your right leg 45 degrees, point your knee to the target area (a), pivot on your left foot and rotate your hips with the kick as you execute it to the body or the head of your opponent (b).
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**The jumping side kick**
The jumping side kick is used if you have stunned your opponent with a punch or kick, or if he is retreating. Even if this kick is blocked, the force will drive your opponent back, opening him up to further attacks. From your fighting stance, jump up and forward, bringing your right leg up close to your chest and shoot out the side kick to your opponent’s body (A).

**Low kicks**
Low kicks are allowed in kickboxing contests and in Thai boxing. Low kicks are not allowed in full-contact bouts, which consist of kicking and punching above the waist only. The low kick can have devastating effects and is the cause of many knockouts.

**The outside low kick**
This kick is thrown at the outside of your opponent’s left thigh and is delivered with the lower shin or instep. The technique is the same as for the roundhouse kick, except that it is thrown to your opponent’s legs. From your fighting stance, pivot on your front foot and rotate your hips and body as you drive the low kick into your opponent’s outer thigh (a).

**The low inside kick**
Pivot on your right foot and drive the low kick into your opponent’s inside thigh (A). Low kicks are thrown after a punching attack to your opponent’s head as this paves the way to kick his legs with an inside or outside low kick. When you low kick your opponent, always keep your guard up as your opponent might counter your low kick with a right cross or stiff left jab.
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**Sweeping**
Sweeping your opponent's leg causes him to lose balance, thus enabling you to follow up with punches or kicks. A clean sweep can also result in your opponent being thrown to the floor.

⇒ **Outside foot sweep**
From your fighting stance, feint a left to your opponent’s face and then sweep his foot with the sole of your foot; this should cause him to lose his balance.

⇒ **Inside foot sweep**
The inside foot sweep is executed in the same manner as the outside foot sweep, except that you sweep inside your opponent’s left leg. Follow the inside sweep with a right to the jaw.

⇒ **Spinning back sweep**
Feint a left jab to your opponent's head, spin around 180 degrees, bend low, and sweep the inside of your opponent’s leg with the lower part of your right leg. Follow up with a right back fist to his head.
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Combination 4
Left jab to the head (A), followed by a spinning back kick to the body (B), a right back fist (C) and, finally, a left punch to your opponent’s head (D). You need to execute this combination in one fluid, continuous movement. Think of all four techniques as one. Practise this repeatedly until it becomes automatic.
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Exercise 4: Arm circles
Swing both arms forward in a full, complete circle for 15 repetitions, and then backwards for 15 repetitions. This exercise warms up your shoulders, arms and upper back muscles. Again, it can be done at a slow, medium or fast pace.

Exercise 5: Side bends
Stretch slowly to the right, hold, and then stretch to the left, keeping your hands in an arc above your head and shoulders as you move from side to side. Side bend stretches warm up and stretch all the muscles on the side of your body. Keep your legs straight when doing the side stretch – this will ensure that you derive the maximum benefits from the exercise. With each repetition you should strive to stretch lower down on your thigh.

Exercise 6: Backward and forward stretches
Stretch backwards and hold for the count of three, and then stretch forwards and touch the ground, again for the count of three. It is important to support your lower back during the backward stretches.

Do 10–20 repetitions for these exercises.
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Your kickboxing workout and training routine

Skipping
Skipping develops your co-ordination, stamina and leg spring. Begin a workout by skipping for 15–20 minutes. Learn to skip by moving your foot forward and then backward as you skip. Also, bring the rope round twice for every one jump in the air. Once you have become proficient in skipping you will have a lot of fun improvising as you go along.

Shadow sparring
Shadow sparring or shadow boxing is, after actual sparring itself, the best exercise for conditioning your body and sharpening your technique. During shadow sparring you must imagine that you are fighting an actual opponent. As you shadow spar you must go through all the offensive and defensive movements at top speed.
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Exercise 9: Leg stretch
As your partner lies on his back and raises his leg, put your foot on his ankle and gently stretch the raised leg towards his head by using your hands to push it forward. You may also support your partner’s kneecap to ensure that his leg is kept straight.

Exercise 10: Side leg stretch
As your partner lies on his side, grasp his foot with both hands and gently push and stretch his leg towards his head.
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Full-contact
All full-contact kickboxing bouts are fought in a boxing ring. The target area in full-contact is the same as in boxing. All punches and kicks must be above the belt. Amateur bouts last for three rounds of two minutes. Professional kickboxing bouts can be from four to six rounds in preliminary bouts, up to 10 rounds for national titles, and 12 rounds for world title bouts, depending on which world sanctioning body is involved. Three judges score the fight on a '10 point must' system (see page 70). You can win either on points, by TKO (technical knockout) or by a straight knockout. Full-contact utilizes all the techniques of boxing and kickboxing: jabs, hooks, uppercuts, front kicks, roundhouse kicks, hook kicks, side kicks and spinning back kicks are all employed, making full-contact exciting and spectacular.

The referee plays a vital role in full-contact bouts - he inspects the fighters to ensure that they are wearing the proper safety equipment and that they conform to the proper dress code. He also goes to each fighter's dressing room before the bout to instruct them under which rules they will be fighting. He will also inspect their taped hands to make sure that the taping conforms to the rules. He must referee the fight strictly according to the rules, will give warnings to the fighters and, if necessary, deduct points for repeated fouls. He will also direct a fighter to a neutral corner after a knockdown and has the power to disqualify a fighter if necessary. He also does the 10-count in the event of a knock-down or knockout.

The kickboxer pictured here is wearing the correct safety equipment for a full-contact bout - head guard, gum shield, gloves, groin guard, shin guards and kickboxing boots. In full-contact the fighter must wear long kickboxing pants - however, the kickboxer on the right is wearing Thai shorts in order to show the correct safety equipment.

