

strength training for mma

Mastering the Cage: A Comprehensive Guide to Strength Training for MMA

strength training for mma is a cornerstone of peak performance, a vital component that separates champions from contenders. It's more than just lifting heavy weights; it's about developing functional strength, explosive power, muscular endurance, and injury resilience specifically tailored for the demands of mixed martial arts. This comprehensive guide delves deep into the essential principles, exercises, and programming strategies that every aspiring or seasoned MMA fighter must understand. We will explore how targeted strength work enhances grappling, striking, takedowns, and overall conditioning, while also addressing injury prevention and the crucial role of periodization in maximizing gains. Prepare to unlock your full potential in the octagon by understanding the intricate science behind building a stronger, more powerful, and more durable MMA athlete.

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The Foundational Pillars of Strength Training for MMA

For mixed martial artists, strength training is not a supplementary activity but an integral part of their athletic development. The demands of MMA are multifaceted, requiring a unique blend of raw power, speed, endurance, and the ability to withstand impact. Therefore, a well-rounded strength program must address these specific needs. The foundational pillars revolve around developing a robust core, enhancing overall muscular strength, improving power output, and building the resilience necessary to endure the grueling nature of training and competition. Neglecting any of these areas can create significant weaknesses that opponents can exploit.

The concept of functional strength is paramount here. This means exercises should mimic the movements and demands of MMA, translating gym gains into real-world performance on the mat or in the cage. This involves compound movements that engage multiple muscle groups simultaneously, simulating the coordinated effort required for striking combinations, grappling exchanges, and defensive maneuvers. A strong posterior chain, for instance, is critical for generating power in takedowns and maintaining balance during clinch work.

Essential Strength Training Exercises for MMA Fighters

The selection of exercises is critical to effectively build strength for MMA. The focus should be on compound movements that recruit large muscle groups and mimic athletic actions. These exercises form the backbone of any successful strength program for fighters. We aim to build a solid foundation of strength that can then be further refined for power and endurance.

Compound Lifts for Overall Strength

Compound exercises are the cornerstone of strength development for MMA. They engage multiple joints and muscle groups, promoting functional strength and improving hormonal response. These lifts are indispensable for building a strong base.

- **Squats:** Variations like barbell back squats, front squats, and goblet squats are crucial for lower body strength, core stability, and developing the power needed for takedowns and explosive movements off the ground.
- **Deadlifts:** Conventional deadlifts, Romanian deadlifts (RDLs), and sumo deadlifts build immense strength in the posterior chain, including the hamstrings, glutes, and lower back, all vital for power generation and injury prevention.
- **Bench Press:** While direct striking power comes from more dynamic movements, a strong bench press builds upper body pushing strength, beneficial for controlling opponents in the clinch and for general upper body resilience. Variations like incline and dumbbell bench presses can also be incorporated.
- **Overhead Press:** This builds shoulder and upper back strength, essential for maintaining posture, controlling an opponent's head, and delivering powerful strikes.
- **Rows:** Barbell rows, dumbbell rows, and cable rows develop upper back strength, which is crucial for pulling, grappling, and counteracting the forward lean common in striking arts.

Core Strength and Stability

A powerful and stable core is non-negotiable in MMA. It acts as the bridge between the upper and lower body, transferring force efficiently and protecting the spine from the concussive forces of strikes and takedowns. A weak core can lead to reduced power, poor balance, and an increased risk of injury.

- **Plank Variations:** Standard planks, side planks, and their dynamic variations (e.g., plank jacks, mountain climbers) build isometric strength and endurance in the entire core musculature.

- **Anti-Rotation Exercises:** Pallof presses (using cable or band resistance) are excellent for developing rotational stability, crucial for absorbing and generating rotational forces in striking and grappling.
- **Leg Raises and Hanging Leg Raises:** These target the lower abdominals and hip flexors, important for maintaining guard and for generating power in kicks and takedowns.
- **Russian Twists:** With or without weight, these improve rotational strength and power, simulating the twisting motion involved in many fighting techniques.
- **Farmer's Walks and Suitcase Carries:** These unilateral carries significantly challenge the core's ability to resist lateral flexion, building robust oblique and spinal erector strength.

