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Get FIGHTING FIT

MMA WORKOUTS

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Welcome

Chances are, you've picked up this bookazine because you want to get fit. And we mean really fit. Not just average Joe fit, but top-end athlete fit. Your goals might be slightly different – you may, for example, be keen to slim down and tone up, build impressive muscles or work off the excesses of the festive period – but your aims are more or less the same. You want to get really fit, and you want to have fun in the process.

This last point is key. At some point or other, all of us have started on an exercise regime, got bored and found something else to do with our time instead. We start with the best intentions, but after a few weeks the monotonous grind of doing the same exercises over and over again saps all enthusiasm and we end up finding excuses not to work out.

This is where *Get Fighting Fit: MMA Workouts* comes in. The exercises in this bookazine have been designed to keep you interested and motivated, while giving you the kind of fun, strenuous and varied workouts that will burn fat and build muscle. With a little hard work over months, rather than weeks, you'll have the body you crave.

You'll also have a good grounding in the basics of Mixed Martial Arts, one of the fastest growing sports in the world – and one renowned for its intensity, excitement and physical demands.

In the pages that follow, you'll find step-by-step instructions on how to do key Mixed Martial Arts moves, training drills, and complementary "general fitness" exercises tailored to supplement the MMA training. You'll also find a range of training plans and workouts designed to keep you motivated, fight fat and give you a thorough grounding in the basics of Mixed Martial Arts.

In other words, if you follow the advice in this bookazine, you'll be fighting fit in no time at all.

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WARNING

Some of the training techniques and workouts featured in this publication could be dangerous if performed incorrectly. If in doubt, consult a fitness professional before attempting them. Always have a training partner with you when working out. Anyone under the age of 18 should be supervised by a responsible adult. You must seek medical advice before undertaking any kind of fitness program. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Future Publishing Limited shall not have any liability in connection with the information in this magazine and disclaims all liability for any damage or injury to individuals or their equipment as a result of or relating to carrying out any of the techniques in this bookazine.

INTRO

TIME TO GET FIGHTING FIT!

Congratulations: you've taken the first step to a fitter, healthier you. Now it's time to learn how and why martial arts workouts will change your life for the better.

There are a multitude of options for those seeking to fight fat and get fit – a myriad of exercise plans, training regimes and fashionable workouts, all of which claim to produce quick results. In truth, significantly improving your all-round fitness, losing weight and getting the body you desire takes time.

What's also true, though, is that some exercises can speed up the process. To understand why, it's worth taking a quick look at the science behind the five key areas that make up physical fitness.

Cardiovascular endurance

Put simply, cardiovascular endurance is the ability of your heart and lungs to work together to fuel your body with oxygen. Cardiovascular endurance can be improved through exercise routines geared towards aerobic conditioning – those that require you to perform the same movement for long periods of time, or for short periods at a high intensity. Running, cycling, swimming, rowing and circuit training (workouts that combine many different exercises) are all excellent ways of improving your cardiovascular endurance. Cardio exercises help you to burn more calories, and are therefore great for fighting fat.

Muscular endurance

This is the ability of a muscle or group of muscles to perform a continuous effort without tiring. Muscular endurance can be improved by doing "bodyweight" exercises such as push-ups, sit-ups, dips, lunges and squats – exercises that require you to move or lift your own body. You can also get the same effect by performing a high number of repetitions of weights exercises using light dumbbells or barbells. Better muscular endurance increases the likelihood of sustained weight loss.

Muscular strength

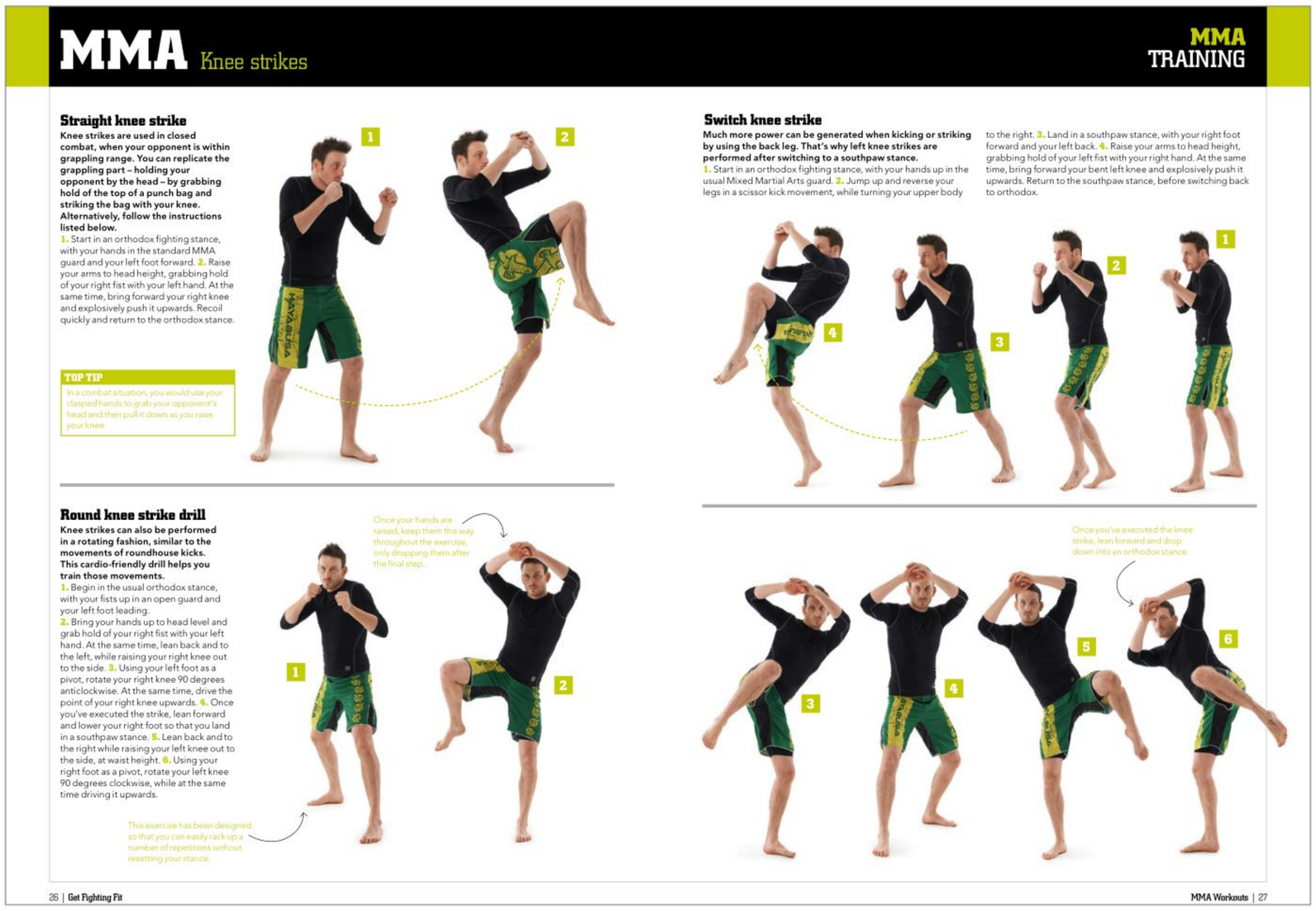
This is the ability of your muscles to lift a moderate to heavy amount of weight with good form and control. Muscular strength can be improved by either lifting moderate to heavy weights such as dumbbells and barbells, or by modifying exercises aimed at improving muscular endurance to include hand-held weights.

Flexibility

In fitness terms, flexibility is the ability of each joint to express its full range of motion. Basically, it's how supple you are. Having a high degree of flexibility allows you to more easily perform different

Your essential guide....

MMA and general fitness drills have their own dedicated sections



Step-by-step instructions detail the correct way to do a move

Follow the photo guides and tips to perfecting the techniques

types of exercises, and move quickly and smoothly. If you concentrate too much on 'getting big' by building muscle mass, you will lose some flexibility.

Body composition

The fifth and final facet of physical fitness is body composition. This is the amount of body fat you have, versus the amount of bone and lean muscle. By definition body composition will be improved by following a balanced exercise regime that takes into account the other four facets of physical fitness.

Ticking the boxes

Few exercise regimes successfully work on all of these facets of physical fitness simultaneously. The good news is that fighting disciplines, and particularly martial arts, do.

When you're fighting, or simply training using martial arts techniques, you'll be improving all of the facets of physical fitness at the same time.

How to use this bookazine

The first part of this guide to MMA concentrates on Mixed Martial Arts techniques and training drills, offering step-by-step instructions on how to perform each and learn the correct technique. You can perform them separately, as a strict MMA workout, or do them in conjunction with the 'general exercises' listed in the second part of the book. These have been hand-picked by MMA experts to complement the techniques featured in the first portion of the bookazine.

The final part of the bookazine features a range of workouts and training plans. All of these have been designed for a specific purpose, from helping you to learn key Mixed Martial Arts techniques, to losing weight and developing the kind of body you crave. There's even a selection of quick 15-minute workouts to do at home when you can't get to the gym.

You don't need a vast amount of equipment to do these workouts. Even the MMA kicking and punching drills can be performed without a punch bag although if you have access to one, it's worth using it), and most of the other exercises are based around the sort of equipment you'd find at your local gym.

If you follow the instructions in this book, exercise regularly and vary your workouts, you will be fighting fit in no time at all. Good luck!

MMA Stances & straight punches

Stances

When learning any kind of martial art, the first place to start is with the fighting stance. In MMA, this is a little more front on and open than the traditional boxing stance. Like boxers, MMA fighters lead with the opposite foot to their stronger hand. If you're right handed, that means taking up an orthodox stance.

Orthodox stance

Stand with your left foot facing forwards (12 o'clock), and your right foot at roughly 45 degrees (3 o'clock). Close your hands into fists, with your thumbs tucked under your fingers. Bring them up to make a guard, with your left hand a little further forward.

Southpaw stance

If you're left handed, reverse the lead foot and hand (right foot and right hand forward). As with the orthodox stance, your weight should be distributed equally between your feet, and your back shoulder (in this case, your left) should be a little further back than the lead one.

Left jab (orthodox stance)

The most basic punch is the jab, a quick, straight punch with the leading arm. If you're left-handed and use a southpaw stance reverse the movements, punching with your right fist. **1.** Get into an orthodox stance, with your hands up in a guard. Your upper body must be positioned so that your lead shoulder is slightly forward. **2.** Turn your upper body a little so your left shoulder is pointing in the direction of your opponent. Quickly extend your left arm until it's straight. **3.** As you're extending your left arm, rotate your fist so that your palms are facing downwards by the point of delivery. **4.** Quickly withdraw, bringing your left arm back to the guard. As you withdraw, bring your left shoulder back to return to the orthodox stance.

Right cross (orthodox stance)

"Cross" punches are so called because they come across your body from your back arm, which should be the stronger one. It's effectively a straight punch with your strongest hand.

1. Start in the orthodox stance, with your hands up in the standard guard position. **2.** Turn at the core, turning your right leg and right foot inwards as you move your upper body forwards. At the same time extend your right arm straight, rotating your wrists so that your palm faces the floor. Bring your left arm in close to your face to guard against a counter-punch. **3.** Keep turning your upper body until you reach the point of delivery. Once delivered, withdraw quickly and reverse the movements to return to the orthodox stance.

If you fight in a southpaw stance, reverse the movements so that you're punching with your left fist and your right foot is the furthest forward.

Combination '1–2' drill (straight punches)

This classic training drill is a great option for those looking for a tough cardiovascular workout. You can do it "shadow boxing" style, or hit a punch bag. Either way, you should be doing it for at least 30 seconds at a time, speeding up delivery once you've mastered the correct technique. Here, it's displayed in orthodox stance.

1. Take up the orthodox stance, with high hands guarding the face. **2.** Throw a straight left jab, rotating your wrist as you extend your arm. **3.** As you withdraw, turn your body to move straight into a right cross and bring your left hand up to your left cheek to protect your face. **4.** Withdraw and return to the orthodox stance, before repeating the steps continuously for 30 seconds.

MMA Hook punches

Left hook (orthodox stance)

In Mixed Martial Arts, hook punches should be used when in close proximity to your opponent. They should be delivered in a controlled manner, close to your body – these aren't the "haymaker" style punches you see in the Rocky movies!

1. Get into an orthodox stance, with your hands up in a guard. Your upper body should be positioned so that your lead shoulder is slightly forward. **2.** Shift your weight onto your right foot, bending your left knee as you turn the left side of your body towards your opponent. At the same time, bring your left elbow up to shoulder level and bring your fist across the front of your face. Your left wrist should end up at around eye level, a few inches in front of your right knuckle. Once you've delivered the punch, withdraw and return to the orthodox stance.

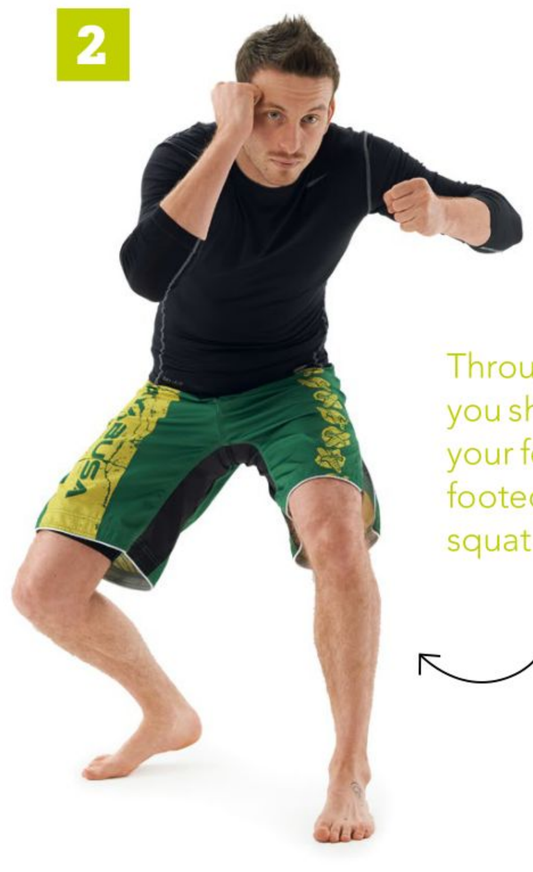
If you have a southpaw stance, reverse the hands, arms, legs and feet, so that you're hooking with your right fist.

When delivering a hook punch, your forearm should be straight, and tucked in close to your body. Remaining balanced throughout is vital.

Left body hook

In MMA, body shots are just as important as punches to the head. The movements are a little tricky, so practise at a slow pace at first.

1. Start in the orthodox stance. **2.** Push your hips back and bend at the knees. At the same time, push your left elbow out to the left and bring your upper arm up to just below shoulder level. **3.** Shift your weight onto your right foot, bending your knees as you turn the left side of your body towards your opponent. Bring your fist across the front of your face. Once you've delivered the punch, return to the orthodox stance.



Throughout the movement, you should be up on the balls of your feet. If you're too flat-footed, you won't be able to squat and turn quickly.

Right hook (orthodox stance)

For right-handed fighters, the right hook should pack some serious power. With the addition of more dynamic body movements, it should be capable of causing opponents more than a few problems.

1. Start in the orthodox stance, with your hands up in the standard guard position. **2.** Turn at the core, rotating your right leg and right foot inwards as you move your upper body forwards. At the same time, bring your right elbow up to shoulder level and move your fist across the front of your face. At the point of delivery, your right fist should be at eye level, four to six inches in front of your face. Bring your left fist in close to your face to guard against a counter-punch. Once you've delivered the punch, quickly recoil and return to the orthodox stance.

The power for the punch comes as much from your legs and core as your arms. You should be transferring your weight to your left foot as you punch.

TOP TIP

You can turn this into an exercise by repeating the steps above for at least 30 seconds. Once you've mastered the technique, punch quickly to burn up more calories.

Right body hook

This punch combines the squatting movement of the left body hook, with the turning movements of the right hook.

1. Start in the orthodox stance, with your hands up in a guard. **2.** Push your hips back and bend at the knees to go down into a squat. Your eyes should be in line with your opponent's chest. **3.** Turn at the core, exaggerating the bend in your knees as you rotate your right leg inwards. Bring your right elbow up to shoulder level and move your fist across the front of your face. After delivering the punch, recoil and return to the orthodox stance by pushing your hips up and straightening your legs.

At the point of delivery, your right fist should be at eye level, four to six inches in front of your face. Bring your left fist in close to your face to guard.

MMA Hook punches (combination drills) & uppercut punches

Hook combination drill

In MMA, hooks are often used as a counter-attack. This specially-designed exercise combines defence and attack, with telephone blocks followed by hook punches. It can be used both as a training drill and a cardiovascular workout.

1. Start in the orthodox stance. When you're ready to begin, move your legs and body into position to deliver a right hook, but instead of delivering the punch, bring your right arm up towards the side of your face and lightly grab the back of your head with your fingers. This is what's known as a telephone block. **2.** Immediately turn to deliver a left hook, bringing your right fist down to your cheek to guard. **3.** Bring your right fist below your chin and grab the back of your head with your left hand to make a telephone block. **4.** Explosively turn and rotate to deliver a left hook. **5.** Simultaneously squat down into a right body hook position. Instead of punching grab the back of your head with your right hand to make a telephone block. **6.** Immediately turn to deliver a left body hook, bringing your right fist down to your cheek to protect the face. **7.** Bring your right fist to below your chin and grab the back of your head with your left hand to make a telephone block. **8.** Explosively turn and deliver a right body hook. Push back up to the orthodox stance to complete one repetition.

Remember to bring your left fist down to your cheek to guard against counter-punches.

Go through the movements of the drill slowly at first, then increase the tempo once you've mastered the techniques.

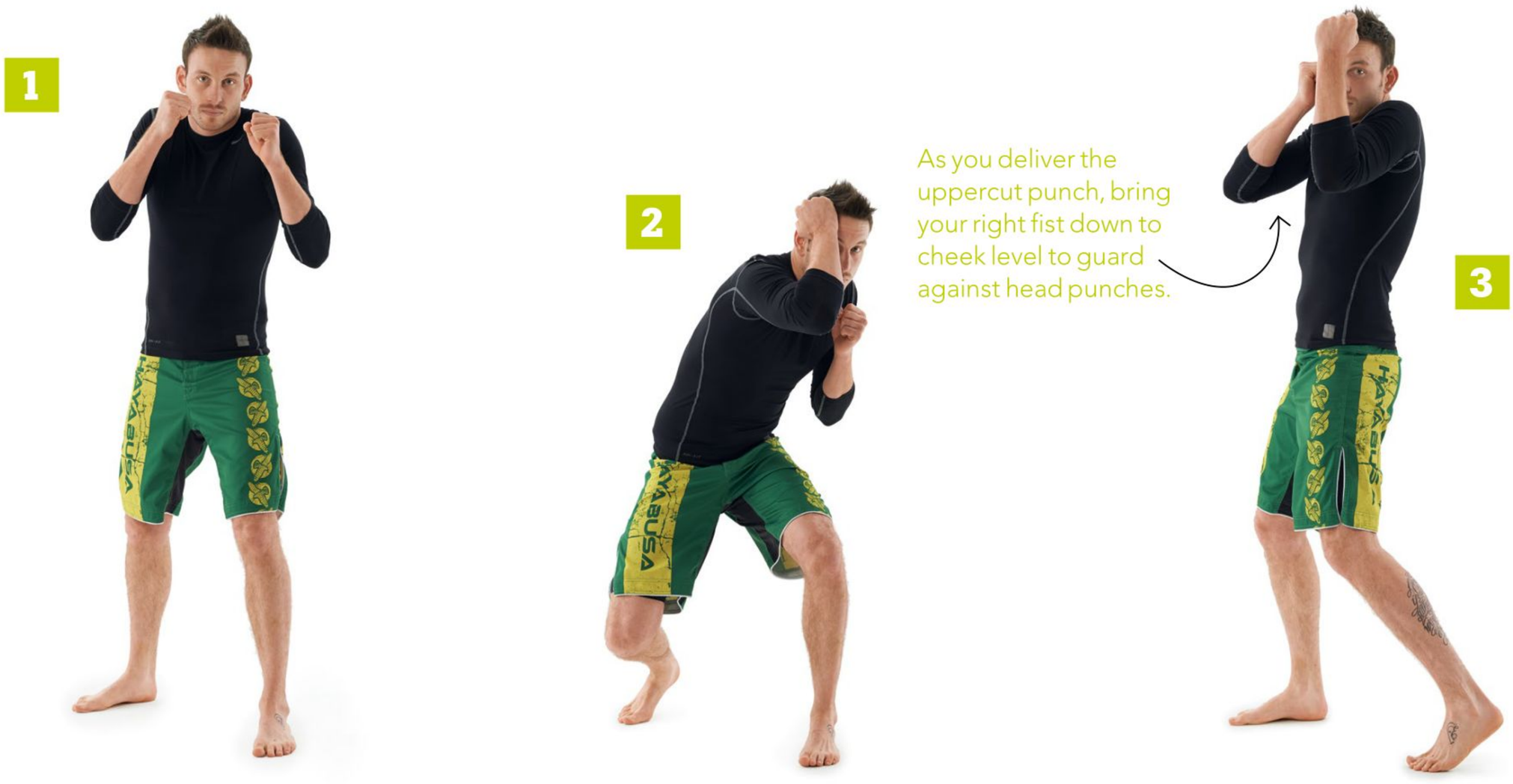
TOP TIP

If you're using this as a cardiovascular exercise as part of a mixed workout, you should repeat the drill for at least 1 minute, or 30 seconds at a high tempo.

Left uppercut (orthodox stance)

Like the hook, the uppercut is used in close combat. It's important to guard your head while getting into position, so it's delivered on the back of a telephone block.

1. Begin in the orthodox stance, with your fists up in the usual open mixed martial arts guard. **2.** Bend at the knees and push your hips back to get into a squat. Simultaneously bring your right arm up into a telephone block to protect the right side of your face. Your left arm should be tucked in close to your body, with your fist at chest level. **3.** Explosively push up and turn to the right. Simultaneously raise your right fist upwards in front of your face, as straight as possible, until your knuckles are level with the top of your head. Recoil and return to the orthodox stance.



Right uppercut (orthodox stance)

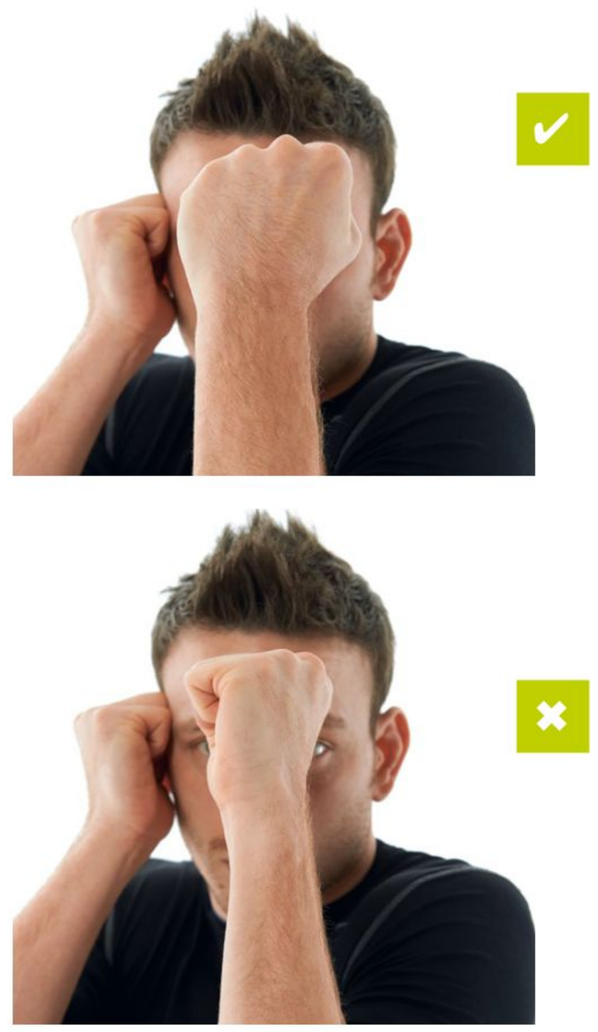
The right uppercut reverses the movements of the left-arm version of the punch.

1. Begin in the orthodox stance. Bend at the knees and push your hips back to get into a squat, turning your body a little to the right. As you do that, make a telephone block with your left arm.

2. Explosively push up and rotate to the left. At the same time, quickly raise your right fist upwards in front of your face, until your knuckles are level with the top of your head. Recoil and return to the orthodox stance.

Correct striking position

As you perform the uppercut, your palms and fingers should be facing towards your head, in line with your eyes. The front of your hand and the top of your knuckles should be facing away from your body.



Basic eight combination drill

If you've ever boxed, or been to a boxercise class for that matter, it's likely that you will have come across the "basic eight" drill; it's a classic exercise that sees the fighter throw all eight basic punches in sequence. This is the Mixed Martial Arts equivalent. It provides a superb all-over body cardiovascular workout while helping you to master the movements and techniques of mixed martial arts punching. Here, it is shown in an orthodox stance; reverse the positioning and movements if you train in a southpaw stance.

1. Start in an orthodox stance, with hands up in the usual guard. **2.** Turn your body a little to the right and deliver a left jab. **3.** Quickly recoil and return to the orthodox stance. **4.** Immediately turn a little towards your left, bending your right knee slightly, to deliver a right cross punch. **5.** Without changing the feet position, pull your right arm up to make a telephone block. Your left fist should be tucked in behind your right elbow. **6.** Twist and move your feet into position to deliver a left hook. **7.** Without changing the position of your feet, pull your left arm up into a telephone block. **8.** Quickly turn and deliver a right hook punch.

9. Immediately squat down, raising your right arm into a telephone block position. **10.** Quickly turn to deliver a right body hook, moving your feet into position as you rotate. **11.** Without changing the feet position, bring your right arm up to your head to make a telephone block. **12.** Turn and throw a left body hook punch. **13.** Push up and turn to the right while delivering a left uppercut. **14.** Keeping your feet in the same position, squat down and make a telephone block with your left arm. **15.** Simultaneously push up and turn to the left while delivering a left uppercut. **16.** Return to the orthodox stance to complete one repetition.

TOP TIP

If you're using the "basic eight" as a tough cardiovascular workout, you should be aiming to move through the sequence at a high tempo. That means quick hands and feet, and no pauses between steps. However, you shouldn't attempt a quick tempo until you've properly mastered the technique, so start slowly.

As you're moving through the punches, don't forget to make the correct applicable guard with your other hand.

MMA Elbow strikes & combination drill

Right elbow strike (orthodox stance)

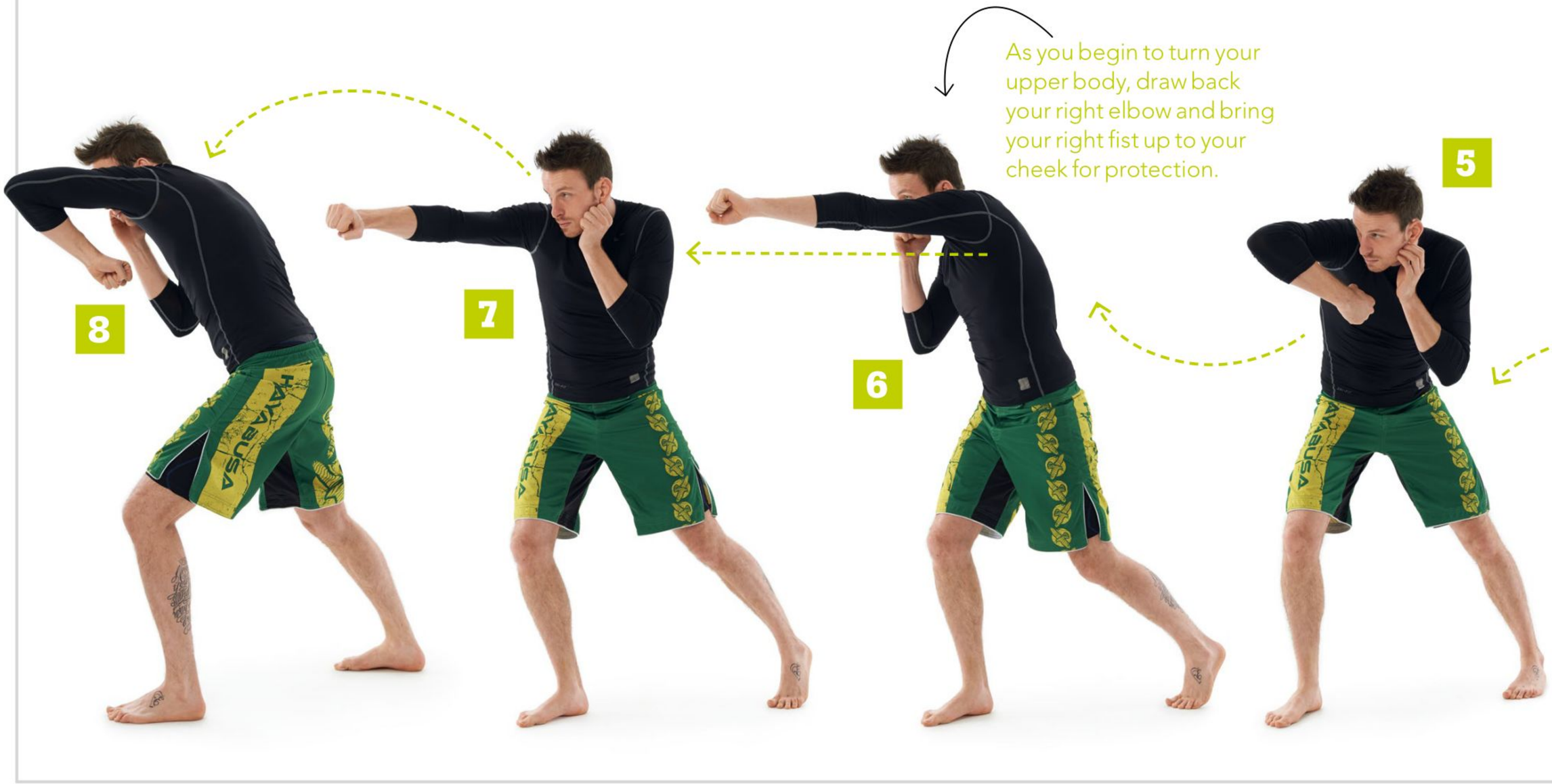
Elbow striking should be performed in one smooth, dynamic movement.

1. Get into an orthodox stance, with hands up in the usual Mixed Martial Arts guard. **2.** Lean forwards. At the same time, bring your left fist up to your left cheek, and pull back your right arm at shoulder level. Your right fist should be in line with your right ear. **3.** Quickly push your elbow forwards to strike the target area. The point of your elbow should make contact with your opponent. As you perform the strike, keep your head up and your eyes on your opponent. Recoil quickly and return to the orthodox stance.

Jabs & Elbows drill

Combinations of punches and strikes are important in Mixed Martial Arts. It's for this reason that we've designed this drill. It mixes straight punches and elbow strikes, and smoothly moves between orthodox and southpaw stances. With forwards movement, it makes a great cardio exercise.

1. Get into an orthodox stance, with left foot forward and hands up guarding your face. **2.** Throw a straight left jab. **3.** Quickly pull back your left fist to guard your face while throwing a right cross punch. **4.** Withdraw your right fist and bring it up to guard your face. At the same time, deliver a left jab punch. **5.** Step forward



Left elbow strike (southpaw stance)

The left elbow strike can also be performed by those who normally use an orthodox stance – just quickly switch to southpaw stance before delivering the strike.

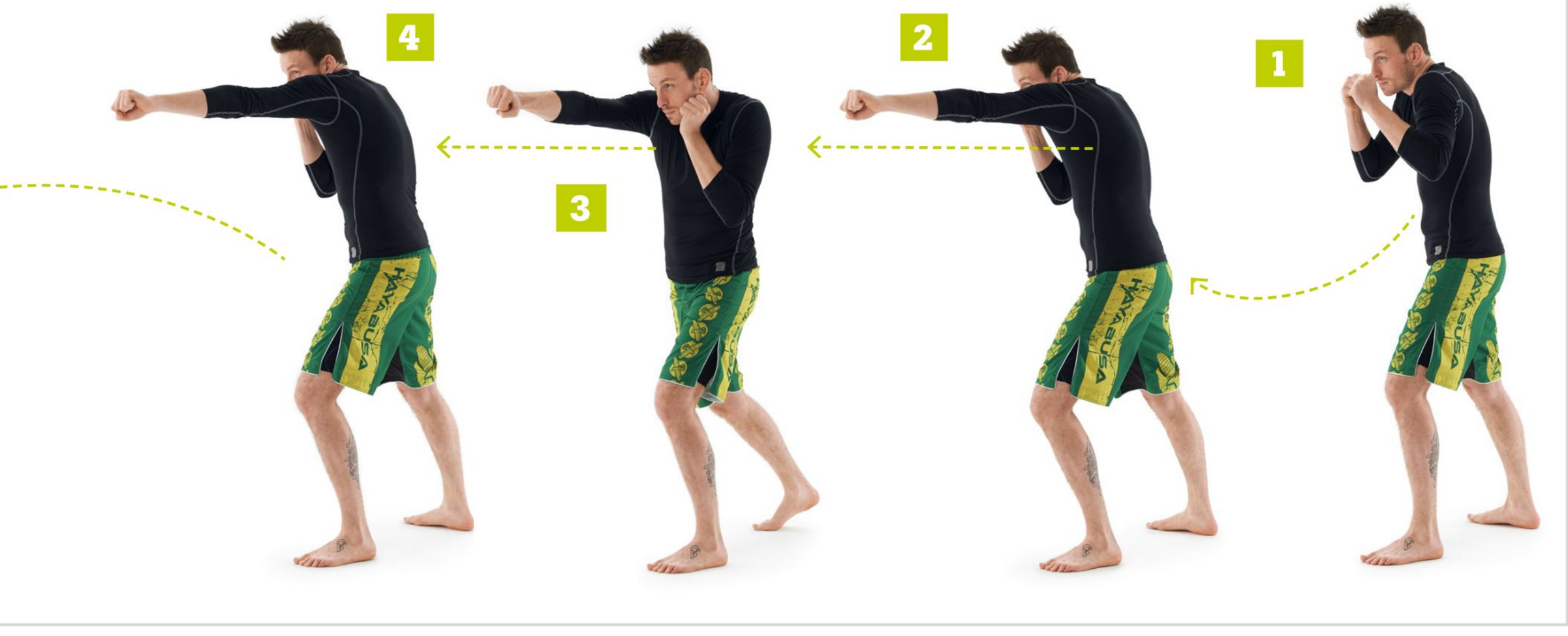
1. Get into a southpaw stance, with your right foot forward. **2.** Lean forwards, bringing your right fist up to your left cheek with your right foot to get into a southpaw stance. At the same time, perform a right elbow strike. **6.** Lowering your right elbow, throw a straight punch with your left arm. **7.** Withdraw your left arm and throw a straight right punch. **8.** Step forward with left foot to get back into an orthodox stance. Deliver a left elbow strike.

TOP TIP

If you're an orthodox fighter, start in that stance and quickly switch your body position before performing the strike.

and pulling back your left arm at shoulder level. Your left fist should ideally be in line with your right ear. **3.** Next, quickly push your left elbow forwards to strike the target area. The point of your elbow should be the part making the contact during the strike. Remember to keep your head up, and your eyes firmly on your opponent. Recoil quickly and then return to the southpaw stance.

Go through the full sequence and then return to the orthodox stance, with hands up, to complete one repetition of the drill.



Orthodox roundhouse (right leg kicks)

Roundhouse kicks are highly effective, but difficult to master. Retaining balance while turning and kicking in a fluid manner is vital. Aim to strike the target area (the side of a punch bag, or opponent) with the top of your foot.

