

Lawyer spars in courtroom and in ring

Boxing can be knockout, white-collar workers find

*By Dean Narciso
Dispatch Staff Reporter*

In this corner, weighing 210 pounds: Columbus lawyer Scott Needleman.

And in that corner, at 237 pounds: a sales manager from Columbus, Mike O'Mera.

These sparring partners represent the many people now turning to boxing as a way to allay workday stress and boost confidence.

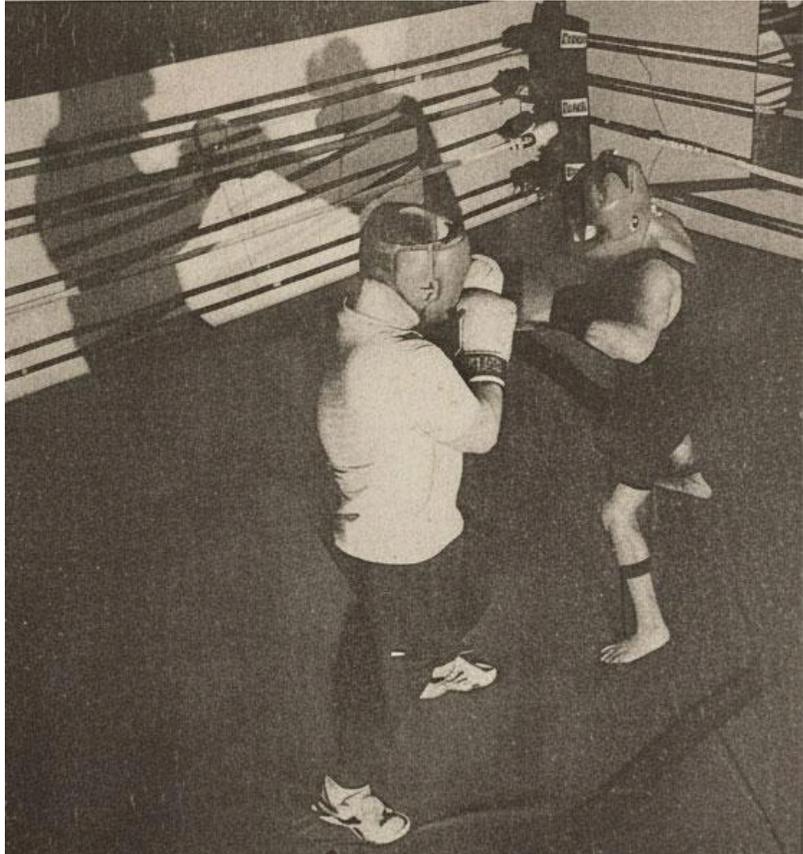
Called "white-collar boxing" or "boxercise," the trend has started on the nation's coasts and has filtered inland afflicted sedentary executives sprouting chicken wings.

The teaching of boxing fundamentals — stance, movement and punches — provides all an athlete workout that can fit into a half-hour, said, whether the participants spar or not.

"In the boxing workout," said Needleman, who took up boxing when a hip injury five years ago kept him from jogging or running.

Still, Needleman steps from the ring into the courtroom, which he said feels only like the boxing ring without the controlled release.

About six times a week, Needleman and O'Mera trade jabs in three-minute sparring sessions at the 40/42 Recreation Center, 2023 S. Hamilton Rd., as owner Doug Douglas barks



combinations — "jab, jab, right" — while keeping a wary eye to break clinches and moderate speed.

"They go at it," Douglas said.

He and O'Mera have owned a Boxing/Personal Fitness gym in Los Angeles and both trained with Zukin, the former lightweight southpaw.

O'Mera, 40, shaved about 45 pounds off his 6-foot-2-inch frame in the first six months after he began boxing two years ago.

"It's by far the hardest (form of exercise)" he said. "It far and away surpasses anything I've ever done."

O'Mera and Needleman training with Doug Douglas, owner of the gym. Others who train at Boxing/Personal Fitness, which opened about a year ago, are executives and office people.

Owners & trainers Joe Zukin and James "Buster" Douglas, hope more people will take up boxing.

He charges \$40 per hour — \$20 a half-hour — for private training sessions and said he has 20 to 25 clients, about half of whom are women. Anyone is welcome, courtly or pug year — old. People who use the gym to work out pay \$30 a month.

"It's nice to have fun and a good workout," O'Mera said.

"It's a great country ... where you can pay someone to hit you in the head," he said, smiling.