

# Boxer's Book of Conditioning & Drilling

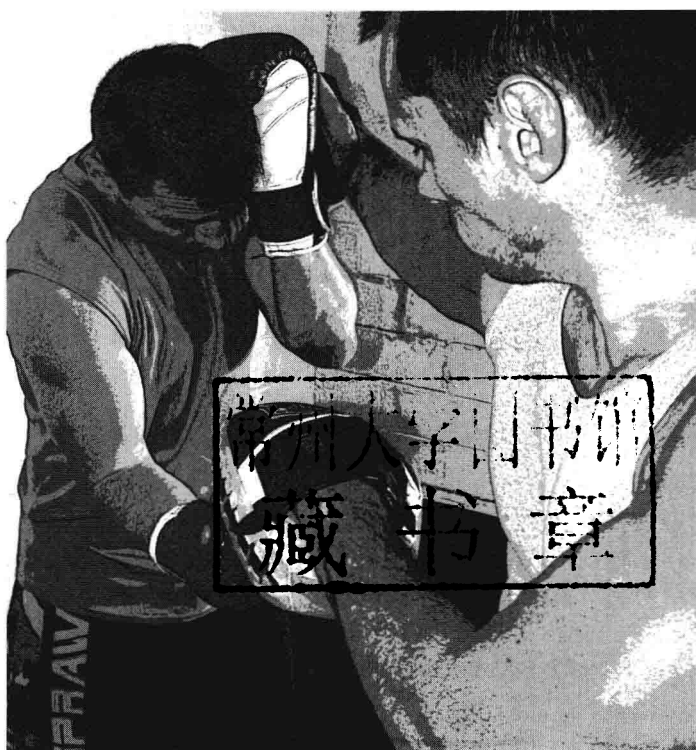
**Mark Hatmaker**

Author of:  
No Holds Barred Fighting Series  
Boxing Mastery  
No Second Chance  
MMA Mastery Series



# ***Boxer's Book of Conditioning & Drilling***

***Mark Hatmaker***



Cover photo by Mitch Thomas  
Interior photos by Doug Werner

**TRACKS**

Tracks Publishing  
San Diego, California

# ***Boxer's Book of Conditioning & Drilling***

## ***Mark Hatmaker***



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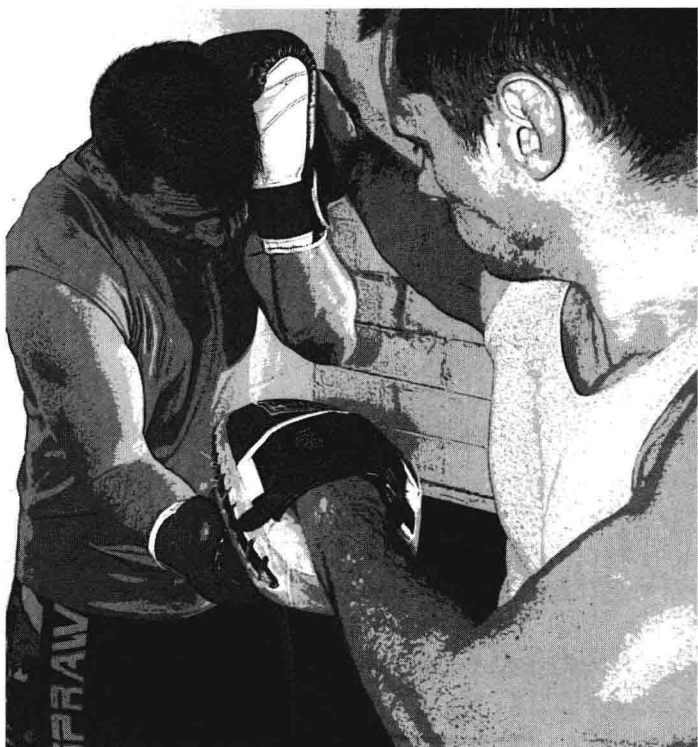
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## ***Books by Mark Hatmaker***

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Ultimate Guide to Submission Wrestling

More No Holds Barred Fighting:  
Killer Submissions

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
Savage Strikes

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
Takedowns

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Clinch

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Ultimate Guide to Conditioning

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Kicking Bible

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Book of Essential Submissions

Boxing Mastery

No Second Chance:  
A Reality-Based Guide to Self-Defense

MMA Mastery:  
Flow Chain Drilling and Integrated O/D Training

MMA Mastery:  
Ground and Pound

MMA Mastery:  
Strike Combinations

Boxer's Book of Conditioning & Drilling



Books are available through major bookstores  
and booksellers on the Internet.