Accessory and Functional Movements

Beyond the primary compound lifts, specific accessory and functional movements are vital to address the nuances of MMA. These exercises target smaller stabilizing muscles, improve mobility, and enhance sport-specific movements.

- **Lunges:** All variations of lunges (forward, reverse, lateral, walking) build unilateral leg strength, improve balance, and mimic the footwork and explosiveness required in fighting.
- **Pull-ups and Chin-ups:** Essential for developing upper body pulling strength, crucial for clinch work, takedowns, and improving overall back thickness and width.
- **Push-up Variations:** From plyometric push-ups to deficit push-ups, these build explosive upper body pushing power and shoulder stability.
- **Kettlebell Swings:** These are phenomenal for developing hip hinge explosiveness, conditioning the posterior chain, and building work capacity.
- **Rotational Medicine Ball Throws:** These exercises directly translate to explosive rotational power used in striking, allowing fighters to generate more force behind their punches and kicks.

Power Development: Explosive Strength for Striking and Takedowns

While raw strength is important, MMA fighters need to be able to express that strength explosively. Power is the combination of strength and speed, and it's what separates a slow, predictable fighter from a dynamic and dangerous one. Developing explosive power

is crucial for landing knockout blows, executing swift takedowns, and reacting instantaneously to an opponent's movements.

This type of training focuses on moving a sub-maximal load as fast as possible or performing movements that require maximal acceleration from a static or dynamic starting position. The goal is to improve the rate of force development (RFD), which is the speed at which muscles can generate force. This is often achieved through a combination of heavy lifting with intent to move fast and specific power-focused exercises.

Olympic Lifts and Derivatives

Olympic weightlifting movements, and their derivatives, are highly effective for developing explosive power. They teach the body to recruit a large number of muscle fibers rapidly and efficiently, engaging the entire kinetic chain from the ground up.

- **Cleans:** Power cleans, hang cleans, and clean and jerks develop explosive triple extension of the hips, knees, and ankles, directly translating to power in takedowns, sprawls, and striking.
- **Snatches:** Similar to cleans, snatches build incredible full-body explosiveness, particularly in the shoulders and upper back, which is beneficial for rapid striking and defensive movements.
- **Jerk Variations:** Power jerks and push jerks can improve the explosive lockout and transfer of power from the lower body through the upper body.

Plyometrics

Plyometric training, often referred to as jump training, involves exercises that use the stretch-shortening cycle to produce powerful movements. By rapidly pre-stretching a muscle and then contracting it, the force produced is significantly amplified.

- **Jump Squats:** Performing a squat and then jumping as high as possible develops explosive lower body power.
- **Box Jumps:** This exercise improves vertical explosiveness and the ability to absorb landing forces.
- **Depth Jumps:** Dropping from a box and immediately jumping as high as possible maximizes the stretch-shortening cycle for maximum power output.
- **Medicine Ball Throws:** Various throwing exercises (overhead, chest passes, rotational) enhance upper body and core explosive power, directly mimicking striking actions.
- **Bounding:** Exaggerated running strides that focus on height and distance are excellent for developing powerful, propulsive lower body movements.

Ballistic Training

Ballistic training involves exercises where the resistance is released at the end of the movement, allowing for maximal acceleration. This is a more advanced form of power training.

- **Kettlebell Swings (Explosive):** While mentioned for conditioning, when performed with maximal intent for speed, they become a ballistic power exercise.
- **Loaded Jumps:** Performing jumps while holding light dumbbells or kettlebells can increase the resistance and force production demands.
- **Olympic Lift Variations with Lighter Loads:** Performing cleans or snatches with loads around 50-70% of one-rep max, with the explicit goal of moving the bar as fast as possible, falls into this category.

Muscular Endurance: Sustaining Performance Through Rounds

Mixed martial arts fights are rarely short affairs. Competitors must maintain strength, power, and technique for multiple rounds, often under extreme fatigue. Muscular endurance, therefore, is as crucial as raw strength and explosive power. It allows fighters to continuously deliver effective strikes, maintain control in grappling situations, and defend against attacks without a significant drop-off in performance.

Developing muscular endurance involves training the muscles' ability to perform repeated contractions over an extended period. This can be achieved through higher repetitions, shorter rest periods, and circuit-style training. The aim is to improve the muscles' capacity to resist fatigue and sustain effort, allowing a fighter to maintain intensity throughout a bout.

