

The Best

COMBAT

ATHLETE

**Exercises
You've Never
Heard Of**



**By Nick
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Mad Scientist Combat Exercise #1:

Develop DEADLY Ground-Based Core Strength and Punching Power...

The Problem: You're on your back, on the ground, and you need to get the other guy off you...and deal some damage at the same time...

Ground fighting is a HUGE part of MMA (and wrestling, and many other martial arts). You need to train your body to exert massive force even in the most vulnerable of positions, such as flat on your back with the other guy on top of you.

This can turn a potential weakness (and/or defeat!) into a STRENGTH.

The Solution: Feet Anchored One-Arm Dumbbell Floor Press

This exercise is a One-Arm Dumbbell Floor Press done with your legs wrapped around a pole or beam. When pressing like this, you have to use your core muscles and adductors to oppose the force of the dumbbell press and lock your body into the movement.

Once you see it in action, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. If you're an MMA fighter, this is one you HAVE to try. It'll develop strength and power and train your ability to USE that strength and power when you're on your back covering up with your legs locked around your opponent.

To do this one, you'll need a solid pole or object (I'm using the upright beam of my power rack) and a dumbbell. I'm using an 85 lb dumbbell in the pictures - pick something you can easily do for one-arm dumbbell bench press the first time you try this one. You can move up quickly from there once you get an idea of how the exercise works.

Now get set with your butt right up close to the pole and your feet on either side of it. Lay down then slide your butt right up close to the pole. Next, lock your legs onto the pole by crossing your feet.

When doing this one, I like to have my "working side" leg hooked over top of the other leg, e.g. pressing with the right arm, lock the right leg over the left, around the pole.

Now reach over and grab the dumbbell with both hands (this isn't the exercise...just getting the weight into position).



Hold the dumbbell on your chest then get it into your right hand.



Bring your arm down and to the side and set your upper arm on the floor.



Clamping your legs HARD around the post then get ready to press. Your other arm is out to the side for balance.

Press the dumbbell to lockout. This is the hard part and the reason why you should start light. It'll take some serious tension in your adductors and lower abs to keep your body from rolling over while pressing the dumbbell up.



Do 4 to 6 reps on one side then lower the dumbbell to your chest and switch hands. Switch your feet over at the same time so your left leg is locked over top.



Now get the dumbbell off to the side and go again on the other side.



That's the exercise! Set the dumbbell on the ground when you're done.

The Bottom Line:

This is the PERFECT exercise for developing ground-fighting strength for MMA. You'll be developing power when flat on your back with your legs wrapped around something and you'll learn how to USE that power.

If you're not an MMA fighter, this is also a great core and adductor exercise in general. It's not going to hit your chest incredibly hard because you're forced to use a lighter weight than you could use for normal pressing, but chest development isn't really the goal of this one anyway...it's ground-based power development.

Next Exercise

Exercise #2 of 5
Double Dumbbell
Swings





Mad Scientist Combat Exercise #2:

A Killer Dumbbell Swing Exercise That Will Add Serious POWER To Your Kicks...

The Problem: Your kicks make contact but they have no IMPACT behind them.

To develop a powerful kick that'll do major damage, you need to train the core to deliver and deal with the massive rotational and impact forces involved. Otherwise, you're just flailing your leg around and annoying the other guy until he puts you on the ground.

The Solution: Double Dumbbell Swings

This may sound a bit strange, but with this exercise you're essentially going to be doing a cross-country skiing pole motion with your arms while holding dumbbells in your hands. Sounds easy, right? On paper, sure. In reality, you're going to be in for a shock...

First think about where the tension from the opposing momentum of the dumbbells moving in opposite directions is going through: the core.

As one dumbbell is swinging down, the other is swinging up and it falls to the deep muscles of the core to stabilize the spine and body and to also provide muscular force to help keep those dumbbells swinging.

This opposing torque on the abs results in TREMENDOUS elastic/plyometric workload on the deep muscles of the core, especially when both dumbbells are at the bottom of their swings and heading back up. All the momentum of those dumbbells swinging is now going to go directly through your core.