1. Stand in an orthodox stance with your left foot leading, and your hands up in a guard. **2.** Quickly raise your right knee to waist level and then begin to swivel round, using your left foot as a pivot. The movement should come from your trunk and upper body. You should also be leaning back as you turn. **3.** Once you have turned almost 180 degrees, extend your right leg to execute the strike. Quickly recoil and swivel back to return to the orthodox stance.

Roundhouse practice drill

Executing roundhouse kicks well is heavily dependent on maintaining balance while you turn. This drill helps train that movement and balance. It requires you to turn 360 degrees anticlockwise, before switching to a southpaw stance to swivel 360 degrees clockwise.

1. Stand in an orthodox stance with your hands up in a guard, and your left foot leading. **2.** Raise your right knee out in front of you to just above waist level, tucking your calves in to your hamstrings. **3.** Begin to turn anticlockwise, leaning a little and using your left foot as a pivot. **4.** Continue to turn, trying to keep your lower leg parallel to the floor. **5.** Concentrate on maintaining balance as you

Switch roundhouse (left leg kicks)

Roundhouse kicks should always be performed with your back leg. That means that if you fight in an orthodox stance, you need to switch to southpaw to kick with your left leg. Here's how to do it...

1. Stand in an orthodox stance with your left foot leading. **2.** Jump up and quickly switch your legs, turning your upper a little to the right in the process. **3.** Land in a southpaw stance, with your right foot forward. **4.** Raise your knee, turn your body and extend your left leg outwards, using the same technique as the standard roundhouse, to execute the kick. Once you've struck the bag or opponent with the top of your foot, recoil and return to a southpaw stance.

near completion of a 360-degree turn. **6.** As complete the turn, begin to lower your right leg so that you can finish in the orthodox stance. **7.** Once you're back in the fighting stance, jump and quickly switch legs, landing in a southpaw stance. **8.** Repeat the round movement, this time raising your left knee, swivelling on your right and turning in a clockwise direction.

TOP TIP

It's unwise to do too many repetitions of this drill if you get dizzy easily. Once through the full drill (orthodox followed by southpaw) should be enough for beginners.

Front kick (right leg kicks)

Front kicks are easier to execute than roundhouse ones. They are performed with a "snapping" movement.

1. Stand in an orthodox fighting stance, with the usual MMA open guard. **2.** Simultaneously lean back a little and raise your right leg (that's the back leg in orthodox stance) to waist height. As you do so, bring your fists together close to your face for protection. **3.** As your knee gets to waist height, quickly extend your lower leg in a "snapping" movement, so the bottom of your foot strikes the punch bag, or opponent. Recoil quickly, before returning to the orthodox stance.

TOP TIP

Our model can aim for the head as he's an experienced MMA fighter. When starting, aim to strike at waist height or just below.

Jab-kick combination drill

This shadow boxing and kicking drill has been designed to give you a tough cardiovascular workout, while training a number of key striking movements. As with other drills, start out slowly and then raise the tempo as you gain experience.

1. Take up an orthodox fighting stance. **2.** Begin the drill by throwing a straight left jab. **3.** Recoil quickly. As you withdraw your left hand, throw a right cross punch. **4.** Withdraw your right hand back to the guard, and immediately throw another left jab. **5.** As you recoil, lean back and perform a front kick with your right leg.

Switch front kick

Just like roundhouse kicks, front kicks should be performed with the trailing leg. That means if you want to kick with your left leg, you need to switch to a southpaw stance first.

1. Start by taking up an orthodox stance, with the left leg forward. **2.** Jump and scissor kick your legs, turning your body in the process. **3.** Land in the southpaw stance. **4.** Immediately lean back a little, raise your left knee to waist height and extend the leg in a "snapping" movement, as with the regular front kick. Once you've made contact, recoil and return to the southpaw stance. Switch back to orthodox stance to complete the move.

6. Pull your leg back and move your upper body forwards to return to the orthodox stance, before throwing another left jab punch. **7.** As you withdraw your left hand, step forward with your right foot and turn your body to get into a southpaw stance. **8.** Perform a front kick with your left leg, before returning to the southpaw stance. Switch back to the orthodox stance to complete one repetition of the exercise. Repeat the drill for at least 30 seconds at a high tempo.

Concentrate on smooth, quick movements between punches. In boxing-speak, that means fast hands!

MMA Knee strikes

Straight knee strike

Knee strikes are used in closed combat, when your opponent is within grappling range. You can replicate the grappling part – holding your opponent by the head – by grabbing hold of the top of a punch bag and striking the bag with your knee. Alternatively, follow the instructions listed below.

1. Start in an orthodox fighting stance, with your hands in the standard MMA guard and your left foot forward. **2.** Raise your arms to head height, grabbing hold of your right fist with your left hand. At the same time, bring forward your right knee and explosively push it upwards. Recoil quickly and return to the orthodox stance.

TOP TIP

In a combat situation, you would use your clasped hands to grab your opponent's head and then pull it down as you raise your knee.

Round knee strike drill

Knee strikes can also be performed in a rotating fashion, similar to the movements of roundhouse kicks. This cardio-friendly drill helps you train those movements.

1. Begin in the usual orthodox stance, with your fists up in an open guard and your left foot leading.

2. Bring your hands up to head level and grab hold of your right fist with your left hand. At the same time, lean back and to the left, while raising your right knee out to the side. **3.** Using your left foot as a pivot, rotate your right knee 90 degrees anticlockwise. At the same time, drive the point of your right knee upwards. **4.** Once you've executed the strike, lean forward and lower your right foot so that you land in a southpaw stance. **5.** Lean back and to the right while raising your left knee out to the side, at waist height. **6.** Using your right foot as a pivot, rotate your left knee 90 degrees clockwise, while at the same time driving it upwards.

Once your hands are raised, keep them this way throughout the exercise, only dropping them after the final step.

This exercise has been designed so that you can easily rack up a number of repetitions without resetting your stance.

Switch knee strike

Much more power can be generated when kicking or striking by using the back leg. That's why left knee strikes are performed after switching to a southpaw stance.

1. Start in an orthodox fighting stance, with your hands up in the usual Mixed Martial Arts guard. **2.** Jump up and reverse your legs in a scissor kick movement, while turning your upper body to the right. **3.** Land in a southpaw stance, with your right foot forward and your left back. **4.** Raise your arms to head height, grabbing hold of your left fist with your right hand. At the same time, bring forward your bent left knee and explosively push it upwards. Return to the southpaw stance, before switching back to orthodox.

Once you've executed the knee strike, lean forward and drop down into an orthodox stance.

MMA Blocks

Telephone block

Blocks are an important part of Mixed Martial Arts fighting, as they offer a quick, instinctive response to oncoming blows. The telephone block, so called because you draw your forearm up to your ear as if you were on the phone, is one of the most useful.

1. Stand up in an orthodox Mixed Martial Arts fighting stance, with your left foot leading and your hands up in an open guard. **2.** Bend your knees, twist at the core and explosively turn to the right. At the same time, bring your left forearm up to the side of your face and grab hold of the back of your head with your fingers. **3.** Twist back to return to the fighting stance. **4.** Repeat the block with your right arm, turning to the left and bringing your right arm up towards the side of your face. Return to the fighting stance to complete one repetition of the drill.

The telephone block should be performed in one quick, smooth movement.

Hunch down a little as you turn, making sure that your upper body gets side on to your opponent.

Low telephone block

The low telephone block is used in situations where you're dipped down in a squat position, for example when you have been throwing body hook punches.

1. Start in a fighting stance. Bend your knees and push your hips back to get down into a squat. **2.** Bend your knees further as you turn your whole body to the right. At the same time, bring your left forearm up to cover the side of your face, and grab hold of the back of your head with your fingers. **3.** Without pushing back up into a standard orthodox stance, turn back to the left to return to the low fighting stance. **4.** Bend your knees further and turn your whole body to the left, bringing your right forearm up to the side of your face. Remember to grab hold of the back of your head with the fingers of your right hand.

When you're turning, use the balls of your feet as pivots – you shouldn't need to raise your feet from the floor at any point.

TOP TIP

When you are in this low, squatted down fighting position, make sure you keep your fists up in the usual guard, to protect your face.

The power for the turning movement should come from your legs – push forward with your bent back leg and turn your leading leg (left in orthodox).

The final position of your legs should be similar to a tight lunge position, with your right knee close to the ground and your left knee thrust forwards a little.

Parry block

The parry block can offer great protection against head high punches.

1. Draw your left fist up towards the top of your head, so that your wrist is level with your eyebrows. **2.** To perform a left arm parry block, turn more front on and draw your fist up towards the top of your head.

Palm block

Open a fist to block head-high punch.

1. Start in an orthodox fighting stance. **2.** Rotate right and unclench your fist so your palm is facing your opponent – do this quickly, as if you're catching a tennis ball. Clench your fist and rotate your wrist to return to the standard guard.

Punch, kick and block combination drill

Now you've learned the basics of striking and blocking, you can start to put all of them together in training drills. These kind of extended drills, which expect you to combine a number of moves in sequence, are great for training the movements and sharpening your skills. They also provide a strenuous cardiovascular workout for those looking to lose weight and shape up. For these two reasons, extended drills like this should form an integral part of your training regime. Just remember to familiarize yourself with the basics before attempting them.

1. Start by taking up an orthodox fighting stance. **2.** Move into a left jab, quickly throwing two successive punches. **3.** As you withdraw after the second jab, quickly throw a right cross punch. **4.** As you recoil from the right cross, turn your body, bend your knees and make a telephone block with your left arm. **5.** Push back up and turn back into the orthodox stance, throwing a right cross. **6.** As you recoil, keep turning to your right and squat down to throw a left body hook. **7.** While in the squat position, turn back to the left, making a telephone block with your right arm. **8.** Turn and push back up, driving your left fist upwards to deliver an uppercut.

TOP TIP

Remember to lead with the balls of your feet when performing a front kick – leading with your toes is a surefire way to get injured.

9. Once you've delivered the uppercut, return to the orthodox stance. **10.** Immediately deliver two straight left jabs. **11.** After the second jab, return to the orthodox stance, lean back and deliver a front kick with your right leg. **12.** Recoil and return to the orthodox stance. **13.** Move into a roundhouse kick. **14.** Rotate through 360 degrees, until you've returned to the starting position. **15.** As you land, place your right foot forward to take up a southpaw stance. **16.** Repeat the drill in a southpaw stance, reversing the movements but employing the same basic kicks, blocks and punches. You should naturally return to an orthodox stance.

TOP TIP

This is a suggestion based on the advice of our MMA experts, but feel free to design your own training drills by combining punches, kicks and blocks that easily flow into one another. For example, a right hook followed by a roundhouse kick makes more sense than a right hook followed by a left hook.

MMA Ground positions – the basics

Top mount

The "ground phase", where fighters grapple on the floor, is as important in Mixed Martial Arts as stood-up striking. You need to learn the basic ground positions. Top mount is the dominant position, the easiest to train without a partner or dummy, and used by fighters to punish grounded opponents. **1.** Get down onto the ground and take up a modified push-up position, with your feet placed twice shoulder width apart on the ground, and your forearms resting on the ground. Your hands should be in fists, and your arms should be placed shoulder width apart. **2.** Raise your hips and pull your knees up towards your shoulders. Your head should remain down, with your eyes fixed on your (imaginary opponent). **3.** Flatten your hands and draw them together, before using them to push up your upper body until they can be extended no more. **4.** Push your hips up and straighten your upper body to complete the mounting process. Reverse to get back into the starting position.

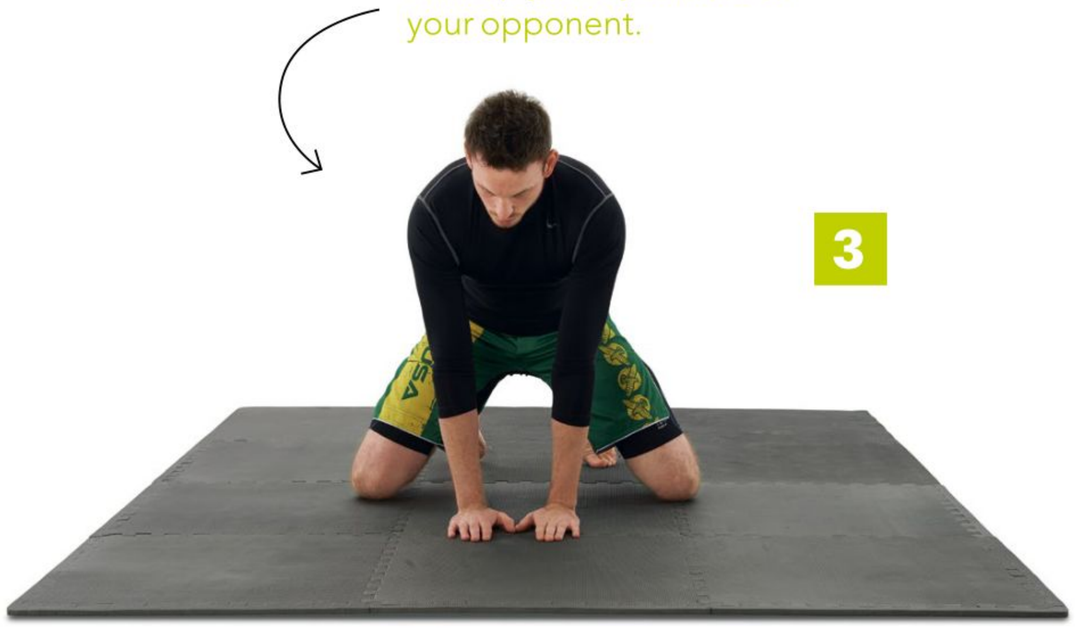
Side control

MMA fighters use the side control position to immobilise opponents who are on their back or side. It is hard to perform without some kind of surrogate opponent. Here, our model is using a punching pad (as seen in most boxing and MMA gyms), but you could use a sofa cushion. **1.** Place a pad or sofa cushion on the floor. Lie across one end as shown, with your forearms resting on the pad, your hips just off the floor, and your toes placed twice shoulder width apart. **2.** Keeping both feet grounded, raise your hips, twist at the core and turn your upper body 90-degrees anticlockwise. Your right arm should be drawn back a little, and your left elbow should be a few inches above the floor. Return to the starting position, and then reverse the movements, so that you're turning your body clockwise.

North South

During ground phase grappling, you will sometimes find yourself on top, but away from the "business end". This is where "north south" comes in; maintaining control over a grounded opponent while turning your body 180 degrees. **1.** Place a pad on the floor, and mount it at one end. Your knees and shins should be on the floor either side of the pad, and your elbows resting on the far end. **2.** Kick out your legs until you can place the balls of your feet on the floor, twice shoulder width apart. As you do this, lower your core to use as a pivot. Push your upper body to the left so that your forearms are now resting on the floor, beyond the far side of the pad. **3.** Keeping your forearms grounded and your legs outstretched, keep turning

Your thumbs should be almost touching when you draw your hands together. Don't forget to keep your eyes fixed on your opponent.



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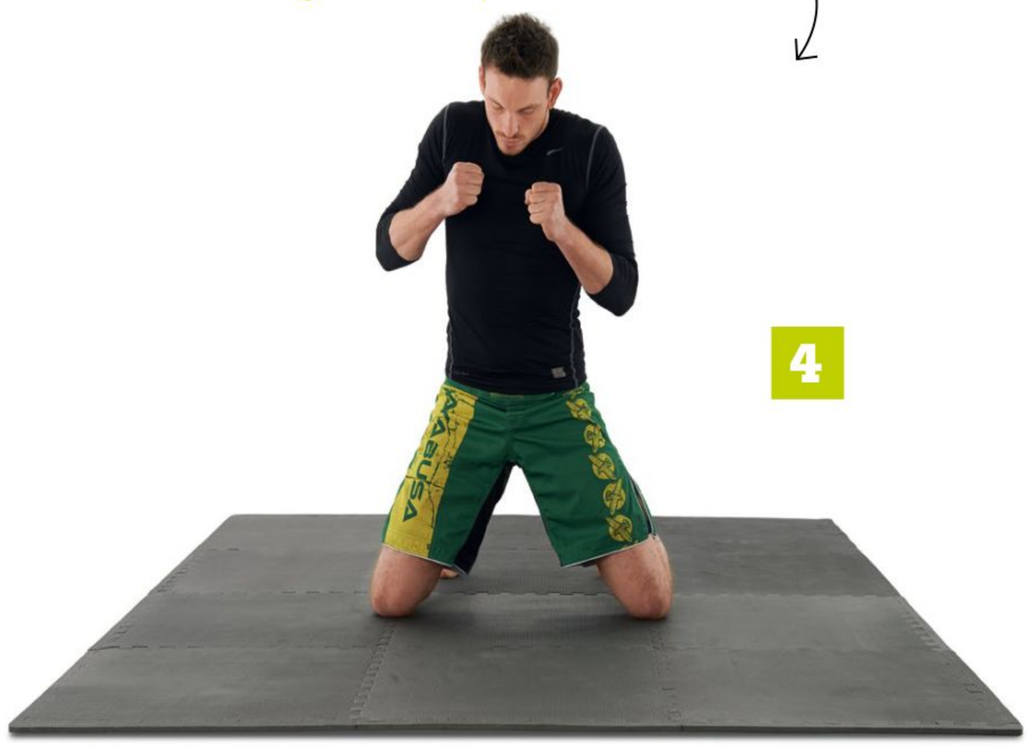
As you come up, draw your hands up into a guard, ready to pummel your opponent. This is known in MMA circles as "ground and pound".



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Scarf control

Scarf control is a subtle variation on side control. It's mostly used to encircle the opponent's head or arm, in order to gain more control during grappling. You transition to the move once you've got up into the scarf control position.

1. Get into the standard side control position (shown left). Bring your right leg forward, so that your thigh is nestling next to the edge of the pad. At the same time, push your left leg back, and plant your left foot firmly on the floor. **2.** Keeping your left foot flat on the floor throughout, pull your left leg back until it's bent at the knee. At the same time, dip your right shoulder. Reverse the movements to return to the starting position. Roll over, and then practice scarf control while lying on your left side.

1

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until you've moved around 180-degrees. By this point, you should be at the opposite end of the pad to the one you began at (hence the "north south" name.

4. Raise your hips and draw your legs forward, so that your knees are once again positioned either side of the pad. At the same time, tuck your forearms tightly into the side of the pad and draw back your elbows.

Once you've completed the move once, push up into the starting position and try again. By the end of this second attempt, you'll be back to the original starting position (picture 1).

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Clock face drill

The clock face drill, which should be performed using a pad, sofa cushion or grappling dummy, is notoriously tricky for beginners. However, it's one of the best ways of training essential ground movements. That's because it goes through all the key moves in one 360-degree turn, as if you were moving around a clock (in this example, in an anti-clockwise direction). As with all drills, the only way to get it right is practice.

1. Start by taking up a modified top mount position. **2.** Place your left hand on the pad, just in front of your thigh. Drop your right shoulder and turn your torso so that your right forearm is grounded, to the left of the pad. **3.** Roll onto your back, while swinging round your legs. Your left foot should land flat on the ground, with your knee bent. Your right arm should be tucked in to the side. **4.** Roll onto your front and into the side control position. **5.** Switch your legs and turn your body to the right. **6.** You should now be in the scarf control position. **7.** Draw your arms into your midriff and push down your chest. 8. Swing round to get into the north south position. **9.** Here comes the tricky part.

Force both knees towards the ground to power the movement from scarf control to side control.

Once you've pushed your left leg under your right knee, turning over should be a smooth and easy process.

Simultaneously roll over your right shoulder and turn your body 90 degrees, so that you finish in the scarf control position. **10.** Begin to turn, forcing your left shoulder towards the pad. **11.** Switch your legs and keep pushing your upper body down until you're into the side control position. **12.** Turn onto your left side in order to get your legs into position to continue the north south movement. **13.** Push your left leg under your bent right leg. **14.** Swing round and turn over so that you finish on your front, astride the pad. **15.** Arch your back and push your knees forward. **16.** Push up into the dominant top mount position. That's one repetition!

TOP TIP

The clock face drill requires a high degree of flexibility. It's unwise to attempt it unless you've already extensively practiced the individual ground movements. There are also many other exercises designed to increase your suppleness in the pages that follow. Try these first, before moving onto this drill.

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The movement between positions should be fluid, rather than jerky.

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Drive your hips up as you raise your upper body into the top mount position. Keep your eyes on your opponent at all times!

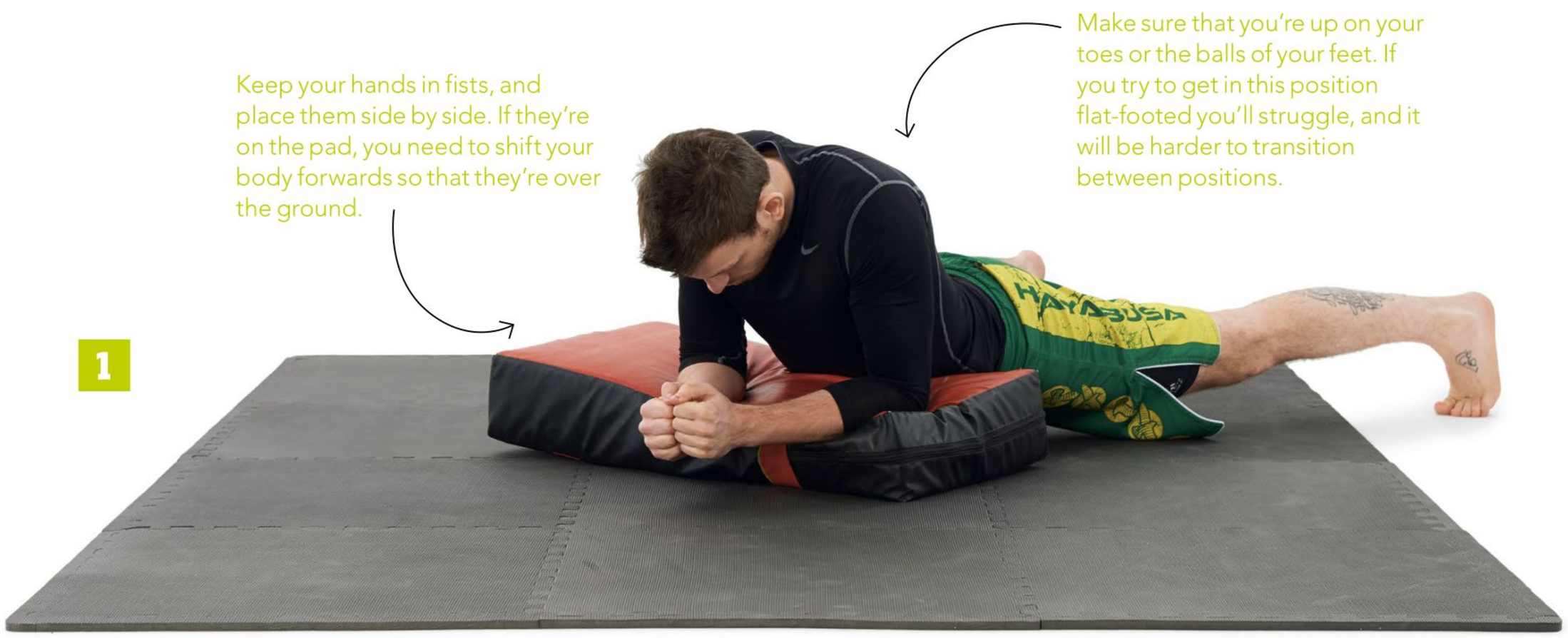
15

16

Half clock and reverse

The half clock and reverse training drill offers an excellent alternative to the full clock face drill. As the title suggests, it involves moving half way around the clock (either in a clockwise or, as is shown here, anticlockwise direction), then reversing the movements to return to the starting position. It's not as technically difficult as the full clock face drill, making it an ideal introduction to the movements needed to transition between ground phase positions.

1. Place a punching pad or sizeable pillow on the floor and lie over one end. Your elbows should be resting on the edge of the pad, and your legs should be extended outwards so that your feet are placed twice shoulder width apart. **2.** Bend your knees and roll over onto your right shoulder. As you do this, bring your right knee up to the side of the pad and place your left foot flat on the floor. **3.** Roll over onto your front, while turning 90 degrees to the left. Bring your legs around and extend them out in a "V" shape. **4.** Keep



turning by rolling over onto your left side while swinging your legs around 90-degrees. Your left thigh should be touching the side of the pad. **5.** Push your upper body left so that you roll onto your front. At the same time, swing your legs round and push them out into that "V" shape. **6.** Begin to reverse the movements by rolling back onto your left side while bringing your left thigh and knee up to the side of the pad. **7.** Turn 90 degrees to the right, while extending your legs back out into the "V" shape used throughout the drill. **8.** Roll over onto your right shoulder, drawing your right knee up to the side of the pad. **9.** Push down onto your front, while kicking out your legs to finish with them in the usual "V" shape.

TOP TIP

Don't forget to alternate between clockwise and anticlockwise movements during sets of repetitions (if you start one repetition by turning anticlockwise, turn clockwise on the next repetition). Throughout, your movements should be fluid, not jerky.

4

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6

When you swing your legs round, your right foot should land flat on the floor. Both legs should be bent at the knee.

By now, you should be used to the turning and twisting movements needed to get back into this position, where your feet are placed twice shoulder width apart.

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Sit-outs

Sit-outs are a favourite exercise of Mixed Martial Arts fighters, because they offer a tough workout while testing your all round suppleness and flexibility. Performed correctly, they should be smooth and fluid, but testing on the arms, legs, shoulders and core.

1. Get up into the plank position, with your hands set shoulder width apart, and your feet set hip width apart. **2.** Using your left arm and right foot for support, smoothly turn your whole body to the left. As you do this, swing your left leg underneath your body and extend it fully, so it moves to the right. Make space for your left leg by drawing your right hand up and placing it on your stomach. When you've finished the movement, you should almost be in a sitting position, with your backside held just off the ground by your left arm and right leg, which should be bent

Leg high sit-outs with push-ups

This tough variation adds in push-up movements for extra cardiovascular endurance benefits.

1. Get into the usual plank starting position, with your hands set shoulder width apart, and your feet hip width apart. **2.** Lower yourself down, as you would if you were doing a regular push-up. **3.** As you explosively push back up with your right arm, turn your whole body to the right, extending your right leg out sideways to perform a sit out. Return to the plank position to complete one repetition. Repeat, this time performing a sit-out with your left leg.

Shoulder roll

One of the least practiced aspects of Mixed Martial Arts ground phase work is the ability to tumble and turn. In this regard, your shoulders are just as important as your core and legs. This simple but devilishly tricky drill helps improve this aspect of MMA fighting, and should help increase your flexibility. Don't despair if you can't get it right first time – it's an advanced technique.

1. Kneel at the corner of a large exercise mat, with your knees placed hip width apart. Your upper body should be held up

TOP TIP

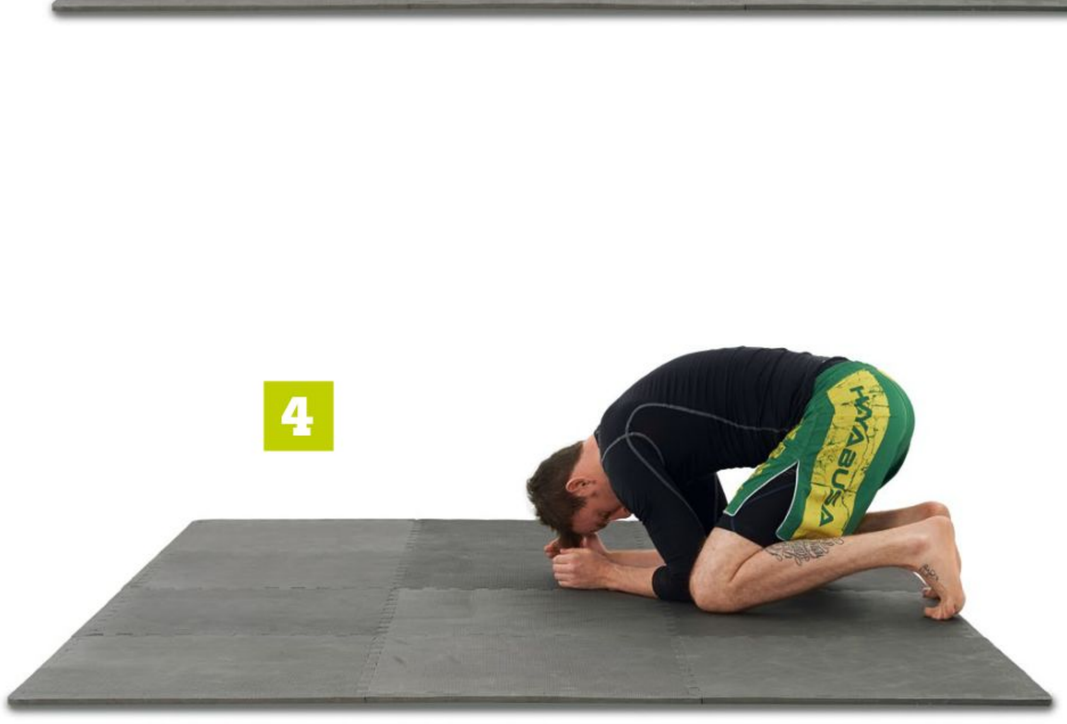
Make sure you have plenty of space around you when you take up your starting positioning – you don't want to be clattering into nearby objects and gym equipment.

at the knee. **3.** Reverse the movements to return to the plank position. **4.** This time, use your right arm and left foot for support, as you turn your whole body to the right. As you do this, swing your right leg under your body and extend it fully to the left. When you've completed the movement, return to the plank position. Keep turning to alternate sides throughout your set of repetitions.

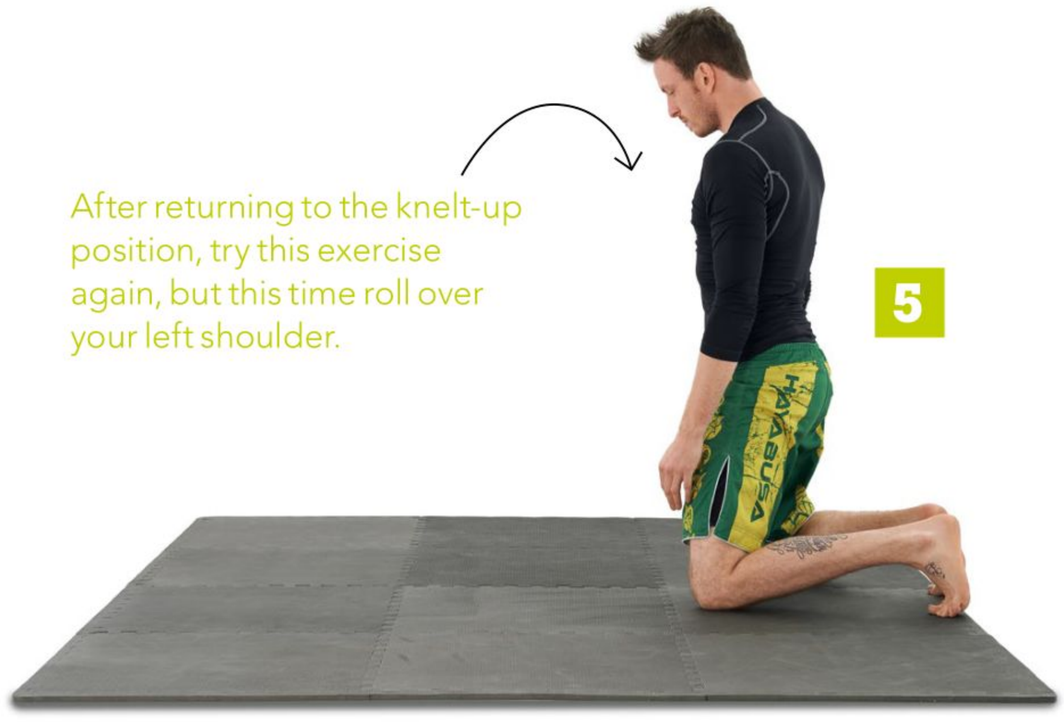
Your foot should be pointing out to the side, with the bottom of your foot facing away from you, when the "sit-out" movement is complete.

naturally, with your arms loosely dangling by your sides. Try to relax your body completely. **2.** Bend over, placing your right shoulder on the ground in front of you, with your right arm tucked underneath your body. Your elbow should be on the ground, with your palms facing upwards. **3.** This is the tricky part. Draw your head down towards your chest, transferring your weight from your right shoulder to your upper back. As you do this, pull up your knees, turn to the right and tuck your arms into your body. At no point should your knees be wider than shoulder width apart. **4.** Try and roll from your right shoulder to your left. By doing this, your momentum should ensure that you land on your knees, as shown. **5.** Raise your upper body and drop your arms to return to a knelt-up popsition. That's one repetition.

Your right ear should be grounded, and your left arm tucked into your body, close to your left thigh.



After returning to the knelt-up position, try this exercise again, but this time roll over your left shoulder.



Suicide planks

A highly recommended variation on the push-up frequently used in MMA training.

1. With your feet set shoulder width apart, get into the plank position, as used in push-ups. Instead of getting up on your hands, place your forearms on the ground, with your fists facing each other. **2.** Draw your right arm back and use your right hand to push up, while keeping your left forearm grounded. **3.** Now push-up with your left hand, so that you're up into the standard plank position. Your body should form a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders. **4.** Pause for a moment, and then dip your left shoulder in order to return your left forearm to its starting position. **5.** Drip down your right shoulder, moving your left forearm back into the starting position. When you finish, the thumbs on your clenched fists should be facing each other.

TOP TIP

Brace your core during the exercise, by pulling in the abdominal muscles around your stomach. Don't let your hips sag at any point, however tough it may be.

Dragon walks

Being successful in the ground phase of Mixed Martial Arts fighting requires a blend of flexibility, core stability, cardiovascular endurance and muscular endurance – all things required to successfully perform this variation on the humble push-up.

1. Get up into the push-up plank position, with your hands and feet placed just wider than shoulder width apart. **2.** In one fluid movement, bend your right knee inwards, drip your right shoulder and place your right hand out in front of you, a little to the right. At the same time, left your left leg out to the side and draw your left knee towards your elbow. **3.** Continue the forward movement, lowering your chest to within a couple of inches of

Keep your core braced and your head up throughout the exercise.

Your hands should be facing slightly inwards while placed on the ground, rather than straight ahead.

TOP TIP

Once you've finished one repetition of the exercise, move straight into the next. This time, though, push up with your left arm first, rather than your right. Keep alternating between repetitions until you've completed the prescribed set of repetitions – we'd suggest 10 to begin with, as it's quite tough for beginners.

the floor. **4.** When you get into this low position, only your hands and feet should be touching the floor. **5.** Begin to push back up into the plank position. **6.** As you push up, move your left hand forward, drawing your right knee towards your right elbow. **7.** As you're moving forwards, lower your chest towards the floor. **8.** Pause for a moment in this low position, before pushing back up into the standard plank position to complete one repetition.

TOP TIP

The key to getting this exercise right is fluid, controlled movements. From the moment you place your left hand forward to begin, it should be one smooth movement of arms and legs as you lower your body. As you come back up, the 'walking' movement of switching arms and legs should be smooth, too.