Higher Repetition Strength Training

While heavy, low-rep sets are for maximal strength, higher repetition ranges are key for building muscular endurance. This means working within a rep range that challenges the muscles but allows for multiple repetitions to be completed.

- **Sets of 15-20+ Repetitions:** When performing compound or accessory exercises, aiming for higher rep counts builds the capacity of the muscle fibers to perform sustained work.
- **Circuit Training:** Moving from one exercise to another with minimal rest between exercises and sets is an excellent way to combine strength and cardiovascular demands, mimicking the demanding nature of a fight.

- **Timed Sets:** Performing as many repetitions as possible of an exercise within a set time frame (e.g., 60 seconds) can be a highly effective method for building muscular endurance.

Cardiovascular Conditioning Integration

While not strictly strength training, integrated cardiovascular conditioning is vital for muscular endurance in MMA. The cardiovascular system supports the muscles' ability to perform, delivering oxygen and removing waste products.

- **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT):** Short bursts of intense activity followed by brief recovery periods mimic the on-again, off-again nature of a fight and improve the body's ability to recover.
- **Sparring and Drills:** Regular sparring sessions and sport-specific drills are essential for developing fight-specific endurance.
- **Roadwork and Aerobic Base:** While less emphasized in pure strength programming, a solid aerobic base built through steady-state cardio is foundational for recovery and overall work capacity.

Strength Endurance Circuits

Creating circuits that incorporate strength exercises with minimal rest is a direct way to build strength endurance. These can be designed to target specific muscle groups or be full-body challenges.

- **Full Body Strength Endurance Circuit:** Example: Squats (15 reps), Push-ups (as many as possible), Bent-over Rows (15 reps), Plank (60 seconds), Kettlebell Swings (20 reps). Rest 60-90 seconds between rounds.
- **Upper Body Focused Circuit:** Example: Pull-ups (as many as possible), Dumbbell Bench Press (15 reps), Face Pulls (20 reps), Bicep Curls (15 reps).

Injury Prevention Through Strategic Strength Training

The inherent physicality of MMA makes injuries a significant concern. Effective strength training plays a critical role in mitigating this risk by building a more resilient and stable body. A fighter who is strong and balanced is less susceptible to common injuries such as sprains, strains, and joint damage. The focus here is on strengthening not just the primary

movers but also the smaller stabilizing muscles and connective tissues that support joints. Developing balanced strength is key. This means ensuring that opposing muscle groups are trained equally. For example, if the chest and front deltoids are heavily trained for punching power, the upper back and rear deltoids must also be strengthened to maintain shoulder health and posture. Neglecting this balance can lead to muscle imbalances, which are a major precursor to injury.

Strengthening Stabilizing Muscles

Many injuries occur due to a lack of control around joints, which is often a result of weak stabilizing muscles. These smaller muscles are crucial for maintaining joint integrity during dynamic movements.

- **Rotator Cuff Exercises:** Internal and external rotations with bands or light dumbbells are vital for shoulder stability, preventing impingement and tears.
- **Glute Activation:** Exercises like glute bridges, clam shells, and band walks strengthen the glutes, which are essential for hip stability, preventing lower back pain and knee issues.
- **Tibialis Raises:** Strengthening the muscles on the front of the shin helps prevent shin splints and improves ankle stability, crucial for footwork and absorbing impact.
- **Forearm and Grip Strength:** Exercises like farmer's walks, wrist curls, and grip trainers improve hand and forearm strength, reducing the risk of wrist and elbow injuries during grappling and striking.

Mobility and Flexibility Integration

While strength training builds muscle and resilience, proper mobility and flexibility are essential for full range of motion and injury prevention. Stiffness can lead to compensatory movements that strain other tissues.

- **Dynamic Stretching:** Performing controlled movements through a full range of motion before training (e.g., leg swings, arm circles, torso twists) prepares the body for activity and improves mobility.
- **Static Stretching:** Holding stretches after training can help improve flexibility and reduce muscle soreness. Focus on areas that tend to become tight in MMA, such as hips, hamstrings, and shoulders.
- **Foam Rolling and Myofascial Release:** Regularly using a foam roller can help release muscle tightness, improve blood flow, and enhance recovery, contributing to injury prevention.

