

Growing out of the strong antifascist movement in Philadelphia, anarchists have been fight training together here for the better part of a decade. The current iteration grew out of a group that would meet about once a week prior to the pandemic. A few people in Philly had taken advantage of some financially feasible trial periods at Muay Thai gyms or were more consistent in their Muay Thai training generally. People would take drills that stuck with them to the anarchist group, we would drill, and then finish out with sparring. Post-pandemic and George Floyd uprising, some people continued to train with friends in parks. This would wax and wane as Covid spiked up and down. Motivated by the changing reality of the political context in a post-Floyd uprising U.S., people continued to meet in parks and basements to train together three days a week. Factors such as the development of the Rise Above Movement and other fascist fight groups, increases in general xenophobic sentiment, the explicit right-wing fixation and pervasiveness of anti-queer and anti-trans hatred, and the need to defend oneself from police and counter-attack attack with frequency and intensity of rioting in the U.S.

Eventually, the gym moved into various indoor spaces. Our current, and most long running space, is one which we split with some other folks who do raves. We fight in the day, they party at night! After years of come-ups, licks, and scamming we have a pretty fully outfitted gym. We hang two heavy bags, but have more than we know what to do with. We have floor mats we got from a gym that was closing (that double as a cushiony dance floor). We have focus mits, that pads, belly pads, extra shin guards, extra wraps, extra mouth guards, kick shields, jump ropes... really anything a normal gym would have. Trainings now happen four times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday where anyone is welcome. Tuesdays are non-cis men days, which are quite popular. For the longest time we did not have a name, we did not desire to be legible as some kind of organization, playing into the mystique and humor of being an iykyk meetup colloquially called "fight club". Recently, we've decided to take on the name Balagoon Boxing Club, after the New Afrikan Anarchist Kuwasi Balagoon.

For those who do not know who brother Kuwasi is (though you should), he was part of the Panther 21, the NYC jail revolt on 1970 and later a member of the Black Liberation Army. As a B.L.A. soldier Kuwasi was convicted of a bank robbery in New Jersey and imprisoned. He would go on to escape prison twice also participated in the breakout of Assata Shakur from behind the walls. Kuwasi was captured again after the robbery of a Brinks truck in Nanuet, New York in 1981 he'd participated in along with other B.L.A. members and members of the Weather Underground. While in prison, he was a prolific writer whose letters were circulated by prisoner support networks in the 80's and 90's. Many of those letters were later consolidated into the book Kuwasi Balagoon: A Soldiers Story in 2001. Unfortunately, he died of pneumonia brought about by AIDS in 1986. The plurality of Kuwasi, as a black man, a queer man, and a New Afrikan Insurrectionary* Anarchist motivated his rebellion against the U.S. and has inspired many of the people who train in gym. We are the beneficiaries of our ancestor's example.

* While "Insurrectionary Anarchist" is not a term he used to describe himself, his actions and parts of his politic could be understood as insurrectionary anarchism now.

Some of us certainly see ourselves in his praxis. Many of us involved in the gym come from a more Insurrectionary or action-oriented Anarchist framework. We also take from him a utilitarian approach to anti-colonial struggle by training/building with some other folks with complementary non-anarchist tendencies. For example, we often build with Black nationalists around self-defense and revolutionary culture. However our project is genuinely multi-racial project, with some days being all Black participants while other days will be more mixed. Philadelphia is the cradle of many Black revolutionary tendencies, as well as others, and we feel that the martial arts space is one that can accommodate folks we would not otherwise work with. This means our gym does not suffer from the same monoculture that many other anarchist projects do. We believe this model is a project that anarchists in other areas could do. Some of our comrades in other cities have started smaller training groups after hearing about our gym.

When we say "Social Insurrectionary" in the title, we are referring to a tendency toward a social form of Anarchism that emphasizes preparation for and a culture of attack. The gym is one example of a social insurrectionary project. Often, there is a criticism in the insurrectionary anarchist tendency of social Anarchists, these criticism(s) are well formed due to the fact that social anarchists, at least in Philadelphia, have a history of acting as "civil anarchists" in how they compromise their anarchist politics in order to be relevant to social struggles composed by the activist left that have a reformist or non-violent character. (To learn more...go check Movement for No Society, a text published by Philly anarchists in 2018). The encouraging thing about our gym is that it is an anarchist project with a social orientation that has not become infected by the liberalism that seems to prevail when many "civil anarchists" decided to build projects that interact with a broader non-Anarchist community.

First things first though...

