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FOR MMA AND COMBAT SPORTS

The indespensable guide to building devastating strength and conditioning for fighters, martial artists and all combat sports people

DOMINATE YOUR OPPONENTS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH, CONDITIONING, POWER AND AGILITY Sandbag Training For MMA & Combat Sports - Sample Copy eBook format (pdf)

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First Edition

SAMPLE COPY





Sandbag Training For MMA & Combat Sports is not meant to diagnose or treat any medical condition. It is designed as a resource for combat athletes to improve their strength and conditioning. Individuals with any pre-existing medical conditions should check with their doctor/physician before commencing any programme of physical activity.

The authors cannot be held responsible for any injury or medical complication resulting from the use or mis-use of this guide or any of the information contain herein.

If you are unsure about its suitability for you, always check with a medical professional first.



This book is designed to help you build strength, speed, power, endurance and agility for MMA & Combat Sports, with nothing but a sandbag. There is no fancy equipment and you can follow the training programmes anywhere, anytime. All you'll need is the motivation to get started, the dedication to keep going and the will to succeed.

You'll discover why the sandbag is a particularly effective tool for Combat Athletes and also how to properly implement sandbag training into your fitness programme.

This is a <u>sample copy</u> of Sandbag Training for MMA & Combat Sports.

The full version contains:

- Detailed, illustrated descriptions of 60 key sandbag training exercises
- 3 complete training programmes with plans for over 100 different sessions
- Printable training logs to record your progress

There are no gimmicks here.

The training is tough.

ARE YOU READY?

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I started training seriously with sandbags in 2009 when I was unable to get access to a gym. The sandbag was a simple option for me to be able to exercise in my garage but I made the mistake of thinking that simple meant easy. My first training session with a homemade sandbag left me battered and bruised but I was eager for more. I figured anything that was that tough was worth persevering with.

I also began documenting my workouts through a blog, Sandbag Fitness, and I soon had a community of like minded individuals following along too. Today the blog gets around 30,000 visitors per month.

Soon after I started using sandbags, I also started using sandbag training with some of my professional clients. I quickly realised that they made a great training tool for athletes - particularly combat athletes. They are now fast becoming a training tool of choice for serious athletes around the world.

Sandbag training works.





Strength and conditioning for MMA & Combat Sports is a complicated subject and, in many ways, the training that you follow will be dictated by your style, strengths & weaknesses and competition schedule. That said, there are definite physical attributes that will be useful for you to attain.

You should have:

- A level of strength and power that allows you to dominate and control your opponents
- A level of conditioning that allows you to fight or train as long as you need to
- The physical attributes that allow you to learn and perfect skills
- A foundation of strength and conditioning that helps you to avoid injury and enhance recovery

It is possible for poorly conditioned athletes to rely on their superior skill but it's also possible for an unskilled but strong and powerful athlete to dominate a weaker opponent. This is not to say that skill isn't a pre-requisite for elite performance, but that high level strength and conditioning should be a goal for you.

When you step into the cage, ring or out onto the mat you're often stepping into the unknown. As much as you can prepare for training and competition, anything can happen so your strength and conditioning programme should prepare you for this.

The training programmes in this book have been designed to support the needs of MMA athletes, Martial Artists and all Combat Sportspeople. They are fast, intense and challenging; with the aim of developing your strength and conditioning so that you can become a better athlete.

SANDBAC TRAININC

Sandbag training is, first and foremost, resistance training. And resistance training is a great option for developing strength and power, building muscle and creating specific adaptations for competition.

The sandbag also offers a number of benefits that you won't necessarily get from a traditional resistance training option. It's a great tool for MMA Fighters, Combat Athletes and Martial Artists because:

- It's hard to hold on to and makes you work hard for each lift. The sandbag has a constantly-shifting centre of mass and this makes most standard exercises much more challenging. Most people report that sandbag training naturally trains their core and grip much more than regular weight training because of this
- The sandbag allows you to experiment with a variety of different grips that have parallels in MMA and the Martial Arts. You'll be using many of those grips during the programme section
- The sandbag is about as close as a free-weight will get to replicating an opponent its size, shape and centre of mass can all be made very similar. You can also be a little more creative and use your sandbag for technique drills rather than just the exercises presented in this book
- The sandbag is malleable meaning that it will mould into whatever shape you want it to. This makes it a great tool for both simulating an opponent, and throwing, catching and running



One of the best things about sandbag training is that you really don't need a lot of fancy equipment to get started. To follow the exercises and programmes in this guide you'll simply need some space, a sandbag and a way of timing the workouts. That, coupled with a lot of hard work and dedication can get you to the level of strength and conditioning that most people dream of.

