

Punching through stereotypes: Nishat Khan's unconventional path to boxing success

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Online Desk: In a dimly lit boxing ring a female boxer steps into the squared circle to face an opponent. The air is charged with anticipation as the two fighters lock their eyes, dispelling the notion that boxing is solely for men. Does it seem like a scene from a movie? Well, it is not! Nishat Khan, a professional boxer and fashion designer, has been breaking stereotypes with her jab and hook, proving that boxing prowess has nothing to do with gender, but entirely on skill and dedication.

Her dual career as a professional boxer and fashion designer exemplifies strength and style —showcasing it's possible to excel in seemingly contrasting fields. So, what made her decide to step into the world of boxing despite having a successful career as a fashion designer?

Khan answers, “I was passionate about fashion designing from an early age; however, I started boxing a bit later, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when I was transitioning from my 20s to 30s.”

Her passion for boxing was primarily sparked by a desire for fitness as she sought physical and mental growth.

“A solo trip to Phuket marked a pivotal moment in my life,” recounts Khan, continuing, “I went there not for vacation, but as a journey of self-discovery and this led me to challenge societal expectations and pursue boxing — despite being told that boxing is a manly sport and it was too late for me to start fighting.”

Undeterred by the scepticism that surrounded her, Khan continued to train as a boxer, ready to prove that skill and tenacity trumped gender stereotypes. Growing up, Khan found inspiration within her family, particularly her elder brother, who was a major influence in her self-development. Video games featuring strong and self-determining female characters like those in Resident Evil and Tomb Raider also shaped her ideals. “These girls had style and the ability to take anyone down and I was obsessed with it!” shares Khan.

Khan's interest in boxing was sparked by attending a match. “My first boxing match inspired me the most,” she says, emphasising the supportive environment of her team that played a crucial role in overcoming initial challenges.



Reflecting on her most memorable fight, Khan shares, “Fighting taught me to be calm, disciplined, and focused. Most importantly, it taught me to be humble and grateful.” Boxing has not only shaped her physically but also instilled a deep sense of humility and appreciation for life’s blessings.

Nevertheless, as a fashion designer and boxer, how does Nishat Khan balance her dual careers? Khan mentions, “Being a daughter, daughter-in-law, wife, friend, entrepreneur and athlete are all demanding jobs and juggling different lives is not easy. Prioritising is the key! You won’t be able to do everything nor will you be able to please everyone.” Her approach involves adjusting her focus based on her priorities.

Khan’s fitness regimen is proof of her commitment and discipline. During training camp, her routine is rigorous and structured: running, followed by two or three hours of training in the day, then rest, and another two to three hours of training in the evening – punctuated by meals and sleep, with occasional massages as a cherished respite.

Off camp, her dedication remains unwavering, with workouts five to six times a week, sometimes twice a day, incorporating yoga, boxing, strength, and conditioning. She emphasises the importance of nutrition, “Never forget to eat healthy, as you are what you eat,” reflecting her holistic approach to fitness and well-being.

Looking ahead, Khan aims to inspire and innovate. She voices, “My journey has not been to be the best boxer but do something I was passionate about — the freedom to be able to say ‘Why not?’ She seeks to advocate for the introduction of martial arts in schools, emphasising its benefits for mental and physical health.

Nishat Khan’s journey showcases the transformative power of breaking barriers. As we celebrate Khan’s victories inside and outside the ring, let us remember that the fight for equality is ongoing. May her story inspire us not only to challenge stereotypes but to dismantle them, brick by brick, until the arena of life is a level playing field for all.