1. What is Muay Thai?

Muay Thai is a striking martial art originating in Thailand which utilizes punches, kicks, elbow strikes, knees strikes, and clinching (standing grappling). It is one of the most complete striking systems one can train. Muay Thai is similar to other martial arts including Muay Boran, Lethwei (also includes headbutts), and Kun Khmer. The accepted history of Muay Thai is derived from four references in the royal chronicles. The earliest description of Muay Thai dates back to the 18th century, in which King Sorasak participated incognito at a village temple boxing match. Another origin story also dating back to the 19th century, where Nai Khanon Tom, as a war captive following the fall of Ayutthaya, fought in front of the Burmese king and defeated ten Burmese fighters; one of the military commander Phraya Phichai Dap Hak, who in his youth was a Muay Thai fighter. Another origin tells of Muen Phlan, who was chosen by King Rama I to fight against two French challengers. Another origin story dates the sport back further to King Naresuan, who popularized Muay Thai in 1560 when he was captured by the Burmese. They knew he was the best unarmed fighter in his land and set him against their own champions. The Thai monarch won his freedom by besting his Burmese opponents in a series of matches. Muay Thai has risen to become the national sport of Thailand and popular around the world.

Muay Thai also has associated cultural elements. Mongkhon headband and pra jiad armbands are worn to the ring before a match, a practice dating back to when Siamese warriors would wear fabric of a loved one to battle. A fighter will enter the ring and perform Wai Khru as Sarama plays, a traditional dance showing respect and gratitude to the fighter's teacher, parents, and ancestors. After the Wai Khru, the Mongkhon is taken off by the fighters trainer. During the fight, phleng muay music will play.

Muay Thai has been heavily adopted by foreigners, or Nak Muay Farang. In the 1950's there were crossover fights between Japanese karate practitioners and Muay Thai practitioners. Particularly, westerners have gotten interested in Muay Thai, being featured in Jean-Claude Van Damme's films Bloodsport and Kickboxer. Around this time, Japanese kickboxing that grew out of the Muay Thai v. Karate bouts was introduced to the Netherlands, starting the Dutch kickboxing trend. The 80's and 90's are viewed as a golden age for Muay Thai and kickboxing. In Thailand, this coincided with a financial boon that drew labor from rural areas to Bangkok, boosting the fighter talent pool. International fight organizations such as K-1, ISKA, and Golden Glory (later Glory) started putting on kickboxing matches, which Thai fighters would begin to participate in and do fairly well. In the modern day, while Muay Thai is still practiced independently, it also finds itself as the main component of an MMA system, which also includes grappling. The One Championship promotion holds Muay Thai, MMA, grappling, and kickboxing matches that has further popularized these sports.

2. Other Martial Arts

Other martial arts are certainly useful for fighting and building comradery as well. Greco-roman wrestling would be useful for grappling, however you would be susceptible to strikes. Western boxing for is a great striking art, however you are susceptible to kicks and knees. Of the grappling martial arts, Brazilian jiu jitsu (BJJ) is probably the best for self defense. Its systems of chokes and arm locks can be very dangerous if one can get into those positions. The culture of BJJ unfortunately is very fascist, being originated by the Gracie family, who remain important in the sport to today. The Gracies are a colonist family from Scotland, the patriarch and one of the founders of BJJ, Helio Gracie was a member of the Integralist fascist movement of Brazil. Further, in Brazil there was a class divide between practitioners of Luta Livre, a grappling art practiced by working class people and was popular by kids in favelas. There was open class war between practitioners of Luta Livre and BJJ. Later Gracies would also support the Bolsanaro government. Their gyms are known to be popular with police, military, and the right wing.

*This system has been worked on & used by Freedom Fighters
now has been found to result in improved physical condition by
all of us who has applied this system, just twice a week. Even though
previous to this we had worked out and consistently used weights, yoga,
isometrics and other calisthenics, there does is separate has proved to
bring faster measurable results.*

*Again, these particular exercises done twice a week will not in any
of themselves be all the physical conditioning that no who exerciser will
need. However we feel that with this system, the running of few miles
three times a week with one and one half of those miles done in
nine minutes, a hundred sit ups every day, and a few stretching exercises
every day, consistently we will be better off.*

*We will build from practice and repeat a daily suggested routine
in the near future, meanwhile please check this out and give us
your criticisms and other thoughts on the matter.*

Kunsteri Bolagsoon

3. What Makes Muay Thai a Good Martial to Practice Culturally?

Out of martial arts cultures, Muay Thai may be one of the most amenable to anarchists. While yes, there is certainly some fascist elements, some machismo, it strangely can be the least of any martial art. These are not hard facts, just some anecdotal speculation. Culturally, contrasted with a fascist colonizer martial art like BJJ, Kraw Maga or MMA, Muay Thai is very culturally Thai and Thai fighters typically dominate the sport. In the west, a lot of antifascist groups in Europe took up Muay Thai, which in the 90's and 2000's influenced an uptick in Muay Thai from people that had grown up in hardcore scenes that were adjacent to anarchist scenes. There's enough of a pervasiveness of this DIY hardcore punk ethos in the sport, that one can typically find the "good gym" in their city, or there is an instructor with this background.

