

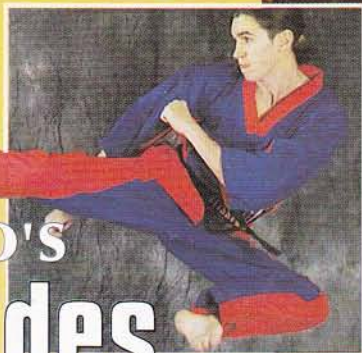
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# MARTIAL ARTS ILLUSTRATED

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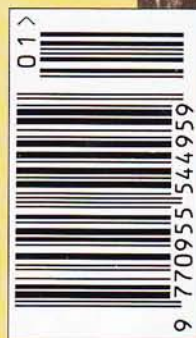
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This article is written for martial arts instructors interested in teaching martial

arts to music as part of their portfolio of classes. I'll include some tips to help improve your classes and explaining why these types of classes are a fantastic addition to your school.

Music is an excellent medium for generating an exciting, high energy class. It makes people want to move and, consequently,

it makes motivating your students easy as they find themselves working hard while experiencing a high level of enjoyment.

It may be Billy Blank's Tae Bo, Cardio Kickboxing, Fitness Kickboxing, call it what you like (provided you have permission of the copyright) but it is now becoming more and more popular and is a good addition to your martial arts school or club. Training martial arts to music provides an exciting introduction to the martial arts for anyone, without the intimidation that is sometimes associated with traditional Karate, Taekwondo, or Kung Fu, and generally appeals to a much wider spectrum of the public. What

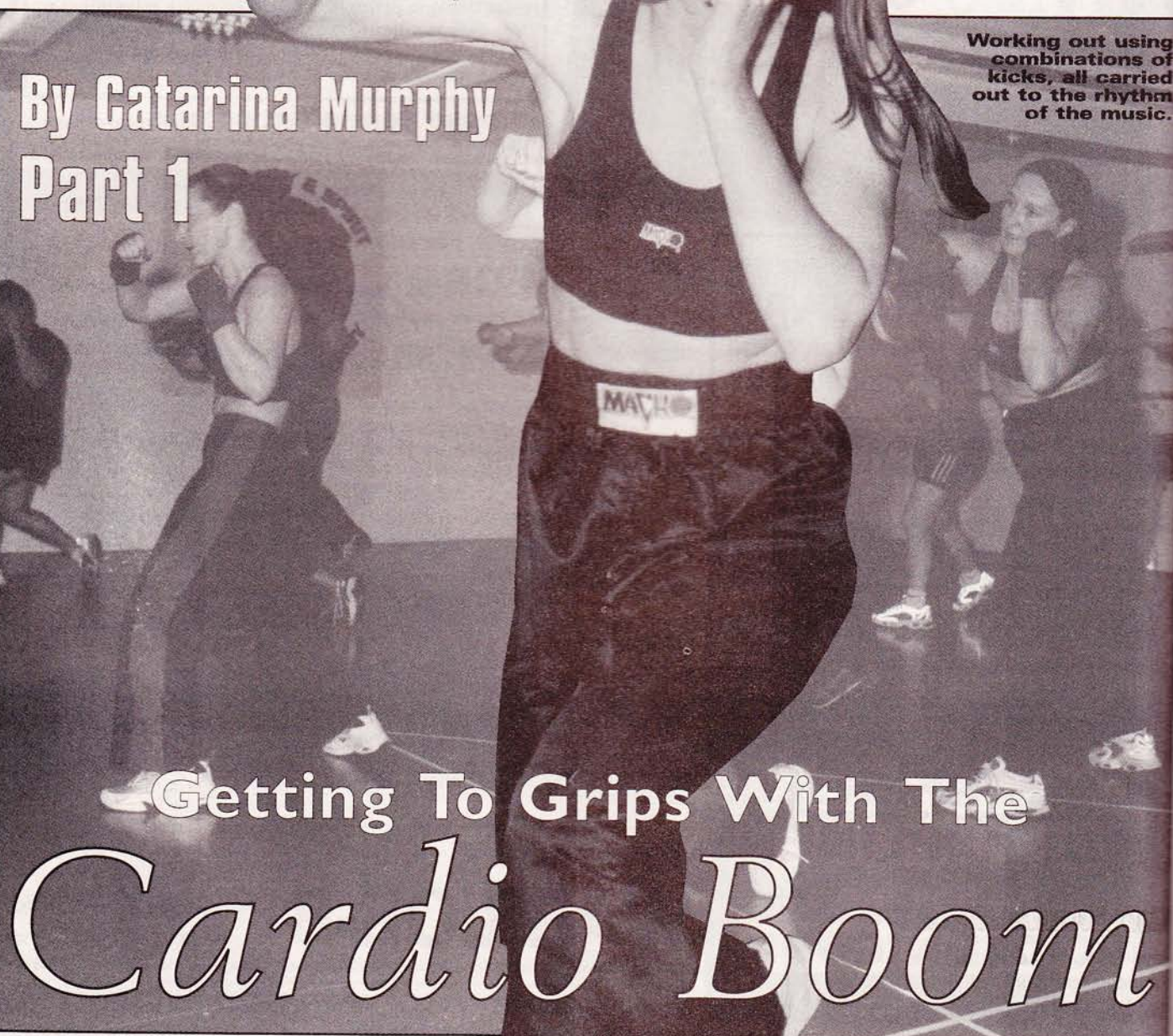
these all have in common is that you are taking martial arts moves and adapting them to a class with music. This is different to an ordinary martial arts class in that you are continually exercising at an aerobic level as well as doing the specific exercises that encourage strength, endurance, power and co-ordination. Hence, it can produce outstanding results for weight loss, muscle tone and increased aerobic fitness. For those already practising a martial art it is an ideal complement as well as a great class for the complete novice who has never thrown a kick or punch in their life. The beauty of it is that many of those who start training this way often progress to learning a traditional martial art as the barriers of 'fear of a traditional martial arts class' are broken down.