How To Do It:

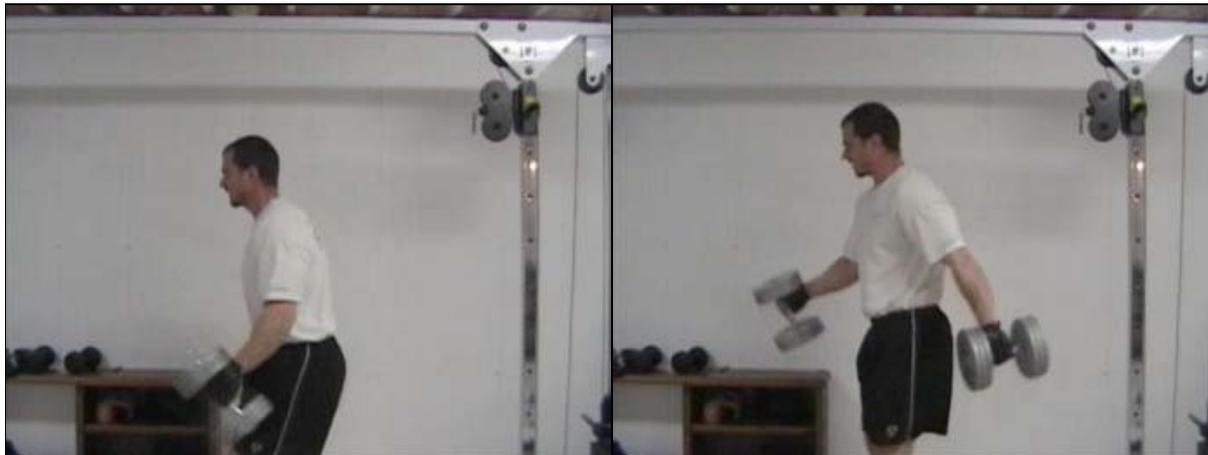
First, pick up two dumbbells, one in each hand, and stand up straight. Start fairly light (use approximately what you can do for 10 to 12 reps on the dumbbell curl) - you will be working your way up to heavier weights as you get stronger and more experienced with the exercise.

Keep your feet close together (a few inches apart at the most). If your feet are set too wide, the dumbbells will contact your thighs at the bottom of the movement. Keeping the feet closer together also forces the abs to do more of the stabilizing as your body can't rely on the legs to absorb as much of the momentum of the swinging dumbbells.

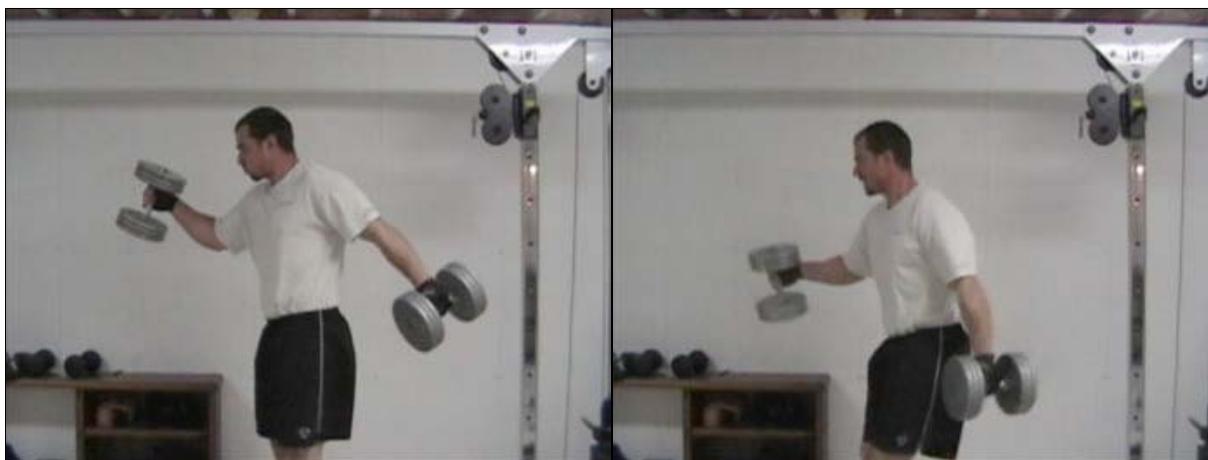
In order to get a good swing going, this exercise will require a carefully timed dip in the knees.