Many Muay Thai gyms have woman's only classes, or non-cis men classes. Gender is still weird at many of these gyms, but they're typically better at dealing with gender than other types of martial arts gyms. A better politic around gender may be attributed to people of a Kathoey gender having more acceptance and visibility in Thailand than in many other countries. From a western view, Kathoey could be understood as "trans woman", however it is a distinctly Thai third gender, where trans woman who identify as woman may refer to themselves as phuying instead. Kathoey have competed and been successful in Muay Thai. Nong Toom has been recognized as the first trans fighter in Muay Thai, gaining popularity in 1998, she fought in the prolific Lumpinee stadium. Nong Rose, is a modern-day trans fighter, became the first woman wearing a sportsbra to fight at Rajadamnern back in June 2017 (this is a big deal due to strict dress codes in national stadiums). Angte Petchrungruang, known as "Kathoey with the Brutal Knees" is another contemporary fighter who has fought in Lumpinee stadium as Kathoey; an interview with her can be found here: <https://8limbus.com/female-fighters/inter-view-kathoey-fighter-angie-petchrungruang>. Another trans fighter in Thailand is Pratuengthot Phayak Lamphong or Janet.

While there is no HARD link between these distinct elements and Muay Thai culture, they are some reasons why Muay Thai may be more desirable for anti-authoritarians to train. Again, none of this is meant to undercut the dismal reality that many combat sports and gyms are places where cis-male machismo dominates and many of the ugly social oppressions present in a racist settler-colonial cis-heteropatriarchy are present.

4. Why Do Fight Training?

As stated in the introduction, major motivations for us starting to fight train so intensely were the rise of fascist elements in the U.S. and our desire to have collective and individual abilities to defend ourselves from and attack them (to the best of our abilities).

We feel that the fight gym can exist as a space that is anti-racist in its politics. Beyond being a space where people can train to defend themselves against racists, it serves an important function in terms of combating a mostly white anarchist subculture. We feel that because there is an emphasis on training, people from different backgrounds can feel more comfortable in the space as you don't need to be from a white dominated subcultural anarchist or even a leftist/activist background to attend. This has meant that our gym has had a wide range of people come to train from a variety of different backgrounds which makes it quite different from other Anarchist and leftist spaces in the city. Training builds a shared respect and solidarity and camaraderie amongst participants. Some of the Black comrades involved in the project have collaborated with Black liberation groups in other capacities around self-defense training throughout the city.

EXERCISE 10 chud up

Position 1
Position 2
Position 3

Start out hanging palms forward on a bar or pipe. Hold body straight, pulling straight up until your chin is over the bar (position 2). Try to do ten. If you are unable to, just try this once every day if you can. Consistency is the key.

This builds up the shoulders, arms + back

EXERCISE 11

Position 1
Position 2
Position 3

Exercise 11
foot rolls
This rewards spinning

EXERCISE 12

Position 1
Position 2

Rotate the head twenty times to the right, twenty times to the left and then step out punching in whatever style you prefer, advancing ten feet or so.

This exercise is good for the neck muscles and aids you in recovering from knock outs.

EXERCISE 13

Start on your tip toes, roll to the edges of the inside soles of your feet, roll to your heels, then to the outside edges of the soles. Try this to 12 rotations, building up to 20 rotations. If inside try to use a rug, if outside try to get a space of ground.

Having this consistent space of encounter where the medium of martial arts requires a mutual commitment to each others consent and personal safety helps establish a consistent pattern between participants of comradery, familiarity, and trust. There are no coaches in our structure, anyone can suggest what we do, what they want to work on, workshop ideas. We continually hope to foster a space where people feel comfortable advocating for themselves with the people around them and ideally feel like everyone has each others backs. This free flowing transfer of skills hopefully creates a space where it is both easy to transfer knowledge and pick-up knowledge in a way that does not reproduce traditionally hierarchical structures of a student/coach relationship. We call this model of training "co-training".

5. Building Combative Networks/International Focus

The anarchist movement in the United States is far behind in some ways than other anarchists on the continent. Our gym is inspired by the Black Flag Combat Club in Montreal and Sinteno Kolektiva in Mexico City.

Both of these gyms train primarily in Muay Thai, though Black Flag provides classes in other types of combat and movement. We feel it's important for anarchists in the United States to understand training martial with comrades is a common thing in many other places where anarchists are engaged in struggle. Creating links with other gyms in other cities can create deeper camaraderie between cities. Events like bookfairs or convergences such as Bash Back '23 are good for people to talk about what fight training looks like in their different contexts. Smokers can be good ways for fighters from other cities to meet each other and fight together; this can build a strong bond and foundation of respect. When the time comes to fight these bonds can translate in the streets, forging strong alliances and ways of moving together.