Addressing Muscle Imbalances

As mentioned, imbalances can lead to injury. A strategic approach involves identifying and correcting these imbalances through targeted exercises.

- **Unilateral Exercises:** Single-leg squats, single-arm rows, and Bulgarian split squats help identify and correct strength differences between the left and right sides of the body.
- **Focus on Posterior Chain:** MMA fighters often develop strong anterior chains (chest, quads) from striking and forward movements. Prioritizing exercises for the posterior chain (hamstrings, glutes, back) is crucial for balance and injury prevention.
- **Adequate Recovery:** Overtraining can exacerbate muscle imbalances and increase injury risk. Ensuring sufficient rest and recovery is paramount.

Programming and Periodization for MMA Strength

Effective strength training for MMA is not a random collection of exercises; it requires a structured plan. Programming involves selecting the right exercises, sets, reps, and rest periods. Periodization takes this a step further by strategically varying the training stimulus over time to maximize performance gains, prevent plateaus, and reduce the risk of overtraining and injury.

The goal of periodization is to peak at specific times, usually before important competitions. This means cycling through different training phases, each with a distinct focus. For an MMA fighter, this might involve phases dedicated to building maximal strength, then transitioning to power development, followed by a phase emphasizing muscular endurance and sport-specific conditioning as a fight approaches.

Phases of Strength Training for MMA

A typical periodized plan for an MMA fighter might include several distinct phases, each building upon the previous one.

- **General Preparation Phase (GPP):** Focus on building a broad base of strength, muscular endurance, and improving work capacity. High volume, moderate intensity.
- **Specific Preparation Phase (SPP):** Transition to more sport-specific strength and power development. Introduce heavier loads and more explosive movements. Volume decreases, intensity increases.
- **Pre-Competition Phase:** Further refine power and speed. Reduce overall volume significantly while maintaining high intensity. Focus on peaking for performance.

- **Competition Phase:** Maintenance of strength and power, with very low volume and intensity, focusing on recovery and freshness.
- **Transition/Active Recovery Phase:** A period of reduced training load and intensity following a competition to allow for physical and mental recovery.

Integrating Strength with Fight Training

Strength training should complement, not detract from, an MMA fighter's primary skill training (striking, grappling, wrestling). The scheduling of strength sessions is crucial to allow for adequate recovery between demanding martial arts practices.

- **Frequency:** Typically 2-3 strength sessions per week are sufficient for most MMA athletes, depending on the training phase and overall training volume.
- **Timing:** Avoid performing heavy strength training immediately before intense skill work, as it can impair performance. Ideally, strength sessions are placed on days with lighter skill training or on separate days altogether.
- **Volume and Intensity Management:** As a fight approaches, the volume and intensity of both strength training and skill training must be carefully managed to avoid burnout and injury.

Example of a Macrocycle Outline

A macrocycle represents the entire training year. Here's a simplified example of how different phases might be structured.

- **Months 1-3 (GPP):** Focus on hypertrophy and foundational strength. High reps, moderate loads, full-body workouts.
- **Months 4-6 (SPP - Strength):** Focus on increasing maximal strength. Lower reps (3-6), heavier loads, compound lifts.
- **Months 7-9 (SPP - Power):** Focus on explosive strength. Incorporate Olympic lifts, plyometrics, and ballistic training.
- **Months 10-12 (Pre-Competition/Competition):** Focus on maintaining strength and power, peaking for fights. Very low volume, high intensity, sport-specific conditioning.

Nutrition and Recovery: Fueling Your Strength Gains

Strength training for MMA is only as effective as the athlete's ability to recover and adapt. Nutrition and recovery are not afterthoughts; they are integral components of the training process, directly impacting an athlete's ability to build muscle, recover from intense workouts, and perform at their best.

Proper nutrition provides the building blocks for muscle repair and growth, as well as the energy required for demanding training sessions. Recovery strategies, on the other hand, help the body adapt to the stress of training, reducing fatigue and preventing overtraining. Without adequate attention to these areas, even the most rigorous strength program will yield suboptimal results.

Macronutrient Balance for Fighters

The types and amounts of macronutrients consumed are critical for energy, muscle repair, and overall health.