I'll give you some of the best options for purchasing sandbags below and also tell you how you can make your own version.

The most important thing is that you don't get too bogged down in deciding what equipment you need to get started.

HOMEMADE SANDBAGS

When I began sandbag training I started with a homemade sandbag. It's a great option if you're on a tight budget or want to try out the training method before investing in it.

By far and away the simplest way to construct a homemade sandbag is by using a duffel bag or holdall. You can then add contractor/builders bags of sand directly into this 'outer shell'. These bags of sand are generally sold in 25kg/55lb weights so you may need to adjust the weight before you can start. To do this, make a small slit in the bag of sand and remove what you don't need. You'll then need to tape up the bag to avoid any leakage (use strong tape for this).

One of the major issues with this method is that you will also need to think about how to add weight to the sandbag as you improve your strength, power and conditioning. This is especially important for the strength sessions in the programme section. A simple way around this is to make a number of smaller sandbags that you can add to the outer shell when you need to. Ziploc bags with around 1-2kg/2-4lbs of sand in them work well (and use tape liberally to seal). Alternatively, you might want to make a range of different sized sandbags and then choose the appropriate one for each session.

Although not perfect, in less that 5 mins you've made your first sandbag.

BRUTE FORCE SAND3AGS

Brute Force Sandbags make the worlds toughest sandbags for strength and conditioning. All of the images in this book are shot with a Brute Force Strongman Sandbag.

The major advantages of using a custom-made sandbag like this are:

- It comes with internal filler bags, making it easy to change the weight of the sandbag when you need to
- It is built to last and will not split, even under the toughest abuse
- The inclusion of handles on the sandbag make it easier to complete exercises like rows and deadlifts

To purchase Brute Force Sandbags in the UK and Europe click below:

CLICK HERE TO VISIT BRUTE FORCE EUROPE WWW.BRUTEFORCEEUROPE.COM

To purchase Brute Force Sandbags in the US and the Rest of the World click below:

CLICK HERE TO VISIT BRUTE FORCE SANDBAGS WWW.BRUTEFORCESANDBAGS.COM

TIMING

All good programmes are measurable so you'll need a way to time some of your workouts and rest periods. Nowadays, most people have a timer of some variety already but if you want to get yourself an awesome interval timer specifically designed for exercise then you need a Gymboss Timer.

CLICK HERE TO VISIT GYMBOSS TIMERS

WWW.GYM3OSS.COM

PREPARING TO TRAIN

Before starting any exercise you should be ready - both mentally and physically.

I see this as a vital component of any training session and it often translates into improved performance. It's also great practice to develop a pre-performance routine that you can quickly and easily employ prior to competition or a tough session.

Below, you'll find a simple routine that you can follow in order to prepare yourself for a sandbag training session.

The principle reason for warming up is to prepare your body for the upcoming physical exertion. It is a vital component in any training programme and you should always remember to do it.

By default a warm up should be based around movement rather than stretching. Spend time gradually warming up the muscles with full body movements and practice the exercises that you will do during the session for that day. You might also want to include a light jog or some other cardiovascular activity.

A good warm up will:

- Help you to avoid injury
- Help you to recover faster following exercise
- Improve your exercise performance
- Mentally prepare you for the session

In the following sequence, Wes takes us through a simple series of MMA Warm Ups that will help to prepare you for the training exercises in this book.

1. Bodyweight Squats - perform 10-20 repetitions

- 2. Press Ups perform 10-20 repetitions
- 3. Shoots perform 5-10 repetitions on each side
- 4. Press Ups with rotation perform 10-20 repetitions
- 5. Bodyweight Lunges perform 10-20 repetitions on each side
- 6. Sprawls perform 10-20 repetitions
- 7. Shrimping perform 10-20 repetitions on each side
- 8. Squat stretch hold for 30-60 seconds
- 9. Lunge stretch hold for 30-60 seconds on each side
- 10. Rotation stretch hold for 30-60 seconds on each side

Repeat this sequence 2-3 times in total.





























FIGHTERS TIP







I approach my training in a very systematic way and make sure that I know exactly what my goals are for each training session. This keeps me (and my sessions) focused. It's my experience that people who approach their training without a goal often fail to achieve what they might - and in many cases don't give themselves the reward of achievement. While monitoring performance and setting targets before each session is important, it is not everything.

How hard are you going to work in this session?

