

FITNESS & CONDITIONING

12 WEEK MMA TRAINING PROGRAM

A complete twelve week plan built around strength, power, mobility, cardio and HIIT, with technique circuits and bag work in every week. Three progressive blocks that take a fighter from base building to fight ready conditioning.

STRENGTH

POWER

MOBILITY

CARDIO

HIIT

BAG WORK

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Twelve weeks, split into three four week blocks. Each block has a clear job. Volume and intensity climb through the first three weeks of every block, then week four pulls back to let the body absorb the work. Train six days a week and keep the seventh for genuine rest.

THE THREE BLOCKS

BLOCK	WEEKS	FOCUS
1. Foundation	1 to 4	Build work capacity, movement quality and an aerobic base. Groove the main strength lifts. Drill technique at a controlled pace.
2. Development	5 to 8	Push maximal strength and start explosive power work. Shift conditioning towards anaerobic HIIT. Raise the intensity of bag and technique circuits.
3. Fight Ready	9 to 12	Convert strength into power. Train round based, fight specific conditioning. Sharpen technique. Week 12 tapers so the body peaks fresh.

THE WEEKLY SPLIT

DAY	SESSION	PRIMARY TARGET
Day 1	Lower Strength & Power	Legs, hips, posterior chain, explosive drive
Day 2	Technique Circuit & Bag Work + HIIT	Skill under fatigue, anaerobic power
Day 3	Aerobic Conditioning	Engine, recovery between hard days
Day 4	Upper Strength & Core	Push, pull, trunk, neck
Day 5	Technique & Sparring Drills + Bag Work	Timing, distance, output
Day 6	MMA Conditioning Circuit	Full body, round based work capacity
Day 7	Rest or Active Recovery	Mobility, easy walk, sleep

THE GOLDEN RULES

- **Warm up every session.** Five to ten minutes of raising the heart rate plus the mobility flow on page 9.
- **Leave one or two reps in reserve** on strength work. This is conditioning for fighting, not a powerlifting meet.
- **Earn the load.** Only add weight or rounds once the current level feels controlled.
- **Respect the deload.** Week 4 and week 8 are lighter on purpose. Skipping them is how injuries start.

EFFORT, LOADING & RECOVERY

HOW HARD EACH BLOCK TRAINS

Strength work is set by RPE, a simple rating of perceived effort from 1 to 10. RPE 8 means two clean reps were left in the tank. Conditioning is set by how long the work and rest intervals run.

QUALITY	BLOCK 1	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 3
Strength intensity	RPE 7, higher reps	RPE 8 to 9, lower reps	RPE 8, fast and crisp
Power work	Light, learn the patterns	Moderate, build speed	Explosive, maximal intent
Conditioning style	Aerobic, steady	HIIT, 1:1 work to rest	Round based, 2:1 to 3:1
Bag & technique	Controlled, form first	Harder, longer outputs	Fight pace, full rounds

THE PAIN AND LOAD FILTER

This plan is built to push conditioning while keeping joints healthy, the elbows and shoulders especially. Use the same rule combat athletes use for tendons.

SIGNAL	WHAT IT MEANS
Discomfort up to 3 of 10	Acceptable during and after, as long as it settles by the next morning. Carry on.
Worse the next day	The last session asked for too much. Cut load or volume by a quarter and rebuild.
Sharp, catching or radiating pain	Stop the movement. Swap it, and get it assessed if it lingers past a week.

THE WARM UP FLOW

Run this before every session. It doubles as the standalone mobility routine on rest days.

RAISE (3 TO 5 MIN)

- Skipping or easy shadow boxing
- High knees and heel flicks, 2 rounds of 30 seconds

MOBILISE (5 MIN)

- World's greatest stretch, 5 each side
- Hip 90 90 rotations, 8 each side
- Thoracic rotations, 8 each side
- Wrist and forearm circles, 10 each way

ACTIVATE (3 TO 5 MIN)

- Band pull aparts, 15
- Glute bridges, 12
- Scapular press ups, 10
- Bodyweight squats, 10 slow

PRIME (COMBAT DAYS)

- Light bag touches, 1 round
- Footwork ladder or line drills, 2 min

BLOCK 1 • FOUNDATION

WEEKS 1 TO 4

Build the base. The aim is work capacity, clean movement and an aerobic engine that makes every later block possible. Nothing here is maximal. The quality of each rep matters more than the number on the bar.