So on your very first rep, start by dipping slightly in the knees then popping back up. As you pop back up, use this momentum to start your right dumbbell swinging forward and up and your left

dumbbell swinging back and up.



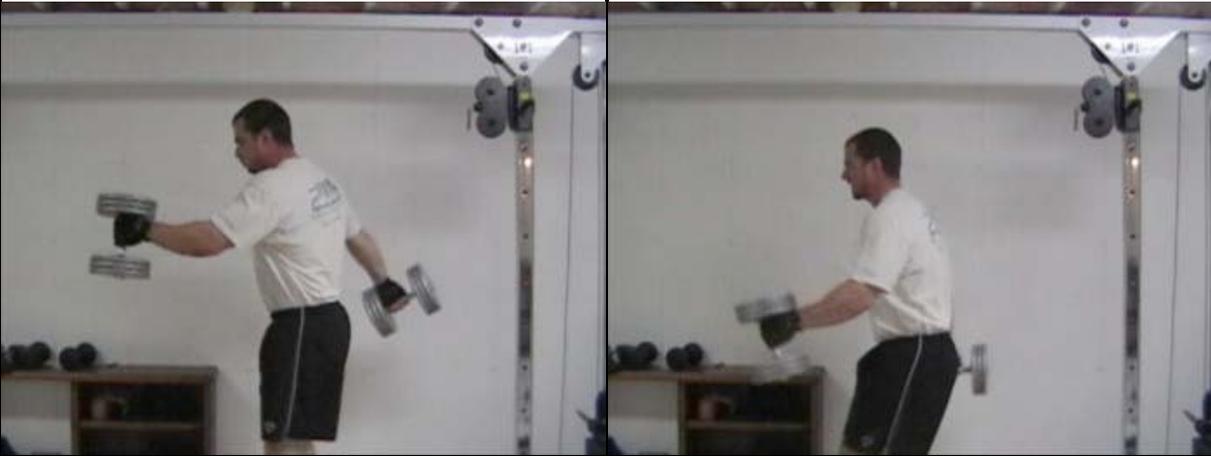
As the dumbbells start to come back down, dip your knees down again. As your left hand swings forward and your right hand swings back, pop back up strongly again.



You are using your legs to add momentum to the dumbbell swings, getting them up higher and giving you the ability to use heavier dumbbells.

Repeat this dip and pop up EVERY time the dumbbells come down to the bottom and start to come back up.





As you do this exercise, try not to let your torso twist back and forth much. Do your best to keep your shoulders and hips square and unmoving so that all the torque goes through the core and so that you don't get any sharp twisting movements in the spine. Your shoulders WILL move somewhat (there is no getting around it) but by trying to keep still, you will minimize the movement.

Keep your arms rigid and locked into position as you swing the dumbbells up and down. For height, you want to aim for about shoulder height in front of you and a little lower with the dumbbell behind you. Keep control of the weight and your torso throughout the movement - no wild swinging. Exhale forcefully each time you pop up (imagine as though you're trying to blow the dumbbell forward).

If the dumbbells are too light and you find the exercise is not challenging your abs after a few reps, increase the weight.

Keep going for as long as you can with good form. When you can't swing the dumbbells very high or you feel your core strength starting to give out (i.e. your shoulders and hips start twisting too much for your core to control), stop the swinging and set the dumbbells down.

At this point, you're going to be huffing and puffing like crazy - this exercise works not only your entire upper body, but also involves your lower body strongly each time you use your legs to pop up.

So how heavy should you go with this exercise? That will depend on how strong your core is and how heavy your dumbbells go! You can build up to some very good weights with this exercise - I've personally gone up to a pair of 85 lb dumbbells.

The more weight you can safely use with this exercise, the stronger and more powerful your entire core area is going to get and the harder you're going to be able to deliver your kicks.

The Bottom Line:

The Double Dumbbell Swing is one of the powerful core-power exercises you can do. It's extremely practical and VERY functional, especially for improving kicking power and core explosiveness.

