

Angie Zuniga has worn out plenty of boxing gloves in her day.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL COREY

## Hooked on boxing

Angie Zuniga defines tough love. One minute, she'll be shouting at a boxer to keep her gloves up—45 minutes into an intense workout. The next, she'll be laughing while "working the mitts" with a guy a foot taller than she, holding her ground while catching scripted punch combinations.

Zuniga has come a long way. She battled through her childhood with an absentee mother and father. She worked a full-time job, raised four sons as a single mother and earned her GED—boxing all along the way. Now she is a **trainer at Flawless Boxing & Fitness** on Broadway, where since 2015 she has worked alongside Brandon "Flawless" Gonzales, a boxing phenom in his own right. Though the 5-foot-3-inch Zuniga is only a bit older than Gonzales, there was a time when she made up an integral part of his coaching staff. SN&R roped in Zuniga to chat about her lifelong love of pugilism.

### Who was your toughest opponent?

So my toughest fight was with Samantha Vega. I usually fought in the Bay Area, but we fought at Colonial Theatre on Stockton Boulevard in Sacramento; the venue has got a lot of history. This girl was from somewhere close to Fresno.

They used to look at me as, you know, an experienced boxer, 'cause these girls were coming up, and I was in my late 20s. And what happened was, we were going at it: I hit her "bottom-up," and then she came forward. She was a little taller than me, and she hit me in the

chin. I backed up because she'd wobbled me, and I felt one of my legs start to shake. Instead of covering up, I went forward to fight her. I remember just swinging, and she backed off. I recouped and then the bell rang. After that, the last round was an all-out fight. That was an awesome fight.

### How about another notable contest?

I qualified for the California Golden Gloves in 2010. I was almost 35 years old. I had to lose one pound to make weight. I went to the sauna at 24 Hour Fitness and my trainer made me walk and spit over and over.

### What sort of music do you like to listen to in the gym?

I listen to old-school. Music like Rick James, Michael Jackson, but you know, upbeat stuff. I like Teena Marie, New Edition. Stuff with a beat. It keeps people going. And old-school hip-hop; I actually love to listen to Tupac.

### I've heard you talk about your back injury. Would you tell us about that?

I got hurt when I was 26. I was doing shipping and loading full-time, and to accommodate my boxing, I would double-shift. I'd work early in the morning and late at night. ... We were at the end of our shift. Everybody was leaving. We were unloading weight machines from a truck, shoving 'em out. And so I sat down, and pushed one back, and my back went out. I didn't stop unloading, but when I sat down later, I didn't get up.

My back was never the same, and I never fought the same, but I kept boxing. I survived my childhood. I survived being poor. I feel like boxing gave me the strength to be able to do anything. □

Zuniga trains boxers at Flawless Boxing—visit them at [flawlessboxingfit.com](http://flawlessboxingfit.com) or their gym at 600 Broadway.

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