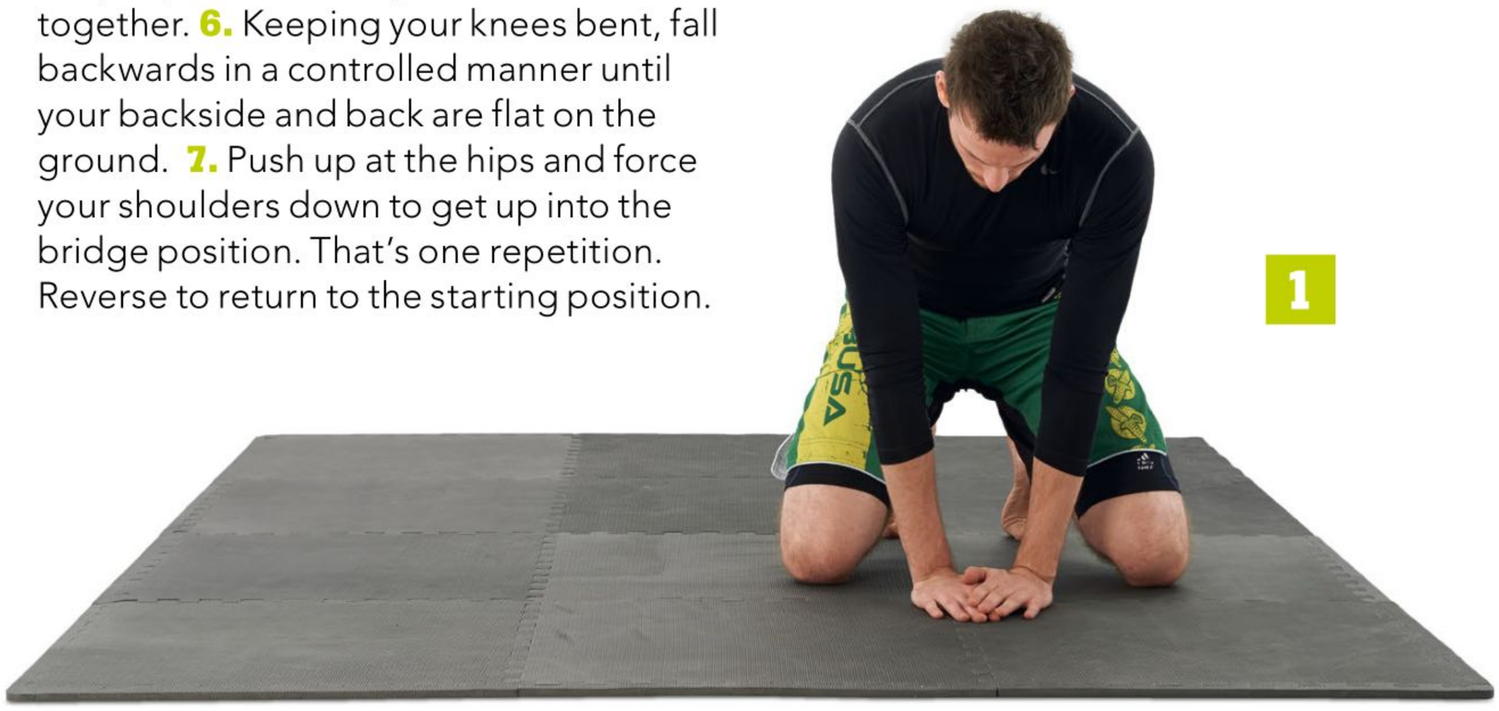
Getting this close to the ground without touching it with your chest takes great control. Don't worry if you don't get it right first time – it's a tough exercise!

An excellent alternative to moving forward twice (right hand first, then left hand) is to go forward once (right hand leading), then reverse the movements, before going forward with the other hand (left).

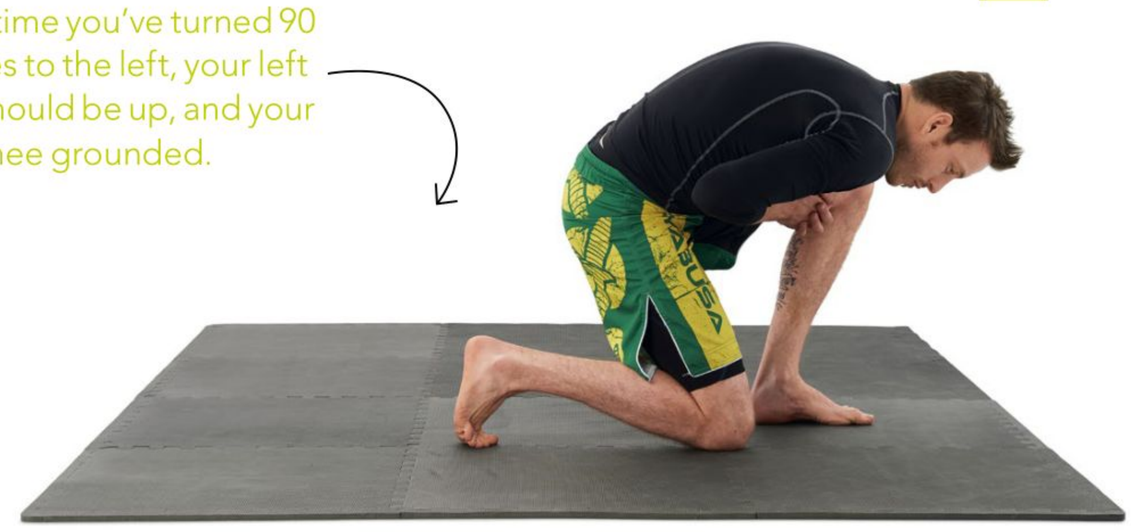
Armbar solo drill from mount

The armbar is a classic technique, originally used in Brazilian jiu jitsu, for taking your opponent's arms out of the equation during ground phase grappling. The position of the arms and hands during this solo drill are the giveaway – if you were sparring with an opponent, you'd have his left arm in a vice-like grip from step two onwards.

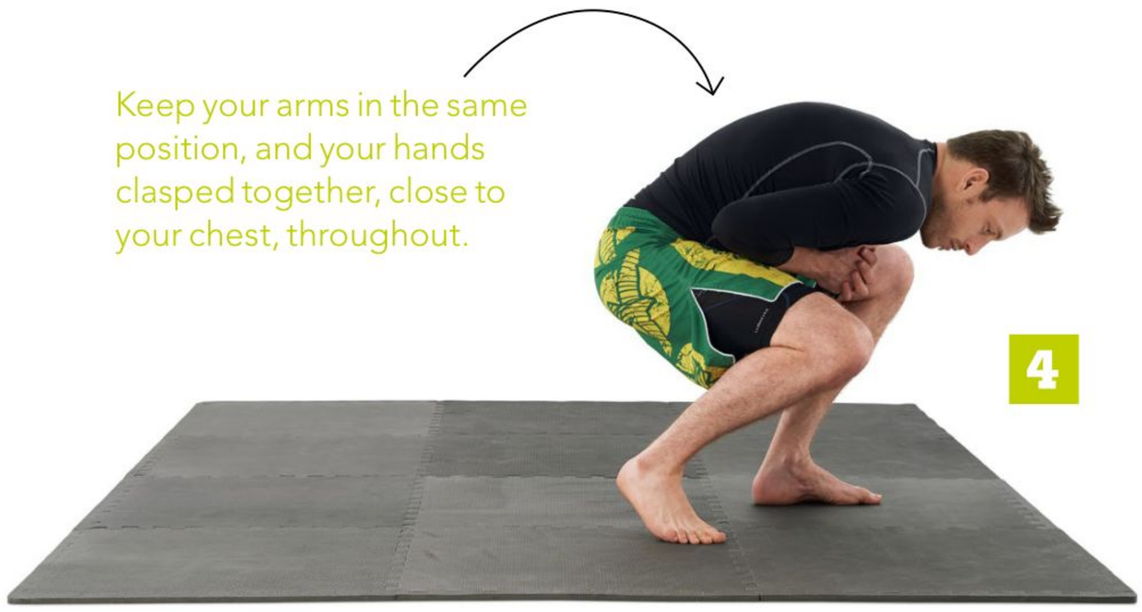
1. Get into the top mount position, on your knees with your hands flat on the ground, between your thighs. **2.** Draw your hands up to your chest, straightening your torso in the process, while using your legs to begin turning to the left. **3.** As you turn 90 degrees to the left, raise your left knee and lower your chest by bending at the hips. **4.** Begin to raise your right knee, bringing your leg forward until it's in line with your left. **5.** You should now be hunched over in a squat position, with your knees close together. **6.** Keeping your knees bent, fall backwards in a controlled manner until your backside and back are flat on the ground. **7.** Push up at the hips and force your shoulders down to get up into the bridge position. That's one repetition. Reverse to return to the starting position.

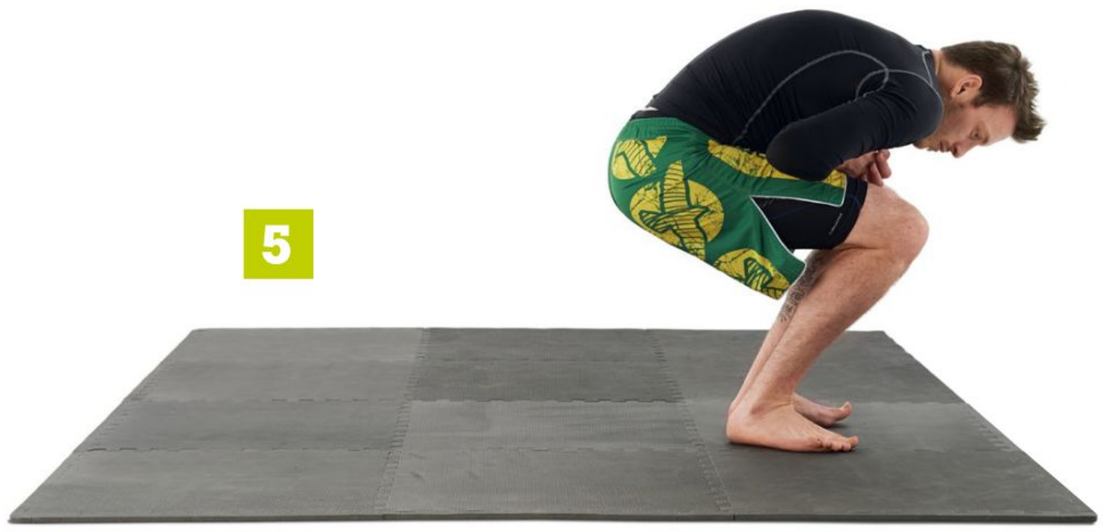


By the time you've turned 90 degrees to the left, your left knee should be up, and your right knee grounded.



Keep your arms in the same position, and your hands clasped together, close to your chest, throughout.





To return to the starting position, try performing the "bridge to quarters" drill explained on page 46.

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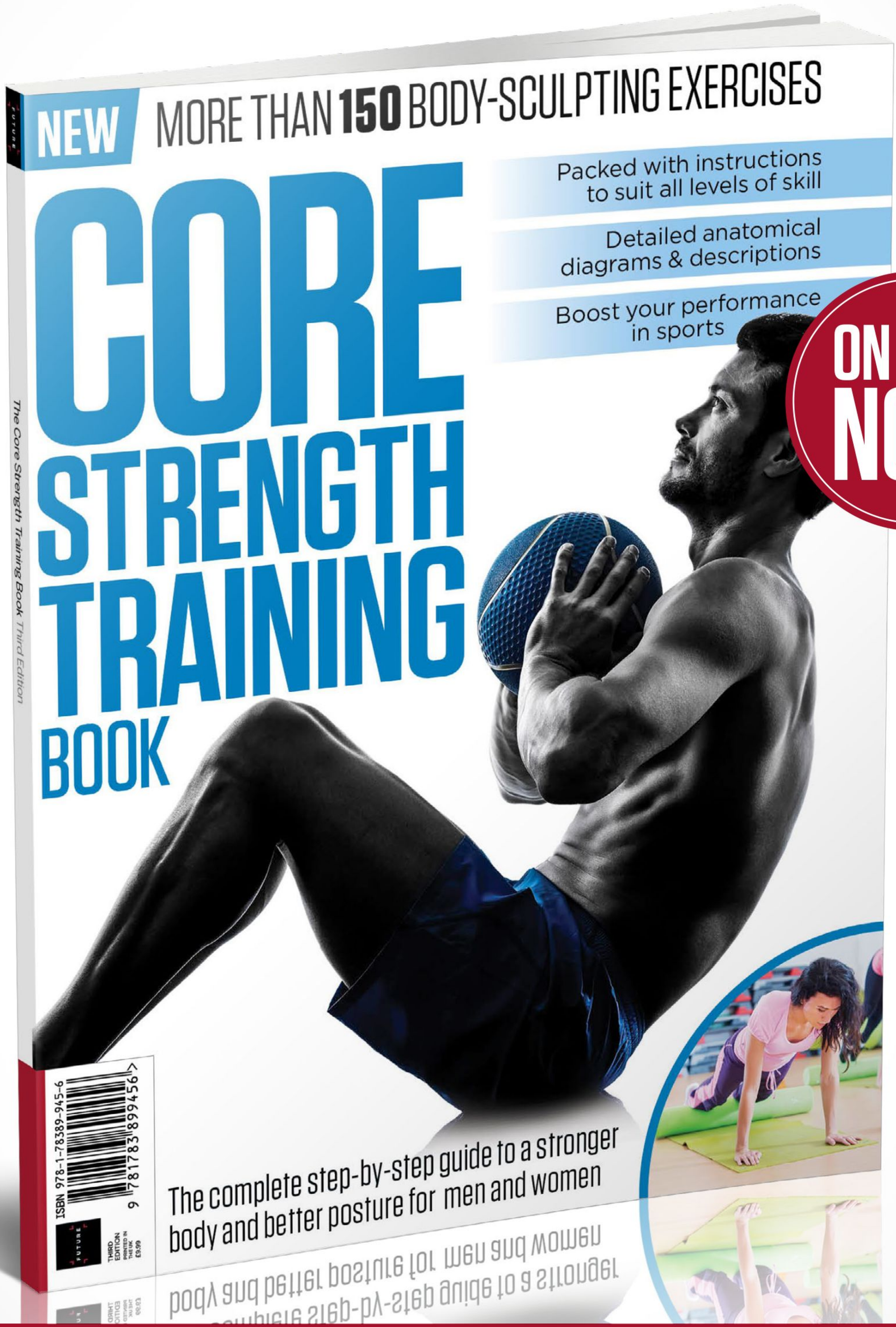

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MMA Back position movement drills

Hip escape drill

Mixed Martial Arts fighters employ a number of techniques to release themselves from holds during the ground phase. The hip escape is one of the more common examples.

1. Lie flat on your back, with your right leg bent at the knee and your fight foot flat on the ground and tucked in towards your left thigh. Your left leg should be straightened, and held a few inches off the floor. Bring the fingers of your cupped hands up to your temples, and raise your shoulders off the ground. **2.** Keeping your legs and arms in their original positions, turn your whole body to the right. **3.** As your right elbow nears the floor, extend your arms and legs straight. **4.** Turn back right until you're on your back, and return your arms and legs to the starting position. **5.** Keeping your legs and arms in their original positions, turn your whole body to the left. **6.** As your left elbow nears the floor, extend your arms and legs straight. Return to the starting position to complete one repetition of the exercise.

Keep your head up, and your core braced, throughout the exercise.

Hip switch

The hip switch is another common MMA drill, which is also regularly used by Brazilian jujitsu fighters. It helps train flexibility and core strength.

1. Lie diagonally across a large exercise mat, with your legs bent at the knees. The balls of your feet should be planted on the floor, roughly hip width apart. Your shoulders and head should be off the floor, with your arms bent at the elbow and your fists held above your chest. **2.** Using your right foot as a pivot, extend your left leg and swing it over your right knee. This should help you turn your body without the need to use your upper body. **3.** Keep turning until you're lying on your right side, and keep extending your right foot until your toes touch

It's vital to keep your head up and your arms set in the same position throughout the drill – don't use them to help power the movements.

As you roll onto your back in the step, use your grounded right foot as the pivot.

Push your arms and legs out as you extend them, as if you're trying to touch something just out of reach with your fingers and toes.

the mat. The side of your right knee should be grounded. **4.** Pull your right knee up towards your chest while drawing your left knee up and slightly to the left. **5.** As you draw your right knee towards you, roll onto your back. **6.** Finally, roll over onto your left side while extending your right leg as far as it will go. Pause, and then roll back into the starting position.

Technical get-up

The technical get-up is a way to get up off the ground that protects you from being attacked.

1. Sit on the floor with your left leg bent at the knee, and your right leg extended. Hold your left hand out in front of you, above head height, and place your right hand fon the ground behind you. **2.** Bend over and stand up, pushing up with your right arm and left leg. As you stand up, pull your right leg behind you. Keep your left hand held up.

Gently stretch out your left leg as you ground your foot. Imagine that you're trying to touch a faraway object with your toes.

MMA Back position movement drills

Bridge and stretch

Much of the "ground game" in Mixed Martial Arts is based on Brazilian jujitsu, a martial art that requires great core strength and flexibility, especially around the hips. This drill, which should be performed in smooth, fluid movements, helps train those aspects.

1. Start by lying flat on your back, with your legs together, bent at the knees, and your feet placed on the ground. Your ankles should be close to your backside. Raise your head off the ground, and place your hands side by side on your chest, below your chin.

2. Push your shoulders and upper back into the ground and raise your hips to get into the bridge position.

3. Pushing off with your left leg, turn your hips, core and upper body to the right.

4. As you twist, extend your left arm out and try to touch a point on the ground just beyond arm's length.

5. At your most extended, your hips should still be significantly off the ground, and your right shoulder should be supporting your upper body weight. Note the position of the legs and feet.

6. Turn and roll back to the left so that you return to the flat starting position.

7. Raise your hips and drive down your shoulders to return to the bridge position.

8. Push off with your right leg, while turning your hips, core and upper body to the left. Your left leg should be used as a pivot, but also help power the movement.

9. As you turn, extend your right arm out and try again to touch that target point just beyond arm's length. Roll to your right and return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

TOP TIP

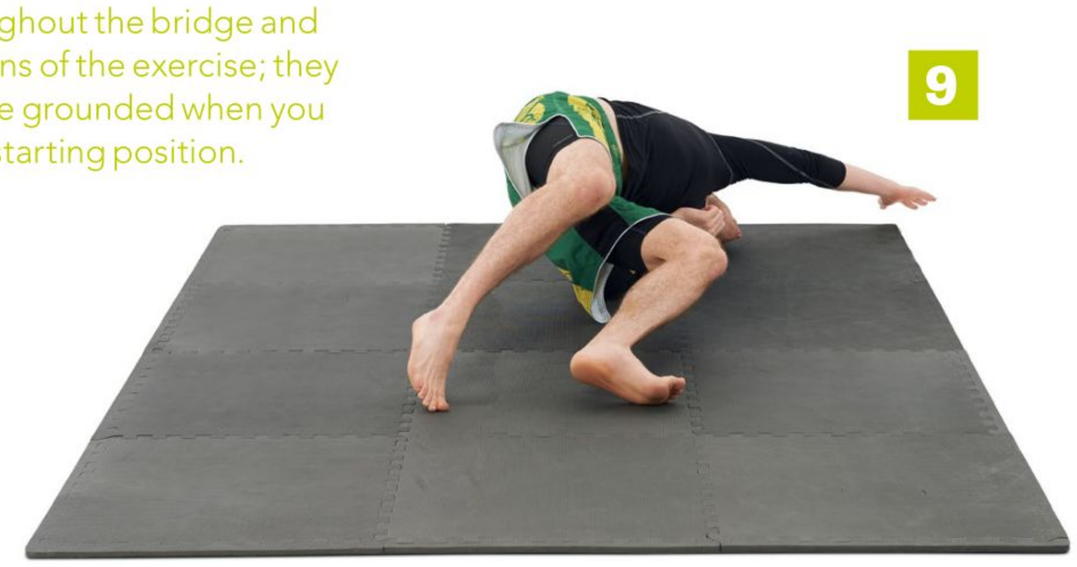
When you're used to the movements, the bridge and stretch should be performed quickly – make sure you've warmed up fully beforehand, as your muscles need to be loose and flexible.

Bridge to quarters

Bridge to quarters is another drill inspired by Brazilian jujitsu. Once again, the movements should be fluid, though the turning procedure can be a little tricky for MMA beginners. As with all the drills, try it out slowly at first, then increase the speed once you've perfected the technique.

1. Lie flat on your back with your feet on the ground, your knees bent and your head lifted up off the floor. When you're ready, raise your hips and drive your shoulder and back into the ground to get up into the bridge position. **2.** Leading from the core and left leg, roll over onto your right shoulder while extending your left arm towards a point just out of reach. This is the same movement you'd find in the bridge and stretch move (above),

Your hips should remain off the ground throughout the bridge and stretch sections of the exercise; they should only be grounded when you return to the starting position.



and should be loose and fluid, not jerky. **3.** When you're at your most extended, swing your left leg over your right. This should naturally lead to a "turning over" movement. **4.** Keep turning until you're on your front. As you turn, draw back your left elbow and tuck it into your chest. When the move is complete, you should be on your knees and elbows.

TOP TIP

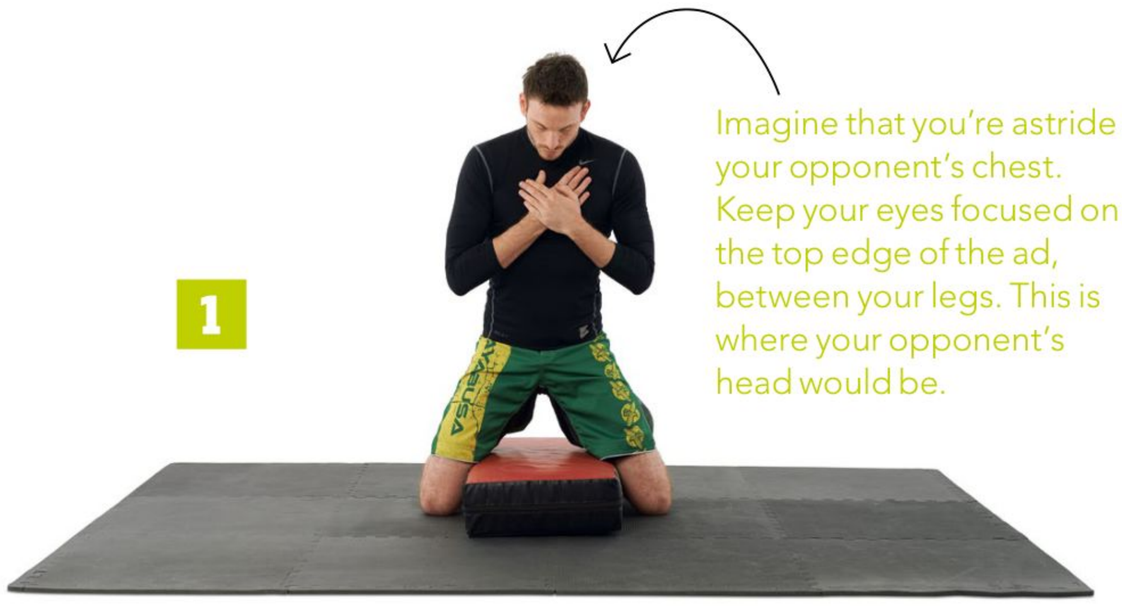
Once you've finished the move roll back to the starting position. You should immediately try the move again, this time rolling over your left shoulder and extending your right arm towards that mythical point beyond your reach. You want to be doing sets of 10 repetitions, alternating between left and right throughout.

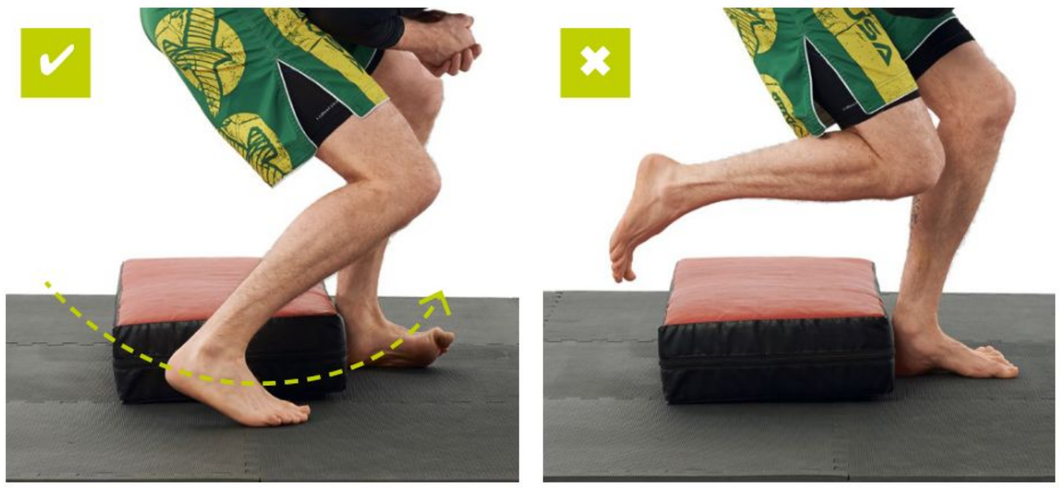
MMA Ground move combination exercises

Arm lock transition drill

This combination drill may seem a little confusing at first, but it's arguably one of the best exercises for training transitions between different ground movements. This is because it mimics real-world situations you may come across during bouts, when you have an opponent grounded and need to work your magic. To attempt it, you'll need a punching pad, grappling dummy or a sofa cushion.

1. Kneel down with your legs either side of a punching pad and your hands placed across your chest, as shown.
2. Push up with your left foot and turn to your left while bending over, until your chest is over your raised left knee.
3. Keep pushing up, until you're standing up but hunched over, bent at the knees. Bring your right leg round the side of the pad, so that it's in line with your left knee.
4. At the end of the movement, you should be squatting over the pad.
5. Lean back until you're sat on the pad – your arms should still be held across your chest.
6. Keep leaning back until your back is flat on the ground, beyond the far side of the pad.
7. Get into the bridge position.
8. Raise your your legs and shoulders off the floor and swing 90-degrees to the left. You should be using your lower back as a pivot, and your knees should be raised high.
9. Draw your right leg in while swinging your left leg to the right. This movement should help you roll back over the pad.
10. By the end of the movement, you should be astride the pad, with your hands pushed into it.
11. Return to the upright position, raising your hands back up to your chest.
12. Push up with your right foot and turn to your right while bending over, until your chest is over your raised right knee.
13. Bring your left leg round so that you're squatting over the pad.
14. Fall back in controlled manner until you're lying on your back with your head up.
15. Seamlessly move into the bridge position. Reverse steps 8 to 11, until you're back to the starting position.

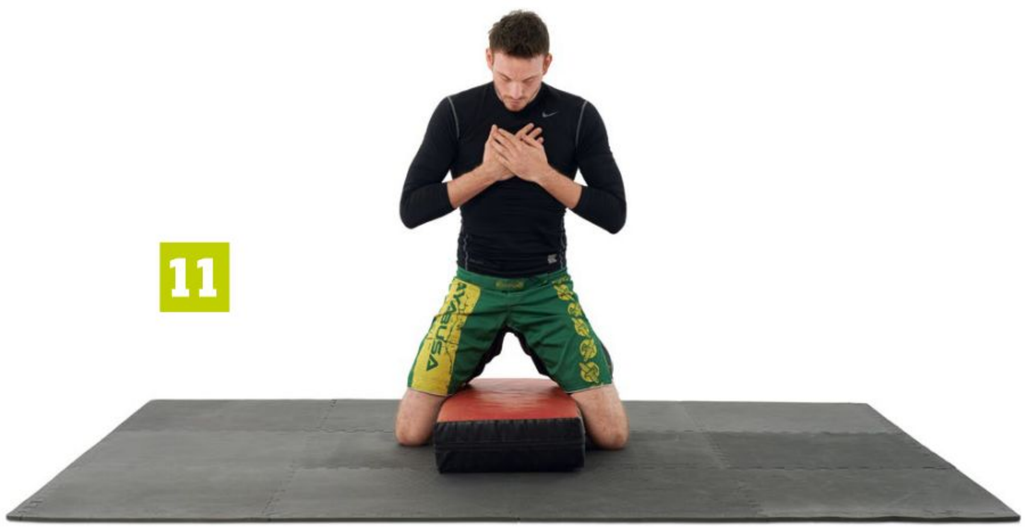




TOP TIP

When bringing your legs round in steps 2 and 13, it should be in a sweeping movement around the side of the pad, not directly over it. This is to ensure that you avoid making contact with your opponent's head with your knee during the move.

Keep your feet flat on the ground and your knees raised high.



MMA Ground move combination exercises

Knee on belly drill

As the title suggests, this training drill helps work on the transitions between movements when you have your opponent down on the ground. Specifically, it focuses on moving around your opponent whilst retaining control, which is gained when you dig your knee into their stomach. Like the previous drill, it's performed with a punching pad. If you've not got one of those, a pillow or slender sofa cushion would do the trick.

1. Place your left knee on the centre of the pad, with your right leg fully extended to the side. Your fists should be placed on the top end of the pad, roughly hip width apart. **2.** Raise your lower leg towards your thigh, bending at the knee. **3.** Using your hands to push up, swing your right knee onto the pad and begin to extend your left leg out to the side. **4.** Extend your left leg until your foot is planted flat on the ground. **5.** Raise your fists from the pad and straighten your torso. At the same time, bend your left knee and begin to swing your foot to the right. **6.** Keep turning, shifting your left leg further round. **7.** As you swing your leg round to the top of the pad, turn your upper body at the core. **8.** Keep swinging your left leg round, using your right knee as a

1

2

5

Keep your eyes focused on a spot in the centre of the top edge of the pad. This is your opponent's head – try not to take your eyes off it unless totally necessary.

6

9

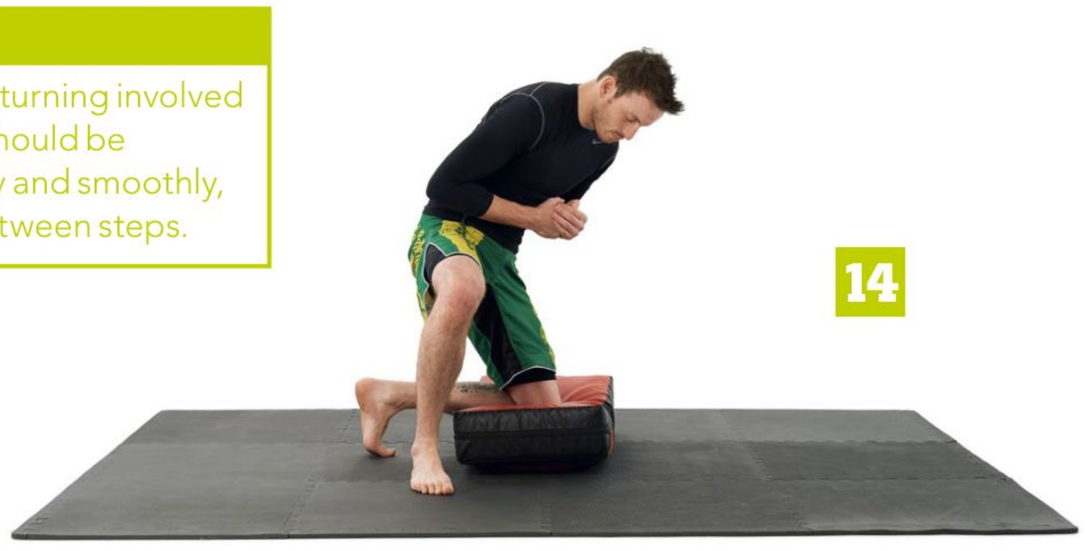
Keep your arms out of the way, tucked in to your midriff – this drill is all about lower body and core movements.

10

13

TOP TIP

The swinging and turning involved in this sequence should be performed quickly and smoothly, with no pauses between steps.

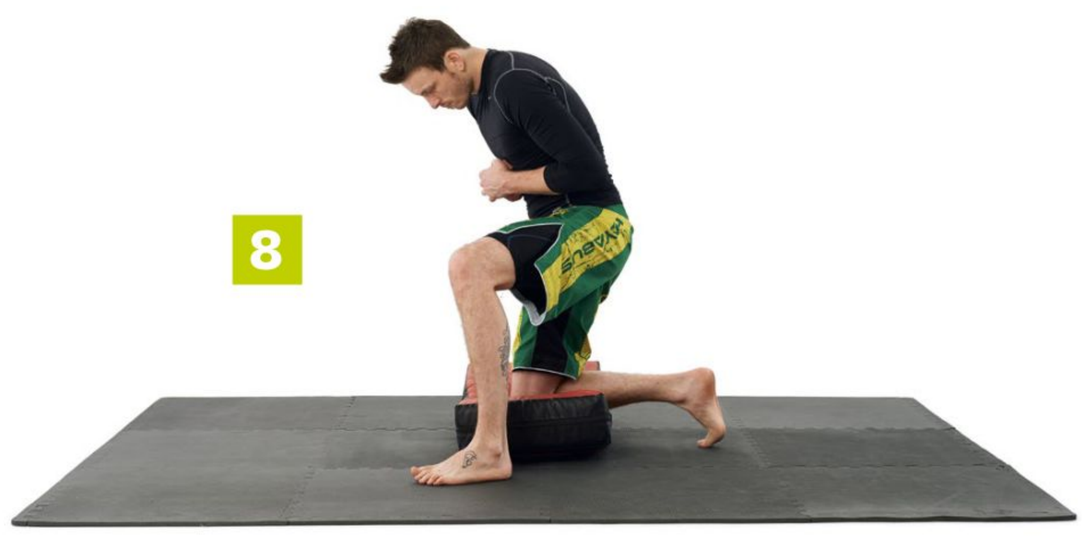


14

pivot to turn the rest of your body. **9.** You should now be kneeling over the pad, with your right knee on it and your left out in front of your body. **10.** Using your right knee as the pivot, shift your left leg to the right. **11.** Explosively turn 180 degrees to the right while crouching down a little. **12.** As you complete the turn, drive your left knee down into the pad. **13.** Begin to swing your right leg round the top of the pad. **14.** As the foot swings round, begin to turn your upper body to the left. **15.** Remember to use your right knee, which should also be turning, as a pivot. **16.** Finally, extend your right leg out to the side to complete the drill.

TOP TIP

When your knee is planted on the pad (or your opponent's belly), the foot of that leg should be in contact with the floor, at the same side as your extended leg. You should be up on your toes. If your foot is down flat, you'll lose the ability to quickly transition between movements.



Once you've completed one repetition, start a second immediately. Alternatively, switch over your extended legs and do the drill in an anticlockwise movement.

GENERAL EXERCISES

If you want to get a body like an MMA fighter, you'll need to incorporate a wide range of exercises into your workouts…

Mixed Martial Arts is arguably the most difficult fighting sport you can train for. The sport's mix-and-match nature, with techniques taken from a wide range of martial arts – boxing, Thai kickboxing, judo, wrestling, karate and Brazilian jujitsu, to name just six – means that it not only requires a high level of cardiovascular fitness (to provide endurance), but also flexibility and serious muscular strength. Mixed Martial Arts fighters are superb all-round athletes, capable of bursts of explosive power but with the endurance to slug it out during energy-sapping bouts.

Achieving this level of all-round fitness requires all-round training. Most serious MMA fighters will mix up their training, supplementing vital technique work, such as sparring, with running, skipping and workout sessions based around the sort of exercises you might do at the gym. As well as doing solo drills, they will work with a partner. Amateur MMA fighters may not only do two or three Mixed Martial Arts sessions a week, but also a couple of sessions down the gym and the odd run to keep the body ticking over.

RECOMMENDED EXERCISES

The 'general exercises' listed in this section have been chosen by our Mixed Martial Arts expert, Simon O'Brien from Bristol Dojo, to complement MMA-specific exercises and techniques. By blending the two together, you can create dynamic, fast-paced workouts that improve your fitness and give you a good grounding in key Mixed Martial Arts techniques.

By and large, the exercises in this section fall into two categories: bodyweight exercises and weighted exercises. Each style of exercise has its advantages and disadvantages, but both will leave you breathless.

BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES

These are so called because you use your own bodyweight to work out, without the need for dumbbells or barbells. In fact, many bodyweight exercises require no equipment at all.

Classic bodyweight exercises include lunges, squats, push-ups, pull-ups, dips and

sit-ups. They often work a number of different muscle groups at the same time, and are a perennial favourite of fighters from all disciplines, as well as the military.

