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## 9Round Kickboxing Fitness Center opens in Lafayette

By Jon Kingdon



Photo Jon Kingdon

There's not a lot you can do in three minutes besides boiling an egg and getting into a ring to box and dance while trying to avoid being hit. Multiply those three minutes by nine and you will be able to get a complete workout at the recently opened 9Round Fitness Gym located at 3561 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette, which is bringing a new perspective to conditioning and working out.

The philosophy of 9Round is to have "nine rounds" of a kickboxing-themed fitness program that incorporates a functional, interval, cardiovascular and circuit training regimen. Each round is three minutes, like in a boxing match, and is completed in 30 minutes. Though proper punching and various kicks are taught, the emphasis is on strength, conditioning and cardiovascular work.

This is very much of a drop-in business designed to allow the individual to show up at any time to work out without an appointment, says Vladimir Volkov, the proprietor of the gym: "The big thing that we pride ourselves on is that no one has to have a scheduled time. When you have 30 minutes, you can show up and there will always be a trainer on site. It's our belief that quality is better than quantity. We feel that people should be able to work out whenever they want. The most someone

will have to wait to begin their workout is three minutes. Thirty minutes - you're in and out with a killer workout."

The programs are designed for males and females ranging in age from 14 to 72, but Volkov is willing to consider those younger than 14: "If a younger person comes in and can handle the workout and has fun, they can be accepted."

With each three-minute period, there is a new exercise from jumping rope to punching a speed bag, performing shin kicks, leg kicks and side kicks, throwing jabs and crosses, working every part of the body. It all comes together for the complete body workout, says Volkov: "It can be a very long three minutes. The workouts are scaled for all ages and levels of skill and conditioning with everyone able to work out alongside each other. We start slow and then build up the workouts. Everyone wears a heart rate monitor to determine how hard they are working and we, along with the individuals, are able to see it up on a screen. If people are working too hard, if their heart rate is too high, we will step in and see that they scale down their efforts. With our program, people will be able to see the results in a short while."

Volkov, who came to the United States from Kazhakstan 25 years ago, has a background in judo, free style wrestling and kickboxing, joined the 9Round family, going back to their headquarters and became a certified trainer and franchise owner of one of the 700 9Round gyms around the country.

Living in Walnut Creek, he was attracted to Lafayette: "It's a nice family, fitness-oriented area. I love the location and the people are great. We have been welcomed into the neighborhood and our new customers have enjoyed what we have been offering."

9Round is not a big gym but it is set up so that there is room for nine people to comfortably work out simultaneously at each station under the direction of Volkov and other trainers: "It's a small boutique so you will come to know the other people working out."

The gym does not have a locker room but does have a changing room and a place for people to put their valuables. All that is required is to bring running shoes and workout gear with the studio providing boxing gloves, hand wraps to protect the wrists and knuckles and a heart monitor.

Lexi Smith, a senior at Saint Mary's College, has been a regular at 9Round: "I have a friend who was working out here and she said it was the best workout she had ever done. I came in and it was the best workout I've ever done. I was sore, but in a good way. I felt like I got my butt kicked, but I have been coming here for over a month and I feel really strong and have a bunch of energy. Vladimir is like having a personal trainer."

9Round has a set fee of \$138 per month. The members are able to work out as many times a day as they want Monday through Saturday, with the only proviso that one cannot do two circuits consecutively.

Volkov appreciates how the studio looks from the outside: "It may look intimidating so we offer a free workout for people to come in and go through our workout. If they like it, we welcome them and if they don't, we're not forcing anyone to stay. My goal is to make it fun and to create challenges every week so those who start on Monday and finish on Saturday will see the progress they made during the week. We'll make you strong both physically and mentally. I want people to have fun when they're here."

9Round is open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m and from 4 to 8 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they open at 6 a.m. and on Saturdays they are open from 8 a.m. to noon. They are closed on Sundays.

Free parking is available behind the gym.

Reach the reporter at: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

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