6. Struggles and Challenges

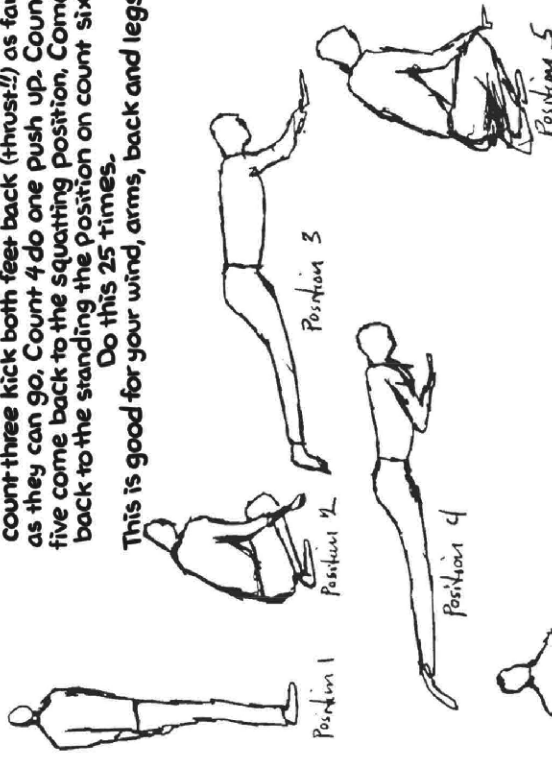
Major challenges has been a combination of inconsistent attendance, skill disparities, commitment and accessibility. These issues tend to feed into one another in a closed loop. Skill disparities mean that the space can be not accessible for new comers which leads to frustration, which leads to a lack of commitment, which leads to poor attendance. This perpetuates a widening skill difference between newer people and more experienced comrades. However, there are solutions to this problem. In the past, we have tried designating individual days for beginners. Recently we have used "circuits" or "gauntlets" if there are too many beginners that need to drill basic skills. If there is lower attendance one day, this gives beginners the opportunity to pair up and train heavily with a more experienced member of the gym. In terms of commitment, we have found that cultivating an encouraging social culture where people hang out outside of the gym can be useful. For instance, we have hosted social events such as a show with live music (a fundraiser for the gym), a movie screening, watching fights together, or public workshops. These can lead to finding new people who wanna train as well as making people more comfortable socially to train. We've also found that holding or attending events like a smoker (an exhibition fight) can be encouraging for comrades to deepen their commitment to train. As we are not training for belts, even if there's a couple of people in the project training for a fight, it can motivate the whole gym to lock-in to purpose-driven training. Goals are generally a good thing in terms of motivation and skill difference.

As we mentioned earlier, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia are unfortunately quite common within martial arts training spaces. Even if these more explicit forms are far less present in anarchist spaces, bro culture can still be a problem. This is why it is important for us to create a social culture around martial arts for anarchist that is anti-oppressive and not bro-ey. Instead, we can use cultures of consent for training instead of hurting someone during sparring. Consent is deeply important in every facet of life and in terms of martial arts, it cannot be underemphasized. Checking-in, building a rapport with your training partner(s), being aware of yourself and asking for consent is deeply important when it comes to training.

8th EXERCISE

Start out standing at the count of one. On the count three kick both feet back (thrust!!) as far as they can go. Count 4 do one push up. Count five come back to the squatting position. Come back to the standing position on count six. Do this 25 times.

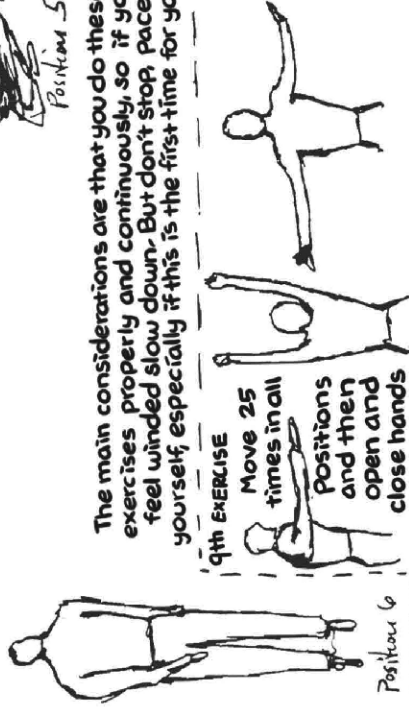
This is good for your wind, arms, back and legs.



The main considerations are that you do these exercises properly and continuously, so if you feel winded slow down. But don't stop pace yourself, especially if this is the first time for you.

9th EXERCISE

Move 25 times in all positions and then open and close hands 25-times in all positions.