### **Preparation Before The Class**

Before you launch your beginners into a full blown class, there are a number of considerations you should make:

**Working out using combinations of kicks, all carried out to the rhythm of the music.**

**By Catarina Murphy  
Part 1**



# Getting To Grips With The *Cardio Boom*





1. Carry out an introductory class: It is necessary for all new members to ensure that the principles of safe kicking and punching are taught before they commence. It is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that just because you have some individuals in the class who are already doing martial arts, that everybody else has the same knowledge and know how to kick and punch. Introductory classes should concentrate on teaching technique correctly and emphasising how to prevent injuries.

2. Carry out some choreographic preparation: That is working out some combination that will fit the music prior to taking a class. Take some time out to practise and this will avoid you reaching a sticky point during the class. This requires a bit of imagination but there are plenty of combinations you can put together by using front punch, hook, uppercut, front snap kick, turning (roundhouse) and side kick. It is best to use a group of techniques that have been taught to the students regularly but in many different combinations. Make sure that what you teach matches the skill level of the student, otherwise you are likely to cause injury as a result of poor body alignment.

3. Have your music and props ready and at hand and ensure you have the appropriate music licences. If you are going to use circuits, it is nice to have sheets of paper with typed station numbers and a short description of the exercise pinned on the wall next to the appropriate equipment. Use a bright piece of paper which has been laminated, giving a professional touch. Avoid using the same sequence of circuits class after class. The ideal is to have a portfolio of circuits, use different coloured paper per set of circuits and have several sets that you can rotate every week, making the classes interesting and varied.