- **Protein:** Essential for muscle protein synthesis (repair and growth). Aim for 1.6-2.2 grams per kilogram of body weight daily. Sources include lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, and plant-based options like legumes and tofu.
- **Carbohydrates:** The primary source of energy for high-intensity training. Complex carbohydrates like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables should form the bulk of intake, with simple carbohydrates strategically used around training.
- **Fats:** Important for hormone production and overall health. Focus on healthy unsaturated fats from avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil.

Hydration and Micronutrients

Water is crucial for nearly every bodily function, especially during intense physical activity. Micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) play vital roles in energy metabolism, immune function, and muscle recovery.

- **Hydration:** Drink water consistently throughout the day, increasing intake before, during, and after training. Electrolyte drinks can be beneficial for prolonged or intense sessions.
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** A wide variety of colorful fruits and vegetables ensures adequate intake of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which help combat inflammation and oxidative stress.

Recovery Strategies

Recovery is when the body adapts and gets stronger. Implementing a comprehensive recovery plan is crucial.

- **Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night. This is when most muscle repair and hormone release occurs.
- **Active Recovery:** Light activities like walking, swimming, or cycling on rest days can improve blood flow and aid in muscle recovery.
- **Massage and Soft Tissue Work:** Regular massage, foam rolling, and stretching can help alleviate muscle soreness and improve flexibility.
- **Contrast Baths (Hot/Cold):** Alternating between hot and cold water can help reduce inflammation and speed up recovery.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid in MMA Strength Training

Many aspiring MMA fighters make common mistakes in their strength training that can hinder their progress, increase their risk of injury, or lead to burnout. Recognizing these pitfalls is the first step to avoiding them and optimizing training effectiveness.

One of the most prevalent mistakes is focusing solely on aesthetics or replicating generic bodybuilding programs. MMA requires a specific type of strength that translates to the cage. Another frequent error is neglecting proper warm-ups and cool-downs, or not listening to their body, pushing through pain instead of allowing for recovery.

Overtraining and Under-recovering

Pushing too hard, too often, without adequate rest is a recipe for disaster. This leads to decreased performance, increased injury risk, and mental fatigue.

- **Too Much Volume/Intensity:** Performing too many sets, reps, or lifting too heavy too frequently without sufficient recovery periods.
- **Insufficient Rest Days:** Not scheduling dedicated rest days or active recovery days into the training week.
- **Ignoring Fatigue Signals:** Pushing through extreme soreness, lack of motivation, or persistent fatigue, which are clear signs the body needs more recovery.

Poor Exercise Selection and Form

Choosing exercises that don't align with MMA demands or performing them with incorrect technique can be counterproductive and dangerous.

- **Isolation Exercises Over Compound:** Relying too heavily on single-joint exercises instead of multi-joint compound movements that are more functional for MMA.
- **Neglecting Core or Posterior Chain:** Focusing on perceived "mirror muscles" while ignoring critical areas like the core, glutes, and hamstrings.
- **Bad Form:** Performing lifts with compromised technique due to ego, fatigue, or lack of knowledge, leading to ineffective training and potential injury.

Lack of Periodization and Progression

Training without a plan or continuously doing the same workouts leads to stagnation and plateaus.

- **No Variation:** Sticking to the exact same exercises, sets, and reps week after week without adapting the stimulus.
- **No Progressive Overload:** Failing to gradually increase the demands placed on the body (e.g., increasing weight, reps, or decreasing rest).
- **Inconsistent Programming:** Randomly choosing workouts without a long-term vision for development.

MMA-Specific Strength Training Considerations: FAQ

Q: How often should an MMA fighter do strength training per week?

A: For most MMA fighters, 2-3 strength training sessions per week are optimal. This frequency allows for adequate recovery between sessions and from skill-specific training. The exact number can vary depending on the training phase, intensity of skill training, and individual recovery capacity.

Q: What are the most important muscle groups for MMA strength training?

A: Key muscle groups include the entire core (abs, obliques, lower back) for stability and power transfer, the posterior chain (glutes, hamstrings, erector spinae) for explosive

movements and injury prevention, the legs for takedowns and striking power, and the upper back and shoulders for grappling, clinching, and striking defense.

Q: Should MMA fighters focus on building mass or strength?