This is good for the shoulders, arms, + fingers

This culture of consent can counter the bro culture that is often common in gyms which can lead to people with marginalized gender experiences feel left out or alienated. The non-cis men days are also important to this as they provide an alternative space where folks who might not feel comfortable around cis-dudes training can help with.

Hierarchies can persist in response to experience. Some of us have many more years training in and out of regular gyms. Regular gyms in the USA tend to perpetuate a culture of elitism that even sincere comrades can bring to anarchist spaces. We try as best we can to work against the perpetration of these hierarchies through the concept of "each-one-teach-one". More advanced comrades try an foster environment of mutual support and learning, as well as stepping back an letting beginners share their own knowledge. While we respect OGs, we also know communities that over specialize are easy to repress. The last thing we need is our one expert striking coach in bookings when we need them.

In terms of money, we are lucky to have a good set up. Generally, gym equipment for martial arts is in very expensive. Before we got the space, we trained in a basement, a bad artist's studio and in various city parks. We scammed, did public fundraisers, found gear in the trash, and accepted donations of gear from individuals and gyms. Getting old gear from martial arts gyms can be a good way to get a come up if you have a relationship with non-anarchist martial arts gyms in your area. Finally, if you have a local social anarchist center or DIY space that would be willing to team up with your crew to provide a space to train, that could be a good way to offset costs. Fortunately, Thai's have been training expert fighters with very little for a ling time, so there are endless possibilities for training without gear. Never put off training because of a lack of equipment.

7. Lessons Learned

Decide what kind of project you are. Are you a teaching gym or are you training together, or a little bit of both. If you are primarily a teaching gym, some of the more skilled people may not want to rely on your project as a place where they will get in a good workout and may need to supplement their training elsewhere. If you are training together and not so interested in teaching new skills to beginners, then maybe only training with people who have trained for so long is a good idea. If your project is a bit of both, maybe split the days up.

It's ok to take breaks too. Running a gym can be stressful, especially when you have a whole other life going on. People run gyms or coach at gyms as their jobs. If you're doing this in your free time, make sure there are people around to spread the load of work. You're not going to gain anything other than burnout busting your ass to run a project alone or with a small group of dedicated people. This can feel especially bad if a project is underappreciated/ underused. It can also be really overwhelming if there is a lot of participation and things lay on the backs of a few people. It's ok to take breaks and disappoint people by not training sometimes.

If you are a more skilled or larger person, it is important to control your power when you are drilling with people less skilled or smaller than you. For people who are less skilled, it is even more important that you control your power and focus on technique. It is a lot more likely someone without skill will injure themselves or more realistically someone with more skill because they are throwing a technique with too much power and incorrectly. This is usually paired with a misunderstood dynamic of a more skilled person going much lighter on a less skilled person than they can go. This is done so that the person with less skill can practice their techniques without fear of getting hit too hard, and for the more skilled person it is an opportunity to work on technique and weak points in their game.

If you have PTSD or some kind of trauma, whether that be associated with abuse, police violence, gender or body dysphoria, paranoia or whatever, using your entire body in the way that Muay Thai requires is a great grounding practice.

Repeat 5 and 6, then do 5 again with hand and reach

Position 1 Position 2 Position 3

This is good for the stomach, back and legs.

On the count of one, hit your stomach with both fists, on the count of two teach down to touch toes, on the count of three hit your stomach again and on the count of four reach to the sky, get on your tip toes at the same time, repeat 5 and 7, then move right on to 8.

Position 1 Position 2 Position 3

Start out with your hands behind you, bending forward at the waist, knees bent, and on your toes.

On the count of one throw you arms up and jump as high as you can. Do this 25 times.

If you need to "bounce" a couple of times for the sake of timing, that's ok. But only count when you jump and reach.

Ally, what's underneath can't be seen →

This is good for the wind and legs.

Exercise reduces stress hormones, like adrenaline and cortisol, and releases endorphins, endogenous painkillers. Intense exercise can be a great way to experience being in your body and grounding your mind. The practice of repetition in Muay Thai also allows you to come to a place where you can learn to trust your body and trust yourself, which is important in building confidence and addressing certain traumas and PTSDs.

8. Dealing With Interpersonal Conflict.

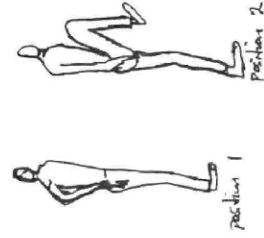
As is typical with an anarchistic organization style, especially one focused on conflict, interpersonal conflict is not unfamiliar. Partially, we have been able to avoid much conflict by maintaining a "semi-closed" model. This formation allows anyone to participate, but people would need to know someone to find out about the project. With this formation, every participant is connected to every other participant in some way. There is no way to reach us via email or social media. We don't intend for that to change. In fact, this is our first and perhaps only communication to the broader public.