When looking to build body mass and tone up, many people ignore bodyweight exercises. In fact, they can be just as good at building muscle as weighted exercises – particularly for beginners – and have the added benefit of helping to increase your cardiovascular endurance. It's also worth noting that many bodyweight exercises can be performed while holding weights, to make them just that little bit tougher, should you so wish.

Over the following pages, you'll find variations on classic exercises, plus a few moves you may not know.

WEIGHTED EXERCISES

These are exercises that are performed by lifting or moving weighted objects, usually barbells or dumbbells, but also kettlebells and medicine balls. Mixed Martial Arts fighters require muscular strength, but also a great deal of flexibility. Because of this, they generally limit the amount of weights work that they do and make sure that they choose a range of lifting exercises – ideally a selection that work a number of different muscle groups.

Generally speaking, the more you lift heavy weights, the bigger you become. When you become big, it is easy to loose a bit of flexibility. Ideally, you want to build strong, lean muscles, rather than the kind of oversized biceps, quads and abdominals seen on bodybuilders and weightlifters. This is easier to achieve if you either limit the amount of weights you lift, or perform exercises with weights that are a little lighter.

Weights can also be used as part of a tough cardiovascular workout. Lifting weights is tiring in itself, but you can get the blood pumping and test your endurance by doing more repetitions of weighted exercises, using lighter dumbbells and barbells.

SIX SECTIONS

In the pages that follow, we have included step-by-step instructions on how to do over 100 exercises. These are divided up into six sections: warm-up and stretches, lower body, core, upper body and total body. If you pick a handful of warm-up exercises and stretches, plus one or two from each of the other sections, then you are well on the way to putting together an excellent, all-over body workout.

Should you wish to work on one particular area – your arms and chest, for example – then focus on exercises from the specific section. Remember, though, MMA fighters are lean and supple, despite the bulging muscles, so don't focus on one area too much.

WARM-UP Dynamic stretches & warm-up exercises

Neck rotations

1. With your feet shoulder width apart, stand up tall with your hands resting at your side. Relax, but retain good posture. **2.** Close your eyes and slowly rotate your head to the right, using your neck muscles to power the movement. Do this for 10-15 seconds, then rotate in the opposite direction. If you get dizzy, rotate more slowly.

Over the shoulder stretch

1. Stand up tall, with your feet shoulder width apart. Reach behind your head with your right arm, and behind your back with your left arm. Both arms should be bent at the elbow.
2. Try to lock the fingers of each hand together. If this is too tricky, touch your fingertips together, or find something to hold (for example a tea towel). Hold the position for 10-15 seconds, then swap arm positions and repeat.

Shoulder circles

1. Place your feet shoulder width apart and stand up tall, holding your arms out to the side and slightly in front of you.
2. Roll your shoulders back, together, in a circular motion. Let the movement come from the joint; the rest of your body should be still. Repeat this for 10-15 seconds. For a longer warm-up, repeat the exercise, but roll your shoulders forwards.

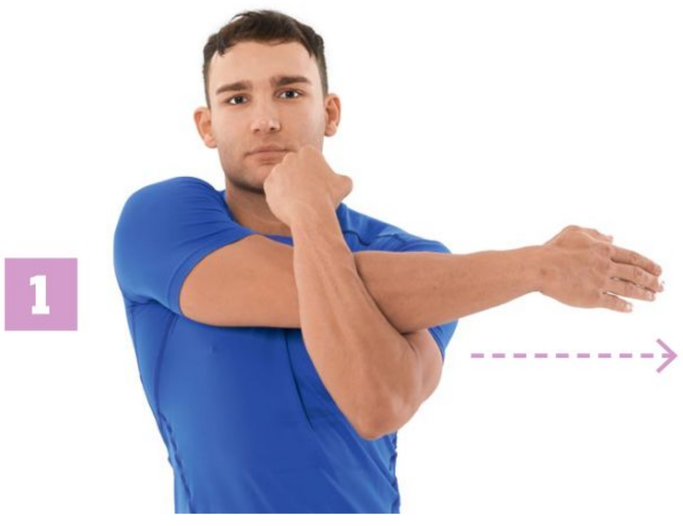
Alternatively, concentrate on one shoulder at a time. Alternate between left and right shoulder movements while the other rests.

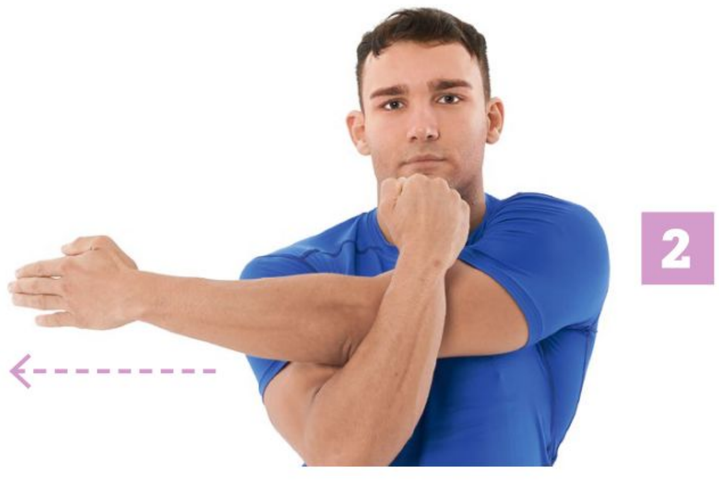
Arm circles

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, arms out to the side at shoulder level. To begin with, your arms should be parallel to the floor. Move them forward in a circular motion, making progressively bigger circles. After 10-15 seconds, repeat the motion in reverse.

Arm crossover

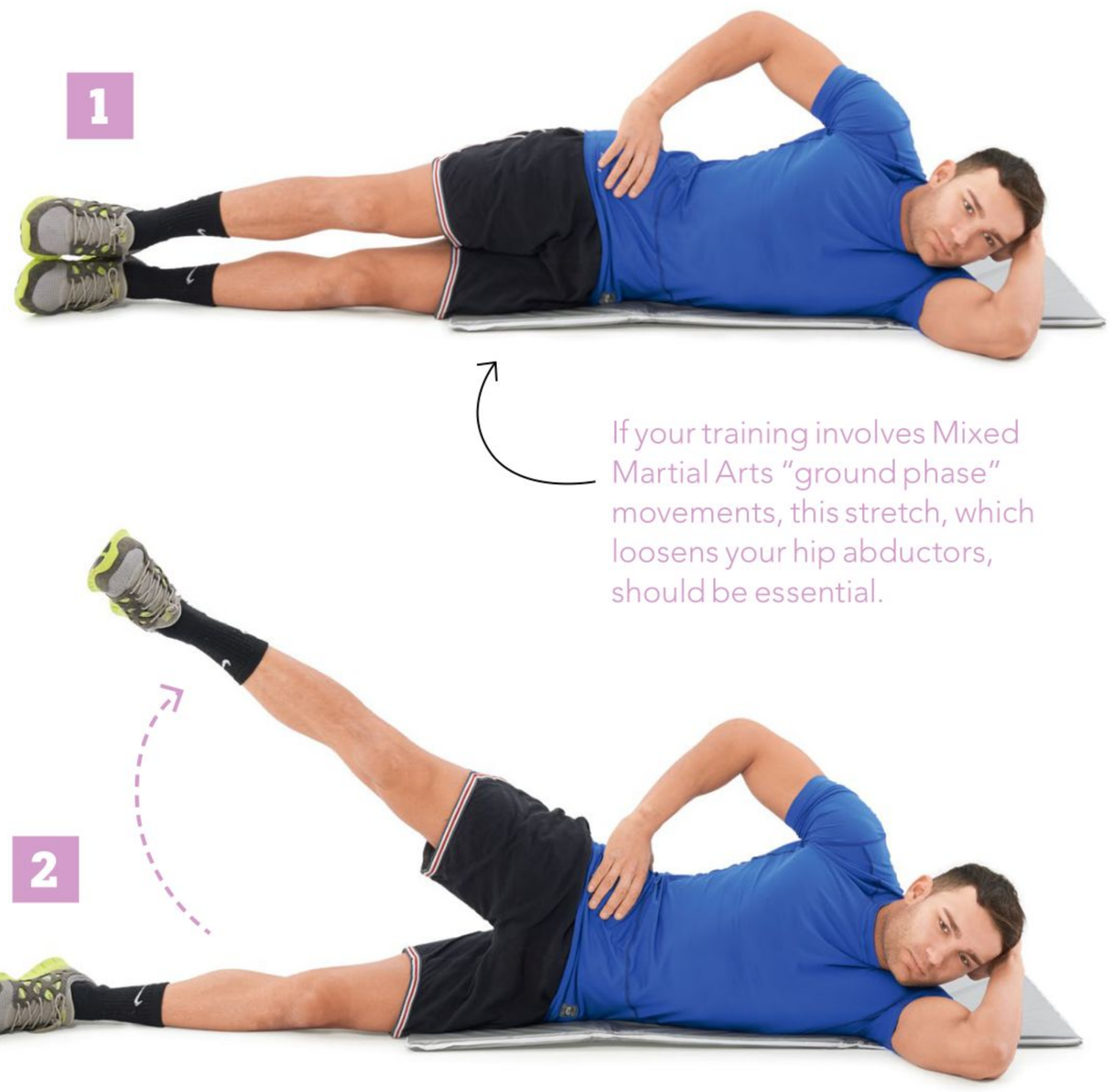
1. Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Stretch your right arm across your chest, clamping it in place with your left arm, which should be bent at the elbow. Hold this pose for 10-15 seconds. **2.** Switch arms and repeat the stretch, clamping your left arm in place with your right.





Lying leg raises

1. Lie on the floor on your left side. Rest your top leg (the left) on top of the right. Place your right hand on your hip, and support your head with your left hand. **2.** Slowly raise your right leg as far as you comfortably can, keeping it straight. Slowly bring it back down. With your repetitions done, roll onto your right and repeat with hand and leg positions reversed.



If your training involves Mixed Martial Arts "ground phase" movements, this stretch, which loosens your hip abductors, should be essential.

Lying leg raises

1. Lie on your back, arms outstretched, palms touching the floor. Your legs should be straight and your feet together.
2. Slowly raise your legs up straight as far as is comfortable. Focus the movement in your hips and core.

WARM-UP Dynamic stretches & warm-up exercises

Knee hugs and heelraises

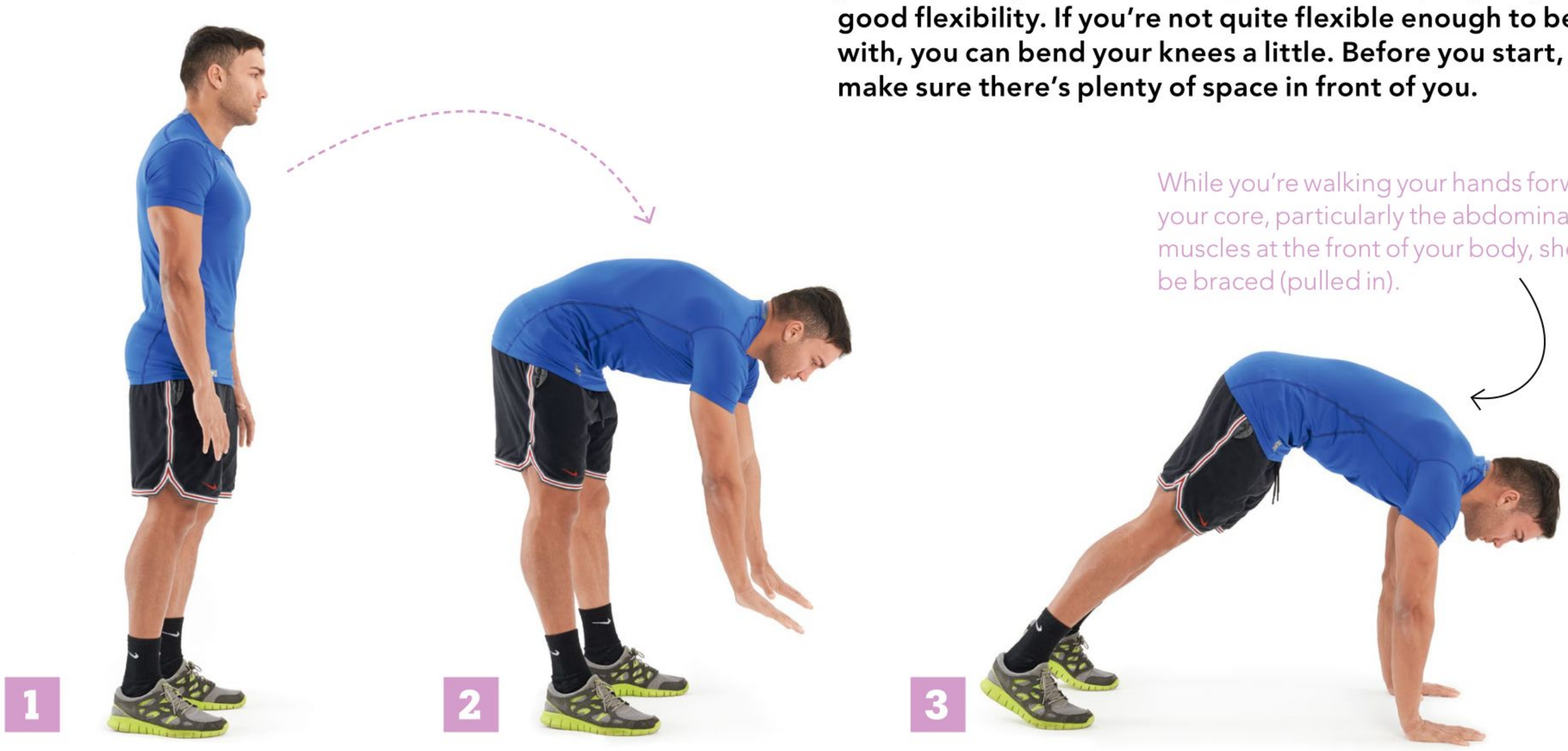
This classic lower body stretch loosens the glutes and hamstrings. After one repetition, repeat the motion for other leg.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your arms straight down by your side. **2.** Raise your right leg towards your chest, grasping it between your hands just below the knee. Pull it in towards your chest. Hold for 5-10 seconds, then release and return to the standing position. **3.** Raise your right leg towards your backside, grab your ankle and pull it in for 5-10 seconds, then release.

Inchworm

The inchworm is a classic warm-up exercise that loosens many different muscles at once, including those around your hips, thighs and core. To perform it properly requires good flexibility. If you're not quite flexible enough to begin with, you can bend your knees a little. Before you start, make sure there's plenty of space in front of you.

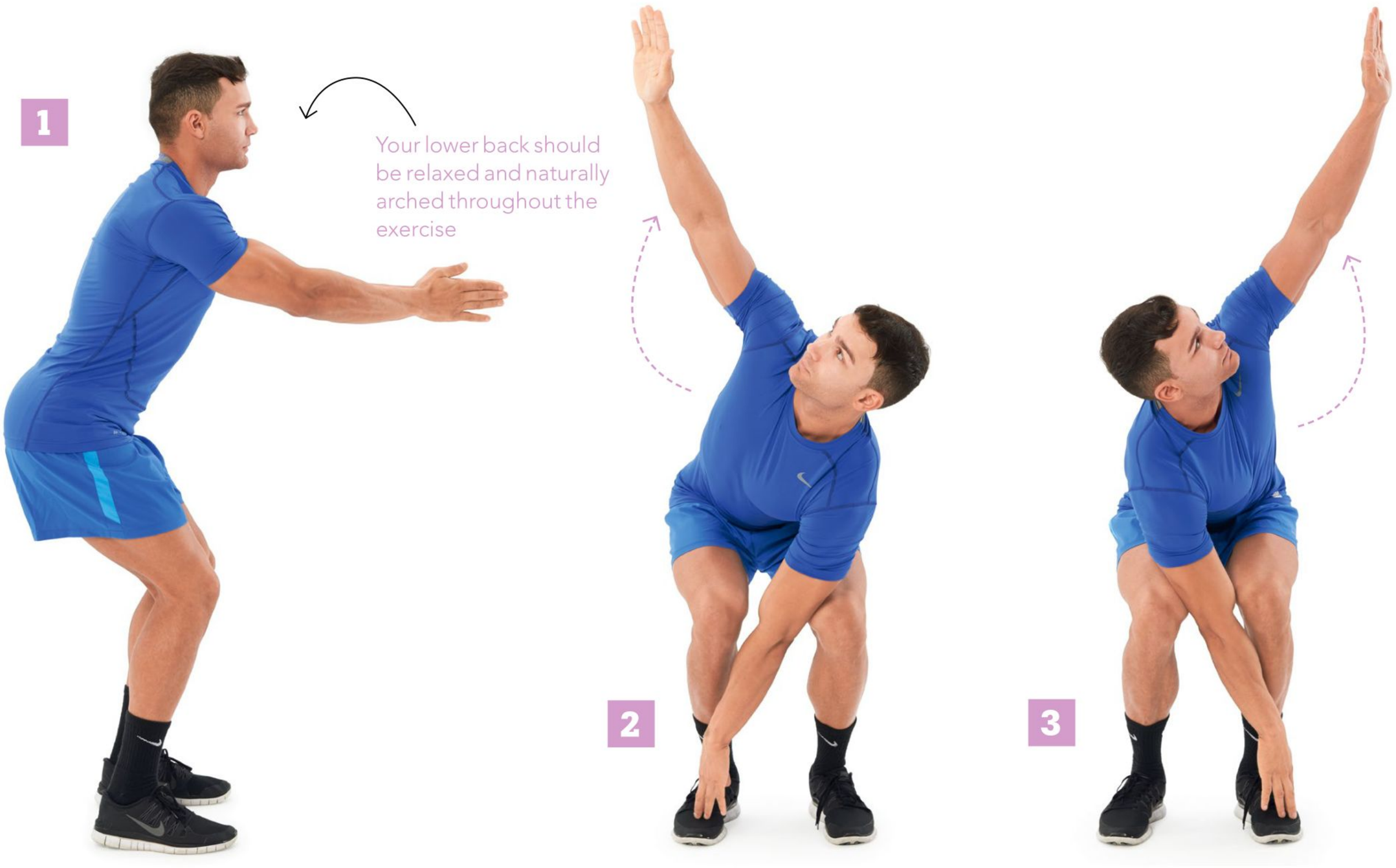
While you're walking your hands forward, your core, particularly the abdominal muscles at the front of your body, should be braced (pulled in).



Bent over reach to the sky

This exercise loosens up the muscles in your lower back and stretches your core muscles.

1. Stand with your legs shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent. Hold your arms out in front of you, palms facing each other and fingertips touching. **2.** Stretch to touch your left foot with your right hand while extending your left arm to the ceiling. Hold the position for a few seconds. **3.** Return to the start position and reverse the movement to your left.



1. Stand with your hands by your sides and feet shoulder width apart. **2.** Bend at the core (the area around your hips, stomach and lower back) until you can place your palms on the floor. Your fingertips should be pointing forwards. **3.** Keeping your legs straight, walk your hands forward. Try to make small, controlled movements in order to retain your balance. Keep the balls of your feet planted on the floor, not your heel. **4.** Continue walking your hands forward, making slightly larger movements if your control and balance enables you to. Soon, you should be in the 'plank' position used in push-ups. **5.** Walk your hands out as far as you can – don't let your hips sag as you do so. When you think you've reached your maximum stretch, walk your feet back towards your hands. Take tiny steps, ensuring maintaining control throughout, until you're back in the bent over position (picture 2). Once you've returned to a standing position, that's one repetition.

WARM-UP Dynamic stretches & warm-up exercises

Jumping jacks

Everyone has done jumping jacks at some point, either in PE at school or before a sweaty workout down the gym. Since they offer an all-over workout for the arms and legs and get your heart rate pumping, they should be a staple of most warm-ups.

1. Stand with your hands by your side and your feet together. **2.** Jump up a little, just enough to kick your legs out wide while raising your arms above your head. **3.** Quickly reverse the movement, jumping back to your starting position with legs together and arms by your side. Without pausing, repeat steps two and three for at least 30 seconds. Perform the movements quickly and smoothly – the idea is to get your heart pumping.

Crab turnover

This variation on the classic 'bridge' position is a must for MMA, as it warms up muscles used in 'ground phase' combat.

1. Get down into a push-up 'plank' position, with your hands on the floor, shoulder width apart, fingers pointing forwards. Get up on the balls of your feet

2. With legs together and feet on the floor, raise your right arm and start to turn your body over, twisting your core. **3.** Keep turning until your right hand is on the ground, behind your back. Bring your left arm round to support your weight with both hands. **4.** Raise your left arm and bring it across your body while twisting at the core. At the same time, bring your left leg over your right. **5.** Keep turning and bringing your arms and legs around until you're back into the 'plank' position.

Split jacks

Although less well known than jumping jacks, split jacks offer an excellent alternative that work the arms and legs just as hard. Use them in conjunction with jumping jacks to warm up all of the muscles in your arms and legs.

1. Start in a staggered stance, with your right foot forward and your left leg back. Your left arm should be out in front of you, with your right arm out behind your body. **2.** Quickly jump back, moving your right leg back and your left leg forwards. At the same time, swing your arms so that they switch positions. **3.** Then reverse the whole movement, alternating leg and arm positions. Repeat the exercise at a quick rate for at least 30 seconds.

By the time you get into this position, both feet should be planted on the ground with your legs and knees facing upwards.

Once you've turned all the way over, reverse the movements. Completing one turn to the right, and one back to the left, counts as one repetition of the exercise.

WARM-UP Dynamic stretches & warm-up exercises

Standing breaststroke

This is an excellent warm-up for the chest, shoulders and arms.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Hold your hands in front of you at chest height, palms down and index fingers touching. **2.** Draw your arms back, bending at the elbow, until fists are parallel with shoulders. Return them to their original position. Repeat for at least 30 seconds.

1

2

Bear squat

This bodyweight exercise warms up the core, thighs and calves. Here, the beginner's version is shown. Once you've been training for a few weeks, you should be able to change the starting position so that your backside is further in the air, and your arms, legs and core form an inverted 'V' shape.

1. Get down into a push-up position, arms down and palms flat on the ground, fingers pointed forwards. Now, bring your feet forward a pace or two, bending at the core. **2.** Without moving your upper body, bend at the hips and knees, drawing the latter towards the floor. **3.** Pause for a moment then straighten your legs to return to the start position. That's one repetition.

1

2

If you're flexible enough, you can start with your hands further forward, and draw your knees further forward during step two.

3

LOWER BODY EXERCISES

Give your legs a workout with our recommended lower body exercises

Like many fighters, Mixed Martial Arts fighters use their legs a lot. They need strong legs to deliver powerful kicks and control opponents on the ground, but also excellent muscular endurance to keep moving around the cage or ring.

The exercises in this section all work the various muscles from the hips down to the ankles.

These are, from top to bottom: glutes (hips and backside), the quadriceps, hip abductors and hamstrings (thighs) and calves.

We use all of these muscles every day, but unless you have a job that means you're on your feet a lot, yours might not be particularly strong or well developed. The exercises in this section will give them some much-needed hard work, building lean, strong muscles and increasing muscular endurance.

Many of the recommended lower body exercises in this section also work other muscle groups.

For example, squats and lunges, which are both Mixed Martial Arts training staples, also give your core (the muscles around the trunk of your body) a good workout. There are also a number of variations on squats and lunges included in the 'total body' section (page 97). These are also excellent for building strong leg muscles.

The exercises in this section target specific areas of the lower body so here's a quick breakdown of muscle groups and which exercises target them specifically:

QUADS & CALVES

Bodyweight lunge, Dumbbell lunge, Low side-to-side lunge, Bodyweight squat, Braced squat, Duck walks, Bodyweight squat jump, Explosive bodyweight squat jump, Medicine ball squat throw, Split jump, Dumbbell squat, Goblet squat, Overhead dumbbell squat, Dumbbell squat jump, Barbell squat, Barbell front squat, Overhead barbell squat, Barbell jump squat, Barbell box lunge.

GLUTES & HAMSTRINGS

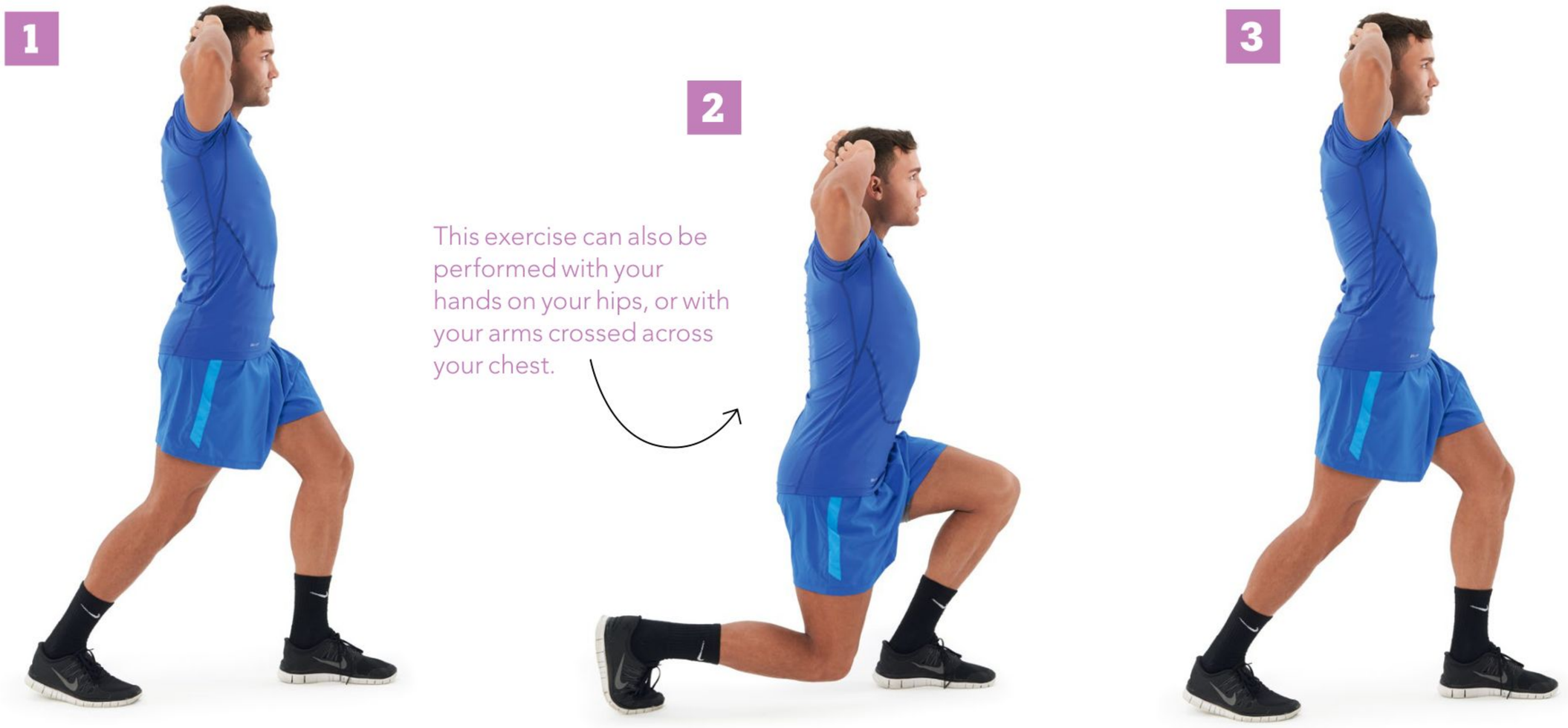
Hip raise, Swiss ball hip raise, Single-leg hip raise, Dumbbell step-up, Crossover dumbbell step-up, Barbell step-up, Barbell stepover.

LOWER BODY Lunge & squat exercises

Bodyweight lunge

The lunge is a classic exercise that provides a good workout for the quads and calves.

1. Get your left leg slightly forward and your right leg slightly back. Then place your hands behind your head, your shoulders back and keep your core braced. **2.** Next, step forward with your left leg, slowly lowering your body until your right knee is almost touching the floor. Then pause for a few seconds. **3.** Quickly push yourself back to the starting position. That's one repetition. Remember to alter the leading leg during the workouts.



Low side-to-side lunge

This simple exercise loosens your groin and glutes, and promotes hip mobility.

1. Stand up tall, with your feet roughly twice shoulder width apart, and your hands clasped in front of your chest. **2.** Bend your right knee and use it to lower your body towards the ground. Your left leg should be as straight as possible, and your upper body should be still. **3.** Without returning to the starting position, reverse the movement, shifting your weight to your left leg, which should now be bent at the knee, with your right leg straightened. Keep this going for at least 30 seconds.

Dumbbell lunge

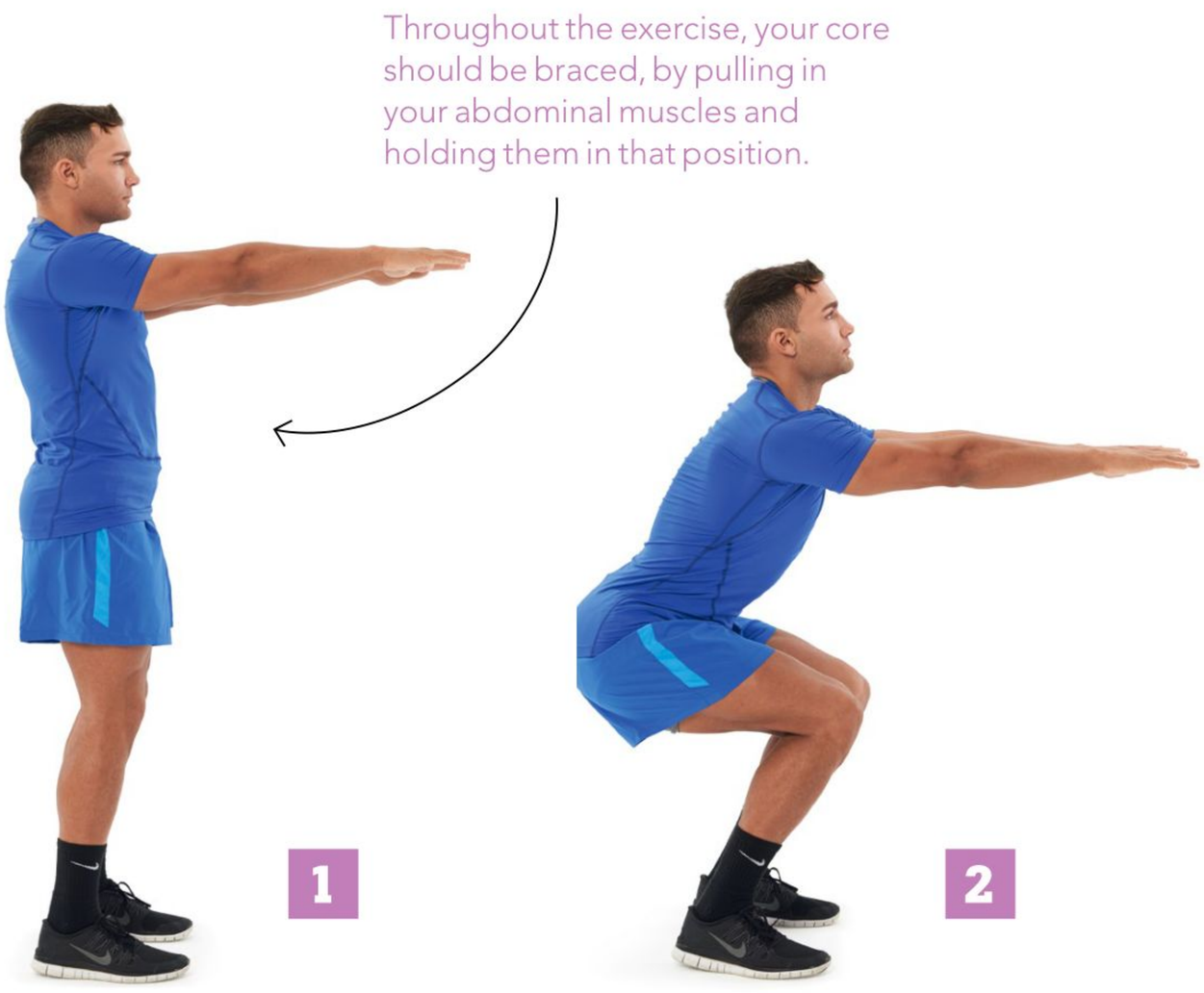
This variant on the bodyweight lunge adds weights, to provide a workout for your arms, quads and calves.

1. Start by standing up tall, with your feet shoulder width apart, holding a dumbbell in each hand. **2.** Keeping your upper body and arms in the same position, lunge forward with your left leg. At the lowest position, your right knee should almost touch the floor. Pause for a few seconds, then return to the starting position. Reverse the movement, lunging forward with your right leg.

Bodyweight squat

If you want to give your thighs a good workout, there are few better exercises than the simple bodyweight squat.

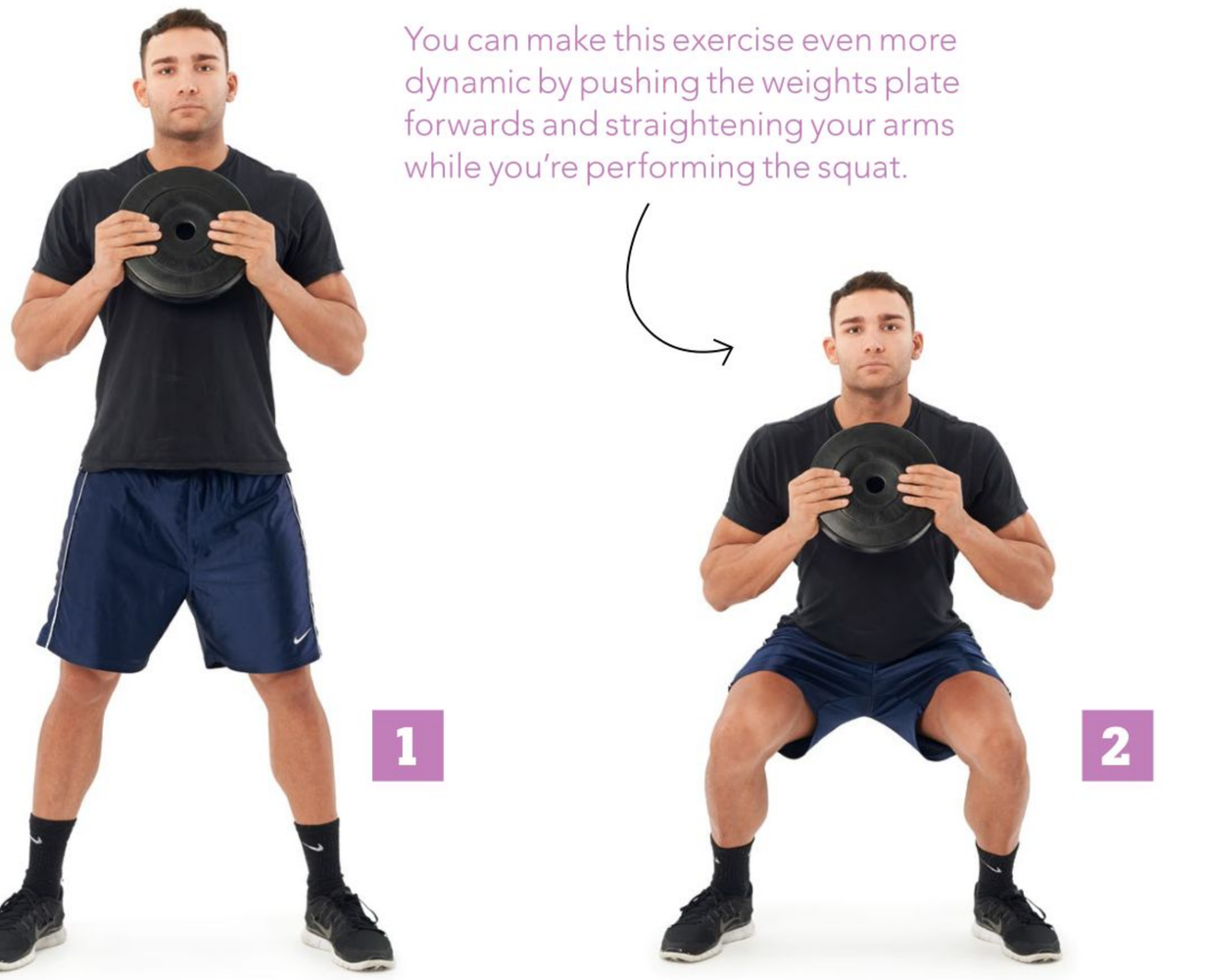
1. Stand up tall with your feet roughly shoulder width apart. Your arms should be held out in front at shoulder level. **2.** Slowly lower your backside as far as you can by bending your knees and pushing your hips back. Your weight should be on your heels. Pause for a few seconds, before slowly returning to the starting position.