DAY 1 • LOWER STRENGTH & POWER

EXERCISE	SETS X REPS	NOTES
Box jump or broad jump	4 × 3	Soft landings, full reset between reps
Back squat or goblet squat	4 × 8	RPE 7, three seconds down
Romanian deadlift	3 × 10	Hips back, flat back
Walking lunge	3 × 10 each	Controlled, tall chest
Calf raise & tibialis raise	3 × 15	Ankle armour for stance

DAY 4 • UPPER STRENGTH & CORE

EXERCISE	SETS X REPS	NOTES
Press up or bench press	4 × 10	Neutral wrist, full range
Neutral grip row	4 × 10	Easy on the elbows, squeeze the back
Overhead press	3 × 8	Ribs down, no lean back
Neutral grip pulldown or ring row	3 × 10	Vertical pull, controlled
Pallof press & plank	3 × 12 / 40s	Anti rotation trunk
Neck harness or manual neck	3 × 15	Light, every direction

CONDITIONING & SKILL THIS BLOCK

DAY 3 • AEROBIC

Steady effort, nose breathing where possible.

- 30 to 40 min run, row, bike or skip
- Keep it conversational, zone 2

DAY 2 • HIIT (EASY INTRO)

- 30s work, 60s rest, 8 rounds
- Pick: bag, bike sprint, burpees

DAYS 2 & 5 • TECHNIQUE + BAG

- Shadow boxing, 3 × 2 min rounds
- Bag work, 4 × 2 min rounds, single shots and clean technique
- Footwork and level change drills, 3 × 1 min
- 60s rest between all rounds

Week 4 deload. Keep the sessions but drop every strength set to RPE 5, cut one set from each lift, and shorten bag rounds to 90 seconds. Easy week. Let the engine catch up.

BLOCK 1 • WEEK BY WEEK

WEEKS 1 TO 4

The template stays the same. These are the numbers that move. Add load only when the previous week felt controlled.

WEEK	STRENGTH	AEROBIC (DAY 3)	HIIT (DAY 2)	BAG ROUNDS
1	RPE 7, base load	30 min steady	30s / 60s x 6	4 × 2 min
2	Add small load, RPE 7	35 min steady	30s / 60s x 8	5 × 2 min
3	Add reps, RPE 7 to 8	40 min steady	30s / 45s x 8	6 × 2 min
4	Deload, RPE 5	25 min easy	30s / 60s x 5	4 × 90s

MOBILITY TARGET THIS BLOCK

Three areas decide how well the later blocks go. Spend five minutes a day on them, rest days included.

AREA	DRILL	DOSE
Hips	Deep squat hold, 90 90 switches	2 min total daily
Thoracic spine	Open book, foam roll extensions	2 min total daily
Ankles	Knee to wall, banded dorsiflexion	1 min each side daily

Block 1 checkpoint. By the end of week 4, steady cardio should feel easier at the same pace, the main lifts should move smoothly, and bag rounds should finish with clean technique rather than ragged arms. If that is true, Block 2 is earned.

BLOCK 2 • DEVELOPMENT

WEEKS 5 TO 8

Turn the base into strength and speed. Loads go up and reps come down. Conditioning shifts from steady cardio to high intensity intervals that mirror the surges of a fight. Bag and technique work gets harder and longer.