There is no formal decision making body in the gym, any group of participants can get together and organize an event or training. That being said, there is an informal collection of long-time and trusted comrades that maintain the space and have full access to it. While we open the space for anyone to train, we maintain clear boundaries with people we do not fully know. This has proven beneficial for our own security culture and the harmony of our regular operation as a gym. For the most part this has kept things operating pretty smoothly.

Combat sports require interpersonal trust. You need to be able to trust that your partner is not intent on hurting you, can control their body, movements, and temper. You need to be able to trust that your partner will listen to you if you tell them something (my leg hurts today, that's too hard, etc.). This trust creates an environment where people can mutually train and push themselves in a way that is comfortable for every participant. If a participant can not listen to others about what they need in training or what is safe for them in training, then maybe combat sports training with others is not for that person. Furthermore, it creates an unsafe environment for other participant. The safety of our comrades is incredibly important, if someone is more tied to their ego than they are concerns about their comrades safety, its probably best to ask them to leave.

Hopefully any conflict can be resolved during training hours, but we have found that different people process conflict differently. It's been important for some of us to follow-up with each other after training. If someone seems hyped at their first couple sessions and then never showed up again, we often reach out to see how they are. This is important even if there hasn't been a big punch-up during a game of two on one. Fighting, even just seeing two people fight, can bring up a lot for people.

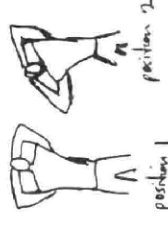
3rd Exercise, Knee Lifts



Stand with arms down to sides. Lift knee to chest and then bring back to floor. Repeat on other leg. Alternate for one hundred reps.

this is good for your mind, hips + legs.

4th Exercise, Side Windmill



Start with hands on head, feet shoulder width apart for position 1. Move upper body to the side, trying to touch the hip with your elbow (position 2), then come back to position 1. Then move to the other side and return back to position 1.

Count to one hundred reps.

This is good for your sides and back.

5th Exercise, Elevated Push Ups

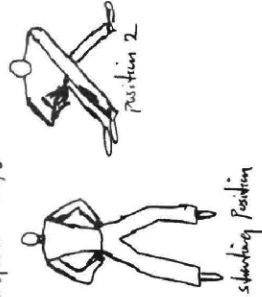


Same as a regular push-up excepts you put your feet and palms on chairs or boxes of the same height. Go down as far as you can and then push back up to where you started.

25 reps.

This is good for arms, shoulders, back and stomach (if these are too difficult try five, or try regular push-up.)

6th Exercise, Dives



Stand with hands on hips, feet shoulder length apart, move to position 2 by touching opposite palms to the floor. Place left hand to right-foot, return to position 1, then place right hand to left foot.

25 reps

(Kuwasi note: try to overlook illustration please)

This is good for the legs.

But what do you need to start this project?

Some Friends! (2-3 minimum)

You don't need a lot of people to start this project or maintain it. Commitment is the main thing to look for when finding people to work on this project. Find people who are interested on their own with training and have a desire to be dedicated to it. The quality of training can even be better with a smaller group sometimes.

Some Gear!

You can scam it, steal it or buy it. Gloves, mouth guards, shin guards, wraps, and genital protection (a cup) are the most essential things to have. If you have this combination of gear, you can run complex drills that don't require pads. Thai pads, kick shields and punching bags are also useful in terms of working on power. If you are training inside you should have some mats ideally to protect yourself from falling on hard floors. But again, the most important things are the gloves, shin guards, mouth guards, wraps and cups because that gear will enable you and your group to do drills and spar outside without hurting one another too bad.

A Bit of Experience!

Ideally one of the comrades in your group should try to get some experience at a gym with a Muay Thai coach, or gym equivalent training. The reason for this is that you can learn faster by being taught by someone who is an expert. The downside is that these gyms are often expensive and bro-ey as we mentioned earlier. It's important to train consistently at these places cause then you can bring the skills back to your friends in your anarchist fight group. Many regular Muay Thai gyms offer free days and trial periods to see if it's a vibe for you. Unfortunately, the only way to build an anarchist martial arts culture is for us to have some experience ourselves and the main place to get that experience and skills is from the existing regular gym networks. The nice thing about Muay Thai is that it tends to be less fascist than other types of martial arts such as BJJ or Krav Maga, which is one of the reasons we train it. If a gym costs a lot, perhaps you and your comrades could collectively pay for one member of your group to go and learn stuff to bring back to the group.



Closing



We hope this summary of our project has been helpful. We've included a fight training outline and a reproduction of Kuwasi Balagoon's exercise manual at the end of this zine. These serve as practical guides for comrades starting off their groups.