Braced squat

You can make the bodyweight squat a whole lot tougher by adding in weights. This guarantees your core a good workout, as well as your thighs, arms and shoulders.

1. Take up the usual bodyweight squat starting position, but this time hold a medium-to-heavy weights plate (the sort you'd use to perform barbell exercises) just in front of your chest. **2.** Perform the exercise in the same way as the bodyweight squat, remembering to keep the weights plate at chest level.



LOWER BODY Squat jump, squat throw & duck walk

Bodyweight squat jump

This variation on the bodyweight squat adds in a jump for a more intense cardiovascular workout. If burning fat is your goal, squat as low as you can before jumping.

1. Place your arms out straight in front of your chest, with your palms facing the floor. You should be standing with your feet shoulder width apart. **2.** Lower yourself down into a squat position by pushing back your hips and bending at the knees, keeping your back straight. **3.** Once in the squat position, dynamically jump upwards, aiming to get as high as you can. As soon as you land, squat down and jump again.

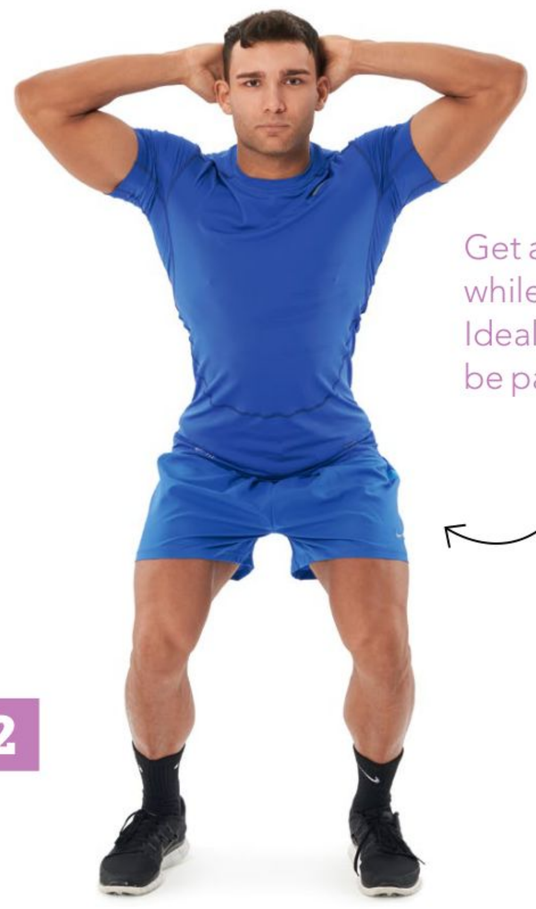
TOP TIP

Keep your arms still when you jump – the movement to jump should just be powered from your legs.

Explosive bodyweight squat jump

In this variation of the bodyweight squat jump, pause before jumping as it helps you to jump more explosively and use more of the individual fibres that make up your muscles.

1. Stand up tall, hands behind your head, your elbows drawn back to shoulder level and your feet shoulder width apart. **2.** Squat down in the usual fashion and pause for five seconds. **3.** Explosively jump as high as you can. Once you have landed, repeat the exercise for the set number of repetitions, or at least a minute.



Get as low as you can while squatting down. Ideally, your thighs will be parallel to the floor.

Medicine ball squat throw

This variation on the bodyweight squat jump uses a medicine ball to add a gentle workout for the arms.

1. Hold a medicine ball between your hands, at around chest height. **2.** Jump as high as you can. As you begin to jump, throw the medicine ball upwards. **3.** As you come down, catch the medicine ball and return to the squat position. Immediately begin the next repetition of the exercise.

For a more dynamic workout, release the ball when your hands are at head height

1

2

TOP TIP

You can vary this exercise by throwing the medicine ball at a wall in front of you, and catching it on the rebound.

3

Duck walk

This exercise is recommended by Mixed Martial Arts instructors. It helps increase the flexibility of your quads and calves, improves you balance and your core stability.

1. Hold your arms out to your sides at shoulder height, with your palms facing downwards. Your chest should be pushed forward and your core braced. Get down into the squat position by pushing back your hips and bending at the knees. **2.** Without altering your upper body position, slowly walk forwards, leading with your right foot. **3.** Continue walking forwards, maintaining the squat position. You should feel the strain on your quads, calves and core. Take small steps, taking caution not to overreach.

1

2

3

LOWER BODY Variations on the squat

Dumbbell squat

Adding weights makes any squat exercise a bit tougher. Here, you'll find excellent variations that will help build upper body strength while delivering a tougher workout for quads and calves. 1. Hold a pair of dumbbells down by your sides in an overhand grip (knuckles pointing outwards). Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. 2. Lower yourself down into the squat position, aiming to get as low as you can comfortably. Your core and lower back should be as upright as possible throughout. Pause in the squat position, then return to standing.

Keep your head up throughout the exercise. If your head drops, it puts more strain on your back and increases the likelihood of injury.

Goblet squat

This weighted variation of the squat mimics the process of holding a heavy medieval goblet in both hands. The exercise should be performed with a heavy dumbbell – your arms should feel the strain throughout or you won't feel the benefit in muscle growth.

1. Pick up a heavy dumbbell and hold it with both hands at chest height. Your elbows should be pointing towards the floor. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. 2. Squat down as deep as you can while holding the dumbbell. Your elbows should be touching your thighs at the lowest point.

Pause for a few seconds before pushing yourself back to the starting position in a controlled manner.

Overhead dumbbell squat

Holding dumbbells overhead or at head height helps work on the muscular endurance of your biceps, triceps, shoulders and upper back.

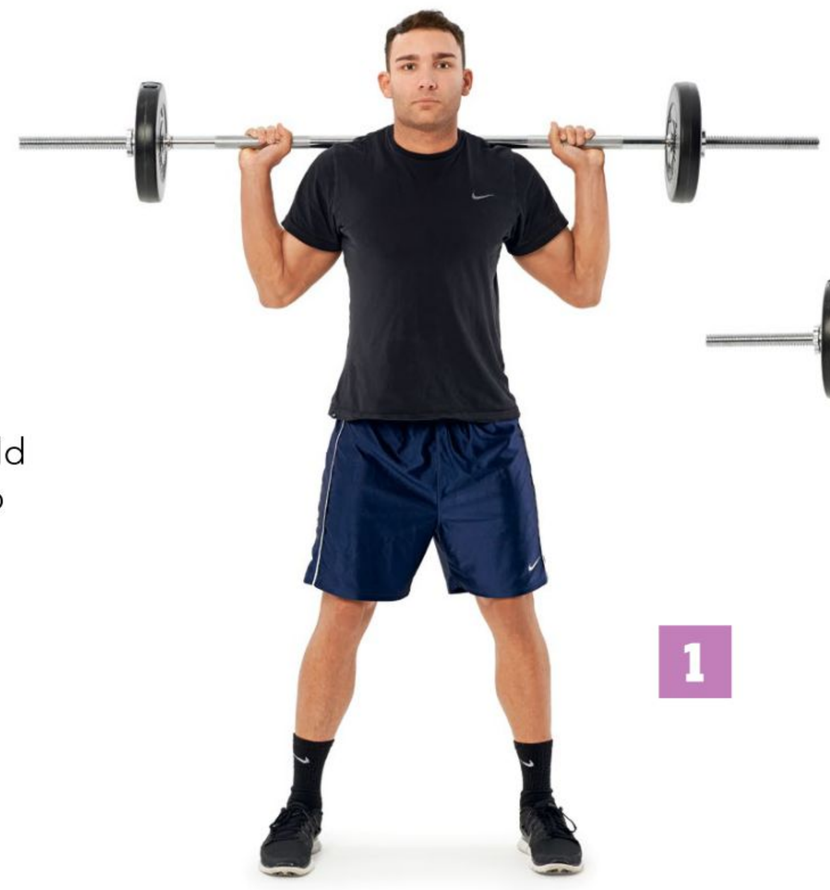
1. Pick up a pair of medium-to-heavy weight dumbbells and hold them at head height. Your arms should be bent at the elbows, with palms facing forwards.You should be stood with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. 2. Hold your upper body position and squat down as far as you can comfortably – ideally, your thighs should be parallel to the floor. Pause, then return to the starting position.

During the exercise, your core should be drawn in tight and your lower back arched.

Barbell squat

Using a barbell, instead of dumbbells, helps spread the weight across your shoulders and arms. It's a great place to start for those who struggle with heavy dumbbells.

1. Pick up a barbell loaded with medium to heavy weights and lift it onto your shoulders. Pull back your shoulders so that the bar has a place to rest. You should be holding the bar with an overhand grip (with your palms and fingers should be facing forwards). **2.** By pushing your hips back and bending at the knees, lower your body as far as you can. Pause, then return to the starting position.



Your core should be braced, your lower back arched and your torso remain upright throughout.

Barbell front squat

This version of the barbell front squat features a close grip. Traditionally, weighted exercises performed with a close grip are tougher than those with a standard or wider grip.

1. With your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, pick up the barbell in the centre of the bar. Your hands should be close together. Lift it to shoulder height and push back your shoulders, so you can rest the bar on your shoulders, with hands just below your chin. **2.** Perform a squat in a controlled manner. Pause and then return to the starting position.

Your elbows should be bent throughout, with the point of the joint facing towards the floor.

Overhead barbell squat

This variation of the barbell squat helps to tone up your abdominals as well as testing your arms, shoulders, quads and calves. That's because you need a strong core to perform it for any length of time.

1. Standing with your feet at slightly wider than shoulder width apart, pick up a barbell with an overhand grip and hoist it above your head. Your core should be braced, with your stomach drawn in. **2.** Slowly lower yourself towards the ground to perform a squat. When you're as low as you can go, pause, before slowly returning to the starting position.

Your arms should remain straight. If you're struggling to hold the barbell up, try using slightly lighter weights.

LOWER BODY Squat jump, lunge & step-up

Dumbbell squat jump

With the addition of dumbbells, you can make the bodyweight squat jump a lot more gruelling.

1. With your feet shoulder width apart, pick up a pair of dumbbells and hold them down by your sides, with palms facing inwards. Stand up tall, and then lower yourself into a squat position. **2.** Explosively try and jump as high as you can. That's one repetition.

1

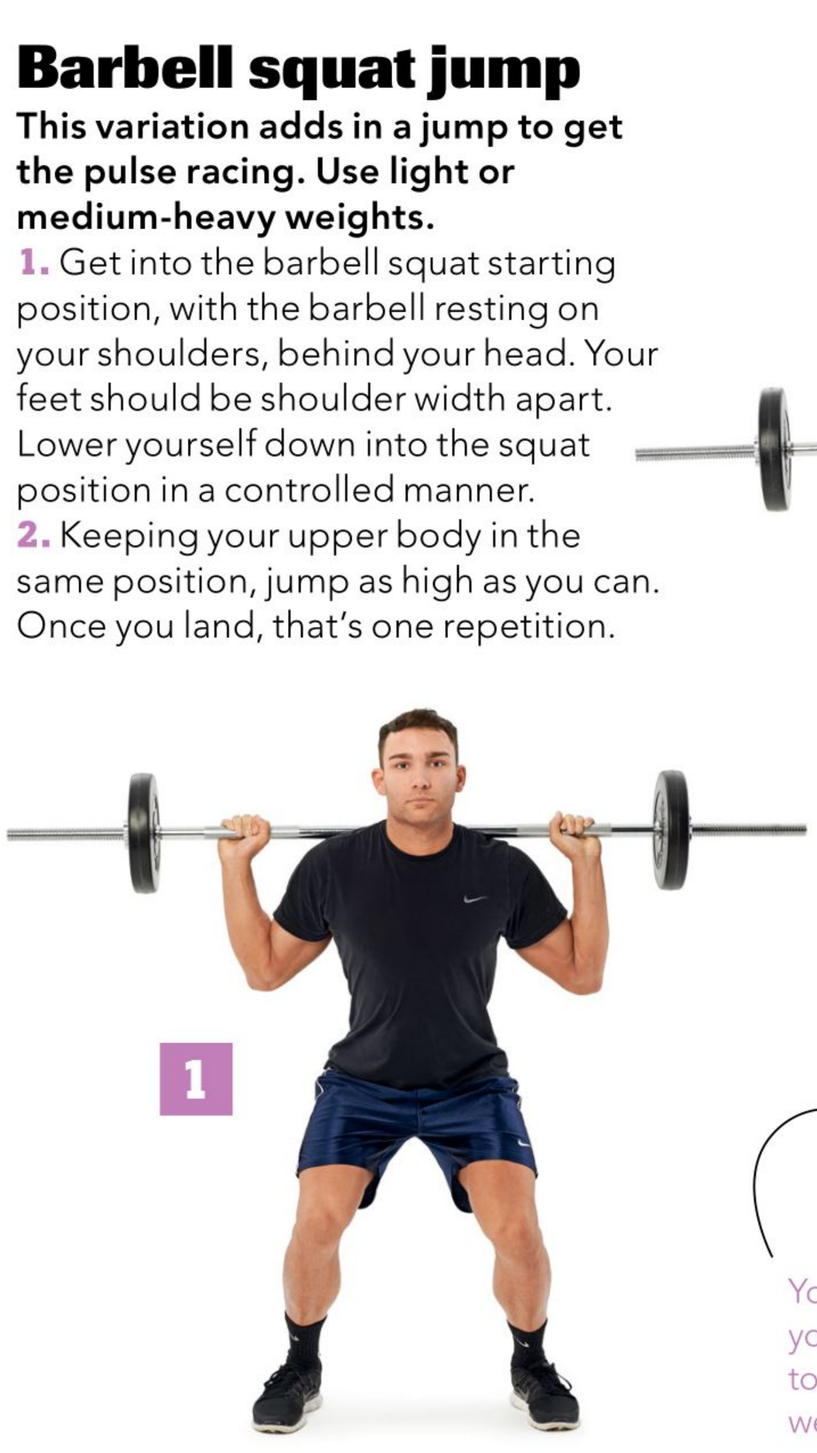
2

Remember to keep the dumbbells down by your side throughout the exercise – don't use your arms to help you jump!

Barbell squat jump

This variation adds in a jump to get the pulse racing. Use light or medium-heavy weights.

1. Get into the barbell squat starting position, with the barbell resting on your shoulders, behind your head. Your feet should be shoulder width apart. Lower yourself down into the squat position in a controlled manner. **2.** Keeping your upper body in the same position, jump as high as you can. Once you land, that's one repetition.



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Your legs should straighten as you jump. Try and land on your toes before shifting your weight to your heels.

Barbell box lunge

The lunge is an excellent exercise for the quadriceps. This variation is performed using an exercise step – the sort used in step aerobics classes.

1. With your feet set at hip-width apart, pick up a barbell with an overhand grip and place the bar on your shoulders, resting behind your head. Stand around two feet from the step, remembering to brace your core. **2.** Slowly lunge forward onto the step with your left leg. Continue until your left knee is bent at least 90 degrees. Your right knee should almost touch the floor. Pause before quickly returning to the starting position.

1

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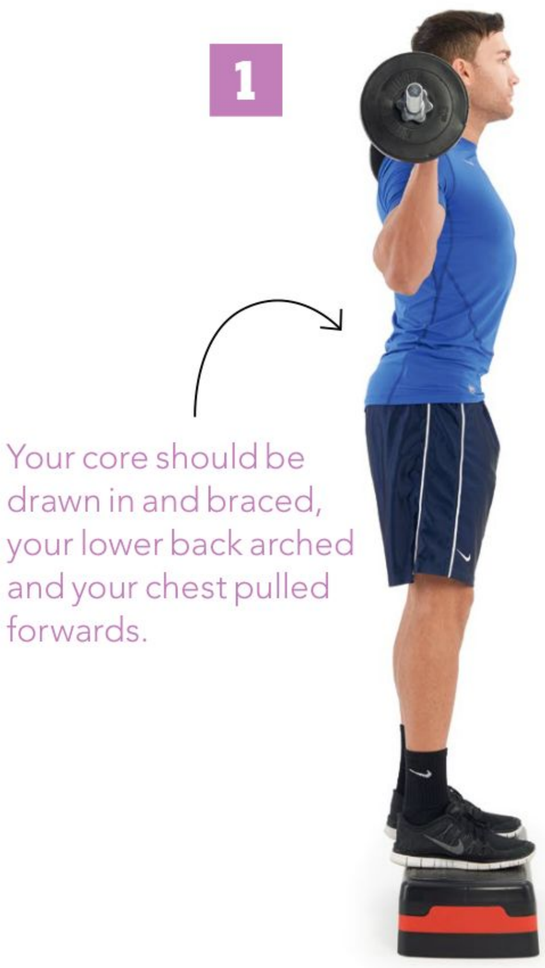
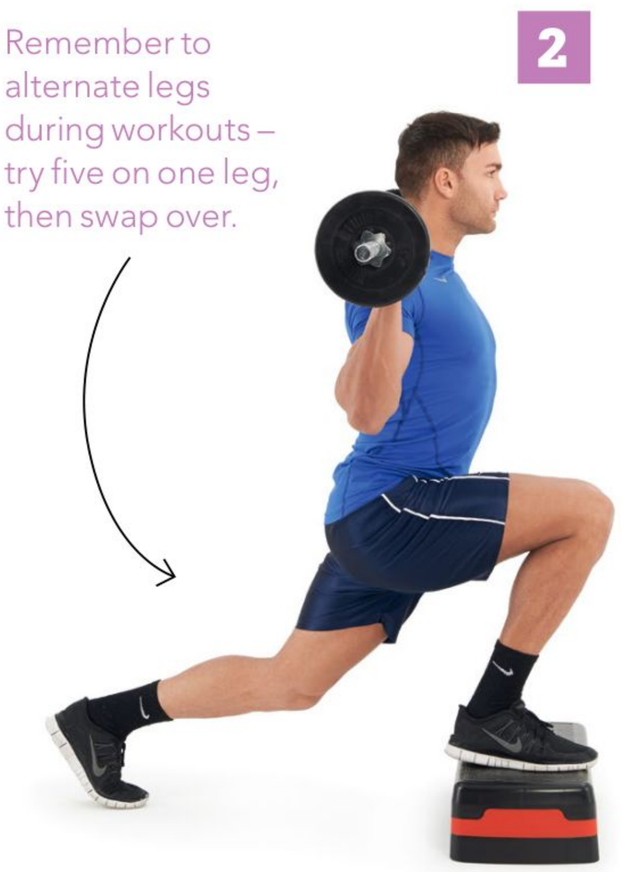
Reverse barbell box lunge

This variation reverses the movements of the barbell box lunge. Try not to step back too far; the movements should remain controlled throughout, with good balance.

1. Stand on an exercise step, with your feet a few inches apart. You should be holding a barbell in an overhand grip, with the bar resting on your shoulders behind your head. **2.** Slowly step backwards with your left leg until you're in a lunge position. Pause for a couple of seconds, and then return to the starting position by pushing up with the heel of your right leg. That's one repetition.





Barbell step-up

Step exercises offer an ideal workout for the calves. You can perform them with or without weights, though if you're carrying a barbell it makes the exercise a whole lot tougher.

1. Stand with your feet hip-width apart around a stride-length away from an exercise step. Pick up a barbell with an overhand grip and rest the bar on the top of your shoulders. **2.** Leading with your left leg, step forward purposefully onto the exercise step. **3.** Once both feet are on the step, pause for a second or two. **4.** Step backwards with your right leg and return to the starting position. That's one repetition.

TOP TIP

For a more intense cardiovascular workout, don't pause on the step. Quickly step up and down for at least 30 seconds.

LOWER BODY Step-up & step-over

Dumbbell step-up

As with many weights exercises, you can swap barbells for dumbbells when performing the step-up.

1. Stand at stride length away from an exercise step, with your feet a few inchces apart. Hold a dumbbell in each hand at arms length, down by your sides. **2.** Step forward on to the step with your left foot, pushing down on your heel when it lands to power the rest of the movement. **3.** Complete the movement until your stood on the box, then reverse it to return to the starting position. **4.** Repeat the exercise, this time moving forward with your right foot.

1

TOP TIP

To test your hamstrings and glutes more, use a weights bench or high box, rather than an exercise step.

2

3

4

TOP TIP

For a more strenuous cardiovascular workout, perform this exercise quickly, without stopping, for at least 30 seconds.

Crossover dumbbell step-up with arm raise

This exercise works your hips, shoulders and arms as well as your hamstrings and glutes.

1. Stand about a foot to the right of an exercise step, with your feet hip width apart, while holding a heavy dumbbell in

1

When holding the dumbbell, your palms and fingers should be pointing forwards, using an overhand grip

3

Your trailing leg should remain in the air throughout the movement, even while you're stood on the step.

your left hand just above shoulder height. **2.** Bring your right foot across your body and place it on the step. **3.** Lift your left leg as you step-up. **4.** Raise your left hand and lift the dumbbell towards the ceiling. Step down to the starting position, lowering your left hand to shoulder height. That's one repetition..

Do at least five repetitions with your right leg/left arm before swapping and doing the same number with your left leg/right arm.

Barbell step-over

Get a double dose of lunging with this step-up and step-down variation on the barbell box lunge.

1. Pick up a barbell with an overhand grip and rest it on your shoulders, just behind your head. Stand with your feet hip width apart, with an exercise step around two feet in front of you. **2.** Lunge forward, placing your left foot on the step. **3.** Push up with the heel of your left foot to help you return to a standing position on the box. **4.** Lunge forward, placing your right foot on the ground. Your left knee should almost touch the step. Continue the movement until you're standing again.

Accentuate the movement so that your right knee is almost touching the floor as you lunge.

Keep your upper body as still as possible during the exercise. Your core should be braced and tight.

Once you've completed one repetition, turn around so that you're facing the step, and go again.

LOWER BODY Hip raise exercises

Hip raise

Mixed Martial Arts fighters swear by the hip raise, an exercise that strengthens your glutes, hamstrings, abs and lower back – muscles that are all vital for ground fighting.

1. Lie on your back with your arms down by your sides and your knees bent. Your feet should be flat on the floor. **2.** Raise your hips, pushing up with the heels of your feet. Your body should make a straight line from your knees to your shoulders. Hold the position for five seconds before lowering yourself down.

Don't press down with your hands or use your shoulders – the movement should come from your heels and hips

Single-leg hip raise

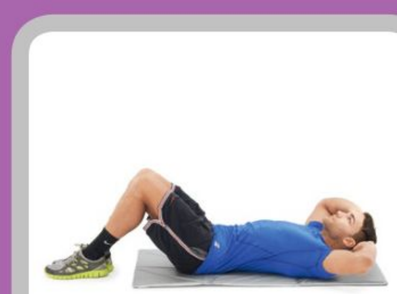
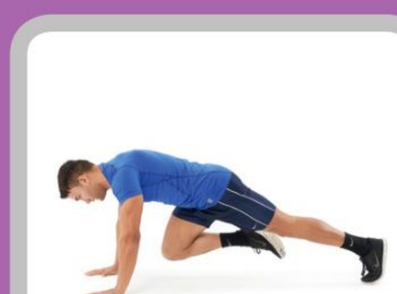
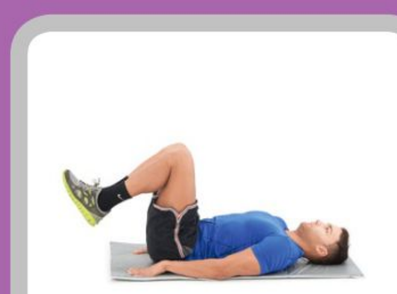
By using this single-leg variation on the hip raise, you'll give your core, glutes and hamstrings an even tougher workout. **1.** Lie on your back with your arms by your side, your left leg bent (foot flat on the ground) and your right leg extended straight, lifted a few inches off the ground. **2.** Push down on your left heel and raise your hips until you're in the correct position. Keep your right leg straight throughout.

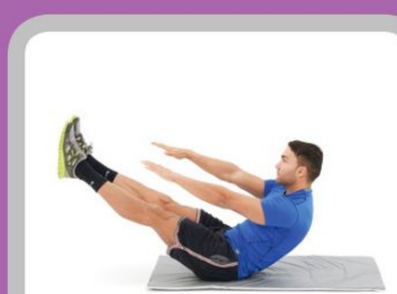
Switch legs after you've done the prescribed number of repetitions. You should be doing at least five on each leg.

Swiss ball hip raise

This variation of the hip raise, using an exercise ball, includes an additional leg curl.

1. Lie flat on your back with your arms by your side and the back of your heels resting on a Swiss ball. **2.** Using your heels and core, raise your hips until your body forms a straight line from your shoulders to your feet. **3.** Without lowering your hips, pull your knees and feet towards you by rolling the feet across the Swiss ball.



CORE EXERCISES

Get some funk in your trunk while working on your six-pack

For Mixed Martial Arts fighters, the core is arguably the most important section of the body by far. All that bending, twisting and rotating that the MMA fighters do originates at the core. This part of the body is of vital importance to the "ground phase" moves – the techniques that have been imported from wrestling, judo and Brazilian ju jitsu, in particular – but it also plays a huge part in kicking and, to a lesser extent, punching.

So what exactly is the 'core'? Generally speaking, fitness experts use it as a catch-all term for the 20-plus muscles around your centre (stomach, hips, lower back) that stabilise your spine and keep your torso upright.

Perhaps the best-known core muscles are the abdominals, or abs, the group of muscles that stretch up the front and side of your body from the pelvis to just below the chest. Having strong, well-defined abs will give you a six-pack, a look that some men would die for.

Getting finely tuned abs is tough, and takes a lot of work, mainly by using exercises such as sit-ups and crunches. There's more to the core than your abs, though. Also of vital importance are the three muscles around your lower back, which play an important role in any movements that involve bending or twisting. The hip-flexors, which we previously mentioned in the lower body exercises section, are also counted as part of your core.

The exercises in this section are a mix of those that strengthen core stability (such as the Mountain Climber, Cat Camel and Swiss-Ball Jack-Knife), and work the trunk flexion area (such as sit-ups and crunches).

When you're planning a workout session, try to include at least one core exercise. As well as strengthening your muscles and increasing flexibility, they can also be superb fat-burners.

There are few more energy-sapping exercises than the Bicycle Sit-Up, which involves moving your legs in a pedaling motion while performing sit-ups. A few sets of 15 repetitions and you'll be desperate for a breather!

CORE Crunches & sit-ups

Crunch vs sit-up

Many people get the abdominal crunch and sit-up mixed up. Although similar, there are subtle differences between the exercises…

Abdominal crunch

A strong core is vital for anyone undertaking any kind of regular exercise, and particularly those playing sport. Mixed Martial Arts, with its ground phase and grappling, is no different. Having a strong, flexible trunk (that's the area around the abdominal muscles) is vital for success in MMA. The abdominal crunch is a classic exercise that works the "abs". Unlike the sit-up, which involves raising your upper body, the "crunch" is about raising your head and shoulders.

1. Getting the crunch right is all about body positioning. Lie flat with your fingertips behind your head, just above your ears. Your elbows should be in line with your chin or ears.

2. Your legs should be together, bent at the knees, with both feet placed flat on the floor. They should remain together, flat on the floor, throughout the exercise. Don't lift your legs!

3. To perform the crunch, raise your head and shoulders off the ground, pushing your chest towards your hips. Your "abs" should tighten during the movement. Pause, before returning to the starting position in a controlled manner.

4. The crunch is hard to get right, and many people make mistakes Try not to push your head forward with your hands – the movement for the exercise should come from your abs, spine and lower back.

For a trickier alternative requiring greater core stability and control, try performing crunches with your legs raised in the air, like this.

Classic sit-up

The sit-up: a classic exercise we've all done. But have we been doing it correctly? Good sit-ups should be smooth, not awkward, with correct form and technique applied throughout. Getting it right does require excellent core strength, so beginners should start with the modified sit-up (below). Take your time to begin with – it's better to do it slowly, with correct technique, than quickly with poor technique.

1. Lie flat on your back with your fingertips behind your head, your knees bent, your legs together and your feet flat on the floor. Your elbows should be in line with your ears, or just below.

2. Raise your upper body until you're sat upright, or as close as you can get. As you do the exercise, you should feel your abs tighten.

1

Don't push or pull your head forward while performing the sit-up – your hands and arms should remain still throughout.

2

Your aim should be to get your upper body as upright as possible, while keeping your legs and feet still.

Modified sit-up

The modified sit-up is a great alternative to the classic sit-up for those starting out on the road to fitness, or anyone who hasn't built up their core strength and flexibility.

1. Lie flat on your back with legs together, bent at the knees, and feet flat on the floor. Place your hands on your shoulders and raise your elbows, so your arms are crossed in front of your body. **2.** Raise your upper body until you're sat upright.

1

Remember to keep your feet grounded throughout and your legs firmly together. The movement should come from your core.

2

V-up

The V-up adds arm movement for a greater workout. If you're bored of regular sit-ups, this is an excellent alternative.

1. Lie flat on your back with arms stretched out behind your head, palms facing upwards. **2.** Simultaneously raise your arms, legs and torso, as if you are trying to touch your toes. The movement should come from your trunk. Go back to the starting position and begin the next repetition straight away.

1

The V-up is so-called because in the upright position, your body should make a 'V' shape.

2

CORE Mountain climber & Saxon side bend

Mountain climber

This is a classic bodyweight exercise that works the core while building muscular endurance.

1. Get in the "plank" position – that's the upright "push-up" position – with your arms straight. Try to keep your back, legs and hips as straight as possible. **2.** Lift your left foot off the floor and slowly bring your knee up towards your chest. **3.** Reverse the movement, bringing your right knee up towards your chest. Alternate between legs for at least 30 seconds.

Mountain climber variation

There are a number of variations on the mountain climber; this is the "cross body" version.

1. Get in the upright plank position with your arms straight, your feet together and your body straight. **2.** Raise your right knee across your body, towards your left elbow, before returning to the plank position. **3.** Raise your left knee across your body, towards your right elbow, before returning to the plank position. Alternate between legs for at least 30 seconds.

Swiss ball mountain climber

If you want to test your core stability as well as your core strength, this tricky Swiss-Ball variation is a good option.

1. Get into the plank position with your feet resting on the top of an exercise ball. **2.** Keeping your left foot on the exercise ball, draw your right knee up towards your chest, before returning to the starting position. **3.** Keeping your right foot on the ball, draw your left knee towards your chest. Return to the starting position. Alternate between legs for at least 30 seconds.

Saxon side bend

The Saxon side bend is a classic core exercise. Its side-to-side movements offer a good alternative to the straight-up-and-down of sit-ups and crunches.

1. Pick up a reasonably heavy weights plate and hold it in two hands, at arms length above your head. Stand with your feet just slightly wider than shoulder width apart. **2.** Slowly bend to your left, taking care to keep your legs, arms and upper body still. Return to the starting position, and then repeat the movement to your right.

TOP TIP

The Saxon side bend can also be performed while holding a pair of dumbbells, if you haven't got a weights plate to hand.

Quadruped

The Quadruped can do wonders for your "abs". Get on your hands and knees and relax your core. To begin, raise one leg and extend it out straight behind your body. Pull your abdominal muscles in tight, as if you were about to be punched in the stomach. Hold the position, with tight abs, for five to ten seconds. Relax your core, and repeat the exercise.

While your abs are tight, remember to breathe slowly and deeply throughout. Alternate between legs after five repetitions.

Cat camel

This exercise is tricky to perfect, and gives abs an excellent workout. It works by alternating between two positions. Get on your hands and knees, with your head up. Push your head down between your shoulders and arch your back, gently pushing from the core. Hold for a few seconds and return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

When your back is up in the "cat camel" position, your spine should be naturally rounded. Don't push – the exercise should be performed slowly and gently.

Swiss ball jackknife

This is a tricky exercise to get right if your balance is poor, but including it in your workouts helps improve your core stability. You should try and keep your back straight throughout.

1. Get into a plank position with your hands placed just outside shoulder width apart, and your shins resting on the top of an exercise ball. Your back, legs and upper body should form a straight line. Your feet and legs should be together, not apart, and your core should be braced with your abs pulled in. **2.** Roll the exercise ball forward with your feet, towards your chest. Pause briefly, and then push the ball backwards so that you return to the starting position.

While rolling the ball forwards to perform the exercise, your lower back posture should remain the same – the movement comes from the legs and abs, not the lower back.

Swiss ball single leg jackknife

This variation adds in extra muscular endurance and requires even better balance. It's worth perfecting the traditional version of the exercise before moving onto this one.

1. Get into a plank position with your shins resting on the top of an exercise ball. As with the standard version of the exercise, your hands should be placed just wider than shoulder width apart, your core braced, and your legs and back should form a straight line. **2.** Simultaneously roll the ball forward with your left foot, lifting your right leg slightly so that it's out of the way of the ball. Once your left leg thigh is straight, roll the ball back and lower your right leg to return to the starting position.

Alternate between legs during workouts, either every other repetition, or after a set number of repetitions on one leg (five, for example).

Deck squat

This dynamic core stability and flexibility exercise also tests your quads, hamstrings and calves.

1. Stand in front of an exercise mat with feet placed shoulder width apart, and your arms outstretched in front of your chest. Pull your abs in tight. **2.** Keeping your upper body position the same, dip down into a squat by bending your knees and pushing your hips back. **3.** Keeping your feet firmly on the floor, roll backwards, so that your hips, back and shoulders are on the mat. There should be no change in your upper body position. **4.** Simultaneously throw your arms back and raise your legs towards your chest, so your backside and lower back are off the ground. That's one repetition.

Leg pull-in/reverse crunch

This hip flexor and core strength "crunch" variant makes your lower body muscles do the work.

1. Lie flat on your back with your arms by your sides, palms on the floor. Make sure your abs are drawn in and your legs and feet are together. **2.** Without moving your upper body at all, raise your hips and pull your knees towards your chest, bending them in the process. Return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

Reverse crunch kick-up

If you're feeling adventurous, try this variation on the classic reverse crunch – it adds in a dynamic kick for a greater cardiovascular workout.

1. Lie flat on your back with your arms by your side, your core braced, your legs together – bent at the knees – and your feet flat on the floor. **2.** Raise your hips and pull your knees towards your chest to perform a reverse crunch. **3.** Keep the movement going by kicking your legs out straight. As you finish this movement, the tips of your toes should be in line with the top of your head. **4-5.** Return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

1

2

As you extend your legs straight, your lower back should raise off the ground and your backside should be in the air.

3

4

5

Bicycle sit-up

This is the most dynamic sit-up variation and it provides a terrific cardiovascular workout that's guaranteed to get the heart pumping.

1. Start in the usual sit-up position, with your legs together, knees bent, and fingers behind your ears. Your core should be tight and remain this way throughout. When you're ready to begin, simultaneously draw your left knee towards you, kick out your right leg and perform a sit-up. As you sit up, twist your body so your right elbow moves towards your left knee. **2.** Without stopping, straighten your left leg and bring your right knee towards your chest. Simultaneously twist your core and upper body to bring your left elbow towards your right knee.

1

When the sit-up movement is complete, your elbow should be touching your opposite knee.

Keep up this pedalling and twisting motion without stopping for at least 30 seconds. You'll soon be breathing heavily and aching all over!