Exercise #3 of 5

Next Exercise

**Kneeling One-Arm
DB Snatch for
Explosiveness**





Mad Scientist Combat Exercise #3:

Improve Your Upper Body Explosiveness in "Less Than Ideal" Body Positions...

The Problem: You need to develop explosive power in the upper body AND in awkward positions...

Upper body explosiveness is something we can BOTH agree on that everybody needs more of. Not an issue there.

However, one of the MAJOR holes that I see in fight training is most time is spent doing strength and explosive work in IDEAL body positions. When you're in the middle of a fight, you know you're going to end up in some strange positions. You will RARELY be set up in that perfect body position that you do most of your explosive training in.

You need to train to exert explosive force when your body is NOT in the perfect position to do it.

The Solution: Kneeling One-Arm Dumbbell Snatch

The One-Arm Dumbbell Snatch is a very easy-to-learn explosive exercise. It has a short learning curve compared to a barbell snatch, making it a great exercise for those who want to build power but aren't interested in taking the time to learn Olympic lifting (or who don't have bumper plates so you can just drop the bar after the snatch or who don't have the coaching to learn it properly).

This version of the dumbbell snatch is done from one knee in order to remove the majority of the lower body involvement and just focus on upper body and lower back explosiveness. That's the "less than ideal" position I was talking about before.

You're going to be doing the snatch from the ground to directly overhead while staying in the kneeling position. This will train your muscles to EXPLODE, no matter what position you're in.

Start with a moderate weight dumbbell...I'm using a 65 lb dumbbell in the demo here. Drop down to one knee, lean forward and grab the dumbbell with an overhand grip (palm facing backwards) with your other hand on your knee (to brace your upper body and provide a little more explosiveness by also pushing with your arm).



Now explode the dumbbell off the ground using upper back, lower back and arm power. Even though your lower body isn't really involved it should still stay tight.



Power the dumbbell up to the overhead lockout position in one explosive movement (if you don't quite get it all the way up, you can finish with a partial press to get it there to full lockout but the goal is one powerful movement).



Set the weight down then switch position so you're using the other arm. The movement is exactly the same.





Remember, this is an EXPLOSIVE movement so get that dumbbell off the ground with as much force as you've got!

The Bottom Line:

Building power that can be used in ANY position is critically important for being a complete fighter. You'll rarely, if ever, be in the perfect position to exert maximum power, so use this exercise to train yourself to be explosive no matter what your body position is.

Exercise #4 of 5

Next Exercise

**In-Set Superset of
DB Split Squats
With Forward Lean**





Mad Scientist Combat Exercise #4:

Hip Strength and Power Will Give You a ROCK-SOLID Foundation to Punch, Kick and Throw From...

The Problem: If you've got weak hips, you'll NEVER be able to put maximum force into your strikes and throws

Hip training isn't nearly as glamorous as core training is but it's every bit as important. Because even if you've got a strong core, without solid hip strength, you're not going to be able fully transfer that force from the lower body in through the core.

The Solution: In-Set Superset of Dumbbell Split Squats With Forward Leans

The In-Set Superset is a technique allows you to combine two different exercises that share a similar start or end position into one set by alternating reps of each. It's an incredibly effective training technique.

In this case, both the exercises we're going to use will work the same general muscles (quads, hams, glutes, lower back), just in a different fashion.

For this exercise, you're going to be combining a dumbbell split squat with what is essentially a stiff-legged deadlift with one leg forward (the forward lean). Your leg and foot position stays the same the whole way through...you just alternate between reps of one exercise then the other then you switch legs and do it again.

This is an excellent exercise for strengthening not only the hips but the entire lower body and lower back as well...MAJOR bang for your buck with this one.

Start with the two dumbbells on the floor in the bottom of the lunge position. You'll want a moderate stance on the lunge...your back foot not too far back or too far forward. Once you do the exercise for a rep or two, you'll know where it feels right for you.

Your front foot should be set in between the two dumbbells.



Bring your back knee off the ground then lean forward and grab the dumbbells. Keep your core TIGHT as you do this.



Now come up to a vertical torso position, which is the top position of the split squat.



