

Qualified instructors important to avoid cardio boxing injuries

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ed knees or even spinal cord injury. Terry Riggs, owner of Warrior Martial Arts Centre in Newmarket, agreed unqualified instructors are a problem. "Unfortunately, our industry is not regulated so pretty much anyone can do it. We used to offer it here when it was trendy but we had a sixth degree master teaching the classes. Other places are offering it as self defence, but they aren't teaching it properly."

According to Ms Punzo, however, Fit City has taken precautions to assure their boxing and TKO (cardio boxing classes) are taught by trained martial arts specialists.

"We only have three instructors who teach these classes. Our newest instructor has his black sash in kickboxing."

"We also don't offer the course very

often so people don't get overzealous and hurt themselves."

Ms Punzo agreed concerns expressed by martial arts experts are valid and said cardio classes focus more on the workout portion and less on the kicks and punches.

'There is no doubt that (cardio boxing) has excellent potential for fitness if taught properly.'

In fact, most classes use simulated kicks — high knee motions — and short, close-to-the-body punches.

"Besides the chance of injuring themselves, in a group environment,

there is also the chance of hurting others," Ms Punzo said. "So we limit the kicks for that reason as well."

Despite claims cardio boxing and kickboxing are yesterday's news, fitness centres are still attracting classes of 30 or more.

"People like these classes because they provide great cardiovascular workouts but don't require much co-ordination. It's a fun environment to try something new," Ms Punzo said.

Tim Wakefield does see some positive aspects to these cardio-based classes.

"There is no doubt that (cardio boxing) has excellent potential for fitness if taught properly. It brings people into the martial arts spectrum who wouldn't have the time to dedicate to full martial arts training; those people who just want to have fun and break a sweat."

what they did.

As one conversation slows down, a new topic is intertwined and discussed.

'Due to the confidentiality here, it's a totally close-knit group and we can discuss anything. You get that trust and closeness that you would in a family.'

"Everybody knows there are certain boundaries that they can't cross outside the wall. Due to the confidentiality here, it's a totally close-knit group and we can discuss anything. You get that trust and closeness that you would in a family,"

Murray said.

Along with free coffee, tea, hot chocolate and condoms, a variety of resources are also provided to help answer questions. Ms Haggart and Ms Murray offer support, whether it means just listening or finding someone to help with problems.

In the future, VENT hopes to be held more than once a week and a new group may begin in Markham as well. Currently another group, Positive Connections Youth Coffee Club, is held every Friday in Aurora at 15150 Yonge St., Ste. 3A.

For more information, call Kati Murray or Jenny Haggart at 905-841-3977.

Carolyn Barry is a journalism student attending Humber College.



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