### Getting Started With The Class

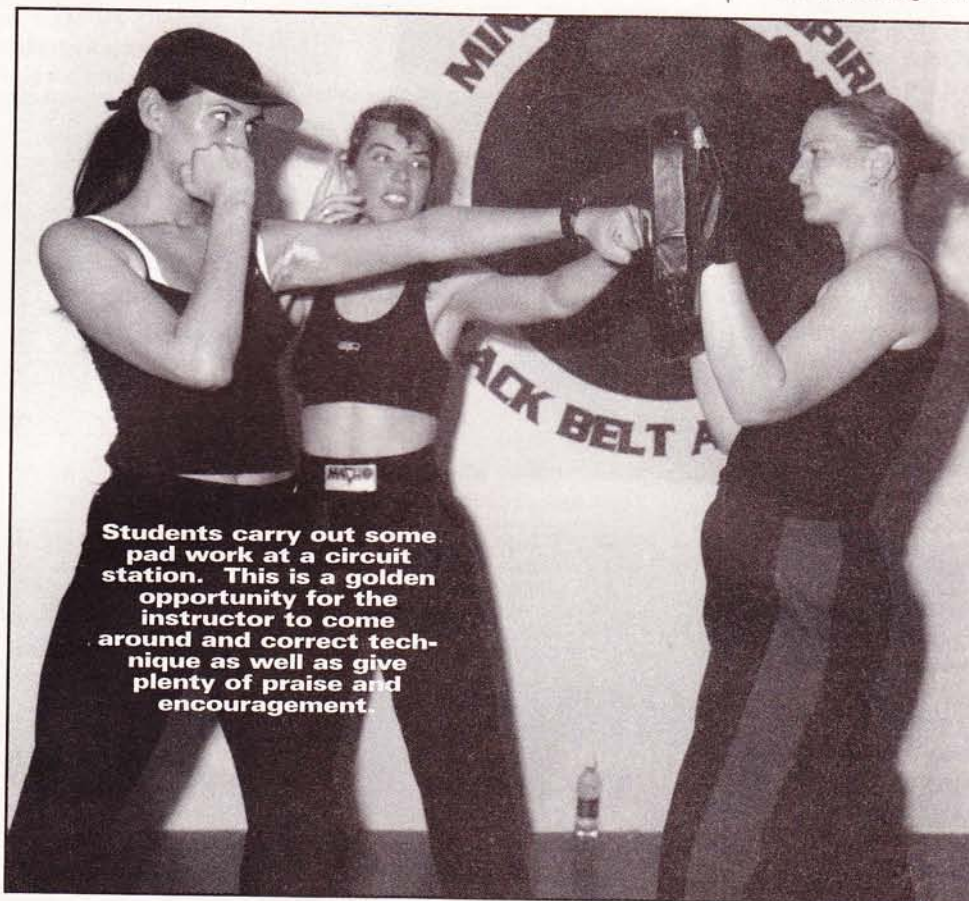
Never allow someone into the class without them having attended an appropriate introductory class first and filled out a

medical questionnaire. Always check that your beginner has the required health and fitness and if in doubt ask for a doctor's note of approval. Remember:

1. Before you start the warm-up make the beginner at ease, you should intro-

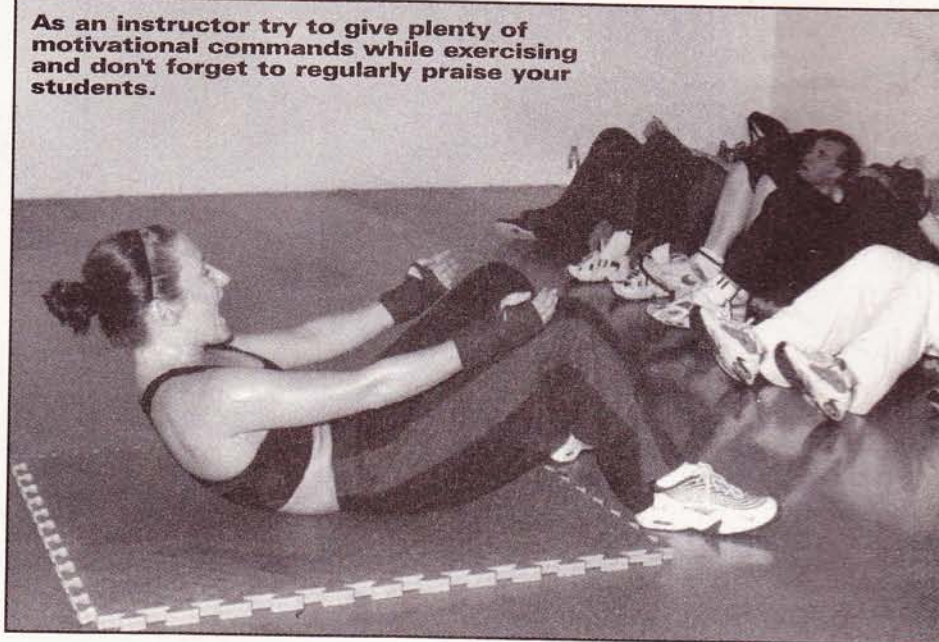
2. Ask everybody if they are feeling well and if anybody has any injuries to report. Always ask the students as a group if they are feeling well and give them the opportunity to inform you of any injuries they may have by specifically asking them at the beginning of the class. Even