Are you training as hard as the 'other guy'?

YOU NEED TO GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME





The sandbag training exercises in this section have all been categorised to make it easy for you to see what muscles are being worked, how to perform the exercise effectively and to pick up some tips on how and why they should be included in a strength and conditioning programme for MMA, Martial Arts and Combat Sports.

Due to the unstable nature of the sandbag it is important that you pay particular attention to your technique throughout all of the exercises listed here. And, if in doubt, you should always practice a new exercise at a light weight to get used to it. This is a much more effective approach in the long term. Also, don't be afraid to start an exercise unweighted to get a feel for the movement first.

"A great compound exercise, they will really develop a fighters core strength which will transfer directly to your base when striking or wrestling."



The squat is a staple in every serious fitness programme out there. It builds strength, power and conditioning in the lower body like few other things. We use a variety of different squat variations in this programme but they all share some common characteristics:

- Your squat should be "hip dominant" stick your hips back into your squat
- Keep your feet flat
- Keep your chest and head high

Take the time to perfect your squat as the resulting strength benefits will be well worth it.



MAIN MUSCLES USED quads, glutes, core

TECHNIQUE

- Start by lifting a sandbag up onto your back and across your shoulders
- You may need to hold the sandbag in position with your hands
- Feet should be around hip width apart, flat on the floor and turned out slightly
- Keeping the chest and head high, push your hips backwards and sit back into a squat
- Keep your knees pointing (tracking) in the same direction as your feet
- Aim to descend until your hip passes below the crease in your knee
- Stand back upwards, leading with the hips
- Your weight should remain towards the back of your feet throughout the exercise and you should try to avoid your knees tracking excessively in front of your toes



FIGHTERS TIP

"I use the Back Squat a lot in my training as it is a great full body exercise that really will develop a fighters core strength and base. The sandbag allows me to make this exercise more versatile and controlling this type of weight has a great carryover into MMA.

Jumping Squats can also be added for a more explosive, dynamic workout."





MAIN MUSCLES USED quads, glutes, core

TECHNIQUE

- Start by lifting a sandbag up to chest height
- Your hands and elbows should be directly under the sandbag
- Feet should be around hip width apart, flat on the floor and turned out slightly
- Keeping the chest and head high, push your hips backwards and sit back into a squat
- Keep your knees pointing (tracking) in the same direction as your feet
- Aim to descend until your hip passes below the crease in your knee
- Stand back upwards, leading with the hips
- Your weight should remain towards the back of your feet throughout the exercise and you should try to avoid your knees tracking excessively in front of your toes



FIGHTERS TIP

"This is one of my favourite exercises and probably the most under used of all. Front squats are a great addition to conditioning sessions and because of the way the bag is loaded it keeps posture and form strict - the upright posture and spinal alignment is great for wrestling, especially finishing double legs."





MAIN MUSCLES USED quads, glutes, biceps, shoulders, core

TECHNIQUE

- Start by lifting a sandbag up to chest height
- The sandbag should sit in the crook of your arms
- Feet should be around hip width apart, flat on the floor and turned out slightly
- Keeping the chest and head high, push your hips backwards and sit back into a squat
- Keep your knees pointing (tracking) in the same direction as your feet
- Aim to descend until your hip passes below the crease in your knee
- Stand back upwards, leading with the hips and elbows
- Your weight should remain towards the back of your feet throughout the exercise and you should try to avoid your knees tracking excessively in front of your toes



FIGHTERS TIP

"A great addition to training as this squat takes a lot of pressure away from the shoulders and rotator cuff - perfect for MMA fighters as we generally over use them trying to fit in a mixture or Boxing, Jiu-Jitsu and Wrestling.

After a heavy sparring session or pad workout I use the Zercher squat the same day with a good weight and still put very little strain on my shoulders unlike the back or front squat."





MAIN MUSCLES USED quads, glutes, back, biceps, forearms, core

TECHNIQUE

- Start by lifting a sandbag up to chest height
- Grip the sandbag in a bear hug (or variation)
- Feet should be around hip width apart, flat on the floor and turned out slightly
- Keeping the chest and head high, push your hips backwards and sit back into a squat
- Keep your knees pointing (tracking) in the same direction as your feet
- Aim to descend until your hip passes below the crease in your knee
- Stand back upwards, leading with the hips
- Your weight should remain towards the back of your feet throughout the exercise and you should try to avoid your knees tracking excessively in front of your toes



FIGHTERS TIP

"The Bear Hug Squat positions the sandbag very naturally for an MMA fighter and relies on a technique very similar to many wrestling moves.