A: The primary focus for MMA fighters is functional strength and power, not necessarily maximal muscle hypertrophy (mass). While some muscle gain is beneficial, excessive bulk can hinder speed and cardiovascular endurance. The goal is to be strong and powerful relative to body weight, with an emphasis on performance rather than sheer size.

Q: How do Olympic lifts like cleans and snatches benefit MMA fighters?

A: Olympic lifts are excellent for developing explosive power and full-body coordination. They teach the body to generate force rapidly through the triple extension of the hips, knees, and ankles, which directly translates to power in striking, takedowns, and explosive defensive movements.

Q: Is it important to train grip strength for MMA?

A: Absolutely. Strong grip strength is crucial for controlling an opponent in grappling, maintaining hand position in striking, and preventing dropped weapons or equipment. Exercises like farmer's walks, dead hangs, and dedicated grip trainers are beneficial.

Q: How does strength training help prevent injuries in MMA?

A: Strength training builds resilience in muscles, tendons, and ligaments. It improves joint stability by strengthening surrounding muscles, corrects muscle imbalances, and enhances body awareness, all of which significantly reduce the risk of common MMA injuries like sprains, strains, and joint issues.

Q: What role does plyometric training play in MMA strength training?

A: Plyometric training, or jump training, is vital for developing explosive power and the ability to absorb impact. Exercises like box jumps, depth jumps, and medicine ball throws enhance the stretch-shortening cycle, allowing fighters to generate more force quickly, which is crucial for striking power and quick transitions.

Q: How should strength training be programmed around fight camps?

A: As a fight approaches, the volume and intensity of strength training should decrease significantly. The focus shifts to maintaining strength and power while prioritizing recovery and skill-specific work. Heavy lifting is usually reduced in the weeks leading up to a fight, with more emphasis on light explosive movements and rest.

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strength training for mma: *Strength and Conditioning for Mixed Martial Arts* Will Peveler, 2021-07-14 While most martial arts gyms teach excellent fighting techniques, few have a full understanding of the principles behind strength and conditioning, leaving many fighters over trained and injured. *Strength and Conditioning for Mixed Martial Arts: A Practical Guide for the*

Busy Athlete provides elite-level instruction beyond fighting technique, focusing instead on improving overall athletic performance that works side-by-side with a fighter's martial arts training. Written for the non-professional athlete, from beginning to advanced fighters, it is also readily implemented around a full-time job. Topics covered in this book include: Selecting and maintaining equipment Developing a training plan Strength and conditioning Developing a sound and safe nutrition plan Common injuries and injury prevention Preparing for competitions Most mixed martial arts athletes must be able to effectively balance strength and conditioning workouts, martial arts training, family, work, and recovery. This book is designed for just that purpose, helping fighters develop programs for their specific needs, whether training for self-defense, health and wellness, or competing in the cage.

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strength training for mma: The Ultimate Mixed Martial Arts Training Guide Danny Plyler, Chad Seibert, 2009-10-01 A Must-Have Resource for all Warrior Athletes Regardless of your skill or fitness level, The Ultimate Mixed Marital Arts Training Guide - with more than 300 step-by-step photographs, detailed callouts, and comprehensive instruction - is the personal trainer you need to accomplish your workout goals and sharpen your techniques. You'll learn: • Cardio and strength training exercises like mountain climber push-ups, partner closed guard sit-up reaches, and the Muay Thai scarecrow • Striking and defense techniques such as the jab, cross, hook, overhand, Muay Thai knee, inner/outer thigh kick, and head kick • Wrestling and countering techniques including the dirty boxing clinch, the over-under clinch, and the Muay Thai clinch • Takedowns like the hip throw, shoot takedown, and single and double leg takedown • Jiu-jitsu passing and escape techniques for the full mount, knee mount, closed guard, open guard, and more • Winning submission moves like the arm bar, Kimura, omoplata, guillotine, ankle lock, and triangle choke • Drills to improve your punching and kicking speed and accuracy • Mental exercises to sharpen your focus, reduce your fears, and increase your concentration • Diet and nutrition techniques the pros use to stay in top fighting condition - whether they're in training mode or cutting weight before a match Whatever your personal fitness and fighting ambitions might be, The Ultimate Mixed Martial Arts Training Guide is your all-in-one resource to peak physical conditioning, clear mental focus, increased confidence, and superior fighting skills.

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