better, if you have time, ask them individually because people are more likely to admit their injuries in private. If you find they have, for example, a back or knee injury you may need to tell them to avoid certain exercises or advise them to keep the movement low impact at all times. On some occasions you may need to discourage them from training, particularly if they are suffering from a virus or a serious injury. Always remind the students that if they get tired, they should not stop dead, but



**Students carry out some pad work at a circuit station. This is a golden opportunity for the instructor to come around and correct technique as well as give plenty of praise and encouragement.**

**As an instructor try to give plenty of motivational commands while exercising and don't forget to regularly praise your students.**



duce yourself as you may not have carried out a beginner's introductory class. Make sure you have had a look at their medical questionnaire so that you are aware of any possible complications, for example one of your students may be asthmatic.

just march on the spot. This will avoid dizziness and sore muscles the next day.

3. Check to see that the students are wearing the appropriate footwear. This needs to be a good pair of trainers that absorb impact (the ideal are aerobic trainers or cross trainers). This is important as poor footwear will rapidly lead to





**injuries.** If you are using equipment, you may need to encourage the students to get some hand wraps or boxing gloves.

4. Get the students to organise their partners at the beginning of the class. If you are planning to do partner work at some point, this is an appropriate time to organise the students so that they don't waste time during the class.

5. Give explanation and instruction on how to use and hold specific bits of equipment for exercises: Depending on how you are structuring the class, you may need to give some explanation about what you are going to do and how to carry out specific exercises rather than leaving the students to their own devices. This is particularly important if you are doing circuit training.

If you are carrying out a class where all people have to do is follow you, then there is no need to do any further talk apart from the motivational commands for the exercises. If you are using equipment or carrying out circuits, then you must demonstrate the different exercises, particularly emphasising how to hold equipment correctly as well as carry out the exercises safely.

Unlike standard martial arts

classes, once you get started you don't get any natural pauses which allow you to give further in-depth explanation of a technique as these types of classes are continuous, not stop start. It is a good idea to demonstrate how to carry out a particular kick and remind students of the safety points about kicking and punching (correct body alignment and so on) at the beginning of the class. You should also advise them of alternative exercises, particularly if you have beginners mixed with more advanced or if you have individuals with specific injuries. If you are lucky enough to have a spare instructor, use them to show the alternative version of the technique appropriate for the beginner. For example, you may wish intermediate/advanced people to kick high and beginners to kick low.

No matter how much you tell your students they will still try to copy what you are doing, so giving them an alternative picture with another instructor will avoid this to a certain extent. Ideally it is best to separate beginners from the intermediate and

advanced classes.

6. Avoid participating in stations, use this occasion for further correction of the students: Station work is another ideal time where you can go round the stations correcting people on their technique. You must avoid joining in the stations and ignoring the other students as they may carry out a technique incorrectly and injure themselves. Remember when you are correcting students give them plenty of praise and encouragement before and after correcting them.