DAY 1 • LOWER STRENGTH & POWER

EXERCISE	SETS X REPS	NOTES
Trap bar jump or power clean	5 × 3	Maximal speed, full triple extension
Back squat	4 × 5	RPE 8 to 9
Hip thrust	3 × 8	Drive through heels, hard squeeze
Split squat	3 × 8 each	Loaded, controlled depth
Hanging leg raise	3 × 12	No swing

DAY 4 • UPPER STRENGTH & CORE

EXERCISE	SETS X REPS	NOTES
Bench press or weighted press up	4 × 6	RPE 8
Weighted pull up or heavy row	4 × 6	Neutral grip if elbows grumble
Push press	4 × 5	Leg drive into overhead
Medicine ball slam & rotational throw	3 × 8	Explosive, full body
Weighted carry (farmer or suitcase)	3 × 40m	Grip and trunk under load
Neck & forearm work	3 × 15	Armour for the clinch

CONDITIONING & SKILL THIS BLOCK

DAY 2 • HIIT

Hard surges, honest rest. 1:1 work to rest.

- 40s work, 40s rest, 10 rounds
- Rotate: bag blitz, assault bike, battle ropes, shuttle sprints

DAY 3 • MIXED ENGINE

- 20 min steady, then 6 × 60s tempo pushes

DAYS 2 & 5 • TECHNIQUE + BAG

- Shadow boxing with intent, 3 × 3 min
- Bag combinations, 5 × 3 min rounds, two to five shot strings plus kicks and knees
- Partner or solo takedown entries, 4 × 1 min
- 45s rest between rounds

Week 8 deload. Drop strength to RPE 6, cut one working set per lift, and reduce HIIT to 6 rounds. Keep technique in but at a relaxed pace. This sets up the hardest block.

BLOCK 2 • WEEK BY WEEK

WEEKS 5 TO 8

WEEK	STRENGTH	HIIT (DAY 2)	BAG ROUNDS	DAY 6 CIRCUIT
5	RPE 8, 5 reps	40s / 40s x 8	4 × 3 min	3 rounds
6	Add load, RPE 8	40s / 40s x 9	5 × 3 min	4 rounds
7	Add load, RPE 9, 3 to 5 reps	40s / 35s x 10	5 × 3 min	4 rounds
8	Deload, RPE 6	40s / 60s x 6	4 × 2 min	3 rounds easy

THE DAY 6 MMA CONDITIONING CIRCUIT

One of the engines of the plan. Run as timed rounds. Work each station hard, move straight to the next, rest only at the end of the round. Technique stays sharp even when the lungs burn.

ORDER	STATION	WORK
1	Bag blitz, non stop combinations	45 seconds
2	Kettlebell swing	45 seconds
3	Sprawl to shoot	45 seconds
4	Press up to shoulder tap	45 seconds
5	Jump squat or box step over	45 seconds
6	Plank knee drive or sit through	45 seconds

One round is all six stations back to back, about 4.5 minutes. Rest 90 seconds between rounds. Build from 3 rounds to 4 across the block.

Elbow and shoulder insurance. If pressing or gripping aggravates an old injury, swap straight bar work for neutral grip and dumbbell versions, use straps on heavy pulls, and keep the warm up band work in. Train around a niggle, do not train through it.

BLOCK 3 • FIGHT READY

WEEKS 9 TO 12

Convert everything into fight shape. Strength stays, but the intent turns to speed and power. Conditioning becomes round based, built to match the rhythm of three or five round fights. Week 12 tapers hard so the body arrives fresh and fast.

DAY 1 • LOWER POWER

EXERCISE	SETS X REPS	NOTES
Power clean or trap bar jump	5 × 2	Pure speed, long rest
Squat, speed reps	5 × 3	Moderate load, fast up
Trap bar deadlift	3 × 4	RPE 8, crisp
Bound & depth jump	4 × 4	Reactive, full recovery

DAY 4 • UPPER POWER

EXERCISE	SETS X REPS	NOTES
Plyo press up or speed bench	5 × 3	Explode off the floor or bar
Explosive row	4 × 5	Pull fast, control back
Push press	4 × 3	Fast leg drive
Rotational med ball throw	4 × 5 each	Hip driven, max speed
Neck & grip finisher	3 × 15	Keep the armour on

FIGHT SPECIFIC CONDITIONING

DAYS 2 & 5 • ROUNDS

Built to mirror a fight. Hard output, short rest.