At the end of the day, the secret is to really begin. Maybe if you're in Philly, you'll run into us.

But you probably won't. We'll see you in these streets, though.

Count 1 hundred
 Try not to slap hands together or to the sides.
 A good quest! warm up exercise.

1. *1st exercise, side shuffle hops*

 position 1

 position 2

2. *2nd exercise, knee hocks, Part 1*

 position 1
 Do not go down further than parallel.

 position 2
 come up on toes.
 25 repetitions

Part 2
 Feet shoulder width apart for both exercises.

 position 1

 position 2
 keep feet flat
 25 repetitions

Take a deep breath at position 1, move to position 2, let air out when returning to position 1. After 25 repetitions, begins part 2. Take hands from hips and place behind head for position 1. Take a breath, most to position 2, keeping feet flat. Continue for 25 repetitions. Move directly from one exercise to the next. 25 reps in part 1, and part 2 count 26-50, back to part 1 count 50-75, to part 2 75-100, to part 1 100-125, to part 2 125-150, to part 1 150-175, to part 2 175-200. If you can't go to 200 repetitions, try 100. If you can't do a 100, try 50 (25 part 1 and 25 part 2) until you build up to 200. This is good for your legs and good for your lungs. Now move right on to next exercise.

Skill Levels & Skills

This is a list of skills we think might be helpful to comrades that are unsure where to start and progress their striking training. This is by no means the final word, but is hopefully a solid jumping-off point. All these skills should be coupled with an equal amount of strength training, running/cardio work, and calisthenics (some of which can be found in Kuwasi Balagoons manual at the back of this zine).

Beginner Skills

- Jab, cross, hook (or 1,2,3)
- Footwork + body mechanics of striking
- Round Kicks (round house kicks to floating ribs)
- Teep (push kick)
- Guard (establish basic boxing or Thai guard)
- Keep hands "glued" to temples or cheeks (maintaining guard) while striking
- Getting used to getting hit by opponent (not flinching or turning away while being hit)
- Checking round house kicks
- Rhythm & transferring weight in stance while striking
- Structured "Dutch" drills

Medium Beginner Skills

- Cross Check kicks
- Low Kick (kicks to thighs, knees, shins)
- Slip, duck, roll opponent's punches
- Parry, catch punches and kicks
- Hand striking alternating between the head and body of opponent
- Guard variations (long guard, cross guard, ect.)
- Head Kicks to opponent
- Movement + moving during combo (stick and move)
- Circling away from opponent
- Angling during combos
- Hollowing out
- Uppercut
- Overhand
- Sweeps, Catch + carry (kick defense)
- Parry + jab
- Basic Feints (stutter steps, thai step, kick feints, ect.)
- execute three punch combos followed by round house kick confidently
- Last 5 basic boxing combos (try to memorize before moving on)
- Technical Sparring (no more than 10-20% power)

The purpose of this manual is to give step by step instructions and suggestions into a good physical cultivation session, that can be started on immediately, improved upon gradually, and build strength and endurance within a minimum amount of space, time, or props. Some of these exercises are more diff. with hand others, and have variations that allow the practitioner to advance to the more difficult exercise in short order if workouts of at least twice a week are consistently performed.

Given consistent application, merely doing the exercises, and directly following each exercise with the rest without delay, this system will leave any one, in reasonably good health in not only good condition, but combat condition.

The session that follows should take less than an hour, indeed the less time taken provided that the exercises are done correctly, done to the maximum, the better, because that means that you are taking less time to recover, are exercising while recovering and that not only are you working your muscles, but are implicitly working your heart and lungs and getting you used to continuing when fatigued.

Along with this session done two times a week, all comrades should run at least four miles, three times a week and do at least one hundred sit ups a day. With that the proper diet and amount of sleep you will be in conditions to study on.

Note from members of the Balagoon Boxing Club in 2024: We found most current digital scans, as well as the edition printed inside of Kuwasi Balagoon: A Soldier's Story, of the preceding manual difficult to read and reproduce. Therefore some instructional text was rewritten for the sake of legibility, with minimal changes to punctuation, spelling, ect. Where significant changes were made we only switched words up for further clarity. We have the utmost respect for brother Balagoon's original work, but we also believe he would appreciate our assistance in keeping his manual useful to revolutionaries in the streets. @

Intermediate Skills

- Clinch
- Elbows (slashing, stabbing, rising, ect.)
- Knees
- Low kick during combos (Thigh, inside, outside, calf, knee)
- Question mark/brazilian kick
- Stance switching during combos
- 1,2,3 while slipping
- General head movement while striking for evasion and feints
- Oblique kick
- Basic sweeps
- Hook variations + targeting (liver, orbital, ect)
- Catching teeps + knowing what to do with catch
- Complex feints + shoulder feints
- Style switching for situations
- Power management
- Superman punch
- Cross + elbow
- Thai step + teep
- Switch feint
- Feint+pull-in+cross to head or stomach
- 6 part combos (with movement types during combo)
- Technical Sparring (30% and more) some harder sparring
- Technical clinch sparring
- 2 v 1 sparring
- Group sparring (2+V2+, or drills around crowd control)

