Recently there has been a steady increase in the use of boxing, kickboxing or mixed martial arts drills (MMA) as a part of general fitness sessions or as specialised classes within the fitness industry. The rising popularity and increased demand for these activities has led to a concurrent increase in the number of related continuing education programs for registered exercise professionals.

While these developments have undoubtedly provided another important source of variety for general fitness training, safe practice that mitigates the risk of injury and enhances effectiveness must be maintained at all times.

It is imperative that these activities remain non-combative, do not involve body contact and are conducted with correct technique. All sessions are to have a fitness orientation rather than a self defence/combative orientation.

To provide clarification for registered exercise professionals and fitness services using fitness activities derived from boxing, kickboxing and MMA, Fitness Australia has produced the following information for guidance:

### Professional Skill and Knowledge

Registered Exercise Professionals who wish to instruct boxing, kickboxing or MMA fitness activities are required to have completed an approved CEC program in the relevant area of instruction.

### Non Contact

The objective of the session is to develop the client’s fitness, and in doing so, use techniques and drills from boxing, kickboxing or MMA for variety. To minimize the risk of injury and ensure safe practice, the session must remain non contact.

### Non Combative

The sessions are not self defence, boxing or martial arts sessions and are to remain non combative. There should be a focus on using the drills to compliment the total fitness program or session, and a focus on health and safety rather than combat effectiveness.

### Preparation

- All participants must complete a suitable pre-exercise health screening questionnaire, such as the Adult Pre-exercise Screening System (APSS) and follow recommended procedures in accordance with risk stratification.
- A sequence in learning must be provided for all drills/exercises. This would include initial description, demonstration, participant practice and re-checking prior to beginning the drill. Each participant must be provided with sufficient time to become proficient, with consideration for their readiness and level of experience.
- When conducting paired activities, an exercise professional should always ensure that each participant is paired with someone of a similar height.

### Equipment

Equipment should be selected according to the skill being taught.

**For example**

- Kickboxing drills should be performed with progression on Kickshields, Muaythai Pads or Hanging Bags.
- Focus pads should be used for punching.
- One to one boxing sessions require appropriate wrist support.
- Group boxing sessions can include the use of bags, shields and floor to ceiling balls.

All equipment should be in good condition and not damaged in any way that would impair instruction or performance. Equipment should be maintained and cleaned in accordance with Occupational Health & Safety legislative requirements. Protective equipment should be selected in accordance with the skills being taught. Padded equipment should have suitable density for the activity undertaken and clientele being trained.
Use of Focus Pads

For Individuals
Safe use of focus pads for one to one training requires, as a minimum, completion of a Fitness Australia approved CEC program that contains specific content related to the use of focus pads.

For Groups
Safe use of focus pads in group training requires, as a minimum, completion of a Fitness Australia approved CEC program that contains specific content related to the use of focus pads. It particularly relies on the provision of adequate description, demonstration, practice and re-checking of technique for each participant. A group session must provide supervision that ensures thorough instruction and safety for each participant.

Setting and Space Requirements
Space allocation must:
• Accommodate the range of movement required for prescribed exercises.
• Accommodate other participant space requirements.
• Allow for correct use of specific equipment.
• Provide adequate space and protection to avoid potential accidents or falls.
• Provide safe indoor flooring or safe ground in an outdoor setting.

Programming
It is recommended that the following components of programming and technique be adhered to:

Bags: Correct holding of the bag and bracing for the technique.
Stance: Correct width and weight distribution for the technique being taught.
Connection: Correct contact with the bag or focus mitts.
Impact: A safe level of impact given and received while using equipment.
Technique: Biomechanics of each skill are taught/corrected.
Position: The instructor and equipment are in a safe position for the skill taught.
Movement: Body and equipment are correctly positioned for moving combinations.

Referral to Specialist Instructors
If a client is interested in being specifically trained in the disciplines of boxing, kickboxing or mixed martial arts, they are to be referred on to a registered and insured boxing, kickboxing or martial arts trainer. Exercise professionals are not qualified or registered to provide these services.

CEC Program Requirements
The following requirements apply for continuing education program content:
• Program content must be compliant with the guidelines outlined in this document.
• Skills taught within the program should be limited to a realistic level of complexity and volume, so that the exercise professional can safely and thoroughly demonstrate and monitor the activity for participants.
• Program materials should include visual and auditory aides to accommodate different learning styles.
• Program materials should be presented in a logical and progressive order that can be followed by someone with little or no boxing/martial arts experience.
• Program information should outline the potential mistakes for each drill/exercise including potential consequences such as injury and provide modifications to allow for safe progression.
• Online delivery is not suitable for introductory beginner programs (individual or group), however may be suitable for programs that update existing knowledge and skill.
• Introductory programs should provide a foundation for future learning and development.

All Exercise Professionals have a duty of care to prevent harm which could reasonably be expected to occur in the course of providing advice or instruction to clients. Professional standards and guidelines developed by Fitness Australia (such as the Safety Guidelines for Boxing, Kickboxing and MMA for Fitness) will assist Registered Exercise Professionals in mitigating risk and exercising their duty of care.