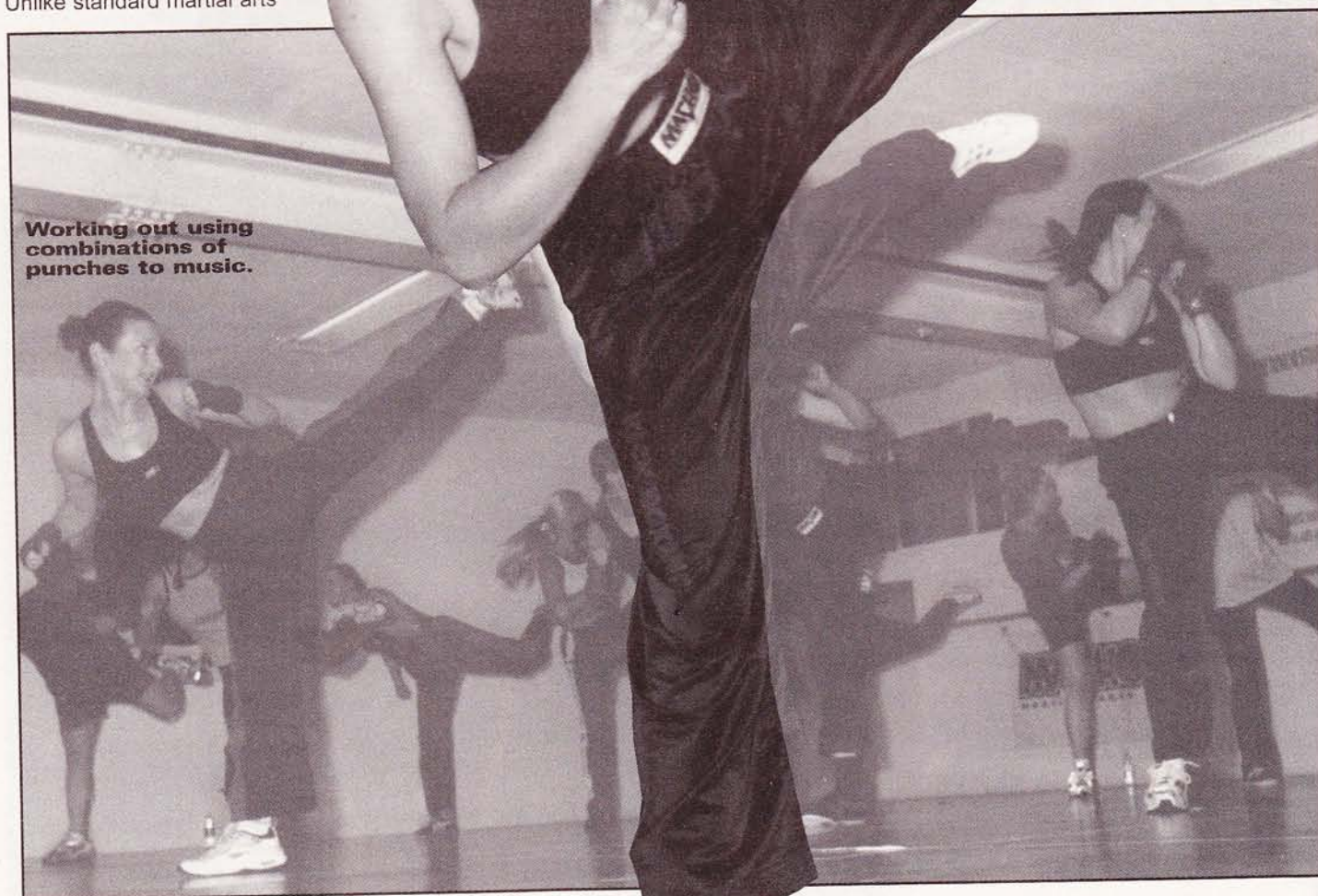
The golden rule is: Keep your eagle eye on your students as you are responsible for their bodies.