Advanced

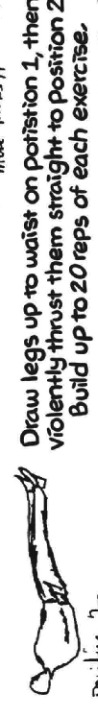
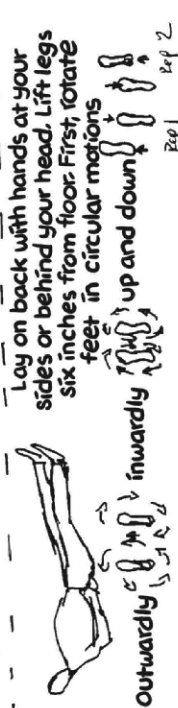
(whatever that means to you, take with grain of salt. at this piont you should follow your bliss.)

- Jumping knees, kicks, elbows
- Spinning elbows and punches
- Side teeps
- teeps to knee (always light)
- Directional feints and combos
- Unorthodox guards (cross guard, applied philly shell, ect)
- Feints to sweeps and dumps.
- Thai superman
- Rear superman
- Ax kick
- Tornado kicks
- Crescent kicks
- Spinning lead
- question mark kick
- Hard sparring (70-90%)
- Clinch sparring

Sit-ups



First try this without anchoring your feet. If you have trouble, get someone to hold your feet or use a piece of furniture or rope to hold yourself down. But as soon as you can do sit-ups without a prop, do them without a prop. Build up to a 100 reps.



Rest straight out on hands and elbows for as long as you can, try to increase length of time.

These exercises should be done everyday along with exercises 6,7 and 8. Do atleast one of the them and add whatever you wish with the exception of knee hands.



Suggestions: keep legs straight, knees unbent. Kick straight up alternating legs. Build to a hundred. Build to a mile and a half of which should be done under nine minutes hundred.

Some Suggested Drills To Start

String + tennis ball
Slip, teap, slip, shuffle forward and back
Grab ball accuracy drill (through bars)
Teeping wall focusing on form and accuracy
Lightly Round house agianst wall and then pushoff
Ball under chin for chin tucking
Pin gloved between hand and head while moving to help retain gaurd
Shadow box with light weights or waterbottles in hands
Skipping rope
Shifting edge of guard
Shadow boxing (5-15 min)
Boxing footwork (all directions)
Dribble tennis ball while doing boxing foot work
dodgeball
Ball grab through obstacle rythmically

Conditioning At Home

(There are multiple ways some of us think you can toughen/condition you body. we do not all agree with these techniques, but we're mentioning them here. These can cause injury and should not be done wrecklessly.
Running and regular training will probably be enough conditioning for you.)

Repeadtly elbowing door frame in slashing or pushing elbow motion.
Tapping or rolling a baseball bat or some similiar against shins.
Kicking light posts or tree with gradually increasing force.
Heavy bag combos with just wraps or 8oz gloves.
Trading kicks (about a hundred total) with one or more partners.
Striking torso with thai pad or similiar

Some Fights and Fights for Research

(Many people are not fans of combat sports, but we encourage you to look to these expert practitioners as examples of how to you use the skills you want to learn. He are including Thai and MMA fighters, as well as boxers, but you can find lots of expert fighters among other sports such a J kick, Sanda, Sambo, and many others.)

Canelo Alvares, Buakaw, Lerdasila, Saenchai, Tawanchai, Nong O., Rodlek, Superlek, Rodtang, Jonathan Haggerty, Supergirl, Stamp Fairtex, Danny Bill, Ernesto Hoost, Connor Mcgreggor (Asshole, but good southpaw), Manny Pacquiao, Uriah Hall, Vasyi Lomachenko, George Foreman, Amanda Nunes.

Some Specific Fights

Peter Yan V. Jose Aldo
Justin Gaetche v. Dustin Porier
Joanna Jondjechek v. Weili Zhang
Arturro Gatti v. Mickey Ward
Cyril Gane v. Derrick Lewis

Useful Youtube Channels

Gabriel Varga
Jack slack
Modern Martial Artist
Complex Boxing
Lawrence Kenshin
Jeff Chan
BLTV Extra
Tony Jeffries
Siam Boxing
Steven Wonderboy Thompson
Max Muay Thai
FightTIPS
Sylvie Von Douglas Ittu
Sean Fagan
Alex Wong - Explosive video