

## Grind Boxing Gym Newsletter – January 2018

Dear Grind Boxing Gym Members and Friends,

This year has started with lots of activity at the gym as our members return from their holidays, new members join our [evening no-contact classes](#), and others sign up for private sessions with me. I've had to scramble to keep up, but I'm delighted with this great start to 2018. In this newsletter, you'll get to know some of our members and read about my latest additions to our workout stations. I wrap it with my story about how boxing helped me through my first months in the United States.

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### Why Boxing Training is the Best Workout

When I opened [Grind Boxing Gym](#) in June of 2015, I envisioned a place where anyone, no matter their age or skill level, could benefit from the very same workout that competitive boxers use, without contact. After forty years as a competitive boxer and coach, I have seen boxing transform people through its full-body strength training combined with cardio conditioning and balance exercises. But rather than writing from my perspective, I wanted you to see how some of our members feel about their workout at Grind.

#### David and Gudrun Miller (fitness boxers):

After reading about Grind Boxing Gym in the Prescott Courier, David Miller dropped by to observe one of my private sessions. David was impressed and to his surprise, his wife Gudrun said, "I want to attend the lessons with you!" She, like David, had been looking for a fun way to get fit. Here's what they asked me to include in this article:

"We fell in love with Jarek's teaching methods and quickly became devoted students. David, who has a background in Tai Chi, quickly saw the benefit of Jarek's attention to detail and his concern for his students. Our physical strength and cardio vascular fitness have improved significantly, and of course we've gained boxing skills!

There is no question that Jarek's approach is a good model for fitness, fun, and boxing improvement for any age! We are impressed that Jarek can tailor his training for any age group, including senior citizens. Thank you, Coach Jarek!"



Tyler Wilson (competitive boxer):

Tyler has been training at Grind for more than a year with an eye toward competition. As a student at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University with military service commitments, he still finds time to get to the gym regularly. Here's what he had to say:

“I have competed in many different sports from wrestling and weightlifting to competitive shooting. Boxing is my first striking sport. Training at Grind Boxing Gym to compete as a boxer has allowed me to develop my ability to fight in a respectful and driven environment. I train to better myself. This boxing gym allows me to do that every day.”



Phil Perisich (fitness boxer):

Phil has been working with me in private sessions for the past seven months. He's one of several Grind members who are in their seventies. His hard work is paying off and he is thrilled with his fitness improvement. Here's what he wanted me to tell you:

“My private sessions with Coach Jarek have built my muscles and taught me how to move, punch, and balance like a boxer. As a computer programmer, I had gotten out of shape, but boxing at Grind Gym is regaining my former strength, flexibility, and posture. I impressed my doctor at my last visit with my fitness level and my A1C sugar count had dropped dramatically. My friends have also complimented me on my health and fitness. I'm so glad I found Grind Boxing Gym.”

Aaron Trail (fitness boxer):

Aaron has been a committed Grind member since 2016, fitting his workout into his busy schedule as a camp manager, MBA student, and cellist. He attends my evening no-contact classes regularly, working hard on his boxing techniques and fitness. Here's what he wanted me to include here:

“I believe boxing is the best workout because it involves the whole body. It involves strength and aerobic conditioning plus mental stamina. All three of these factors need to be combined in order for an individual to improve.”



## More Members, More Workout Stations



This winter I spent a few weekends at the gym building a second framework that now holds two more heavy bags, two more double-end bags, and our two speed-bag platforms. This new framework has freed up space around the original bag stations allowing me to add another heavy bag on that side. We now have fourteen workout stations that allow full movement in a wide variety of weights, densities, speeds, and shapes. If you haven't been in for a while, be sure to renew so you can try them out.

## Grindings – How Boxing Helped Me through My First Months in America

Over my many years as a boxing coach I have known countless boxers who were saved by our sport. In Poland and across Europe and finally here in the states, people of all ages struggling to find their way gained focus and discipline at the gyms where I coached. Most profound to me were the tough dudes from the street who came to me in New Jersey desperate for a way out of that dangerous lifestyle.

I would like to tell all of their stories starting from the stress I saw in their faces when we first met and ending in our last of many tournaments together as they raised yet another championship belt above their heads. But only they know the details of their stories. So instead, I will tell you mine. This is the first in a series of stories I'll share through Grind News about my life as a competitor and coach of combat sports.

I flew from Poland to JFK airport in New York City in February 1989. I had chosen New Jersey simply because I'd briefly met a few Polish kickboxers who had since moved there. They were my only connections in the U.S. and I barely knew them.

I had taken this leap because I wanted to experience the development of boxing and kickboxing in the U.S. The sport was blossoming here and I wanted to be a part of it. But first I had to survive. Those first months were like hell, taking the worst jobs and living in terrible conditions. I spent all my time just trying to survive.

I had dropped myself into an alien world where customs and attitudes were so bizarre that the little English I'd learned seemed useless. This only added to my growing sense of isolation.

Finally, I took the time to enter the local YMCA to help them start their first kickboxing program. At the same time, I resumed my boxing training at a local gym through their Police Athletic League (PAL). It was like walking back into familiar territory I had known in Poland.

The beat of the speed bags, the pop of the heavy bags sounded like home. And the people I met there spoke my language – boxing. That week I found my footing in America.

Thinking back on that week, I can only imagine the stress that had etched itself onto my face in the previous months, but I'm sure it was similar to the etchings I'd later see in the troubled future boxers I coached in New Jersey. As I began pounding the bags once again, life crystalized into something that made sense, something to hold, control, and be proud of. I regained my psychological spine from which I could decipher the world around me, this alien world of America. Through my fellow boxers, I came to understand and appreciate American attitudes and culture.

As a boxer, every day is a fight, but it's a good fight, a fight we choose to engage in, a fight we can be proud of. This is not limited to competitive boxers. When we train, we fight against ourselves and that little voice that begs us to stop, to give up the fight. But as we knock down that invisible opponent inside we meet our true selves and learn that we can rely on ourselves in the worst situations.

After that first week back to boxing at the YMCA and that neighborhood gym, all the perils I'd battled in my first months in New Jersey diminished and I could see how I was going to make it in my new country. I've often heard the saying that life is like boxing. I suppose even non-boxers can relate to this as life often seems like a fight. But only boxers know that boxing makes sense of life.

In the next Grind News, I'll tell you about the first boxing gyms I managed in New Jersey and some of the crazy things that happened while I was there.

Coach Jarek Slagowski