2

UPPER BODY EXERCISES

Work the back, arms, chest and shoulders with these exercises and weights moves

Mixed Martial Arts fighters need a strong upper body to wrestle and grapple opponents while on the ground. Flexibility is key, and while many MMA fighters are impressively 'stacked' up top, few look like bodybuilders or weightlifters.

To attain a body like an MMA pro you will need to work on both suppleness and strength. In this context, the weighted exercises are there to provide strength and muscle tone, but not muscle mass.

There are a vast amount of muscles that make up the 'upper body'. It's important to give all of these sets of muscles equal attention. Many people will focus on the 'pecs' and biceps, but the back, shoulders and triceps are equally as important.

So that you can target the specific areas in your workout, here is a run down of each exercise and which particular parts of the body they affect:

CHEST

Push-up, Spiderman push-up, Diamond push-up, Judo push-up, Typewriter push-up, Scorpion push-up, Walking gecko push-up, Walk the plank, Dip, Classic barbell bench press,Close grip bench press, Reverse grip bench press, Dumbbell floor press, Dumbbell floor press variation, Dumbbell bench press, Alternating bench press, Swiss ball bench press, Swiss ball alternating bench press.

BACK

Chin-up, pull-up.

SHOULDERS

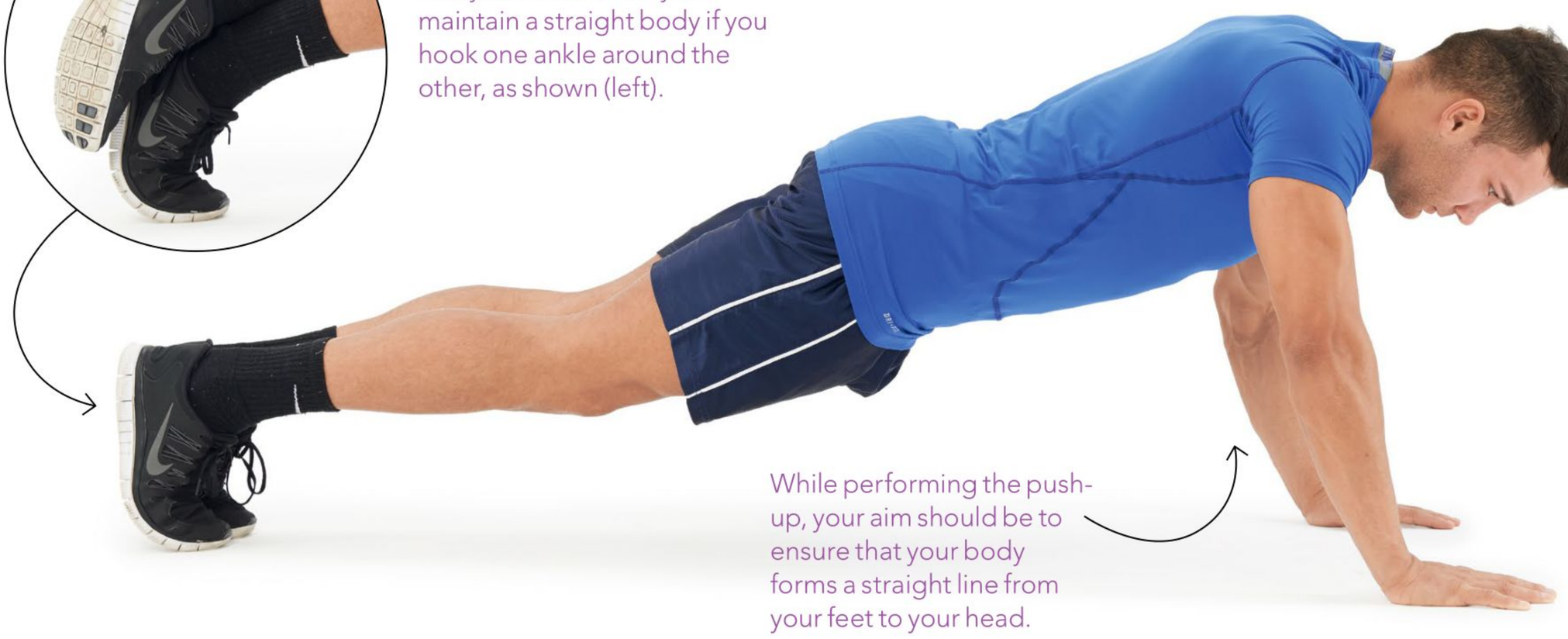
Barbell row, Dumbbell row, Alternating row, Halo, Ballistic row, Rear lateral| raise, Lateral raise, Alternating lateral raise, Scaption (front raise), Single arm front raise, Barbell shoulder press, Dumbbell shoulder press, Alternating shoulder press, Push-press, Cuban press.

ARMS

Medicine ball slam, Lying dumbbell triceps extension, Arm curl with dumbbells, Twisting arm curls, Preacher curl, Zottman curl.

UPPER BODY Push-up & variations

Some fitness experts believe that you're more likely to maintain a straight body if you hook one ankle around the other, as shown (left).



While performing the push-up, your aim should be to ensure that your body forms a straight line from your feet to your head.

Push-up

You say press-up, we say push-up; either way, it's a classic bodyweight exercise that should be a staple of any Mixed Martial Arts training plan. It's also hard to get right. There are many pitfalls along the way. How many times have you seen someone's hips sag low as they perform a push-up, or stick up high in the air? Both of these things are examples of bad technique and poor core strength. While the push-up tests the chest, shoulders and arms, it takes great core strength to retain a correct plank position. It's a simple exercise, but difficult to master. Here's how to do it right.

1. First, get into the starting "plank" position. Keep your legs together, with the balls of your feet and toes planted firmly on the floor. Your arms should be straight, with your hands placed just wider than shoulder width apart.

2. In this starting position, your fingers should be spread out and pointed forwards. Most importantly, your body should form a straight line from your heels to your shoulders, with your head up.

3. Start lowering yourself down towards the floor, concentrating on maintaining your straight body position. If you pull in your glutes (they're the muscles in your backside) and your abs, this will help you maintain a rigid body position throughout.

4. Keep lowering yourself down until your chest almost touches the floor. Pause before pushing back up until your arms are straight. That's one repetition – you should be doing at least 10 in a set. Go slowly at first, concentrating on perfecting the correct body position.

Spiderman push-up

The Spiderman push-up acquired its superhero-themed name as it mimics the leg movements of Stan Lee's great comic book creation. It adds in leg movement for an altogether trickier – not to mention tougher – workout.

1. Begin in the standard push-up position, with your arms straight and hands placed just wider than shoulder width apart. As usual, your body should form a straight line from your heels to your shoulders. **2.** As you lower yourself down, bring your right knee out sideways and pull it up towards your right elbow. Once you've reached the lowest position, slowly push back up to the plank position. While you're doing this, reverse the leg movement so it finishes in the starting position.

1

2

Once you've done it with your left leg, swap over and do the same exercise with your right leg. Alternate between the two during sets of repetitions.

Judo push-up

This variation on the push-up adds in extra movements for the core and upper body. As a result, it's great for MMA ground fighters and should help improve your core flexibility.

1. Start in an adapted push-up position, with your body bent at the hips to make a rough "v" shape. As usual, your hands should be placed just wider than hip-width apart, with your legs together and the balls of your feet grounded. **2.** Lower yourself down in the adapted position, then bring your hips down to make a standard push-up "down" position. **3.** Pause briefly in the lower position. **4.** As you push back up, raise your head and shoulders to gently stretch your core and lower back. Pause briefly, before lowering your head and shoulders to return to the starting position.

1

2

3

Don't allow your chest or hips to touch the floor at this stage. Pull in your abs and glutes to help maintain good posture.

4

You can exaggerate this movement by pushing your hips towards the ground as you raise your shoulders and chest.

UPPER BODY Push-up variations

Diamond push-up

If you want a gruelling workout, you should try variations on push-ups with different grips. Closer and wider grips both make the exercise much more difficult. Another excellent alternative is the diamond push-up, which works the triceps just that little bit harder.

1. Assume the plank position, taking care to make a straight line with tour back and legs. Place your hands a few inches apart, with your fingers pointing forwards at a 45-degree angle and your thumbs extended. The tips of your thumbs and fingers should be touching and form a triangle shape.

1

2

Your fingers and thumbs should be positioned like this. Note the triangle shape created on the ground.

Typewriter push-up

This push-up variation pushes the hands much wider, ensuring that your chest muscles do more work. It also puts more strain on the shoulders, helping build muscular strength and endurance. **1.** Get into the standard plank position, but this time place your hands significantly wider – about twice shoulder width should do the trick. **2.** Slowly lower yourself down towards the ground, until your chest is a couple of inches above the floor. Take care to maintain control and good form. **3.** When you're at your lowest position, quickly shift your weight to your left arm by pushing your upper body to the left. As you do that, your right arm should naturally extend. **4.** Quickly shift your weight to right arm, so your left arm extends, by pushing to the right. Push back up to the plank position to complete one repetition.

1

2

The right-to-left movement should be fluid, not jerky, and feel natural, rather than forced.

3

4

Scorpion push-up

In its purest form, the scorpion push-up offers a real test of your flexibility. In fact, only those with particularly flexible muscles can perform it accurately. Because of this, we've adapted the exercise to make it easier for those of all levels of ability and muscular flexibility.

1. Get into the plank position, but this time place your feet roughly hip-width apart. Your arms should be straight, with your hands positioned in the classic manner. Remember to pull in your glutes and core to help make your body more rigid. This helps maintain that fabled straight line between your shoulders and ankles. **2.** Lower yourself down in the standard fashion, until your chest is a few inches off the ground. **3.** As you push back up, flick your left leg over your right ankle and out to the side. To do this, you'll need to twist at the core a little. How far you are able to flick it out depends on your flexibility; to begin with, don't try and overreach and concentrate on keeping good balance and control. **4.** Once your arms are fully extended, go straight into another push-up, lowering your body down whilst simultaneously bringing your core and legs back to the usual position, as shown in picture two. When you press back up again, reverse the "scorpion" leg movements so that you're bringing your right leg over your left ankle and your right heel towards your left shoulder.

1

2

3

It might help to imagine that you're trying to hit your right shoulder with your left heel.

4

These are relatively unnatural positions to get into, but the scorpion push-up works wonders for your flexibility and core stability, as well as offering a tough cardio workout.

UPPER BODY Walking gecko & walk-the-plank

Walking gecko push-up

This variation on the push-up requires good agility, and provides a workout for the core, legs and upper body.

1. Start in a regular plank position, but with your feet hip-width apart and your hands just wider than shoulder width apart. **2.** Lower yourself down in the standard manner. **3.** As you come up, simultaneously bring your right knee towards your right elbow, and move your left hand forward.

4. As you move forward, your body should naturally lower. In the lowest position, your left hand should be further forward than your head. **5.** As you come up, raise your left knee towards your left elbow, and push your right hand forwards. **6.** Complete the movement, so that you're down low with your left knee touching your left elbow and your right arm extended forwards. That's one repetition – now onto the next one…

1

2

TOP TIP

If you're having trouble getting the movements right, imagine that you're walking like a gecko lizard.

3

4

5

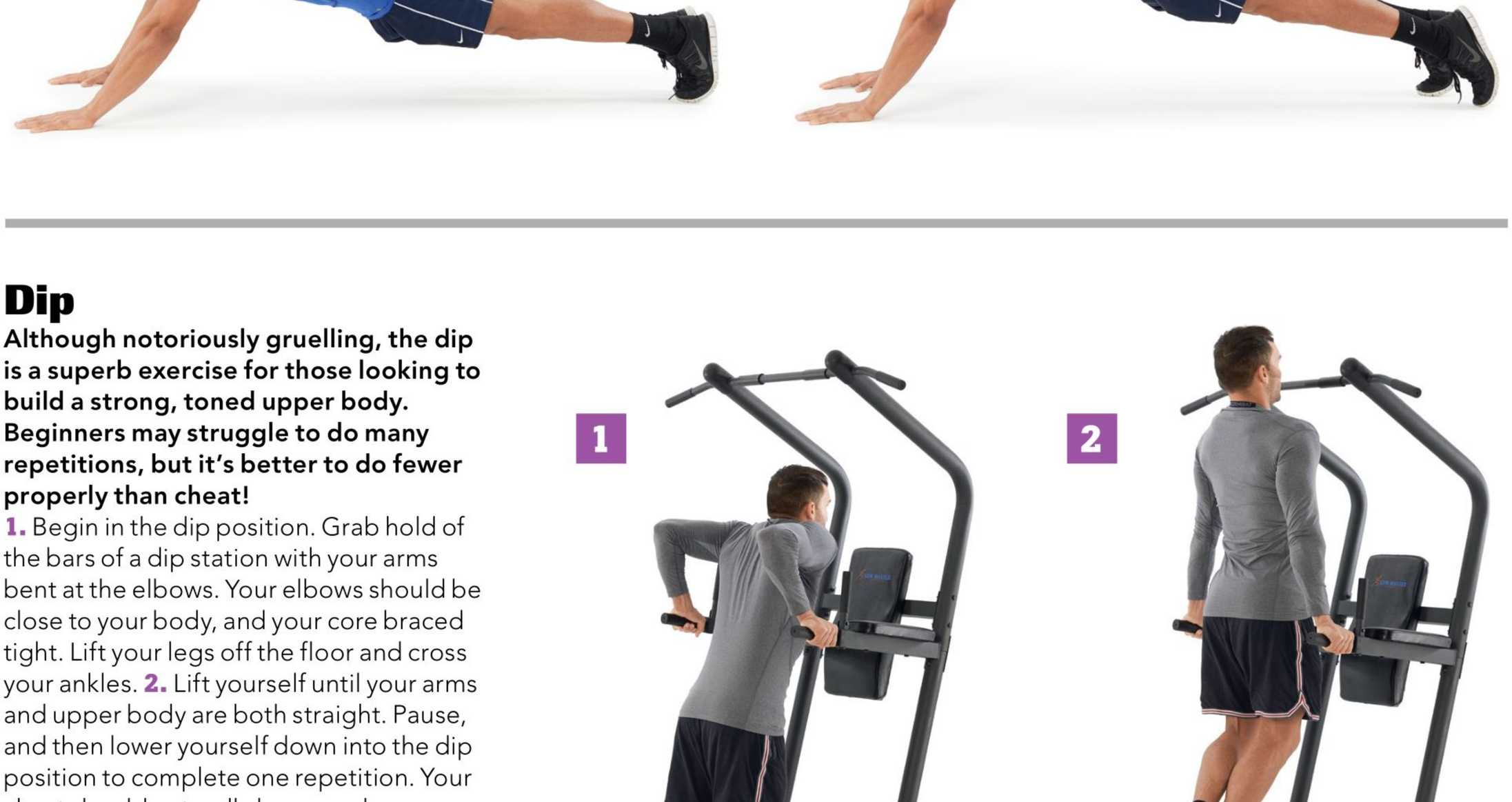
Once you've completed the forward movements with your right and left arms and legs, reverse the procedure to move back to the starting position.

6

Walk the plank

Try this option to the push-up for a tough test of your upper body muscular endurance and core stability.

1. Begin in a push-up position, with your hands placed shoulder width apart and your feet hip-width apart. Pull in your abdominal muscles so that your core is tight and braced. **2.** Slowly begin to walk your hands forward, taking care to keep your lower back posture the same. This exercise is all about maintaining good form under pressure. **3.** Keep walking your hands forward until you've reached your limit. This is when you can still just about maintain the correct lower body position. Don't let your hips sag! **4.** Slowly walk your feet forward to return to the starting plank position and complete one repetition.



Dip

Although notoriously gruelling, the dip is a superb exercise for those looking to build a strong, toned upper body. Beginners may struggle to do many repetitions, but it's better to do fewer properly than cheat!

1. Begin in the dip position. Grab hold of the bars of a dip station with your arms bent at the elbows. Your elbows should be close to your body, and your core braced tight. Lift your legs off the floor and cross your ankles. **2.** Lift yourself until your arms and upper body are both straight. Pause, and then lower yourself down into the dip position to complete one repetition. Your chest should naturally lower and move forward as you dip.

Try to keep your wrists as straight as possible throughout the exercise. They need to be as stiff as possible to hold your weight and prevent injury..

UPPER BODY

Pull-ups, chin-ups, ballistic row & Halo

Pull-up

At some point, everyone has attempted a pull-up and struggled to lift their own weight. It's hard work, but it also works wonders for your lats, shoulders and biceps. Here's how to do it effectively...

1. Stand up tall and grab hold of a pull-up bar with an overhand grip. That means your palms should be facing forwards, with your fingers wrapped around the far side of the bar. Your hands should be about twice shoulder width apart. **2.** Lift your feet off the ground and cross your ankles, so that your bodyweight is being supported by your arms and back. **3.** Pull your body up as far as you can go and pause for a couple of seconds. The top of your head should be above the bar. If possible, bring your shoulders up to the bar. Lower yourself down to the hanging position to complete one repetition.

Close grip pull-up

Believe it or not, using a closer grip makes the exercise slightly easier. That's because it shifts some of the workload to your biceps.

1. With your hands placed shoulder width apart and with an overhand grip, grab hold of the pull-up bar. **2.** Then perform a pull-up, raising your body as far as it will go.

Pull-up vs chin-up

A chin-up is a pull-up performed with an underhand grip (that means your palms facing towards you, and your fingers wrapped around the near side of the bar). Chin-ups are slightly easier to perform for beginners than pull-ups.

Ballistic row

Ballistic exercises are those performed quickly with a heavy weight, rather than slowly and surely. Many ballistic exercises are performed using a cast-iron weight with a large handle, called a kettlebell. The ballistic row is one of the best ballistic exercises around.

1. Stand with your knees bent a little and your feet hip width apart. Place a kettlebell in front of you, roughly halfway between your feet. Grab hold of the kettlebell with your right hand.

2. Quickly lift the weight by pulling your right arm back in a rowing movement, before reversing the movement to put the kettlebell back in its original position.

3. Switch arms, so that you're picking up the kettlebell with your left hand.

Keep your knees bent and your core braced throughout the exercise. This helps to guard against unwanted back injuries, as a result of poor posture.

Halo

The Halo is a terrific kettlebell exercise that provides a cardiovascular workout for the muscles in your shoulders, arms, chest and upper back.

1. Pick up a kettlebell between your hands, holding it bottom up by the handle at chest height. **2.** Lift the kettlebell over your left shoulder with both hands. **3.** Bring the kettlebell round the back of your head in one smooth, fluid movement. Your shoulders and upper back should feel the strain. **4.** Keep the movement going, moving the kettlebell over your right shoulder and back to the starting position. Without stopping, repeat the exercise for at least 30 seconds, or until you have completed the required number of repetitions.

The Halo should be performed quickly and smoothly, bringing the kettlebell around your head in one smooth, fluid movement.

UPPER BODY Rows & raises

Barbell row

Rowing offers a great cardiovascular workout, and the same movements can be applied to weighted exercises to improve muscular strength and endurance. Any kind of "row" exercises will strengthen your upper back.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, and your knees slightly bent. Pick up a barbell with an overhand grip (palms facing towards your body) and hold it at arms length. Bend at the hips, and let the bar hang straight down – depending on your height, it should be somewhere around your knees or shins. **2.** Pull the bar towards you using a rowing movement, until it's at waist height. Pause, and then slowly return to the starting position. That's one repetition.

Dumbbell row

Like many exercises in this book, you can perform the classic "row" with dumbbells instead of barbells, should you so wish.

1. Pick up a pair of medium to heavy weight dumbbells and hold them down by your sides at arm's length, using an overhand grip. You should be bent at the core, with your knees slightly bent and your feet hip-width apart. **2.** Quickly pull the dumbbells backwards using a rowing movement. Pause, and then slowly return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

Don't round your back during this exercise, or any other variation on the "row" – keeping it naturally arched helps prevent back injuries.

Alternating row

This variation, which involves raising and lowering each dumbbell in turn, is perfect for spicing up your workouts, especially if you're bored of the traditional versions of the row exercise.

1. Get into the usual dumbbell row starting position, bent at the hips and knees, with the dumbbells held down by your sides using an overhand grip. Instead of lifting both dumbbells at once, just row back with your right arm. **2.** Slowly lower your right arm back into position, and then repeat the rowing movement with your left arm.

When preparing sets of repetitions of this exercise, count one repetition after you've lifted a dumbbell with each arm.

Rear lateral raise

'Raise' exercises work similar muscles to the 'rows', but are performed with straight arms. This means that they're particularly good for the shoulders and upper back. The rear lateral raise is a workout classic.

1. Pick up a pair of medium weight dumbbells using an overhand grip. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent, and your body bent over at the core. Let your arms hang down in front of your body. **2.** Raise your arms out to the side until they're in line with your shoulders. Your upper body and torso should remain in the same position throughout the exercise. Pause, and then slowly return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

Lateral raise

This classic exercise is performed standing up, rather than bent over. It works similar muscles to the rear lateral raise, but is a little easier on your back.

1. Stand up tall with your feet hip width apart. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and hold them together, just in front of your body. **2.** Raise your arms out to the sides until they're level with your shoulders, keeping them straight throughout the movement. Pause for a moment, and then slowly return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

TOP TIP

Breathe in before you lift, then breathe out as you raise your arms. As you lower the dumbbells, breathe in again.

Alternating lateral raise

This is the "raise" equivalent of the alternating dumbbell row. It's a good option if you're getting bored of the classic lateral raise.

1. Stand up tall with your feet hip width apart. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and hold them together, in front of your body. Raise your right arm out to the side until it's in line with your shoulder. Pause, and then slowly return to the starting position. **2.** Repeat the raise movement with your left arm, pause, and then return to the starting position.

Try lifting one dumbbell as you lower the other for a more dynamic, fast-paced workout.

UPPER BODY

Front raise, shoulder press & push press

Scaption (front raise)

This exercise offers an excellent workout for the shoulders, particularly when performed with medium to heavy dumbbells. You can also try it with the dumbbells held at your side, rather than straight out in front, for a slightly different workout.

1. Stand up tall with your feet placed shoulder width apart. Pick up a pair of medium to heavy dumbbells with an overhand grip and let your arms hang down in front of your body. Your knuckles should be facing away from your body and the ends of the dumbbells touching each other. **2.** Simultaneously raise both arms straight in front of you, until your hands are level with your shoulders. Pause, then slowly return to the starting position to complete one repetition.

Single arm front raise

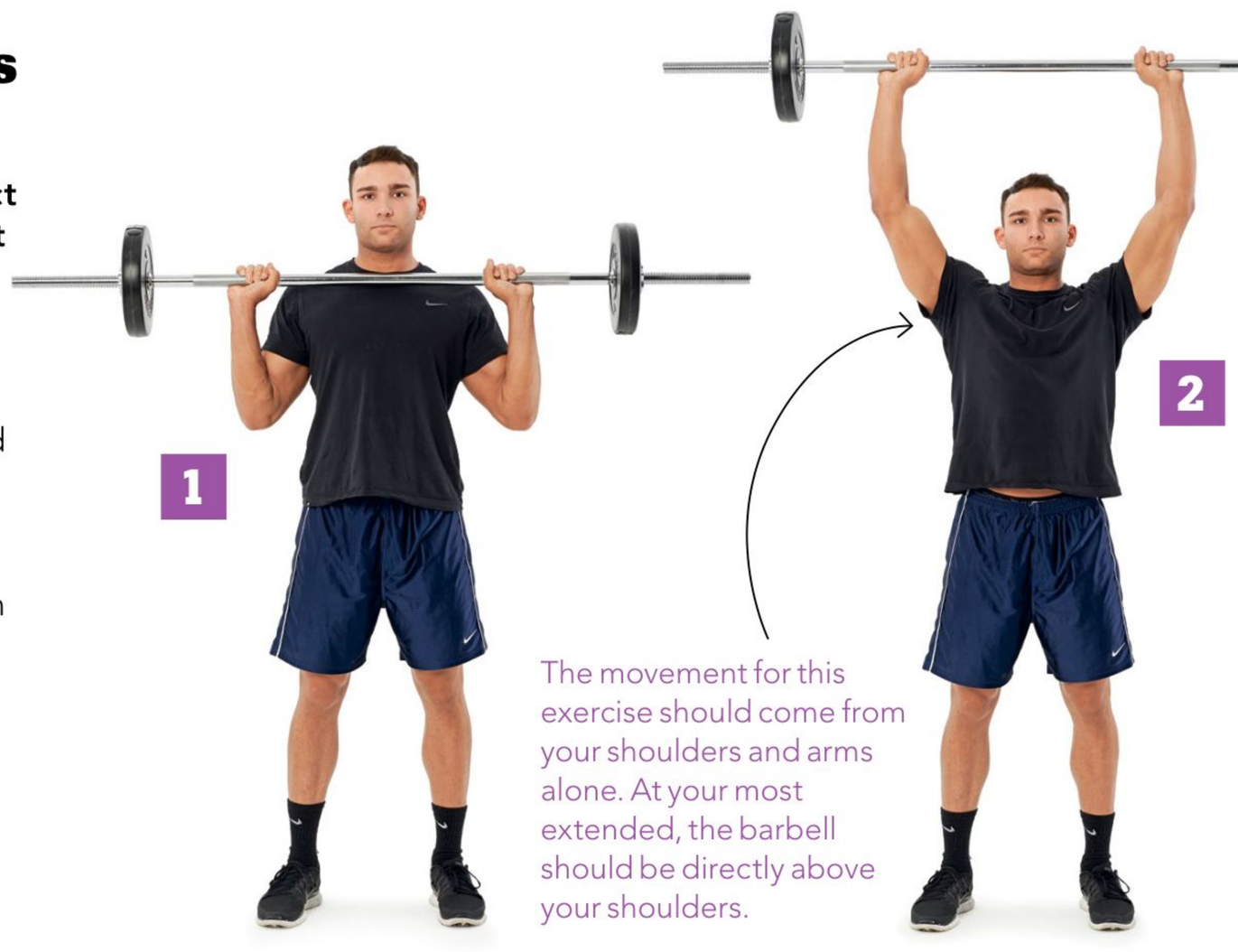
Like many exercises in this book, you can vary how you do the front raise. For example, you can do a number of repetitions with one arm, before switching to the other.

1. Pick up a dumbbell with your right hand using an overhand grip. Stand with your feet hip width apart, letting your right hand hang down in front of you. Let your left arm hang down by your side, or place it on your hip. Perform a front raise with your right hand. **2.** Reverse the procedure to perform the exercise with your left arm.

Barbell shoulder press

The barbell shoulder press is a weightlifting classic. Many people perform it sat down in order to protect their back. This also allows them to lift heavier weights. We recommend doing it stood up, using a light or medium weight barbell.

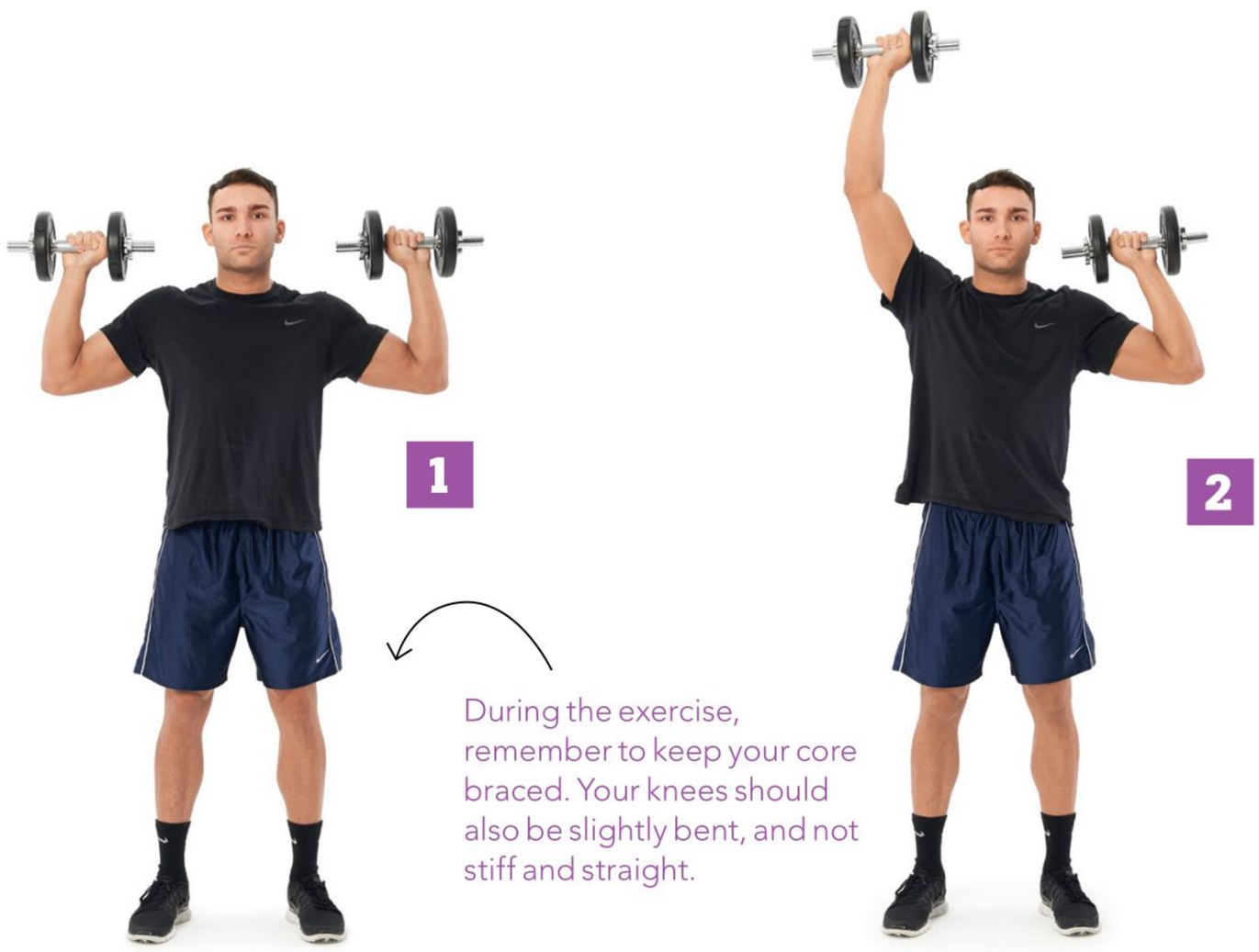
1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Pick up a barbell with an overhand grip, placing your hands shoulder width apart. Lift up the barbell and hold it at shoulder height, just in front of your body. Your core should be pulled in, with your abs braced – as if you were expecting a punch in the stomach. **2.** Push the bar up above your head, straightening your arms in the process. Pause, and then return to the starting position to complete one repetition.



Dumbbell shoulder press

This variation on the barbell shoulder press is more suited to home workouts, assuming that you own a pair of dumbbells (a shrewd investment, we'd suggest).

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, holding a pair of dumbbells at head height using an overhand grip. Your upper arms should extend straight from your shoulders, and your fingers should be wrapped around the far side of the dumbbells. **2.** Push the dumbbells above your head, straightening your arms in the process. Pause, before returning to the starting position.

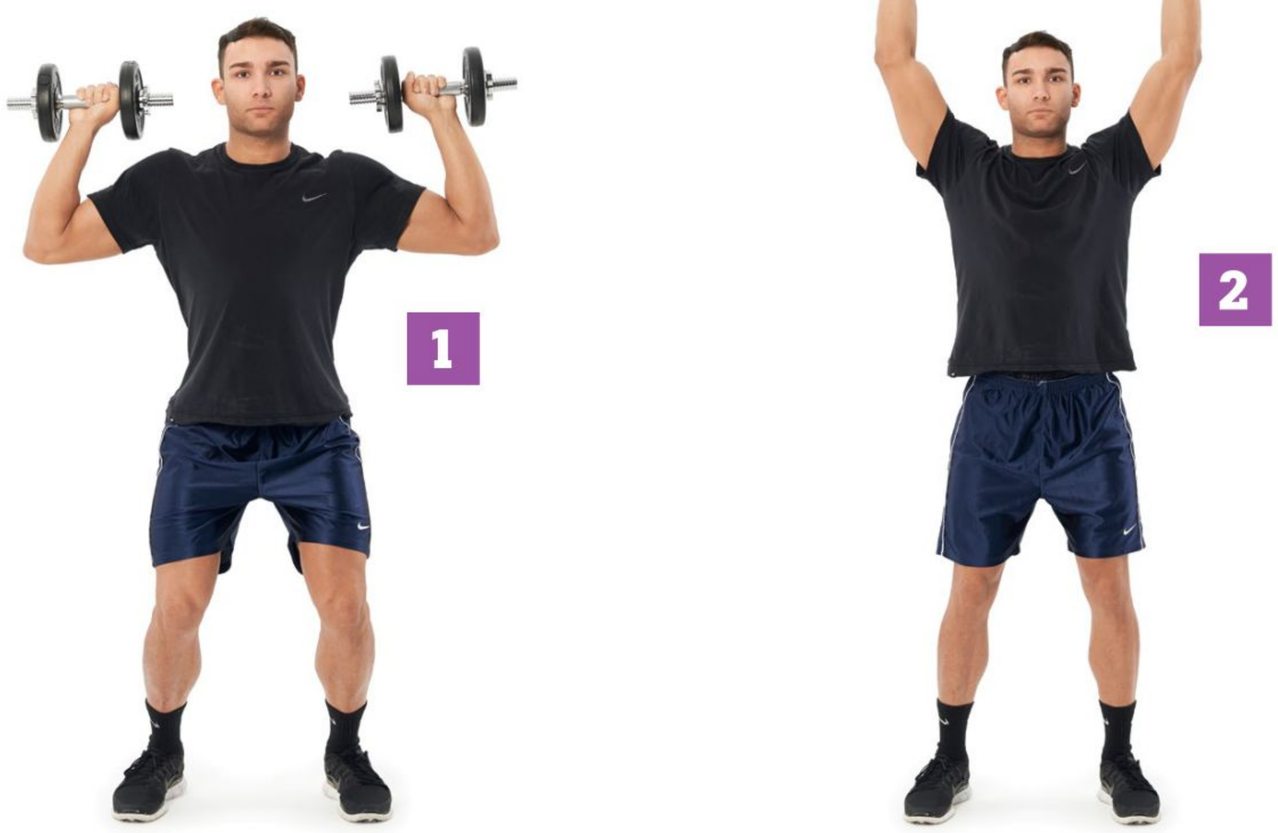


During the exercise, remember to keep your core braced. Your knees should also be slightly bent, and not stiff and straight.

Push press

Try this variation on the shoulder press, which adds in leg movement to create a much more dynamic exercise.

1. Stand up straight, with your knees slightly bent and a pair of dumbbells held at head height. Your elbows should be bent and your upper arms in line with your shoulders. Dip down by bending your knees further in an exaggerated manner. **2.** Simultaneously push up hard with your legs and raise the dumbbells above your head. Pause, and then slowly return to the starting position.



Alternating shoulder press

Help keep boredom at bay with this enjoyable alternative to the straightforward shoulder press. Unlike some of the other lifting exercises, it's fine to perform this one continuously without pausing between movements.

1. Stand with your feet hip width apart, holding a pair of dumbbells at head height with an overhand grip. When you're ready, raise your right arm straight above your shoulder. Your left arm should remain in the starting position. **2.** As you're lowering your right arm towards the starting position, raise your right arm until it's straight.

TOP TIP

This is an excellent exercise to perform at a reasonable pace over a fixed, timed period, for example 30 seconds or a minute.

UPPER BODY Cuban press & medicine ball slam

Cuban press

The Cuban press is a classic weights exercise that's always popular with gym fanatics and fitness experts. It can be a little tricky to get the hang of at first, and to confuse matters there are multiple variations. This is a simplified version that should prove easy to understand for beginners and experts alike.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and hold them down by your sides. You should be stood with your feet roughly hip width apart.

2. Lift the dumbbells to chest level, twisting your wrists in the process so that the dumbbells are turned side on, and your knuckles are parallel to the floor.