Equipment and dress code for full-contact
Fighters wear long kickboxing pants, gloves, gum shields, groin guards, shin pads and kickboxing boots. Women wear breast protectors. Head guards are compulsory in amateur kickboxing.
Male kickboxers' upper torsos are bare in amateur and professional kickboxing.
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Another tactic you can use against a tall opponent is to attack his body with strong front leg side kicks, following this with a fast spinning back fist to his head. You can also use the side kick when he steps in to attack you with straight punches.

If you are a strong and aggressive fighter, you can pressurize a taller opponent by continually moving forward and attacking his body with combination punches, before switching your attack to his head, the most vulnerable area for a knockout.
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Defence against two attackers

Two attackers line themselves up to attack the defender (A). The attacker in front attacks with a left jab to the body, which the defender blocks with a palm heel block and simultaneously counters with a strong front kick to his solar plexus (B), which should knock the attacker down. As the second attacker launches his attack by throwing a right punch, the defender executes a back kick to his body (C).
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Axe kick</td>
<td>Kick executed from above to land on opponent’s head or chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back fist strike</td>
<td>Delivered with back of gloved hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag work</td>
<td>Practising punches/kicks on a punch- or speed bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocking</td>
<td>Preventing an opponent’s punches/kicks from landing, by blocking with hands, forearms and knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobbing</td>
<td>Ducking under punch or kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination punches</td>
<td>Succession of punches to weaken opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodging</td>
<td>Evasive body movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downward elbow strike</td>
<td>Elbow strike to back or top of opponent’s head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbow strike</td>
<td>Any strike using elbow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty-hand</td>
<td>Any martial art combat (such as karate) without weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting stance</td>
<td>Alert stance assumed when ready to begin fighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor-to-ceiling ball</td>
<td>Small punchbag suspended on elastic rope; used to sharpen reflexes and eyesight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus pad</td>
<td>Training implement used to practise punches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footwork</td>
<td>Steps forward, backward and sideways to attack or evade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front elbow strike</td>
<td>Same as a punch, but landing with elbow instead of fist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front kick</td>
<td>Fast kick delivered by raising the knee and kicking foot straight into opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front knee kick</td>
<td>Forward strike with knee, often delivered after grabbing opponent around the neck and putting down (allowed in Muay Thai butts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-contact</td>
<td>Bouts in boxing ring; targeting area strictly above the belt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>Evaluation of student’s progress and award of higher grade (belt) to successful candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hook</td>
<td>Circular kick in opposite direction to roundhouse kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hook (left or right)</td>
<td>Powerful knockout punch with bent elbow held away from the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jab</td>
<td>Straight, quick, sharp strike with extended arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping front kick</td>
<td>Leaping up to deliver a front kick, both feet off the floor (surprise attack)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping knee kick</td>
<td>Knee kick while leaping up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping side kick</td>
<td>Side kick while leaping up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kama</td>
<td>Traditional Okinawan weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knee kick</td>
<td>Blow to opponent’s body, delivered with the knee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knockout (KO)</td>
<td>Boxer unable to get up within 10-count knockdown rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light-contact</td>
<td>Continuous fighting; punches/kicks strictly above the belt; fight not stopped when point is scored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low kick</td>
<td>Outside and inside; kicks delivered to in- or outside of opponent’s thigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muay Thai</td>
<td>Thai boxing (use of knees, elbows, low kicks and throws allowed during bouts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushin</td>
<td>Japanese word, ‘empty mind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical form</td>
<td>Choreographed martial art sequence set to music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parrying</td>
<td>Deflecting punches/kicks with hands, elbows or forearms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pear bag</td>
<td>(see Speed bag)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Distance from opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Cross</td>
<td>Right hand punch thrown over opponent’s left jab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringcraft</td>
<td>A fighter’s overall ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roundhouse kick</td>
<td>Front and rear kick delivered to opponent’s head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai</td>
<td>Traditional Okinawan weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-contact</td>
<td>Punches/kicks strictly above the belt; fight stopped every time a point is scored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow sparring</td>
<td>Fighting against an imaginary opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovel hook</td>
<td>(left or right) close-range punch halfway between a hook and an uppercut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side elbow strike</td>
<td>Sideways strike with elbow, usually from on-guard position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side knee kick</td>
<td>Kick delivered in roundhouse motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slipping</td>
<td>Evasive left or right movement to avoid punch/kick to head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southpaw</td>
<td>Left-handed fighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparring</td>
<td>Practise round between two kickboxers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed bag</td>
<td>Training implement used to sharpen reflexes, speed and timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinning kicks</td>
<td>All spinning kicks are executed by pivoting the body 180 degrees from the original stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>Standing position of a fighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeping</td>
<td>Outside and inside; foot movement to opponent’s leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical knock-out</td>
<td>Referee stops bout when one fighter is clearly disadvantaged, or has been knocked down more than three times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai pad</td>
<td>Pads strapped onto trainer’s forearms to allow student to practise kicks, elbow- and kneep strikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrust kick</td>
<td>Front or side kick with leg thrust out fully extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonfa</td>
<td>Traditional Okinawan weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppercut</td>
<td>(left or right) punch executed in upward motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving</td>
<td>Evasive left or right movement to avoid punch/kick to head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Kru</td>
<td>Ceremony that introduces traditional Thai boxing bouts</td>
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KICKBOXING is your guide to

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- Techniques and training
- Getting started and improving your skills
- An effective exercise regime
- Worldwide contacts

With full-colour photographed step-by-step sequences