Another good thing about this exercise is the ability to play with your grip. I like to use a variety and switch between Gable, Bear Hug, S-Grip, Wrist Grab or even a Rear Naked Choke or Short Choke style grip."







MAIN MUSCLES USED quads, glutes, core

TECHNIQUE

- Start by lifting a sandbag up onto one shoulder
- Your hands and elbows should be directly under the sandbag
- Feet should be around hip width apart, flat on the floor and turned out slightly
- Keeping the chest and head high, push your hips backwards and sit back into a squat
- Keep your knees pointing (tracking) in the same direction as your feet
- Aim to descend until your hip passes below the crease in your knee
- Stand back upwards, leading with the hips
- Your weight should remain towards the back of your feet throughout the exercise and you should try to avoid your knees tracking excessively in front of your toes
- Repeat on both sides
- Try to avoid leaning to either side during the squat stay as upright as possible



FIGHTERS TIP

"This squat is the most applicable for MMA with the positioning of the bag being on the shoulder it lies in the same way a person would after a double leg shoot. As with the Back Squat, the addition of jumps to this exercise makes for an additional challenge.

You can also try shoots with the bag over the shoulder."





"The sandbag is tailor made for partner exercises. It's easy to throw, catch, push and pull."



The sandbag is perfect for partner drills and easily takes the place of something like a medicine ball. In this section, we've listed some of the most common sandbag partner exercises but don't be limited to these alone. Get creative and try to add in some of your own variations.

As with the Carries & Drags exercises, these are deceptively simple. And the addition of a training parter always ups the intensity of a workout.

MAIN MUSCLES USED legs, back, arms, core

TECHNIQUE

- One partner will be working (aggressive) in this exercise while the other will be resisting (passive)
- Stand facing a partner, each person holding the sandbag
- Either push or pull the sandbag for a prescribed distance while your partner resists you
- Both partners should engage (brace) core muscles throughout this exercise



FIGHTERS TIP

"This drill is excellent in a class and I like to match myself with someone heavier than me for a real challenge. The key is to get your partner to resist as much as they can."







MAIN MUSCLES USED legs, chest, arms, shoulders

TECHNIQUE

- Stand facing a partner, approximately 15 feet apart
- Squat down and take a firm hold of your sandbag in both hands
- Explode upwards and powerfully throw the sandbag forwards
- Your partner should be prepared to catch it either with the hands or in a Zercher grip
- Your partner then performs a Forwards Throw to you
- If you don't have a training partner then just run to the sandbag, pick it up and throw it back in the opposite direction



FIGHTERS TIP

"Throwing movements like this will build pressing power, strength and conditioning. You can also try single handed variations.

As with many of the exercises, you can make these heavy or light depending on the goal for that session."









FIGHTERS TIP

"For an additional challenge you can also add a sprawl in between each throw - this makes you work a lot faster that normal."



MAIN MUSCLES USED back, arms, legs, core

TECHNIQUE

- Stand with your back to a partner, approximately 15 feet apart
- Squat down and take a firm hold of your sandbag in both hands
- Explode upwards and powerfully throw the sandbag backwards, over your head
- Your partner should be prepared to catch it either with the hands or in a Zercher grip
- Your partner then turns around and performs a backwards throw to you
- If you don't have a training partner then just run to the sandbag, pick it up and throw it back in the opposite direction



FIGHTERS TIP

"The Backwards Throw is perfect for developing power in the back and legs. I use it with a lighter weight in my conditioning sessions and with a heavier weight when I'm trying to work on my strength and power."









FIGHTERS TIP

"I use the Backwards Throw with or without a partner. Throwing the sandbag and then sprinting to it is a great mix of strength and conditioning.

It's also a good exercise to combine with sprints, sprawls and any agility work."



MAIN MUSCLES USED core, arms

TECHNIQUE

- Stand back to back with a partner
- Hold the sandbag at chest height in both hands
- Rotate to your right and pass the sandbag into the hands of your partner
- Your partner will then rotate to their right and pass the sandbag back to you
- This movement should be fast and powerful
- Maintain good posture throughout the exercise
- Repeat in each direction



FIGHTERS TIP

"With torso rotation being such an important movement in MMA, I use these frequently. I like to practice them before heavier lifts like Deadlifts and Squats.

You can also try a variety of different grips like Gable and Bear Hug."







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These sessions are designed to develop your ability to generate and apply power - a crucial factor in all sporting performance.

