

Working Out MMA Style

What it takes to get a body that's ready for mixed martial arts.



There is one thing all your favorite mixed martial arts (MMA) fighters have in common: an undying dedication to the gym. So what can you do to build a body that is ready for battle? Work out like a MMA monster with these exercises. For the best results, try to perform a series of these exercises back to back with no break between them. After completing a series of four or five, break for 60 seconds and repeat the same exercises.

Bent Over Row: Standing with your knees slightly bent and your waist bent at approximately 45 degrees, lift a weighted barbell for 8 to 10 repetitions. Make sure you keep your back straight throughout.

Good Morning: With a weighted barbell resting on your shoulders, bend at the waist until you get close to a 90-degree bend. Return to the upright position and repeat 8 to 10 times.

Plate Pinches: All you need for this one are two heavy weight plates. Pick them up, with your fingers on one side and thumbs on the other. Then pinch them together as long as possible. You'll want to keep your feet spread wide to avoid having the weights drop on your toes.

Running: On top of strength training, you are going to need plenty of cardio to make sure you can go the distance. Since MMA requires you to perform at a high intensity, you won't want to jog or walk. Rather, you'll need to run as hard as you can for three to five miles. You can also incorporate short sprints to gain explosive bursts of power.

Fast Knee Highs: Run in place quickly, lifting your knees as high as you can. It may seem simple, but after a couple of minutes, your body will feel the burn and you'll be closer to MMA shape.

Power-Wheel Rollouts: Using an abdominal wheel, start on your knees and allow your body to stretch out straight on the floor without touching the floor. Return to the starting position and repeat. It may take a while to be able to extend all the way, so feel free to begin with less of a stretch initially.

Bodyweight Exercises: Some of the most important exercises you can do to get that MMA body involve using nothing more than your body weight. Push-ups, pull-ups, and inverted sit-ups are all great choices to get your body fit without needing anything more than your body.

Tennis Ball Pull-Ups: A variation on a great bodyweight exercise, tennis ball pull-ups require a little more of your body. To do them, grab a tennis ball in each hand and start doing pull-ups. The difference is noticeable immediately.

Bag Work: Whether or not you're planning on getting in the ring, throwing punches, knees, kicks, and elbows at a solid bag is a great way to improve your physique and add some excitement to your routine. If you are planning on getting into MMA, it will also help you punch and kick better and learn what it feels like to pound a solid, heavy object.

Sparring: Only to be used when you have good control over your limbs, sparring is invaluable for anyone seriously considering MMA. Avoid injury by keeping cool and practicing defense more than knockout punches.

Fighting Foods

If you're planning on working your way into the MMA scene, you're going to need more than a killer right hook. Equally as important is what foods you put into your body.

Though you may have been able to eat anything you want before getting into MMA, MMA requires your body to always operate at its peak. That means plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean protein sources, and whole grains. It also means saying goodbye to any junk food, alcohol, or cigarettes that may keep you from optimal performance.