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What do you most value in life?
My freedom of choice.

What scares you the most?
I have a fear of failure – but I see it as something positive as it keeps me striving to achieve my goals.

Where and who do you train?
I coach at my academy, Ray's Kickboxing Academy (RKA) in Wynberg, Cape Town. We've taught hundreds of men, women and children. We also teach children in townships like Imizamo Yethu in Hout Bay, where it is really having a positive effect on the children.

If you met danger in a dark alley, who would come off worst?
Danger!

What is it about contact sport that gets your blood rushing?

The adrenaline rush you feel before a fight is exhilarating – I enjoy training hard and then putting my skills to the test in the ring.

Do you travel much?

I've travelled to some of the best Thai boxing gyms in the world – especially in Thailand, where it is the national sport.

What is always in your suitcase when you travel?

Umm ... my hairdryer. Believe it or not, I always carry a skipping rope so that if I'm feeling like I need to train and don't have access to a gym, I can have a workout in my hotel room!

You don't mess with Rayana Ameeroedien. South Africa's Thai boxing bantamweight champion and the nation's first female Thai boxing promoter is a hard-hitting sportswoman, businesswoman and anti-violence campaigner. And a really nice person ...

Boxing clever



WHAT IS FIGHT GIRLS?

Fight Girls South Africa is an all-women's Thai boxing event organised by Rayana and her company, Team Ray Promotions. "The first Fight Girls SA tournament, which was held in Cape Town in celebration of National Women's Day, was a huge success," Rayana says. "The women fighters on the Fight Girls SA stage are talented, skillful and humble. They are serious athletes who participate in a brutal sport. It's important to me that these fighters have positive attitudes both in and out of the ring because they will be seen as role models in the future."

Rayana uses Fight Girls to create awareness about safety, to highlight violence against women and children, and support women in sport and women in general.

"My team's T-shirts feature the slogan "Woman Stand Up" on their backs. We attend schools on a weekly basis where I do motivational speaking and encourage youths to be aware of their own safety – it is our responsibility as parents and educators to protect our future generations."

What can't you live without?

Love, fresh air and my dogs, who give me unconditional love and never have bad moods.

What was your funniest or most memorable travelling experience?

I was travelling with my boyfriend once, and we had an argument on the plane. He ended up giving the gold earrings he had wanted to surprise me with to an old lady sitting behind us ... It was hilarious!

“The adrenaline rush you feel before a fight is exhilarating”

Describe yourself (honestly!) in three words.

Headstrong, compassionate, determined.

If you could be anyone in the world, who would that be?

I would probably be the president of South Africa – then I'd build kickboxing gyms in every school around the country! Children would be more aware of their own safety and the coaching would instill in them self-discipline, teach them about self-defence and give them a sense of belonging.

Are you ever a couch potato?

I wish I could be – I just can't sit still for too long! There are days, though, when I have to slow down. I switch off my phone and watch DVDs on my couch – but not often!

What music's playing on your iPod or in your car?

Nelly Furtado and Pink.

What exercise regime does it take to get a body like yours?

Since becoming a promoter, I don't spend as much time in the gym as I'd like to, so I've gained some weight. But, if you want a great body, I would suggest taking up Thai boxing – it provides a brilliant all-round body workout! I also try to maintain a balanced diet and drink lots of water.

Thai boxing

- Is also known as Muay Thai.
- Uses boxing techniques, hard kicking, knee and elbow strikes, and stand-up grappling.
- Training includes running, shadow boxing and heavy bag work.
- Most women and men use Thai boxing to build self-esteem and as a form of self-defence.
- For more information, visit www.muaythaissa.com.

Can you cook? What does a typical night's dinner look like?

Yes, a bit. I keep meals healthy and simple, it's mainly stir-fries on the go with protein and veggies. Tasty!

What is the best training food for breakfast? Lunch? Dinner?

Breakfast? Bran flakes. Lunch? Chicken. Dinner? Fish.

Where do you live and why?

I live in Cape Town because it's one of the most beautiful cities in the world!

If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be?

To be more patient – I'm an Aries, very impatient!

Your last words are ...

Commit to your passion and you will succeed.

By Sarah Kattel



Whose suitcase would you like us to raid next? Please send your suggestions to:

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