*Dedicated to all the  
"Sweet Scientists" out  
there who have experi-  
mented and continue to  
experiment in the gyms  
and rings of the world  
pushing the sport and  
science ever further.*

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**Warning label**

The fighting arts include contact and can be dangerous. Use proper equipment and train safely. Practice with restraint and respect for your partners. Drill for fun, fitness and to improve skills. Do not fight with the intent to do harm.

## *Introduction*

**“Fights are  
won in the  
gym, not in  
the ring.”**

**— Unknown**

Stop me if you've heard this one before. Nah, scratch that, I'm going to say it anyway. I'm going to hit you with something you've heard time and again, something you already know. Something you've heard come out of the mouths of boxing coaches, trainers and ringside

commentators hundreds (if not thousands) of times. And we can only assume that this bit of repeated advice was being uttered in some form or another long before someone decided to write it down. You ready for repetition #4,347,771?

“Fights are won in the gym, not in the ring.”

Too bad we can't track down with any surety who first uttered these wise words so we could give them full credit, but my guess is that some form of this advice has been around as long as human beings decided to make a sport out of smacking each other around. We can easily imagine pancratium masters in ancient Greece exhorting their protégés with these wise words, or gladiator trainers (doctores) urging their charges on with some version of the phrase.

**“Chance  
favors only  
the prepared  
mind.”**

**— Dr. Louis Pasteur**

This advice holds true not only in boxing but in all combat sports. Wrestling has a long tradition of brutal training regimens, and today's mixed martial arts (MMA) fighters have adopted the axiom as well. In truth, the axiom holds for all

human endeavors that require any level of elevated performance. Whether it be competitive sprinting, heightened musicianship, chess prowess, military endeavors, you name it — if it requires a level of skill, the key to successful performance lies in the training — not the mere observation of the end result. In other words, to paraphrase the axiom, what we see in the ring is indicative of what preceded it in the gym/training phase. Or performance is a reflection of the work that preceded it. If you don't like what you see reflected, you know how to change it.

I repeat, performance level in the ring or any endeavor is more a reflection of preparation than that of any other variable. Yes, luck does factor in, no doubt about that. We have to accept the phenomenon of the lucky punch, the “out of nowhere” dropper, but we can draw some comfort from a corollary to “Fights are won in the gym, not in the ring.” That corollary is the axiom “Chance favors the prepared mind.” (We can source this one — Dr. Louis Pasteur.)

Let's be precise and respectful of Dr. Pasteur and give the more literal translation of his quote. What he actually said was, "In the fields of observation, chance favors only the prepared mind." The literal translation is a bit narrower, but to our advantage because it more readily highlights the wisdom of the first axiom. The nice, more loosely translated version of Dr. Pasteur's quote leads one to think that preparation is ideal, but apparently chance also favors random individuals in an infinite number of scenarios. In other words, if we were allowed to put 100 professionally trained boxers in the ring with the best version of Mike Tyson, we can imagine or expect a sizable proportion of those professionally trained 100 to do rather well. But the loose version of the quote also allows for the possibility that out of 100 nontrained folks entering the ring *mano a mano* with Iron Mike, a handful might do well via chance alone.

Now, honestly, can you picture any of the average Joes you meet on a day-to-day basis coming out on top in a head-to-head match with the 21-year-old Iron Mike? I can't. Let's return to the strict interpretation of the esteemed doctor's quote, "Chance favors only the prepared mind." The word "only" is key. Your "luck" is wholly and solely dependent on your level of preparation.

OK, I've restated an obvious training axiom and belabored the loose translation of the words of a dead French scientist. To what purpose you may ask? There is a tendency to focus on the end result of training — the glory of victory, the appreciation of smooth performance. But what we see in the ring, the end result, is

but the tip of the iceberg.

I want to take away all wiggle room regarding getting your butt into the gym. I want to kill any excuse generating mechanism that allows anyone not to do what must be done to be a successful boxer (successful anything for that matter). I want to remove any and all barriers between you and luck. As we know, luck, by definition, is a chance thing. If you are so lucky as to have some once-in-a-lifetime chance in your favor, and you see it and recognize it for what it is, but you didn't do the prep work to capitalize, well, then, you have no one to blame but yourself. So say again ...

"Fights are won in the gym, not in the ring."

