


Never miss a beat! **Subscribe!**

TER EMAIL

 Connect with Facebook

My ride is your ride.

Sidecar

[home](#) [meet cheeky](#) [eats](#) [scene and be seen](#) [fit 'n' pretty](#) [lifestyle](#) [arts and culture](#) [perks](#) [events](#) [press](#)

## Powerstrike at Equinox

### The Ultimate Hangover Cure

by *Jamie Hamburg* – November 19, 2008

[Tweet](#) [Tweet](#) 

Saturday is my workout day. No Blackberry ringing off the hook, no lingering end-of-the-day deadlines and no pushy Chicago commuters giving me hell about the huge gym bag I take to work (probably because I hit an average of three of them a day with it).

But, alas...although I often say that I have a strict “must work out” policy on Saturday morning, there’s one problem with this commitment: Saturday morning comes after Friday night, the most tempting night of the entire week. I try my best to take it easy, but I somehow always find myself enjoying one too many Friday happy hour martinis. Bottom line, it takes a heck of a lot to get me to that gym bright and early Saturday morning, as the smell of Cosmopolitans past still lingers on my breath.

Thank the lord for Equinox’s Marcelo Ehrhardt and his 9 a.m. Powerstrike class, an energetic, yet challenging 60 minutes that fuse American kickboxing with karate. I spend a majority of my walk to the gym feeling sorry for myself and my 8 a.m. hangover. I’m still in that “poor me” mode – right until Marcelo walks through the door with his signature morning opener, “Good morning everyone! How are we feeling today? Are we ready to work!?” From that point forward, it’s a whole new ballgame.

The next hour is a mixture of kicks, jabs, crosses, lunges and fun martial arts combinations set to a background of playful Latin and pop music. And, of course, the ever constant sound of Marcelo’s voice pushing me to kick a little higher and punch a little harder. The class flows so smoothly and he rarely misses a beat.

“The goal for anyone that takes my class is for them to get a fulfilling sense of accomplishment and have fun while they are getting fit,” says Ehrhardt. “It’s all about the experience. Whether you’re new or have been taking my class for years, I just want you to have a great time, while getting in some hardcore cardio.”

Ehrhardt was part of the original group of trainers that studied to teach Powerstrike back in 2000. To ensure that he would be providing the best quality teaching, he took various classes, including boxing, Adojo and Karate. He also teaches Impact, a class that incorporates moves from Powerstrike, allowing people to vent their anger by punching at a bag, instead of the air.

“What makes this class different than any other kickboxing class is, not only the fusion of karate, but also what it does for YOU,” says Ehrhardt. “The class is structured so that, with some determination, anyone can catch on. You walk out of here with a great cardio workout and a sense of accomplishment for mastering these techniques.”

The second half of class is the most exciting because Marcelo creates new punching and kicking combinations each week. Usually by a quarter to 10 a.m., I’m really struggling to push myself to finish strong...and so is Marcelo. He’s always saying, “This is the point in your workout where you need to tell your body to keep going. Do not give up!” It’s as if he has psychic powers!

Yet, even after you consistently go to classes for a few months and can anticipate the next punch, the class is never boring. In fact, sometimes I feel like I get a better workout because I can focus on form and strength instead of worrying about keeping up with the instructor.

“This class is definitely technique-based, and that’s why it’s such a great cardio and toning workout,” says Ehrhardt. “But, once you catch on to the moves, you can still continue to get the most of your workout and push yourself to the limit.”

This class is suitable for the advanced class-takers, but I can attest to the fact that it welcomes beginners, as I am extremely uncoordinated! I was totally lost in the first class, but something about Marcelo’s attitude and the challenge of his workout kept me coming back. Within three weeks, I felt like a pro!

And, for all those first-timers, Marcelo has some advice: “Stay committed, have fun, take baby steps. If it’s intimidating and you’re tired, just come back. It’s all about **you**. Just jump in, and if you keep going and stay committed, you’ll see changes.”

Powerstrike and Impact are available at all three Chicago Equinox locations. For more information on times and locations, go to [www.equinoxfitness.com](http://www.equinoxfitness.com).