Do a rep of the split squat. It's important to note the difference between a split squat and a lunge...with a lunge, you start with your feet together and step forward then come all the way back up. In a split squat, you start with your legs split already and just lower yourself down then back up. I find the split squat to be a lot less stress on the knees than a lunge as you don't need to stop the forward momentum of the weights.



So next come back up to the full standing position.



Now lean forward again, lightly touching the ends of the dumbbells to the floor. Pretty much all the tension is going to be on your front leg and lower back here. Keep your core tight and do your best not to let your lower back round over.



Come back up to vertical.



Once you've done your reps on one side (about 6 to 8 reps total is good, which is 3 or 4 on each exercise), switch to the other leg.



Come down into the split squat.



Then come back up.



Then move into the forward lean.



Then back up.



Repeat for 6 to 8 reps on that side.

And you're done! Set the dumbbells down on the floor.

The Bottom Line:

This is an extremely powerful exercise for targeting the hips, and pretty much the entire lower body as well as the lower back. This exercise will develop rock-solid hip strength that will help you deliver more powerful kicks, punches and throws.



Exercise # 5 **100 Reps of** **Inverted** **Rows for Muscular** **Endurance**





Mad Scientist Combat Exercise #5:

Power and Strength Are Useless If You Don't Have the Muscular ENDURANCE to Match...

The Problem: Most fights last more than 4 seconds...you need STAYING power to go the distance

Unless you're like Mike Tyson in his prime, you're going to need muscular endurance to match the power and strength you're developing with the other exercises you're doing here.

Proper training for muscular endurance will develop the "slow twitch" endurance-oriented muscle fibers that are designed for that purpose. It will also help your body better learn how to deal with Lactic Acid build-up (the burn) so you can FUNCTION when most people's body's would simply shut down.

The Solution: 100 Rep Set of Inverted Rows

To do an Inverted Row, you essentially set your body under a bar then pull your torso up towards the bar, rowing your upper body up as the resistance rather than rowing a weight up towards you.

We're going to work this exercise with using a 100 rep protocol...which is actually a lot worse than it sounds...

Now, there is a point to doing 100 rep sets, beyond working the muscles directly (those slow-twitch muscle fibers I mentioned) and that is to develop the microcirculation in your muscles...high reps push a large volume of blood through the tiny blood vessels in your muscles called capillaries.

When this volume of blood gets pushed through for long periods, the capillaries can burst and create NEW pathways, improving circulation to the muscle fibers.

THAT is what we're looking for. Because these new pathways mean more surface area for your muscle cells to get oxygen and nutrients and expel waste, this helps your body better deal with Lactic Acid build-up, improving your overall muscular endurance.

You are changing the physiology of your body to better support muscular endurance and performance.

So here's how to do it...

Set a bar in the rack (or on the Smith machine, or find something you can grab onto) at about chest height.

Grab the bar with a moderately wide overhand grip then set your feet a little forward underneath the bar. Lean back and keep your body straight and stiff.



Now row your body up towards the bar.



This is purposefully easy to start with.

The high bar placement means you're not putting much resistance on your back on each rep, which is what's going to allow you to do a LOT of reps before lactic acid and fatigue kick in.

The goal here is to try and get as many reps as you possibly can...ideally 60 or more on the first go before you have to take a short break.

If you make it to 100 reps, GREAT! Next time you do this 100 rep set, lower the bar position a few inches to increase the resistance.

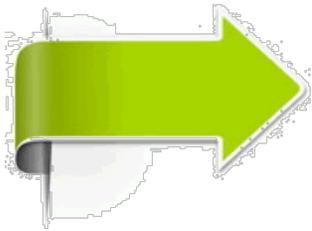
If you don't get 100 reps straight through, when you've hit as many as you can, take 10 seconds rest then crank out as many more reps as you can. Repeat this "reps then 10 sec rest" cycle until you hit 100 total reps.

Do one set of this at the end of every workout and you'll start seeing big changes in your endurance.

The Bottom Line:

This exercise is not particularly demanding on the body/nervous system since the resistance is so light but it has serious potential to improve the endurance of your back muscles which is critical in a fight lasting more than a few minutes.

And yeah, when done right, 100 reps sets are brutal...just thought I'd throw that in there in case you were thinking it was going to be a breeze...



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