3. Keep lifting until the dumbbells are held at shoulder height. Your upper arms should move back slightly during the process.

4. Push up into an extended shoulder press position by extending your arms straight above your shoulders.

5. Pause, and then lower the dumbbells down to shoulder level, so that you're in the starting position for a classic shoulder press.

6. Rotate your arms at the elbows to bring the dumbbells back down to chest level.

7. Lower your arms until the dumbbells are back at thigh level. Twist your wrists to return the dumbbells to their starting position by your sides, and complete one repetition.

TOP TIP

Pause briefly between each movement to test out your muscular endurance, or perform the exercise quickly for a greater cardio workout.

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Medicine ball slam

When we asked our Mixed Martial Arts expert to recommend exercises that complement MMA training, the medicine ball slam was the first one he chose.

1. Stand tall with your feet shoulder width apart, holding a medicine ball in two hands above your head. Begin by bending at the knees and pushing your hips back, as if you were moving into a squat. **2.** As you're dipping down, quickly bring the medicine ball forward and throw it forcefully towards the floor, just in front of you. **3.** Catch the medicine ball on the rebound to complete one repetition.

Classic barbell bench press

The bench press is a favourite of top athletes and keen weightlifters, who waste no time in telling you just how much weight they can "press". Despite the negative connotations, it's still a great exercise to tone those all-important chest muscles.

1. Lie flat on your back on a weights bench, with the barbell resting on the rack behind your head. Place your feet on the floor – your heels should be pushing into the ground. Pick up the barbell with an overhand grip, with your hands placed just wider than shoulder width apart. Lower the barbell down so that it's just above your chest. **2.** Slowly and surely, push the bar upwards in a straight line, extending your arms straight. Imagine that you're trying to push your shoulders into the bench, as this will help you maintain the correct body position as you straighten your arms. Pause, and then lower the barbell back down to the starting position to complete one repetition.

TOP TIP

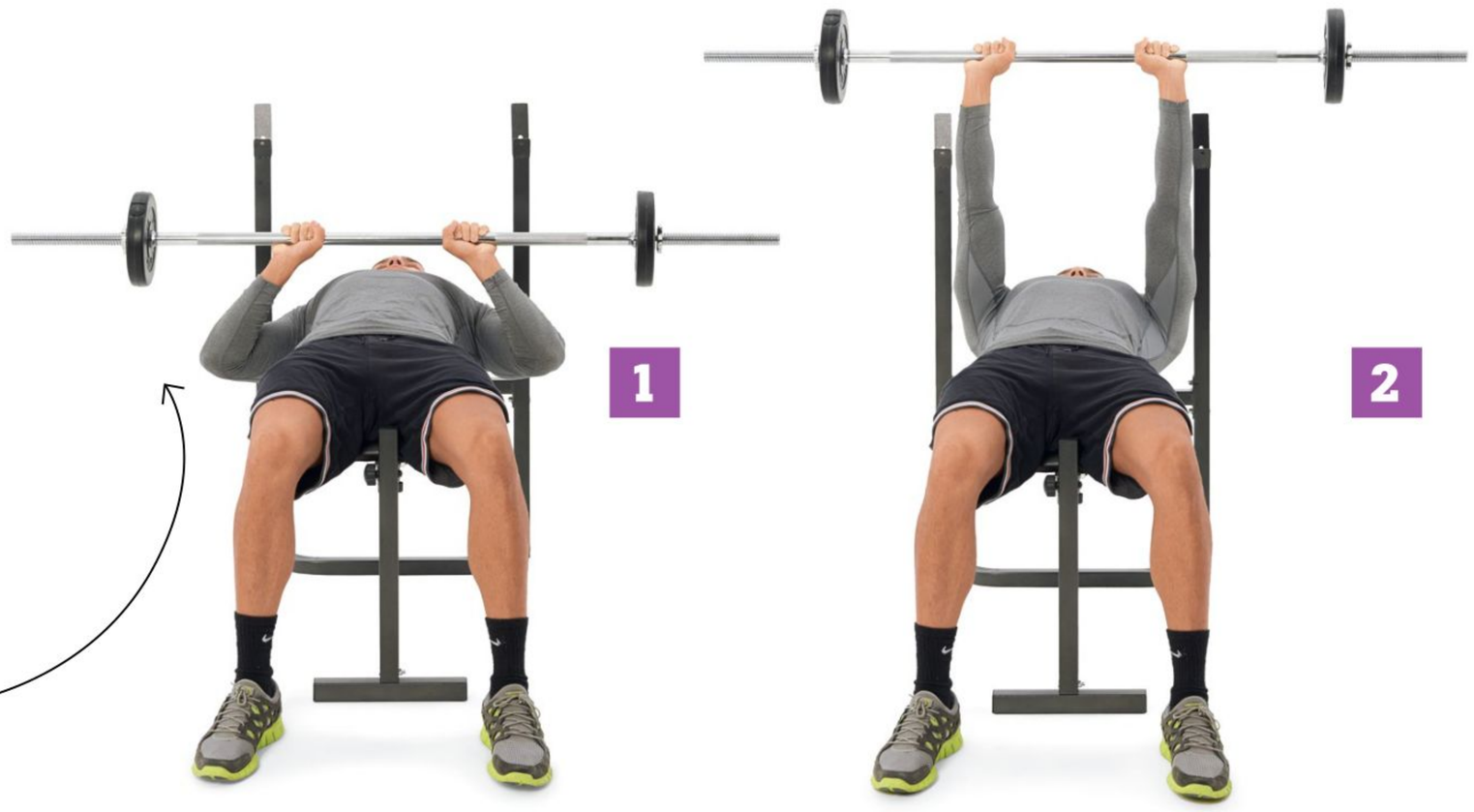
For safety reasons, you should never try and bench press heavy weights without someone there to help you. Start off with light or medium weights.

UPPER BODY Bench press variations

Close grip bench press

Varying your grip when performing the bench press allows different sets of muscles to take the strain.

1. Lie flat on your back on a weights bench, with the barbell resting on the rack and your feet on the floor. Pick up the barbell with an overhand grip, with your hands placed shoulder width apart. Lower the barbell down until it's just above your chest. **2.** Slowly and surely, push the bar upwards in a straight line, extending your arms. Pause, and then lower the barbell back down to the starting position.



By using a close grip, you bring your triceps into play. Since they're often overlooked in workouts, it's a good option.

Reverse grip bench press

Using an underhand grip, with your palms wrapped round the far side of the bar, ensures a tougher workout for the muscles in the top of your chest.

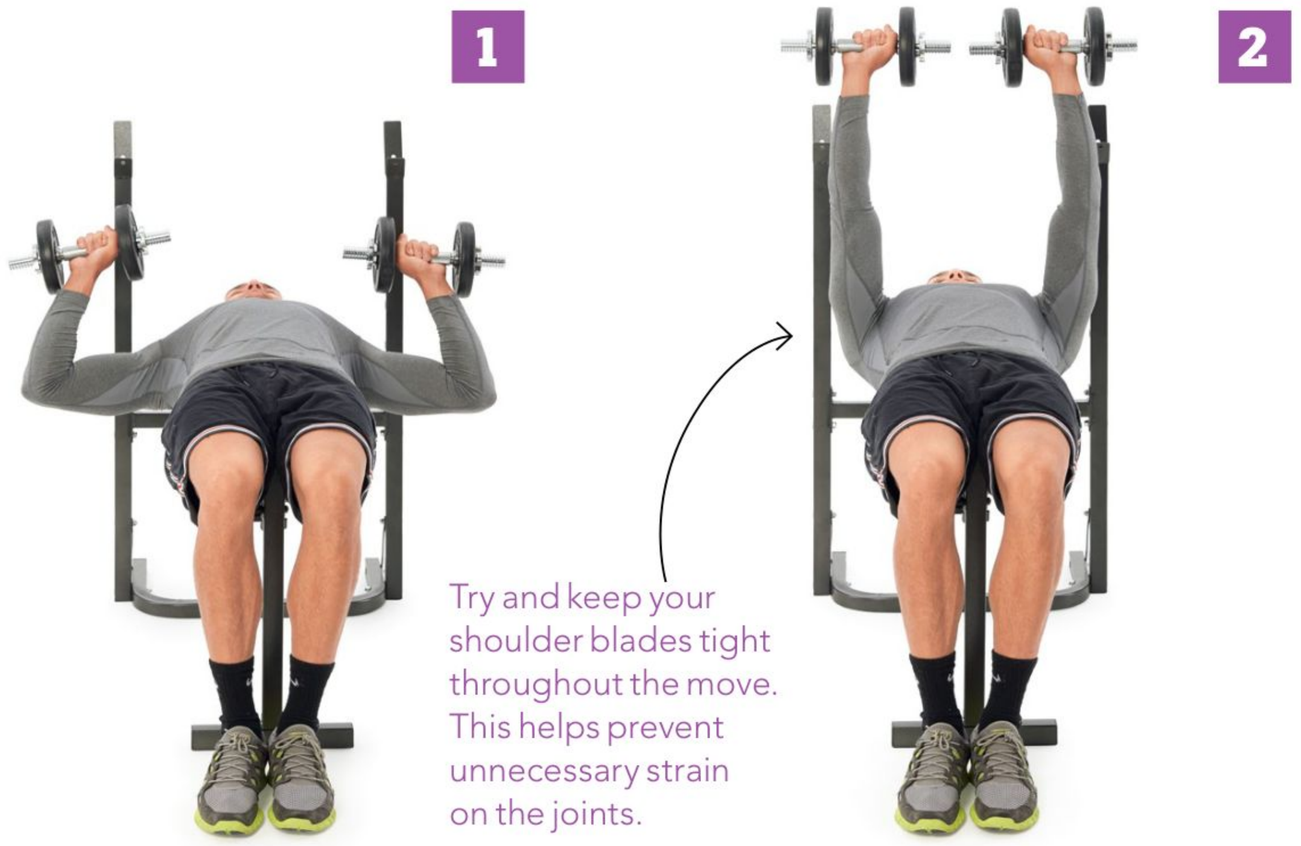
1. Lie flat on your back on a weights bench, with the barbell resting on the rack and your feet on the floor. Pick up the barbell with an underhand grip, with your hands placed shoulder width apart. Lower the barbell down. **2.** Slowly and surely, push the bar upwards in a straight line, extending your arms. Pause, and then lower the barbell back down to the starting position.

As you lower the bar, remember to keep your elbows close to your sides. This helps retain good form and prevent injury.

Dumbbell bench press

Did you know that you can bench press with dumbbells? Try it out – it offers a sterner test of form, especially with heavy weights.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and lie flat on your back on a weights bench. Your legs should be together, or just apart. Hold the dumbbells just above chest height, with your arms bent at the elbows. Your wrists should be straight, with your palms turned slightly inward. **2.** Push the dumbbells upwards in a straight line as quick as you can, remembering to maintain good form. Your arms should be locked straight at the end of the move. Pause, before slowly lowering the dumbbells back to the starting position.



Try and keep your shoulder blades tight throughout the move. This helps prevent unnecessary strain on the joints.

Alternating bench press

Give yourself a more testing cardio workout with this dynamic twist on the dumbbell bench press.

1. Lie with your back on a weights bench and get into the dumbbell bench press starting position. When you're ready to begin, quickly push the weight in your right hand towards the ceiling, extending your arm straight. **2.** Without pausing, simultaneously lower the dumbbell in your right hand while pushing the one in your left hand towards the ceiling. Keep up this alternating left/right movement for the prescribed number of repetitions, or at least 30 seconds.

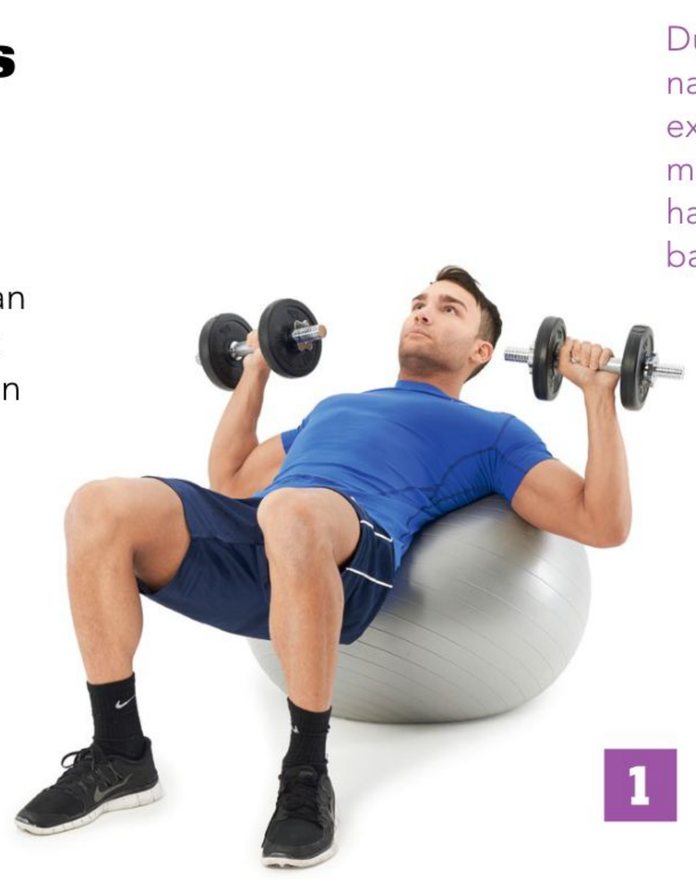
TOP TIP

Performing the alternating bench press is great for your core, as it has to work harder to keep your body stable.

Swiss ball bench press

You don't need a weights bench to "press"; in fact, you can do it with an exercise ball and a pair of dumbbells.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and lie with your back on an exercise ball. Your feet should be bent at the knees, with your feet planted firmly on the floor, and your core braced. The dumbbells should be held above your shoulders. **2.** Push the dumbbells upwards in a straight line as quick as you can. Pause, before slowly lowering the dumbbells back to the starting position.



Due to the Swiss Ball's soft nature, performing any exercise while lying on it makes your core work harder to keep you balanced and stable.

Swiss ball alternating bench press

Simultaneously work your arms and test your core with this cardio-friendly variation on the Swiss ball chest press.

1. Lie with your back on an exercise ball and get your arms and feet into the dumbbell bench press starting position. When you're ready to begin, quickly push the weight in your right hand towards the ceiling, extending your arm straight. **2.** Without pausing, simultaneously lower the dumbbell in your right hand while pushing the one in your left hand towards the ceiling. Keep up this alternating movement for at least 30 seconds.

Keep your core tight and braced throughout. It's going to be working overtime just to keep you stable.

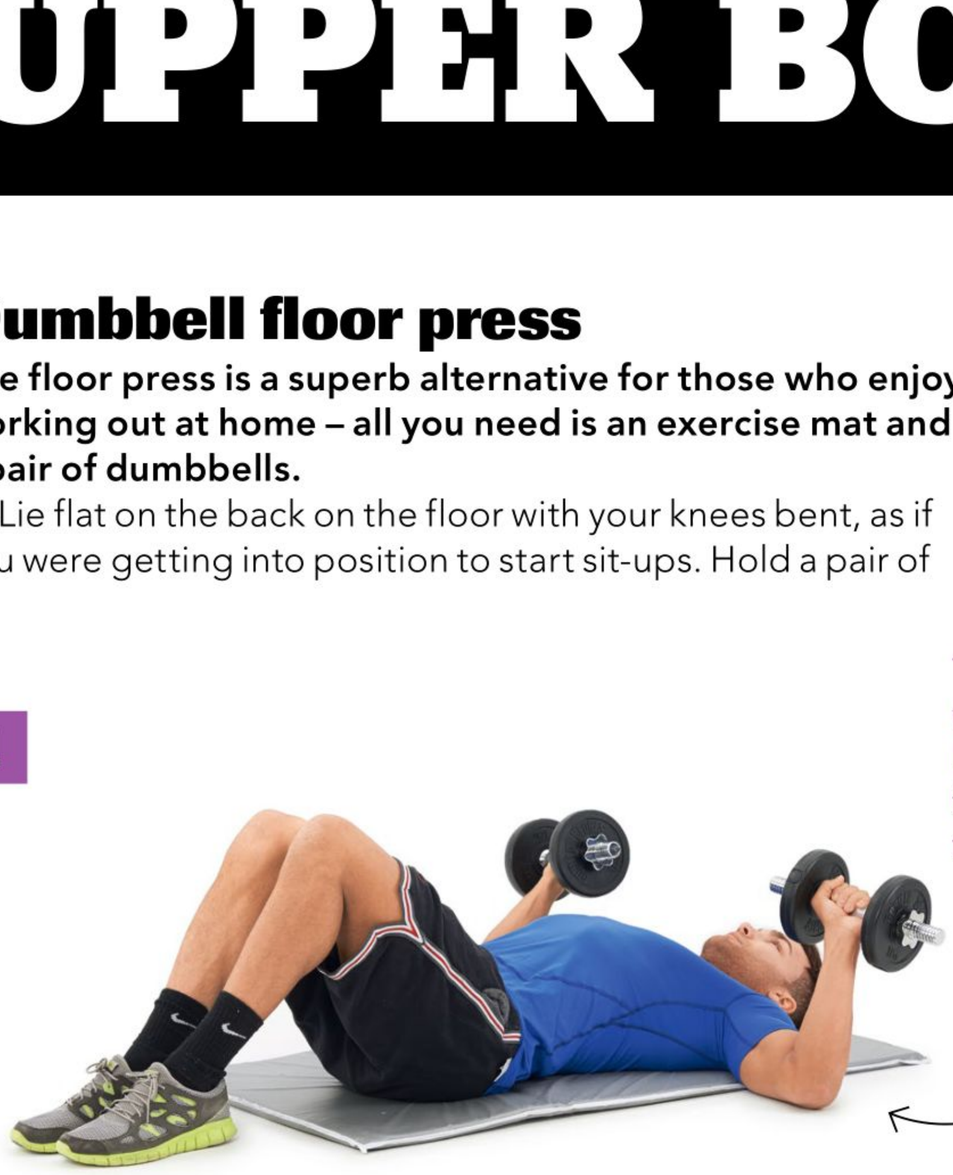
UPPER BODY Floor press & arm curl

Dumbbell floor press

The floor press is a superb alternative for those who enjoy working out at home – all you need is an exercise mat and a pair of dumbbells.

1. Lie flat on the back on the floor with your knees bent, as if you were getting into position to start sit-ups. Hold a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip, just above your shoulders. Your upper arms should be resting on the mat, with your core tightened. **2.** Push the dumbbells upwards in a straight line as quick as you can. Pause, before slowly lowering the dumbbells back to the starting position.

1



The floor supports your weight and stops you lowering your elbows too far when you return to the starting position.

2

Dumbbell floor press variation

This controlled variation is a little easier on your arms, but works the muscles at the top of your chest just that bit harder.

1. Lie flat on the back on the floor with your knees bent, as if you were getting into position to start sit-ups. Hold a pair of dumbbells together, just above your chest. **2.** Keeping your arms together, push the dumbbells upwards in a straight line above your chest. Pause, and then lower the dumbbells.

1

Throughout the exercise, your elbows and upper arms should be tucked in tight to your body.

2

Lying dumbbell triceps extension

Many people make the mistake of focusing too much on their biceps. To get strong arms, you need to work your triceps, too.

1. Lie flat on your back with your legs together, bent at the knees, and your feet firmly on the floor. Hold a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip at arms' length above your shoulders. Turn your wrists so that your palms are facing each other. **2.** Without changing the position of your upper arms, bend your elbows and lower the dumbbells until they're beyond 90 degrees. Pause, then return to the start position.

1

TOP TIP

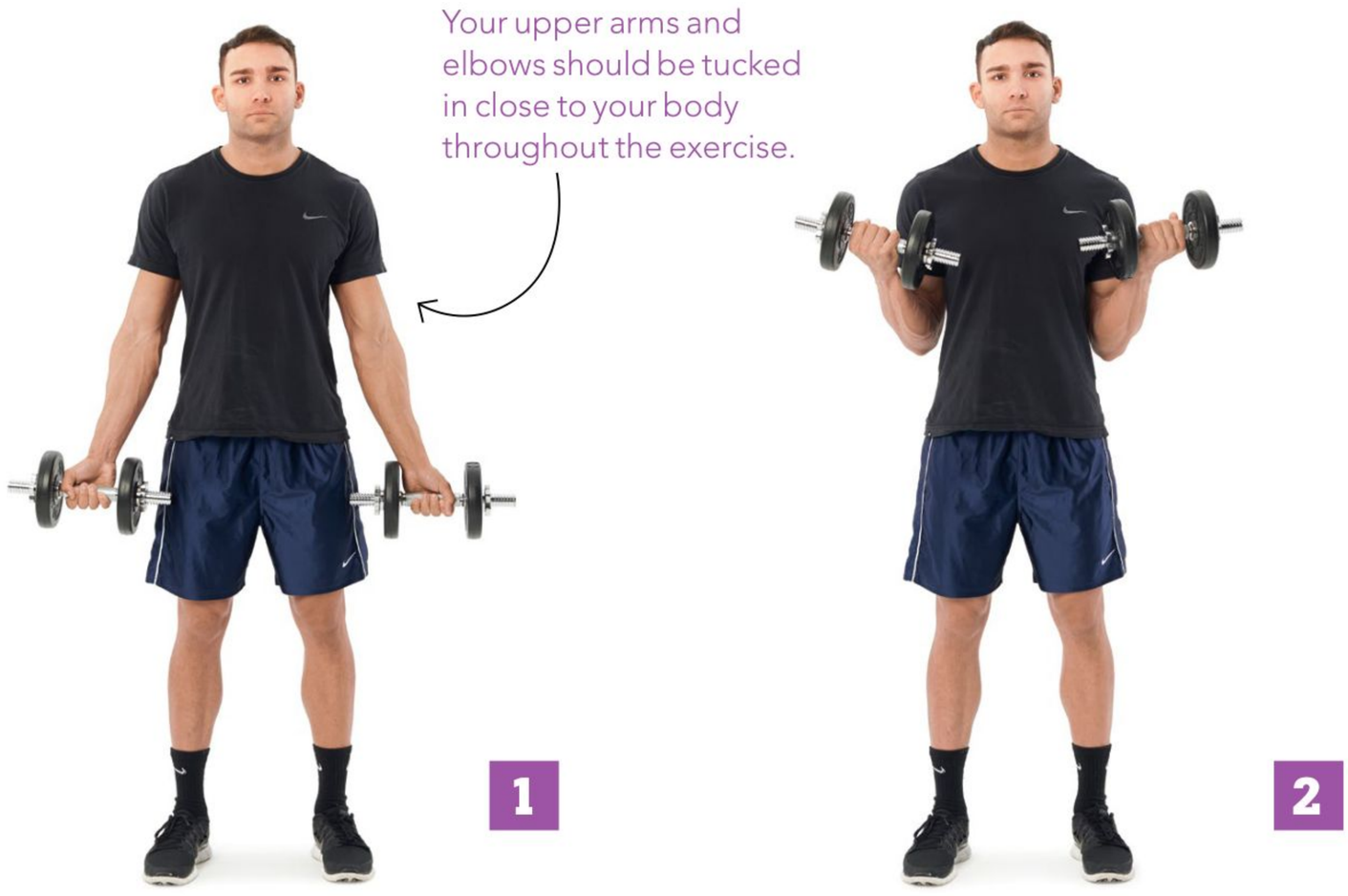
This exercise can also be performed while lying on a weights bench, with your feet planted on the floor.

2

Arm curl with dumbbells

Arm curls are the perfect exercise if you're looking to get bulging biceps.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an underhand grip, so that your palms are facing away from your body. Stand up tall with your feet shoulder width apart, holding the dumbbells down by your side at arm's length. **2.** While keeping your upper arms still, lift the dumbbells towards your shoulders using a curling motion. Although the power comes from your biceps, the movement should come from your elbows. Pause, and then lower the dumbbells back to the starting position.



Twisting arm curl

Work a wider range of muscles using this variation with a twist (literally).

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells and hold them down by your sides, with your palms facing your thighs. This is what's known as a hammer grip. **2.** While keeping your upper arms still, lift the dumbbells towards your shoulders using a curling motion. As you lift, rotate your wrists so that your palms end up facing your shoulders at the top of the movement. Pause, then slowly return to the starting position.

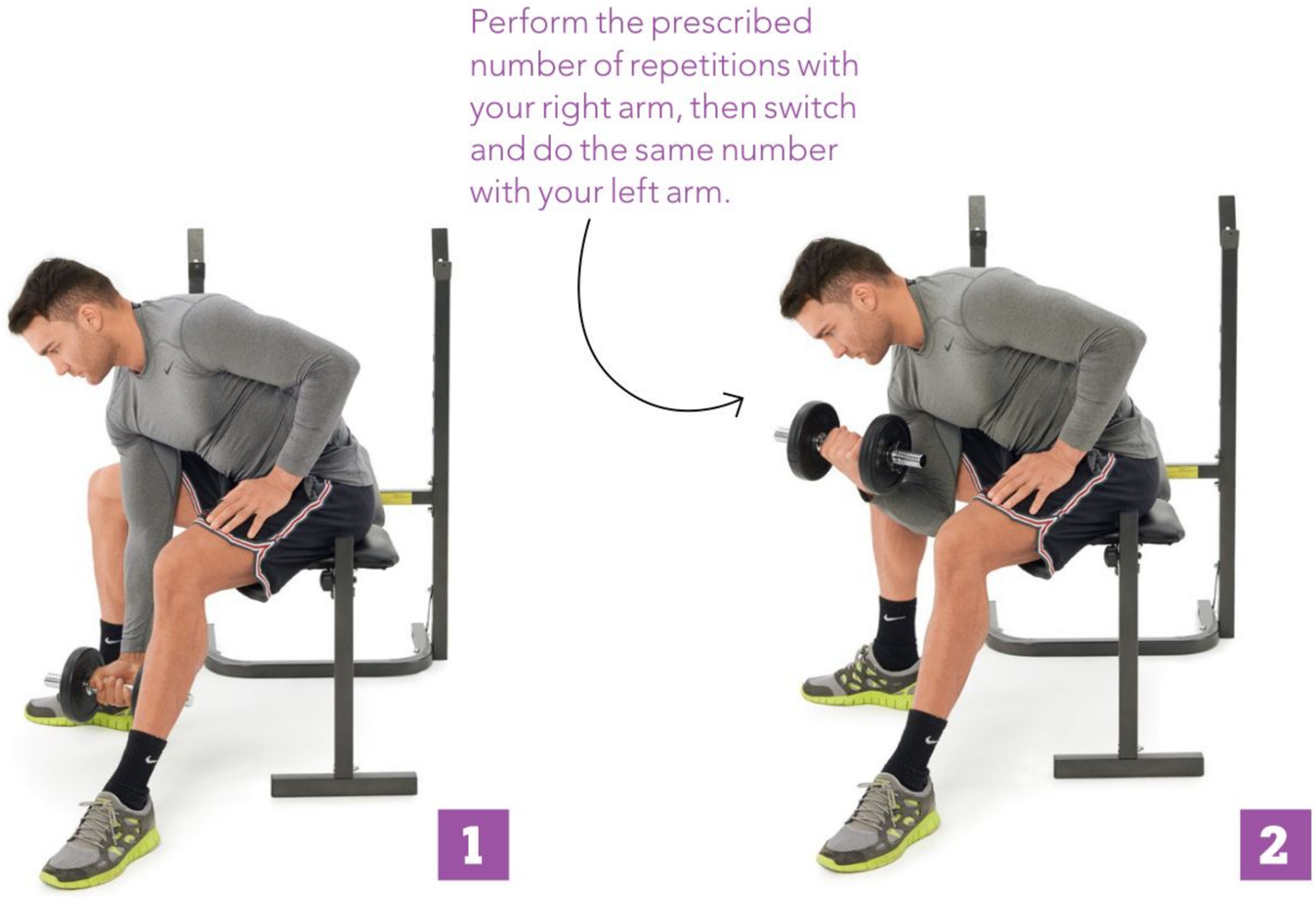
TOP TIP

Curl exercises like this one can also be performed sitting down, with your backside perched on the edge of a weights bench.

Preacher curl

This classic exercise is best performed with a heavy dumbbell.

1. Sit on the edge of a weights bench with your legs spread wide and place a dumbbell between your feet. Place your left hand on your thigh. Bend over until the dumbbell on the floor is at arm's length, and grab it with your right hand using an underhand grip. **2.** Without moving your upper arms, lift the dumbbell up to your shoulder in a curling movement. Pause, then slowly lower it back to the starting position.

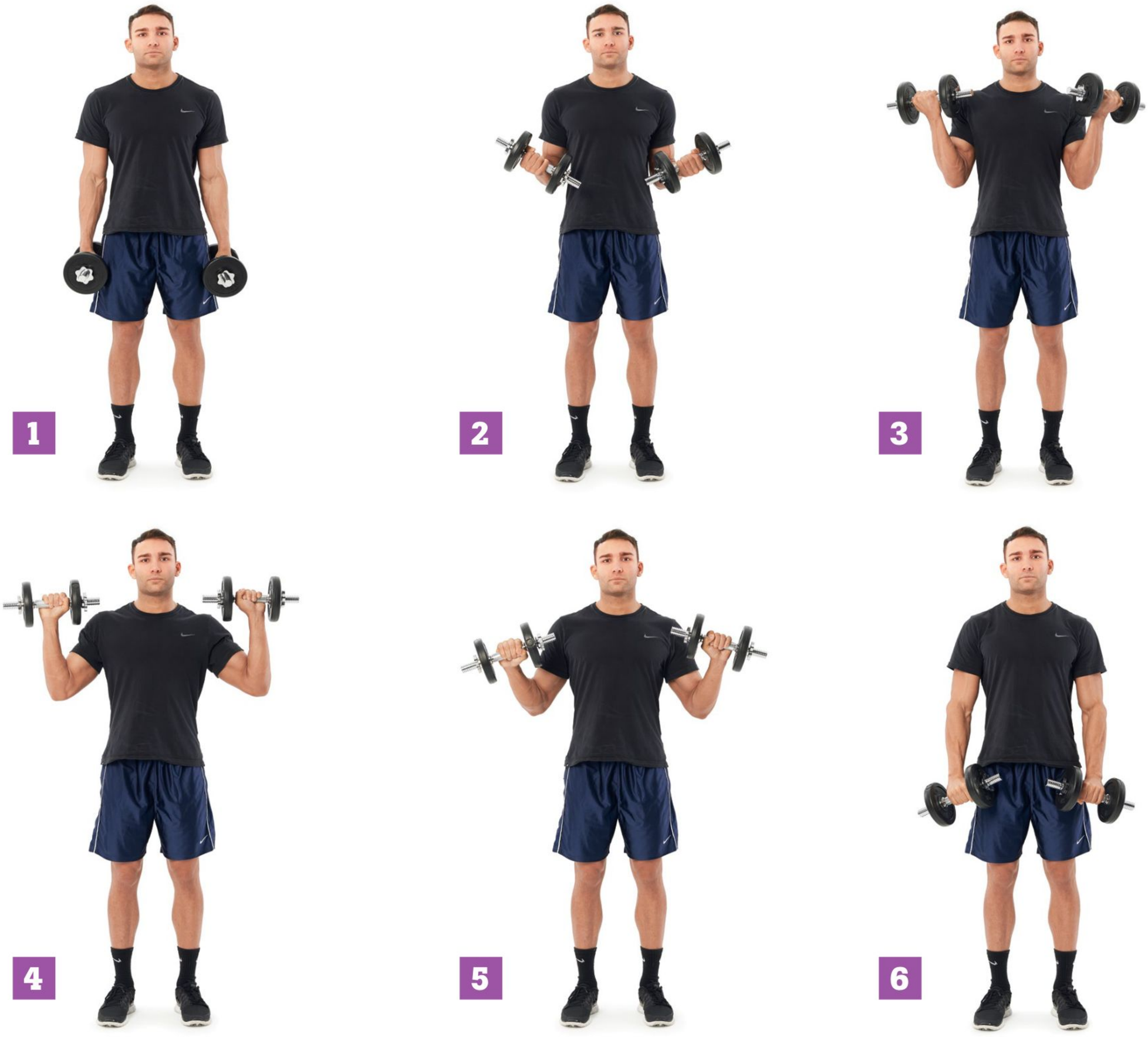


UPPER BODY Chest & forearm exercises

Zottman curl

Not only does the Zottman curl work your biceps, it also provides a stern test for your forearms.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells and hold them down by your sides in a hammer grip, so that your palms are facing your thighs. **2.** Begin to lift the weights in a curling motion, twisting your wrists as you curl to return to an underhand grip. **3.** Keep lifting until the dumbbells are just in front of your shoulders. **4.** Rotate your wrists so that your palms are facing away from your body. **5.** Slowly lower the dumbbells without moving your upper arms. **6.** As you near the starting position, twist your wrists again so that you end up holding the dumbbells with a hammer grip.



Swiss ball dumbbell fly

A classic chest exercise that can be performed on a weights bench or, as here, an exercise ball.

1. Lie with your back on an exercise ball and your feet planted firmly on the floor. Grab a pair of dumbbells with a hammer grip and hold them together, above your chest, at arm's length. **2.** With your elbows slightly bent, lower your arms down until they're parallel with the floor. Pause, and then lift the dumbbells back to the starting position to complete one repetition.

TOTAL BODY EXERCISES

Feel the burn with these exercises, which will stimulate muscles all over your body

All of the exercises and technique-based routines featured in this book should leave you breathless, but few exercises are quite as energy-sapping and lung-busting as those that target your full body.

Total body exercises are excellent for those who are looking to burn fat and improve their all-round fitness. By working several muscle groups at once, you will use more energy and therefore burn up more calories. Total body exercises are also a great way to fire up your metabolism, something that's key to sustained weight loss and cardiovascular endurance.

There are other benefits, too. Many of the exercises contained within this section require you to do several things at once – lifting weights while performing a lunge, for example – which helps improve coordination and balance. These two things are a key part of any sport, and fighting sports more than most.

This section also contains a number of 'all over' bodyweight exercises guaranteed to bring you out in a sweat, such as burpees, squat-thrusts and the intense Turkish get-up. They're great for cardiovascular endurance as well as improving all-over muscular strength, two things that are vital to success in mixed martial arts.

Quite how many total body exercises you include in your workouts really depends on your goals. If you're looking to lose weight and get in shape, particularly if you're tight on time, then you should be looking to pack your sessions with these "all-body" moves.

As to which you choose, and how many repetitions of each exercise you should perform, that really depends on your existing fitness levels. For example, if you are a little out of shape, diving straight in to three sets of 20 explosive left-to-right push-ups, or five minutes of burpees, is going to leave you gasping for air and heavily fatigued. If, however, you already have a decent level of fitness, these exercises might give you the sort of tough, exhausting workout you crave.