## ***10,000 hours<sup>1</sup>***

10,000 hours? What's that? That is the consensus estimate of how many hours of training it takes to master a subject or skill. Ten thousand hours is a lot of time. We have 8,760 hours available to us per year. Out of those 8,760 hours, we have to find time to eat, sleep, earn a living, relax with friends and family and a few other necessities. Where are we going to find these 10,000 hours?

Let's assume an industry standard of eight hours per night sleeping for a total of 2,920 hours. That leaves only 5,840 of our yearly total. Let's add in a day job and assume full-time hours with weekends off, a couple of weeks for vacation and a few personal days scattered

1. For books on the 10,000 hours hypotheses see *The Genius in All of Us* by David Shenk or *Talent is Overrated* by Geoff Colvin. If you've got time for only one, go with Shenk.

**10,000 hours?**  
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here and there. That uses up an estimated 1,920 hours per year leaving us 3,929 hours. We still have to eat, commute to and from work, go to the store, shower, hit the bathroom, interact with friends and family, veg in front of the TV, Xbox or the Net (insert needless vice of your choosing here). Figure your own numbers to

subtract. So where are these 10,000 hours going to come from?

Before we try to find the time, let's first recognize that the 10,000 hours number refers to mastery or elite level performance. It does not refer to competent performance, "pretty damn good" performance or great performance. Ten thousand hours merely gives us a rough ETA for the apex of performance. That means somewhere between zero hours and 10,000 hours there is an entire spectrum of skill that we can attain and use to our benefit along the way. Giving up at zero because one can't jump to 10,000 is ludicrous. There are many excellent athletes not at the 10,000-hour mark who make good use of their current in between measures. The key is to not see the 10,000 hours number as a barrier, but as an impetus — a metaphorical fire under the posterior to get to work now recognizing that even the first hour of training contributes to

The way to  
10,000 hours  
begins right  
now — at  
minute  
one.

the 10,000 hour total. On the other hand, procrastination (choosing defeat by default) gets you nothing.

How about another quote? This one is from either Lao Tzu or Confucius depending on your source.

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Let's paraphrase this to better fit our needs:

The way to 10,000 hours begins right now — at minute one.

## ***Are you experienced?***

Mr. Hendrix asked this very question referring to an area of endeavor outside the focus of this book, but the question is still pertinent. The aforementioned 10,000 hour mark leads many to believe that simply putting in the time makes us golden, but, alas, not so much.

If time were simply all it took to be great, we'd have to come up with a new word for great because great would be the new average. To illustrate how experience and longevity aren't all they are cracked up to be, look at those around you. Those who have been in

their jobs for lengthy periods, those who have been weekend athletes or after work gym rats for years. To be blunt, look to your own personal lives. Look at how many years you have been a husband, a wife, a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a friend. Ask yourself if experience and years on the job are all it takes. Are you the best husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, friend, employee, employer or weekend athlete you can be? Does your current performance match your years of experience?

Before anyone gets insulted, we all have areas where we have “years on the job” and yet perform like rookies. You’ve probably heard this key question before, “Do you have five years experience or have you repeated the same year five times?” That two-pronged question is what designing better training regimens is about — not repeating the same year again and again but always progressing. This breaking of stalemate work and commitment to continuous progression is called, in cognitive learning circles, deliberate practice.

Deliberate practice spells all the difference. Let’s be honest, most of us are athletes who put random time in the gym lifting some weights here, banging the bag there and overall simply maintaining what skill and conditioning levels we had when we walked through the door. Utilizing deliberate practice, this very same athlete could potentially spend as much time in the gym (in many cases even less) with progressively designed General Physical Preparedness (GPP) and Specific Physical Preparedness (SPP) training regimens and always edge onward and upward (more on these two later).



Deliberate practice requires that we always keep an eye on weaknesses whether these be in conditioning (quickly fatiguing shoulders, poor recovery between rounds and the like), or in specific skill work (such as poor elbow alignment in hooks or lagging footwork), and address our weaknesses, whatever they may be at the time, and bring them up to snuff. Deliberate practice asks us to continuously monitor all aspects of our game (conditioning and skill) and always tweak components of our training to inch our conditioning and skill work ever upward.

The deliberate practice approach to training says that we cannot simply put in hours at the gym with our minds disengaged. We must be ever aware of what we are doing at the very moment we are doing it while also keeping an eye on where we want to be. We must assess daily and ask the question, "What can I do today, do right now that will lend itself to closing the gap between my present ability and my ideal self?"

With this working definition of deliberate practice in mind, ask yourself, right now this minute, whether what you're doing in the gym is moving you forward and adding to your experience, or are you spinning your wheels repeating year one.