

In Fighting Condition



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To be taken seriously in the ever-evolving and mainstream sport of Mixed Martial Arts, you have to be at the top of your game. You can train for fun because it's something you simply enjoy doing, or you can be the person that comes to the classes as a form of exercise or self defense. But there is something that sets apart the fighters from the fans, and that's heart. You also have to be 100% dedicated to be in fighting condition.

As a former figure competitor and fitness model (as well as being a personal trainer), I know what it takes to look great on the outside for photo shoots and physical appearance, but I also know that looking amazing on the surface is not going to win you fights. You need to build your strength, speed and endurance. Most importantly you must live by the ever-so popular rule: You are what you eat. You will get through your most intense workouts and training sessions more efficiently and with better recovery with the right food to fuel your body's needs. In order to do this, here are some quick tips:

1. Always eat smaller meals before training and avoid heavy food that will weigh you down. Choose a food that is light, but will be a good source of energy.
2. Choose carbs on the low glycemic index. These are the carbs that will provide you with the crucial energy supply needed to train hard and for longer periods of time. Carbohydrates should make up about 60% of your total caloric intake. Protein should be 0.5-0.9 grams

per pound of your body weight, and fat should take up 20-30% of your caloric intake.

Eating a clean, healthy diet will boost your training performance and focus as well as provide you with more natural energy sources. Eating the wrong foods can leave you feeling sluggish and tired and can truly affect your ability to concentrate. Staying within 8-10 pounds of your fight weight is the smartest, healthiest and easiest choice an MMA fighter can make. Eating 5-6 small meals per day will send your metabolism into overdrive, increase energy levels and diminish your hunger cravings as well. Doing this will also help build and maintain muscle.

HOW TO TRAIN FOR YOUR FIGHT



Conditioning is crucial in MMA. You have to work on your maximum speed, power and endurance. Speed training is going to help you start strong and finish strong. Being able to be quick with your hands and fast on your feet will make all the difference

between you and your opponent.

Strength training work which is isolating specific muscle groups should also be a part of your fight training routine. Strength training will also help to strengthen up your bones and your muscles, increase the strength of your heart, boost your metabolism and help you burn off that stubborn fat!

It's important to get plenty of rest to be prepared for the work ahead of you. If you are not feeling 100%, you cannot perform at 100%. Cutting out alcohol is a must, for obvious reasons. You will feel the affects during your training and it will absolutely slow you down. DO NOT drink alcohol while

in fight training. Although your opponent may be happy you did, let's just stick to drinking plenty of water.

The best way to simulate your fight during your cardio training is to do interval sets such as sprinting for one minute, jogging for one minute and walking for 30 seconds and so on. You can also do circuit training, which is quickly moving from one exercise to the next with little rest in between. You should adjust your training to best simulate the length and time of rounds your fight will consist of. Becoming exhausted during training is due to a build up of lactic acid. In order to avoid this you have to train at a higher intensity to increase your lactic acid threshold. Your conditioning sessions will be important in avoiding exhaustion come fight time. Some great exercises you can include in your fight conditioning are rope drills, pull ups with the ropes, hammering tires, tire flips, wall walk-ups, jump squats, box jumps, chest press, high pulls, dead-lifts and Plyometrics. Explosive training is very important for MMA Athletes. Running stairs, up-hill sprints are great, as well as building core strength as well.

Of course there are many more exercises you can do, but those are just a few to get you started if you are not sure what how you should be training. As I mentioned, building the core is crucial in this sport, because everything, all of our power comes from our core. Having powerhouse abdominal muscles will add to every single MMA technique you perform. Stronger abs can also help with any lower back pain you may have been experiencing due to those weak abdominal muscles. Your core stabilizes the spine, pelvis and shoulder girdle. Without strength in your core, everything becomes weaker.

CUT IT OUT

Let's be honest, cutting weight is not fun, in fact it sucks. But, it's part of the game for most fighters. If you stick with what I said earlier about trying to keep your weight in between 8-10 pounds of what you fight at, things won't be as rough when it comes time to cut it out! It's a fact that cutting more than 8-10 pounds in a 24-36 time period can be very dangerous, especially when it's all new to you. It's pretty much starvation and severe fluid restriction. It can also affect your cardio output, ability to sweat, your tolerance to heat, energy levels, explosiveness, skeletal muscles and speed. So, here are some approaches to help, for those of you who have to race against the clock.



- On the 5th, 4th and third day before your weigh in, you should be drinking 2 gallons of water per day, which allows you to go to the bathroom more frequently.
- Two days before your fight, reduce your water intake to one gallon per day and begin to cut sodium from your diet.
- On the last day you will be completely cutting your sodium and water intake.

REFUEL

Just as important as it was for you to cut it out, you need to refuel your body back to full health for your fight. Eat small meals every 30 minutes. Carbs will be a must to regain proper blood sugar levels. At this time fluids should be taken back in slowly about 3-5 gallons should be consumed over the next day, to replace all that you have lost. An IV can also help you recover, but only when administered by a skilled professional.

SWEATING IT OUT

Layering up while exercising in a heated room will help you lose excess water weight. So will using a plastic exercise suit. Saunas should be used in 15-30 minute intervals and natural laxatives may also be used the night before...but I stress, they must be natural.

Never try anything new before a fight, whether it be a new food, a new diet, a new training method, or a new way to cut weight. Try it out beforehand and see how your body will react. Every single one of us is unique. Our bodies respond to new things differently, and everyone needs to make different adjustments. Not every diet or weight-cutting strategy will work for every person. A person must train safe, train smart, and plan ahead as to how you will prepare for your next fight. When the day of the fight finally comes, I wish you good luck, and until next time...see you cageside!

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