- Bag and pad rounds, 5 × 5 min
- 60s rest, the real fight interval
- Mix striking, clinch, level changes

DAY 3 • RECOVERY ENGINE

- 25 to 30 min easy, flush the legs

DAY 6 • FIGHT SIMULATION

- 3 or 5 rounds of 5 min
- Alternate 1 min bag blitz, 1 min grappling or sprawls, 1 min bodyweight, repeat
- 60s rest between rounds
- This is the test of the whole plan

BLOCK 3 • WEEK BY WEEK

WEEKS 9 TO 12

WEEK	POWER / STRENGTH	FIGHT ROUNDS	DAY 6 SIMULATION	INTENT
9	Speed focus, RPE 8	4 × 5 min	3 rounds	Find the rhythm
10	Add a little load, fast	5 × 5 min	4 rounds	Raise output
11	Peak power, crisp	5 × 5 min	5 rounds	Hardest week
12	Taper, half volume, keep speed	3 × 3 min sharp	None	Peak fresh

THE WEEK 12 TAPER

Volume drops by around half. Intensity and speed stay high so the body sharpens rather than fades. This is where fitness surfaces, not where it is built. Resist the urge to cram.

DAY	TAPER SESSION
Mon	Short power lift, 3 fast sets per movement, long rest
Tue	Sharp bag work, 3 × 3 min, crisp combinations
Wed	Easy 20 min flush plus mobility
Thu	Light technique, movement only, no fatigue
Fri	Full rest
Sat	Optional 10 min activation, then rest
Sun	Rest, sleep, fuel

After week 12. Hold the gains with two strength sessions, two to three skill sessions, and one hard conditioning session a week. Then run the twelve weeks again from a higher base, or build a new block around a specific fight date.

HIIT PROTOCOLS & BAG WORK

FOUR HIIT PROTOCOLS TO ROTATE

PROTOCOL	STRUCTURE	BEST FOR
Classic intervals	40s work, 40s rest, 8 to 10 rounds	General anaerobic base
Fight rounds	5 min hard, 60s rest, 3 to 5 rounds	Specific fight conditioning
Tabata finisher	20s all out, 10s rest, 8 rounds	Short, brutal top up
Ladder	60, 45, 30, 15s work, equal rest	Output under rising fatigue

Pick tools that spike the heart rate fast: assault bike, battle ropes, shuttle sprints, burpees, or the bag itself.

BAG WORK COMBINATIONS

Drill these on the bag during technique and conditioning days. Start slow for form, then add speed and power once the pattern is clean.

STRIKING STRINGS

- Jab, cross
- Jab, cross, lead hook
- Cross, hook, cross
- Jab, cross, low kick
- Lead teep, cross, switch kick
- Elbow, elbow, knee in the clinch

CONDITIONING FORMATS

- **Pyramid.** 1 shot, then 2, up to 6 and back down
- **30 second blitz.** Non stop output, last 30s of a round
- **Movement rounds.** Strike, circle, re enter, repeat
- **Power tens.** 10 hard kicks each leg, controlled rest

Hand and wrist care. Wrap hands for every bag session. Keep a straight line from forearm to knuckle on impact. Build round volume gradually. Sore knuckles and tweaked wrists come from too much too soon, not from poor toughness.

PROGRESS TRACKER

Log the numbers that matter each week. Rising loads, longer rounds and a lower resting heart rate are the proof the plan is working.

WEEK	SQUAT LOAD	BENCH / PRESS LOAD	HARD ROUNDS DONE	RESTING HR	BODYWEIGHT	NOTES
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						

FUEL & RECOVERY BASICS

- Protein at every meal, roughly 1.6 to 2.2g per kg of bodyweight a day
- Carbs around hard sessions to fuel output
- Hydrate through the day, not just in the gym
- Seven to nine hours of sleep, the real recovery tool
- One full rest day every week, no exceptions
- Deload weeks are training, not time off

IMPORTANT

This program is general fitness and conditioning information, not medical or coaching advice tailored to an individual. Combat training carries risk. Anyone starting should be cleared for intense exercise, learn technique from a qualified coach, and stop and seek assessment for any sharp or lasting pain. Train within your current ability and progress at your own pace.

BLACKBELT // WHITEHAT