



# How the Modern Woman is Packing a Punch with Martial Arts

Hill Myna Bureau

Fitness disciplines such as yoga, pilates or light cardio are known to improve endurance, flexibility and overall well-being. While their benefits are well-established, what they often miss out on is the idea of physical resistance or self-defence. In a world where personal safety and self-assurance are increasingly important, especially for women, this gap becomes more significant. Martial arts help address this gap, as their impact on women is highly transformative.

Every form of martial arts — kickboxing, mixed martial arts (MMA), Brazilian jiu-jitsu (BJJ), karate, and Muay Thai (a form of Thai martial art) — offer something more profound. They required you to offer space find your voice, and trust your physical power.



## A Kickstart to Strength

Different arts serve different needs for the modern woman.

*“Kickboxing is often the first port of call for women entering the world of martial arts, and for a good reason,” says Shikher Gupta, founder, Kombat Hall, a martial arts academy in Gurugram. “It’s a high-octane blend of Western boxing’s*

*hand speed and the powerful kicking techniques of karate and taekwondo.”*

Each punch and kick starts at the feet and travels through the core. While making it the ultimate “stress destructor”, kickboxing helps women build mid-section strength and cardiovascular endurance.

Unlike a standard fitness class, kickboxing requires you to visualise a target. This shifts the mind from “working out” to “executing a skill.” As women progress to higher belts, they develop a sharp sense of distance

and timing. They learn that power isn’t about size but about the speed and accuracy of the strike.

This realisation — that they can generate significant force — is a massive psychological turning point.

## Precision and Discipline

*The foundation of self-defence lies in karate. This art is about “kime” or focus. It teaches women how to channel their entire bodily energy into a single point in a second.*



Beyond the strikes, karate involves “kata” (structured forms) that improve posture, balance, and neurological coordination. It instils a deep sense of traditional respect and etiquette, helping women move through the world with a “quiet confidence” that deters conflict before it even begins.

## The Art of Eight Limbs

While kickboxing is about speed and fluid combinations, Muay Thai helps develop efficiency and resilience. Originating from Thailand, it is known as the “Art of Eight Limbs” as it utilises the hands, feet, elbows, and knees.

Muay Thai introduces the “clinch”, a form of upright grappling where

you control your opponent’s head and neck while delivering knee strikes. This is vital for self-defence. The conditioning in Muay Thai is legendary; hitting Thai pads increases bone density and toughens the shins, which is critical for long-term physical health.

Muay Thai is a gritty, rhythmic art. It teaches how to absorb pressure and keep moving forward. For women, mastering the “eight limbs” means having twice as many tools to defend themselves and twice as many ways to express their strength.

## The Great Equaliser

Another essential art for female self-defence is BJJ. It operates on the premise that most physical altercations eventually end up on the ground. BJJ focuses on leverage, joint locks, and chokeholds, allowing

even a smaller person to successfully defend against a relatively larger, stronger assailant.

One of the benefits of BJJ is that it removes the fear of being “pinned” or overpowered. By learning how to move the hips and use the legs — the strongest part of a woman’s body — to control an opponent, women gain a sense of physical autonomy that is incredibly liberating. It is like “human chess” — solving physical puzzles under pressure.

## A Complete System

*The synthesis of each of these arts is MMA. It bridges the gap between standing up and being on the ground, offering a “no-limit” environment to test versatility.*

MMA builds a “polymath” athlete. It teaches the practitioner to be adaptable. If one strategy isn’t working, one can switch from striking to wrestling. This adaptability is a vital life skill, teaching women that there is always a way out of a difficult situation if they stay calm and change their approach.

**A 4th Dan in Karate and a BJJ practitioner, Gupta says, “When I first opened the doors of Kombat Hall in Gurgaon, I had a very specific vision: to create a space where the ‘warrior spirit’ wasn’t reserved for a select few. Over the years, that vision has sharpened into a mission.”**

He adds, **“The goal shouldn’t be just to teach a perfect roundhouse kick or a clinical armbar. It is to ensure that every woman who steps onto the mats leaves stronger, more centred, and more capable than when she walked in.”**



## Fighting Stereotypes

To understand the appeal of martial arts for women, one only needs to look at the practitioners themselves. At Kombat Hall, students from diverse backgrounds are redefining strength in their own ways.

“Varuni, a teenager, has found focus and discipline through MMA training, using it as an anchor in an otherwise distraction-filled world,” Gupta narrates. Her commitment has led her to compete at both national and international levels. Dr. Gauri, another student, approaches kickboxing as both a physical and mental practice, using it to release

stress while maintaining strength and overall health. Manisha, an entrepreneur and mother, has similarly embraced martial arts to manage life’s pressures with resilience and adaptability.

Highlighting these journeys, Gupta emphasises, “Each of these women has used martial arts not just as fitness, but as a way to build focus, resilience, and inner strength.”

## A Stronger Future

Looking ahead, the vision is both ambitious and deeply intentional. Gupta says, “The aim is to bring more women into martial arts and break the stereotype that academies are ‘gritty basements’ meant only for men.”

*For him, the shift is not just about participation, but perception. “When a woman realises she can throw a punch, defend a takedown, or escape a hold, she stops seeing the world as something to fear — and starts seeing it as something she can take on,” he adds.*

The true power of martial arts perhaps lies in this moment of realisation. Physical training soon evolves into transformation — a quiet but profound shift in how women carry themselves, respond to challenges, and claim space in the world.

It is no longer limited to self-defence or fitness. It is about cultivating confidence, resilience, and a sense of agency that extends far beyond the mat.