The name of the game here is <u>maximum</u> power. You should be trying to perform at your very best and maintain high quality in all of your movements - for that reason, you can be more relaxed with your rest periods here than in some of the other conditioning sessions.

You should be using a Moderate - Heavy sandbag for your Power Conditioning sessions.



1

Forwards Throw for distance Sprint to the sandbag, pick back up and turn around

Repeat 10 times, rest for 1 minute and complete a total of 5 rounds.

Z

Backwards Throw for distance Sprint to the sandbag, pick back up and turn around

Repeat 10 times, rest for 1 minute and complete a total of 5 rounds.

3

Resisted push for 20m Resisted Pull for 20m

Rest for 30 seconds and repeat for a total of 10 rounds.





4

Clean and Press Ladder.

Complete 1 Clean and Press in the first minute, 2 Clean and Press in the second minute and so on until you can no longer complete the required repetitions within the allotted time.

5

Sandbag Catch.

Stand facing a partner, perform a front squat with your sandbag and then powerfully explode upwards and throw it to your partner.

Complete 5 rounds of 10 throws each with a 30 second break between rounds.







These sessions are designed to improve your speed and agility.

The name of the game here is <u>fast and efficient</u> movement. You should be trying to perform at your very best and maintain high quality in all of your movements - for that reason, you can be more relaxed with your rest periods here than in some of the other conditioning sessions.

You should be using a Light - Moderate sandbag for your Speed & Agility Conditioning sessions.



1

Lateral Drag for 20m Zercher Lateral Lunges X 5/5

Repeat for a total of 5 rounds.

2

Sandbag Sprint for 20m Shoulder Get Up X 1/1 Sandbag Sprint for 20m

Rest for 30 seconds and repeat for a total of 5 rounds.

#3

Complete a single repetition of a Get Up (Shoulder), Single Arm Press and a Windmill without putting the sandbag down. Switch sides and repeat on the opposite side.

Repeat for a total of 10 rounds.











4

Clean X 5 Push Jerk X 5 Forwards Drag for 40m (or 20m/20m)

Rest for 30 seconds and repeat for a total of 5 rounds.

5

Lateral Lunge (Overhead) X 5/5 Backwards Drag for 40m (or 20m/20m) Single Arm High Pulls X 5/5

Repeat for a total of 5 rounds as fast as possible.







Will sandbag training make me a better fighter or martial artist?

Sandbag training will not, by itself, make you a better fighter.

You should think of strength and conditioning as the foundation to be able to become a better fighter. And sandbag training is a great option for strength and conditioning.

Can I follow these training programmes on the same day that I practice my MMA or Martial Arts?

Absolutely. The sessions in this book are designed to support your existing training schedule, not replace it.

Can I construct my own training programme using the exercises in this book?

Yes. You can follow the strength principles found on page 140 and pick and choose any of the exercises from the instructional section of this book. The conditioning sessions can also be used as and when you desire.

I have an injury - should I still try sandbag training?

It would depend on your specific injury but, like any new training method, you should probably wait until you are fully healed before attempting any of the training programmes in this book.



What is the real difference between a homemade sandbag and a custom made sandbag?

Put simply, a custom made sandbag is more versatile and hardwearing. That does not mean that you can't follow the programmes with a home made sandbag. I trained with a homemade sandbag for 6 months before upgrading to a Brute Force Sandbag.

I've finished all of the programmes. What now?

The programmes are performance based so you should go back through them and try to beat your previous best. This is the basis behind all good training programmes - they are progressive.

I'm trying to cut weight, will sandbag training help?

Yes, it can. You should focus more on the conditioning sessions and couple this with some dietary changes.

I'm trying to build muscle, will sandbag training help?

Yes, it will. You should focus on the strength sessions and ensure that you are eating enough.



I can't lift as much weight in a sandbag as I can with a barbell - is that a problem?

Sandbag training is not about making you a better weight lifter, it's about providing you with a strength and conditioning method that will enhance your capabilities as an athlete. Most people find that they can't lift as much weight when they make a switch to sandbag training because it's awkward. But this isn't a bad thing. Your opponent will most likely be awkward too so it makes sense to train for this.





If you've enjoyed this sample copy of Sandbag Training For MMA & Combat Sports then why not purchase the full version. Includes:

- Over 50 more exercises, described in detail
- Over half a year of training programmes 100 sessions in total!
- Nearly 200 pages in total, including ready made training logs to record your sessions

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MATTHEW PALFREY

The Sandbag Fitness Blog is packed full of workouts, tips, advice and sandbag training information.

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