7. Get your students to take sips of water regularly. This is important to avoid dehydration, particularly in the summer months.

So, to summarise, here are ten useful tips on getting started with cardio style lessons.

Before you get started make sure that you have done the following:

1. Introduced yourself to new members.



**Working out using combinations of punches to music.**



2. Ask everybody if they are feeling well and if anybody has any injuries to report.

3. Never allow anybody to do the class without having done an appropriate introductory class and filled out a medical questionnaire.

4. Check that everybody is wearing appropriate footwear.

5. Remind students how to carry out a specific technique if you haven't done it for a while. Demonstrate the technique.

6. Show the students how to hold a piece of equipment safely.

7. Demonstrate the circuits you are going to use.

8. Remind people to march if they are

tired rather than just stop.

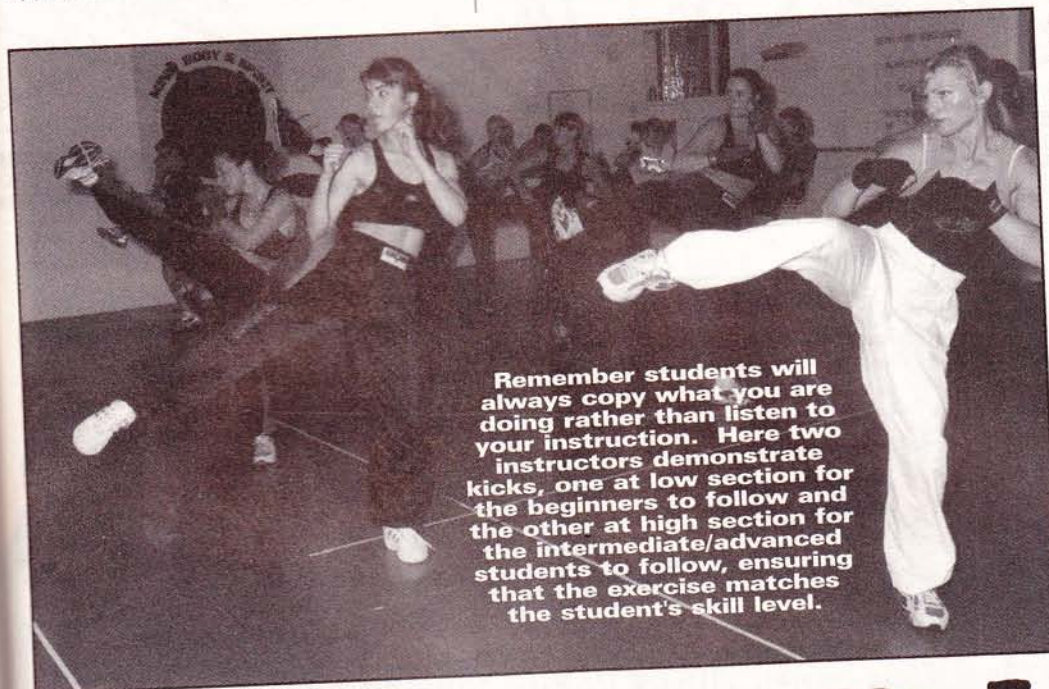
9. Demonstrate alternative exercises to people with specific injuries or use a second instructor to demonstrate the alternative.

10. Encourage the students to take sips of water throughout the class.

It seems like a lot to do before you get started but the key is to keep the explanation short and simple and be well organised before hand.

Part 2 of this article will encompass how to structure a class, examples of stations that could be used and how to mark a student's progression.

Catarina Murphy of Frank Murphy's Black Belt Schools now offers accreditation in teaching martial arts to music which you may adapt to your style. For further details on course dates Tel: 01474 326967.



Remember students will always copy what you are doing rather than listen to your instruction. Here two instructors demonstrate kicks, one at low section for the beginners to follow and the other at high section for the intermediate/advanced students to follow, ensuring that the exercise matches the student's skill level.

## V1 Getting Started & V2 Early Patterns

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