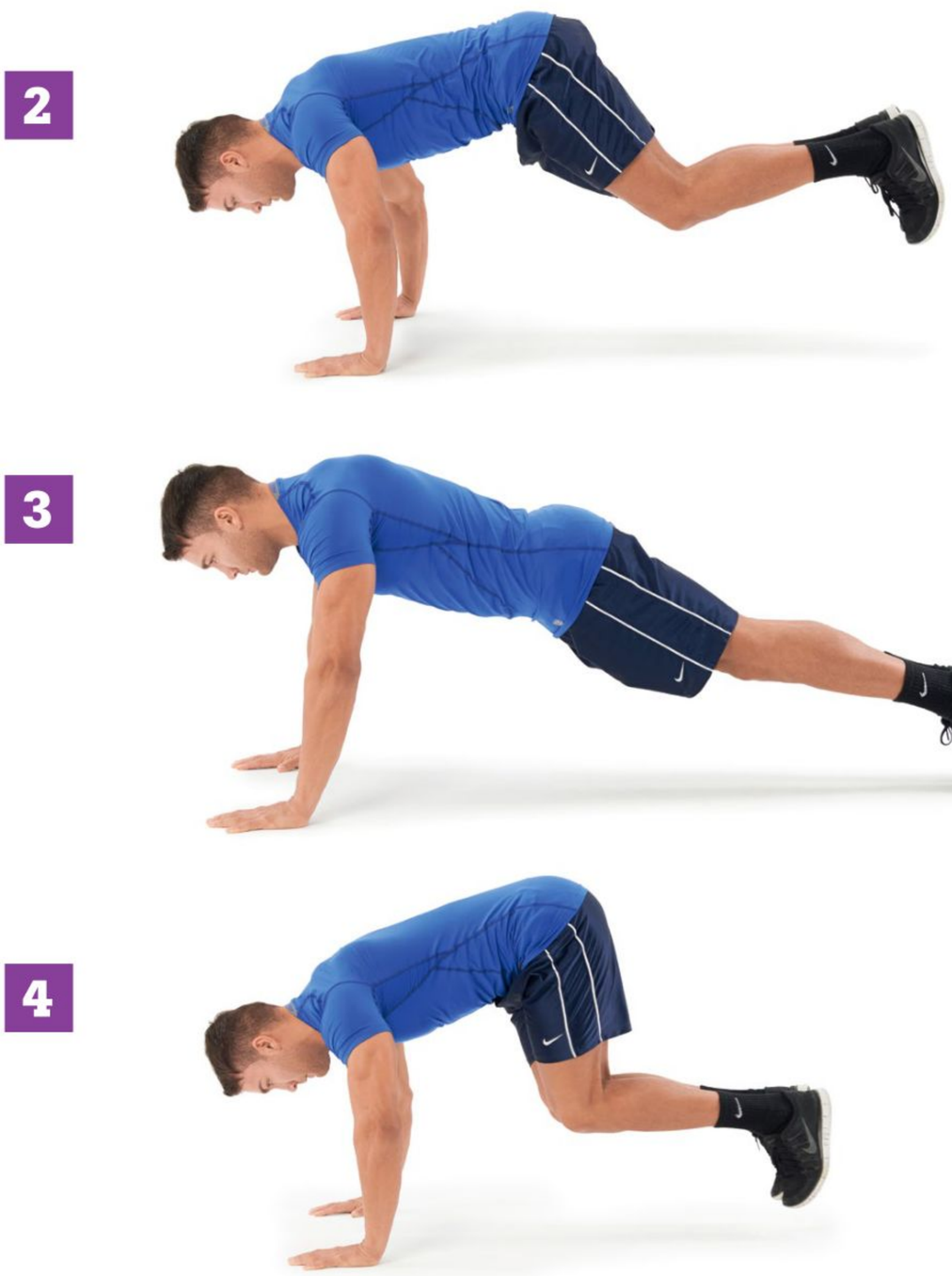
Whatever you choose, total body exercises should be a key part of any Mixed Martial Arts-themed workout.

TOTAL BODY Squat thrusts & burpees

Squat thrusts

Like all of the other exercises in this section, the squat thrust is ideal for those looking for dynamic, tiring exercises that test muscular endurance and provide a tough cardiovascular workout. Primarily, squat thrusts target a number of muscles in the legs, specifically those in and around your thighs, namely the glutes, quads and hamstrings. They also provide additional benefits; as well as making the heart work hard, they also test out the muscular endurance of your arms, chest and, of course, the core. If you want to really push your body, several sets of squat thrusts at a high tempo (providing you've mastered the correct technique) is a great place to start.

1. Get on your hands and knees, with your arms bent a little and your legs pushed forward. Your weight should be equally distributed between your hands and the balls of your feet. Raise your hips and kick your feet back. **2.** Keep your legs together and extend them straight as they move back. At the same time, straighten your arms to stiffen your upper body. By the time your feet land, you should be in a push-up position. **3.** Without pausing, quickly bring your legs back to the starting position. Think of the movement as jumping forwards, but without lifting your hands. Your upper body will move forwards slightly and your arms should bend a little. **4.** Once you're back in the starting position, go back into another squat thrust. Do this until you've completed the required number of repetitions. Alternatively, see how many you can do without stopping – we guarantee that you'll need a serious breather afterwards!



Burpees

Burpees are about the best "total body" exercise around, mixing squat thrusts, push-ups and jumps. Tiring!

1. Stand up tall with your feet shoulder width apart and your hands by your sides. **2.** Get down into a squat thrust starting position, with your hands placed on the ground shoulder width apart in front of you. **3.** Kick your legs out to get into the plank position. **4.** Quickly lower yourself down until your chest is just above the ground. **5.** Push back up to return to the plank position. **6.** Bring your legs forward so that you're back in the squat thrust starting position. **7.** Regain your feet and stand up. As you're standing up, jump up. When you've landed, move straight on to your next repetition.

If you're flexible enough, try to place your knees in line with your arms.

While performing burpees, you shouldn't pause at all – one movement should naturally lead in to the next.

Throw your arms up above your head as you jump. This works out even more muscles, and will give you momentum.

TOTAL BODY Burpee variations & Turkish get up

Burpee jack variation

If you want to make burpees even tougher, try this variation that mimics the movements of jumping jacks. It's a guaranteed fat burner that will get your heart pumping. **1.** Perform a standard burpee up to, and including, the point where you kick back into the plank position. As you're lowering your body down in the push-up phase, kick your legs out to the side. **2.** As you push back up into the plank position, bring your legs back together. Continue the rest of the burpee as described on the previous page, changing the standard jump for a jumping jack. Simple!

1

2

Single leg burpee

Burpees are tough whatever way you do them, though few make your muscles fatigue quicker than this grueling single-leg variation. **1.** Stand up tall with your hands down by your side, but with your right foot raised behind you at knee height and your left foot on the floor. Keep your right foot raised as you get down into a squat thrust position and kick back into a push-up. Perform the push-up on one leg, holding your right leg in its raised position. **2.** Jump back into a squat-thrush position, remembering to keep your right leg raised behind you. **3.** As you stand up, use your standing leg to dynamically jump up in the air. Remember to throw your hands above your head to help power the jump. **4.** Land on your left foot to complete one repetition.

1

2

3

Once you've landed, switch legs before performing the next repetition. Keep alternating throughout the set.

4

Although your raised leg doesn't do anything during the exercise, just holding it up tests out your muscular endurance.

Turkish get up

The Turkish get-up is a little tricky to get right first time, and the movements may not seem all that natural. It's worth persevering with, though – our MMA experts say it's one of the best exercises for those undertaking Mixed Martial Arts training.

1. Lie flat on your back, with your left leg bent at the knee. Pick up a kettlebell by the handle with your left hand and hold it at arm's length above your chest. **2.** Keeping your eyes on the kettlebell, roll onto your right side. **3.** Bend your right knee and tuck it under your left leg, while propping yourself up on your right elbow. **4.** Holding the kettlebell in the same position, use your legs to stand up. Remember to keep the kettlebell held up with your left arm throughout.**5.** Once you've fully stood up, reverse the movements to return to the starting position.

1

2

3

Keep your eyes fixed on the kettlebell at all times. If you've not got a kettlebell, use a dumbbell instead.

4

5

Complete the required number of repetitions with your left arm, before switching and doing the same number with your right arm.

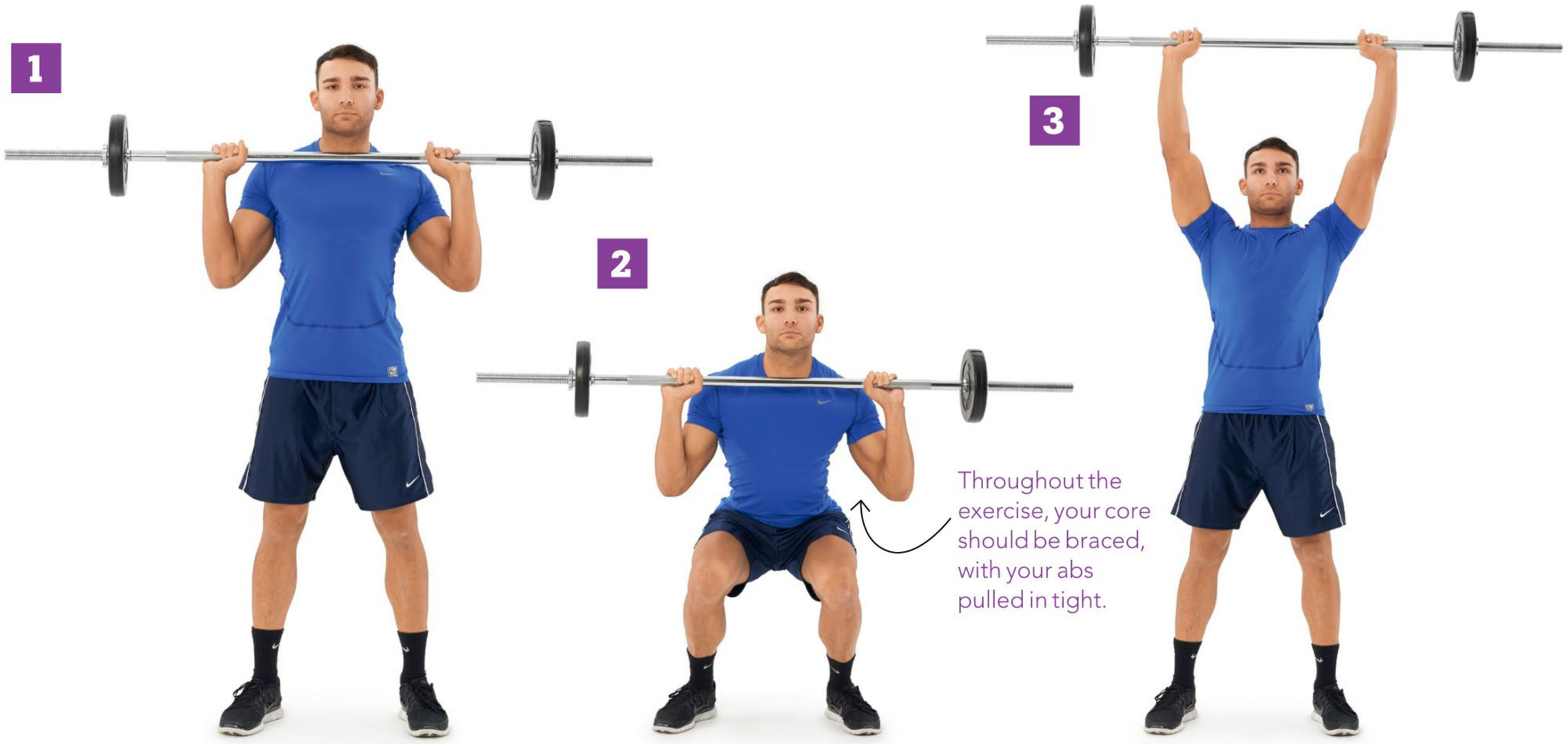
You may not have come across kettlebells before. They're cast iron weights that look like small cannonballs with a handle attached. They're often used for "ballistic" exercises and even the smallest "bells" are pretty darn heavy. Lifting them requires some serious effort, which makes them perfect for training your muscular strength and endurance. They come in different sizes; for this exercise, we'd recommend a lighter kettlebell.

TOTAL BODY Exercises using weights

Front squat push press

You can turn some weighted exercises into dynamic, fat-burning cardiovascular workouts by adding in extra movements. This combination of a half-squat and a front press is a prime example.

1. Stand tall with your feet placed shoulder width apart. Pick up a barbell with an overhand grip, lift it up to your chest. Pull your shoulders back to make room to rest the bar on your chest. **2.** Bend your knees and push your hips back to get into a half squat position. Don't fully squat, just get elasticity into your leg muscles. **3.** Simultaneously straighten your legs and raise the barbell in a straight line over your head. Pause, and slowly return to the starting position to complete one repetition.



Deadlift and row

This exercise, which can be performed with either dumbbells or a barbell, offers a good workout for the hamstrings, shoulders, and the muscles in your back. Speaking of your back, try to keep it naturally arched throughout the exercise to help prevent injury.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and hold them in front of your sides. Stand with your knees slightly bent, and your feet placed shoulder width apart. **2.** Bend at the hips and knees, lowering your torso down until it's almost parallel with the floor. Allow your arms to hang down in front of your knees and shins. **3.** Quickly pull back the dumbbells in a rowing movement until they're to the sides of your chest. Reverse the movement to return to the deadlift position, before standing up straight to complete one repetition.

Explosive left to right push-ups

If you thought push-ups were tough, try this intense variation that requires more explosive power.
1. Get into the plank position, with both hands placed close together on a weights plate. The plate should be in line with your neck. **2.** Lower yourself down until your chest is an inch or two off the floor. **3.** Explosively push up and to the left, so that your hands leave the weights plate. Land with your right hand on the weights plate, and your left hand on the ground. **4.** Lower yourself down as normal. **5.** Explosively push up to the right, so you land with your left hand on the plate, and your right hand on the floor. **6.** Lower yourself down. Continue the explosive left-to-right movement until you've completed a set of repetitions.

High pull

This exercise is superb for building explosive power, something that's key in Mixed Martial Arts.
1. Place a barbell on the floor in front of you and stand with your feet shoulder width apart, up on the balls of your feet. Bend at the knees and push your hips back to get into a squat. Grab hold of the barbell with an overhand grip. **2.** Explosively push up onto your tiptoes while you stand up, at the same time quickly lifting the barbell up to shoulder height. Your hips should move forward and your shoulders back. Return the bar to the ground to complete one repetition.

TOTAL BODY Exercises using weights

Sideways lunge and press

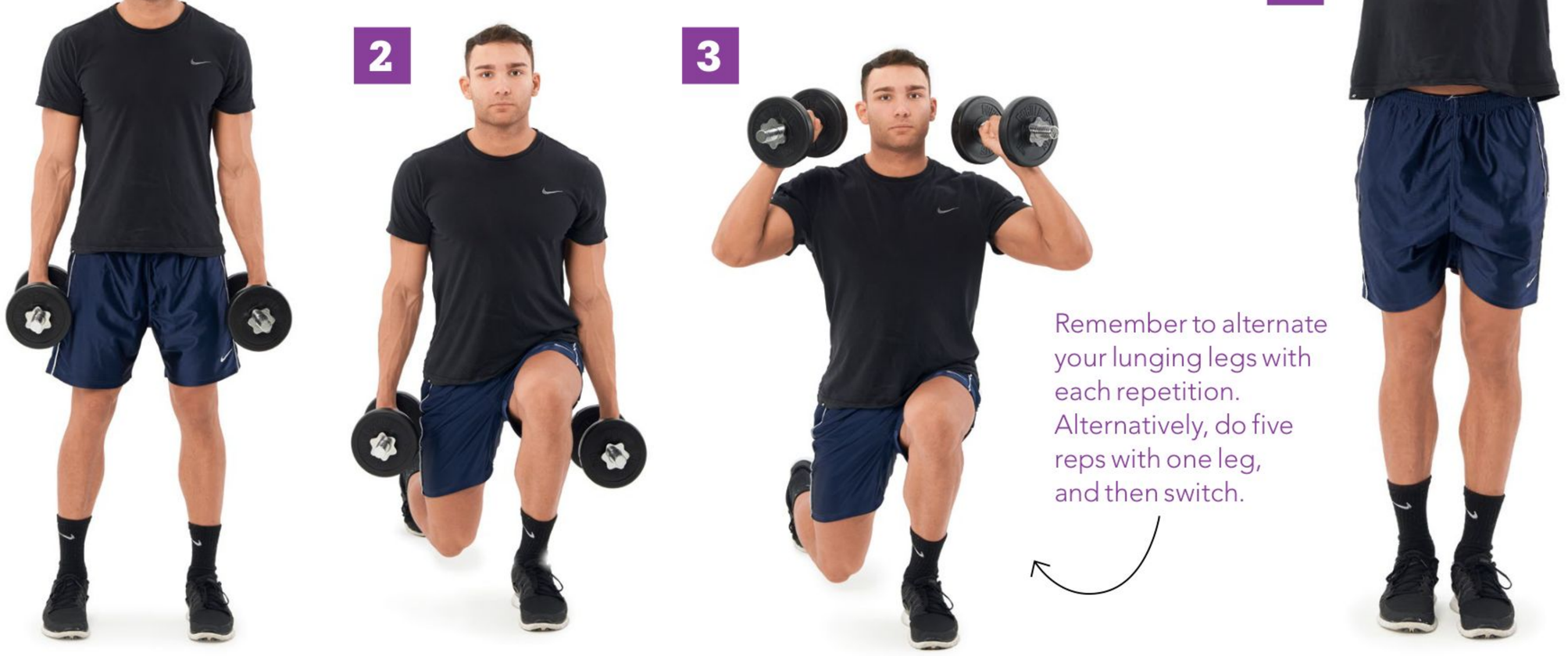
If you want to get the heart pumping and burn some serious calories, this fusion of the alternating dumbbell press and the trusty lunge should do the trick.

1. Stand up tall with your feet placed shoulder width apart. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an overhand grip and hold them at head height.. **2.** Simultaneously lunge to the right, leading with your right foot, while pushing your left arm upwards, straight from your shoulder. At the same time, lower your right arm, so that it hangs by your side. Reverse the movements to return to the starting position. **3.** Simultaneously lunge to the left, while pushing your right arm upwards as if you're performing a shoulder press. At the same time, lower your left arm, so that it hangs at your side. Reverse the movements to return to the starting position. That's one repetition completed.

Reverse lunge and press

Adding lunges to weights moves increases the strain on your heart, guaranteeing a sweaty cardiovascular workout.

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with a hammer grip and let your arms hang by your side. Stand with your feet roughly shoulder width apart. **2.** Step backwards with your right foot and perform a reverse lunge. **3.** As you dip your body down, lift the dumbbells up to your shoulders. **4.** Simultaneously explosively push up to a standing position and raise the dumbbells straight above your shoulders. Slowly bring your arms back down to your sides to complete one repetition.



Remember to alternate your lunging legs with each repetition. Alternatively, do five reps with one leg, and then switch.

Dumbbell snatch

This tiring total body exercise should be performed quickly in one smooth, dynamic movement.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and place a medium to heavy weight dumbbell on the ground in front of your right foot. Bend your knees and hips so that you can grab hold of the dumbbell with your right hand at arm's length, using an overhand grip. **2.** Simultaneously push up with your feet and then lift the dumbbell towards the ceiling. Imagine that you're throwing the dumbbell without letting go of it. **3.** When you have completed the movement, return to the starting position and get ready to go again.

Drive your heels into the ground to provide a solid base and power the "snatch" movement.

Lunge and curl

It's a lunge with arm curls. What's not to like?

1. Pick up a pair of dumbbells with an underhand grip and hold them out to your sides. Stand up tall with your feet placed shoulder width apart. **2.** Lunge forward with your left leg. **3.** As you lunge, raise the dumbbells up towards your shoulders in the standard arm curl movement. Keep the movement smooth and ensure that both arms are moving in tandem. **4.** Stand up, without changing the position of your arms. Lower the dumbbells back down to your sides to complete one repetition.

Change the lunging leg with each repetition, so that you're alternating between left and right.

Try and lunge and curl in one smooth, fluid movement.

THE 12-WEEK MIXED MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING PLAN FOR YOU

Fight fat, shape up and learn the key MMA techniques with our range of recommended workout plans

This three-stage, 12-week training plan has been designed to get you fighting fit, while learning key Mixed Martial Arts techniques. If you follow this plan, you'll fight fat, increase your cardiovascular endurance, build muscle tone and improve your flexibility.

Each of the three stages – beginner, intermediate and advanced – features five different workouts, each designed to work on a different group of muscles, or area of fitness. They should be undertaken in the sequence listed, including any prescribed rest days.

You should follow each training plan for a minimum of four weeks before moving on to the next one. They increase in difficulty and intensity, particularly the Mixed Martial Arts-specific exercises, so you should allow your body the time to adapt before you step up to the next plan.

If you already have a good base level of fitness, then don't simply skip the beginner's plan. Instead, you should increase the number of times you perform each daily exercise circuit. This way, you will get a tougher workout, but also learn the basic Mixed Martial Arts techniques, such as the correct way of punching, elbow striking, and kicking.

The five different workouts listed for each week focus on the following:

UPPER BODY

Exercises that work the chest, shoulders, arms and back, including mixed martial arts punching and striking drills.

LOWER BODY

Exercises that work the leg muscles – particularly the glutes, hamstrings, quads and calves – including mixed martial arts kicking drills, inspired by kickboxing.

CORE & GROUND MOVEMENT

The core – the area around the abdominal muscles, hips and lower back – is of huge importance in MMA. The exercises in these workouts are focused towards increased core stability and flexibility, and include drills to help with mixed martial arts ground phase movements.

ALL-OVER BODY EXERCISES

A mixture of exercises and technique drills to ensure a dynamic, total body workout, aimed at increasing cardiovascular endurance and muscle endurance.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

Bodyweight exercises and weights work to increase your strength and build muscle.

WEEKS 1-4: BEGINNER'S TRAINING PLAN

Learn MMA basics and improve your fitness with this four-week programme

WHAT IT IS

A weekly programme of workouts, designed to work on a different aspect of fitness or group of muscles each day. It offers an introduction to key MMA techniques, as well as bodyweight exercises and weights work.

HOW TO DO IT

- Remember to rest for the prescribed period after any exercise
- Repeat each circuit three times, unless otherwise stated
- Use light dumbbells or barbells to begin with for any weights moves, then add extra weight when you feel that you are ready
- When working on mixed martial arts training drills, concentrate on form and technique. This might mean performing the moves slower than you would like to begin with
- Repeat this weekly cycle for a minimum of four weeks

Day 1: Upper body Warm-up – no rest period between exercises, unless stated

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Shoulder circles	30 seconds	-
Standing breaststroke	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	15	30 seconds
Split jacks	15	30 seconds
Inchworm	5	-

Exercise circuit

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Modified push-up	12-15	1 minute
Burpees	10-12	1 minute
Combination 1 - 2 drill (straight punches)	1 minute	1 minute
Hook combination drill	1 minute	1 minute
Jabs & elbows drill	1 minute	1 minute
Medicine ball slam	10-12	1 minute

Day 2: Legs Warm-up

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Kneel hugs & heel raises	30 seconds	-
Bear Squat	10	-
Lying leg raises	30 seconds	30 seconds
Jumping jacks	15	30 seconds
Split jacks	15	-
Inchworm	5	-

Exercise circuit

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Squat-thrusts	12-15	1 minute
Sideways lunge and press	10-12	1 minute
Bodyweight squat jump	10-12	1 minute
Round knee strike drill	1 minute	1 minute
Roundhouse practice drill	1 minute	1 minute
Jab-kick combination drill	1 minute	1 minute

Day 3: Core & ground movement Warm-up

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Kneel hugs & heel raises	30 seconds	-
Crab turnover	10	-
Lying leg raises	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	15	30 seconds
Split jacks	15	30 seconds
Inchworm	5	-

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Abdominal crunches	15	1 minute
Saxon side bends	10-12	1 minute
Suicide planks	30 seconds-1 minute	1 minute
Dragon walks	30 seconds-1 minute	1 minute
Sit-outs	1 minute	1 minute
Turkish get-up	10 (5 on each side – I.E 5 holding dumbbell in left hand, followed by 5 holding dumbbell in right hand)	1 minute
MMA ground positions (practising the four different positions in sequence)	Top mount – 5 reps Side control – 5 reps Scarf control – 5 reps North south - 5 reps	1 minute 1 minute 1 minute 1 minute

Day 4: Rest Rest is essential. Look after your body and take a day off!

Day 5: Total body exercises & combination moves Warm-up

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Arm circles	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Lying leg raises (straight) Lying leg raises (side)	30 seconds 30 seconds	- -
Bear Squat	10	-
Jumping jacks	15	30 seconds
Split jacks	15	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Burpees	10-12	1 minute
Single-leg burpees	10-12	1 minute
Lunge and curl	10-12	1 minute
Punch, kick & block combination drill	1 minute	1 minute
Combination eight	1 minute	1 minute
Medicine ball slam	10-12	1 minute
Medicine ball squat throw	10-12	1 minute

Day 6: Strength & conditioning workout Warm-up

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Arm circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Lying leg raises (straight) Lying Leg raises (side)	30 seconds 30 seconds	- -
Inchworm	5	-
Squat-thrusts	15	30 seconds
Burpees	15	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Dumbbell squat jump	10-12	30 seconds
Dumbbell step-up	10-12	30 seconds
Bicycle sit-up	10-12	30 seconds
Suicide planks	10-12	30 seconds
Dumbbell bench press	10-12	30 seconds
Dumbbell shoulder press	10-12	30 seconds
Lateral raise	10-12	30 seconds

Day 7: Rest Give your a body break. Tomorrow, you can begin the weekly plan again.

WEEKS 5-8: INTERMEDIATE TRAINING PLAN

Step up your fitness regime and learn more complex MMA techniques with this second four-week programme

WHAT IT IS

A slightly more advanced weekly programme of workouts, featuring tougher exercises, trickier Mixed Martial Arts moves and more intense sessions.

HOW TO DO IT

- Rest for the prescribed period after any exercise. Notice that in some instances, the rest periods have been reduced, in order to guarantee a tougher, fast-paced workout
- Repeat each circuit three times, unless otherwise stated
- Use medium-heavy dumbbells or barbells to begin with for any weights moves, then add extra weight when you feel you're ready
- Perform any MMA technique drills and moves previously featured (such as some of the punching and kicking drills) at a higher tempo and intensity, concentrating on quick hands, arms, legs and feet
- When working on new mixed martial arts moves, particularly those on day 3 (core and ground movement), take your time to ensure that you get the technique right, before stepping up the intensity in later weeks
- Repeat this weekly cycle for a minimum of four weeks

Day 1: Upper body Warm-up – no rest period between exercises, unless stated

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Shoulder circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	20	30 seconds
Split jacks	20	30 seconds
Inchworm	5	-
Crab turnover	5	-

Exercise circuit

Exercise	Repetitions/time	Rest period
Spiderman push-up	15	30 seconds
Burpee-jack	15	30 seconds
Medicine ball slam	15	30 seconds
Hook combination drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Jabs & elbows drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Combination eight drill	1 minute	1 minute

Day 2: Legs Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Lying leg raises	30 seconds	-
Lying leg raises (side) Lying leg raises (straight)	30 seconds 30 seconds	- -
Crab turnover	5	-
Kneel hugs & heel raises	30 seconds	-
Inchworm	5	-
Jumping jacks	20	30 seconds
Split jacks	20	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Squat-thrusts	15	30 seconds
Sideways lunge and press	15	30 seconds
Barbell squat	15	30 seconds
Roundhouse practice drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Front kick practice (alternate between front kick and switch front kick)	1 minute (30 seconds of each kick)	30 seconds
Jab-kick combination drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Punch, kick and block combination drill	1 minute	1 minute

Day 3: Core & ground movement Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Crab turnover	10	-
Inchworm	10	-
Lying leg raises	10 (5 each side)	-
Bear squat	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	15	30 seconds
Split jacks	15	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Classic sit-up	20	30 seconds
Bicycle sit-up	20	30 seconds
Mountain climber	20	30 seconds
Dragon walks	1 minute	30 seconds
Shoulder roll	1 minute	30 seconds
Clockface drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Half clock and reverse	1 minute	1 minute

Day 4: Rest

Day 5: Total body exercises & combination moves Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Shoulder circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Lying leg raises (side) Lying leg raises (straight)	30 seconds 30 seconds	- -
Knee hugs & heel raises	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	15	30 seconds
Split jacks	15	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Scorpion push-up	20	30 seconds
Bicycle sit-up	20	30 seconds
Turkish get-up	20 (10 on each hand)	30 seconds
Combination eight	1 minute (concentrate on quick hands)	30 seconds
1-2 combination (straight punches)	1 minute (quick hands)	30 seconds
Punch, kick & block combination drill	1 minute (quick hands/feet)	30 seconds
Hip escape drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Leg high sit-outs with push-ups	1 minute	30 seconds

Day 6: Strength & Conditioning Workout Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Arm circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Lying leg raises (straight) Lying leg raises (side)	30 seconds 30 seconds	- -
Crab turnover	10	-
Bear squat	10	-
Squat-thrusts	20	30 seconds
Burpees	20	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Barbell jump squat	15	30 seconds
Barbell step-up	15	30 seconds
Walking gecko push-up	15	30 seconds
Dip	10	30 seconds
Pull-up	10	30 seconds
Barbell shoulder press	15	30 seconds
Triceps extension and bench press	10	30 seconds
Cuban press	10	30 seconds

Day 7: Rest

WEEKS 9-12: ADVANCED TRAINING PLAN

Push your body to the limits in the third and final part of our 12-week Mixed Martial Arts workout programme

Roundhouse practice drill - pg22

WHAT IT IS

The third and final part of our 12-week training plan, featuring even tougher workouts and more advanced MMA moves. Due to the advanced nature, this plan requires a much higher degree of flexibility than the rest of the programme.

HOW TO DO IT

- Ensure you do the warm-up first, before moving on to the exercise circuit
- Rest for the prescribed period after any exercise. Notice that in some instances, the rest periods have been reduced, in order to guarantee a tougher and fast-paced workout
- Repeat each circuit three times, unless otherwise stated
- Use heavy dumbbells or barbells for any weights moves
- Perform any MMA technique drills and moves previously featured at a higher tempo and intensity, concentrating on quick hands, arms, legs and feet
- When working on new Mixed Martial Arts moves, particularly those on day 3 (core and ground movement), take your time to ensure that you get the technique right, before stepping up the intensity in later weeks
- Repeat this weekly cycle for a minimum of four weeks

Day 1: Upper body Warm-up – no rest period between exercises, unless stated

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Shoulder circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/triceps stretch	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	20	30 seconds
Split jacks	20	30 seconds
Inchworm	5	-
Crab turnover	5	-

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Diamond push-up	15	30 seconds
Single-leg burpee	15	30 seconds
Medicine ball slam	15	No rest between moves, 1 minute at the end
Medicine ball squat throw	15	No rest between moves, 1 minute at the end
Hook combination drill	1 minute (high hand speed)	30 seconds
Jabs & elbows drill	1 minute (high hand speed)	30 seconds
Combination eight drill	1 minute (high hand speed)	30 seconds
Dip	15	30 seconds
Pull-up	15	1 minute

Day 2: Legs Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Arm crossover/triceps stretch	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Lying leg raises	30 seconds	-
Crab turnover	10	-
Bear squat	30 seconds	-
Kneel hugs & heel raises	30 seconds	-
Inchworm	5	-
Jumping jacks	25	30 seconds
Split jacks	25	30 seconds

Exercise circuit
Perform each of the exercises for the prescribed repetitions, in sequence. Repeat the sequence/circuit three times

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Squat-thrusts	20	30 seconds
Reverse lunge and press	20	30 seconds
Explosive bodyweight squat jump	20	30 seconds
Duck walks	30 seconds	30 seconds
Roundhouse practice drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Round knee strike drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Jab-kick combination drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Punch, kick and block combination drill	1 minute	1 minute

Day 3: Core & ground movement Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Bent over reach to the sky	30 seconds	-
Crab turnover	10	-
Inchworm	10	-
Lying leg raises (side) Lying leg raises (straight)	10 (5 each side) 10 (5 each side)	- -
Bear Squat	30 seconds	-
Jumping jacks	20	30 seconds
Split jacks	20	30 seconds

Exercise circuit
Follow the exercises below, ensuring you take the rest periods recommended

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Abdominal crunches	20	30 seconds
Bicycle sit-up	20	30 seconds
Leg high sit-outs	20	30 seconds
Hip escape drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Suicide planks	1 minute	30 seconds
Clockface drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Arm lock transition drill	1 minute	30 seconds
Knee on belly drill	1 minute	1 minute

Day 4: Rest

Day 5: Total body exercises & combination moves Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Shoulder circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/triceps stretch	30 seconds	-
Lying leg raises (side) Lying leg rises (straight)	30 seconds 30 seconds	- -
Knee hugs & heel raises	30 seconds	-
Crab turnover	10	-
Jumpin jacks	20	30 seconds
Burpee-jacks	20	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Explosive left-to-right push-ups	20	30 seconds
Front squat push-press	20	30 seconds
Bicycle sit-up	1 minute	30 seconds
Turkish get-up	20 (10 on each hand)	30 seconds
Combination eight	1 minute (concentrate on quick hands)	30 seconds
Roundhouse practice drill	1 minute (quick hands)	30 seconds
Punch, kick & block combination drill	1 minute (quick hands/feet)	30 seconds
Half clock & reverse	1 minute	30 seconds

Day 6: Strength & conditioning workout Warm-up

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Neck rotations	30 seconds	-
Arm circles	30 seconds	-
Arm crossover/tricep stretch	30 seconds	-
Over the shoulder stretch	5 on each shoulder (10 in total)	-
Lying leg raises (side) Lying leg raises (straight)	10 (5 on each side) 10 (5 on each leg)	- -
Crab turnover	10	-
Bear squat	10	-
Squat-thrusts	20	30 seconds
Burpees	20	30 seconds

Exercise circuit

Exercise	No. of Reps/time	Rest period
Saxon side bends	20	30 seconds
Barbell step-up	15	30 seconds
Diamond push-up	20	30 seconds
Dip	15	30 seconds
Pull-up	15	30 seconds
Ballistic row	15	30 seconds
Triceps extension	15	30 seconds
Cuban press	15	30 seconds

Day 7: Rest

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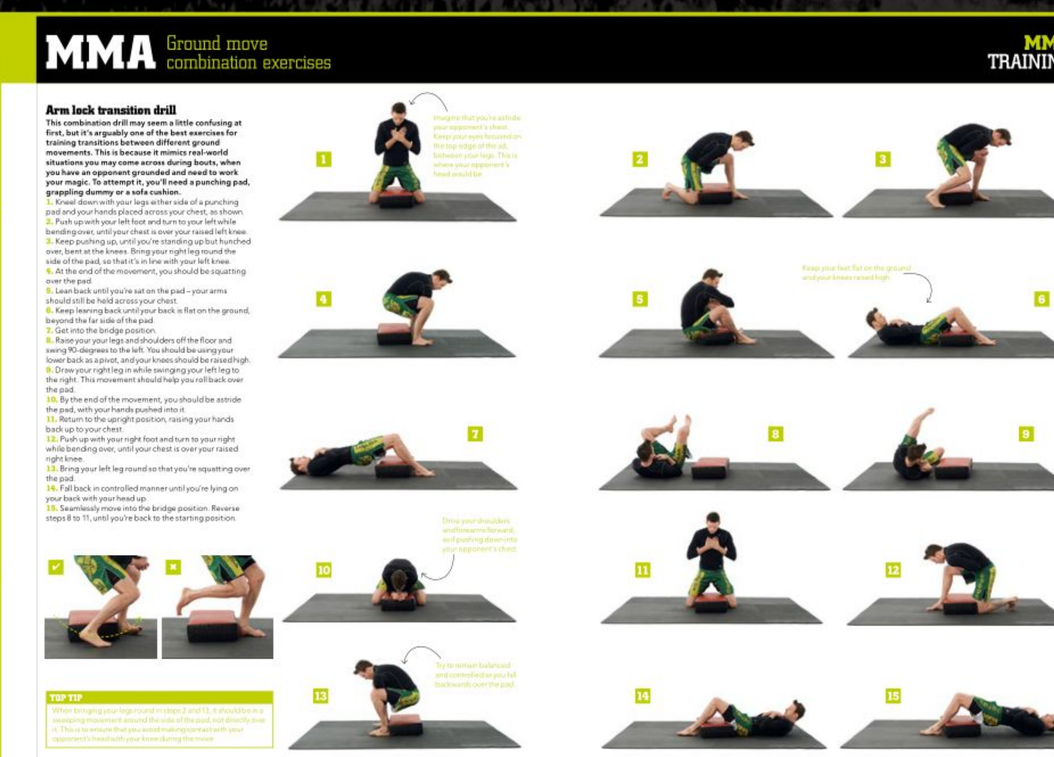

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