



The BEST Methods to Prepare for Combat

So, we all think we know the most effective methods to prepare for MMA. We hear it all the time, “Distance running does nothing for improving your performance as a combat athlete”.

Then what happens? We see Fedor Emelianenko performing distance running. We see every Muay Thai camp in Thailand running 10 km (6.2 miles) in the morning and another 5 – 8 km in the evening.





We see Matt Hughes running daily and Renato “Babalu” Sobral running a mountain for over 20 minutes.

Where is the energy system training? Where is the power training? Why is Rich Franklin shown performing a bodybuilding workout yet he bull dozed through countless opponents until Anderson Silva.

It can get confusing, and to be honest, I am more often confused than understanding! This is the process of learning, and, in my learning through personal experiences, discussions with fighters, coaches and watching fighters train, I realize that one of the most effective methods for energy system training, strength work and power training often times comes from training in MMA itself.

The Grappling is very much strength oriented: maximal efforts against a resisting load (the opponent) all through various movements such as pushing, pulling, level changes and rotation.

The power / speed training comes from skill work performed at high speeds and maximal exertion.

The conditioning and muscular endurance comes from the sparring and the extended times / long practices.

This is why you can deadlift 500 lbs and get your ass kicked by someone half your size who can't even deadlift 250 lbs!

Devil's Advocate

Now that we're both thinking and analyzing which is the most efficient way to improve conditioning for combat, we must look at a few points:

- 1) When we spar (BJJ, wrestling, MMA, etc), as much as we want it to be 100 % exertion, it may not be full exertion
- 2) When you incorporate barbell complexes (or complexes with any tool) for your energy system work, you **MUST** exert at high intensities to move the weight.
- 3) Complexes mixed in with sprints can make for excellent energy system work. When we grapple or do stand up sparring, we might back away from our opponent, rest for a few seconds in a certain position, etc
- 4) When we sprint, or perform a kettlebell, barbell, sandbag, or stone complex – we have no places to rest! This is where the benefits of complexes and energy system work come into greater benefit, more so than just sparring alone can do!

Let's go back to my senior year in high school. My training partner and I were pretty bad, so I thought. We were built like studs and we regularly dominated our training partners. Then, this "old" guy walks in and our Coach introduces him.

I don't remember his name, but, I remember our Coach stating he took 4th in the state in 1974 and he was here to see if he still had what it takes to hang with the young guns.

He looked like a REAL blue collar guy, and he was wearing an OLD wrestling singlet with his t shirt underneath. His hands were big, his legs were solid, his body looked like that of a lumberjack. Still, I figured since he last wrestled before I was born, we were gonna kick his ass all over the place.

We were 17, this guy was in his mid 30's, to us, that was old. Now, I am approaching my mid 30's, and I'm not feeling old one bit, in fact, I'm feeling meaner and stronger than ever. I'm sure this guy was feeling the same thing.

He was about 175, and my partner and I wrestled in the 152 and 160 lb class. His grip was freakishly strong. Once he grabbed our wrists we felt the pain. His tie up controlled our entire body, and when he went for a takedown, he didn't stop until he put us down.

I remember watching him spin behind my partner, my partner tried to stand up and he got lifted so high and slammed so hard I even felt it!

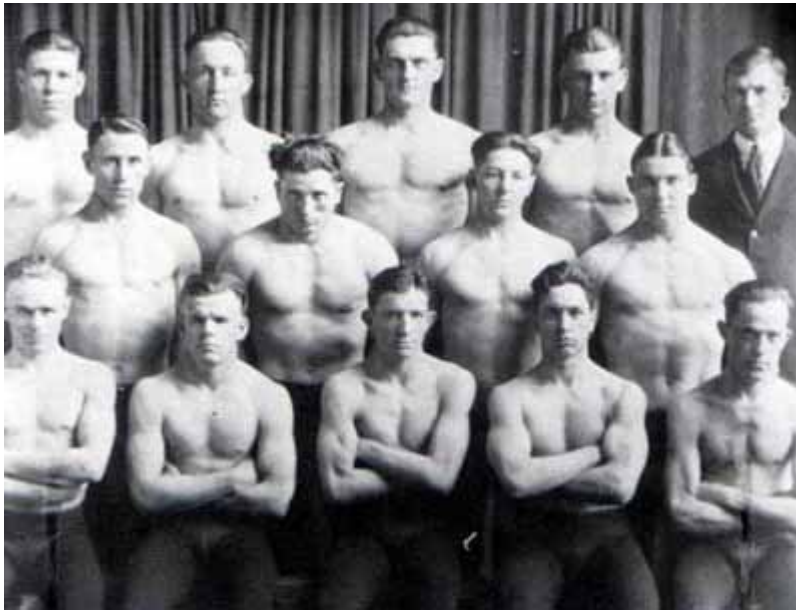
His performance reminded me of The Ultimate Fighter Wrestling sensation, Matt Hamill: Brutally strong and powerful, dominating in every position, but mainly strong and powerful from wrestling and farm boy training, NOT training in the weight room.



When the beating ended, he spoke to us about his training in high school and his attitude. He said, over and over, “If you’re gonna do anything, do it with Conviction!” He repeated that sentence over and over to us.

He spoke about how he never sat out or rested during the drills when they performed round robin. He stayed after practice to do extra live wrestling or drilling non stop for the length of a wrestling match plus overtime.

Did he lift weights? No. Back then, the high school kids had jobs working at local lumber yards, or working for their hard nosed Dad. He did tons of calisthenics like pull ups, push ups, jumping rope and he even showed us how to do handstand push ups.



1923 Oklahoma State wrestling team.

Note the rugged physiques of the 1923 OSU wrestling team, much of which came through lots of wrestling and lots of calisthenics!

I was in shock but as a kid, this “training” style never hit home until I got injured so often. Today, 13 years later, this practice hits home more. It shows me the carry over that grappling has to getting someone stronger (brutally strong), more powerful and in excellent condition.

In the end, it comes down to balancing your training, and looking what needs work and focusing your energies on your weak areas.

In the end, training is great, but, if your skill is not up to snuff, you're in big trouble. We took an ass whoopin' from a guy who was not better than we were, but, he had that REAL Man strength that never quit, and it all came from using his own body, and lots of wrestling.

As I finish this article, I still hold that vision in my head as he locked his hands around my partners waist and lifted him and slammed him down as if he was 50 lbs! It was freaky to say the least, and now, the quest for the optimal training methods for MMA continues.

Perhaps the question is not which methods don't work, but how can we put together a plan that works best for the individual, and that might mean a mixture of all methods, even the "old" methods we often discount as non-beneficial.

Let the quest continue!

For more innovative articles from The Underground, 24 – 7 access to our ego free, members only forum and a bad ass Underground video library, visit <http://UndergroundStrengthCoach.com>, the most innovative strength and conditioning web site in the world!

Top notch resources for Combat Athletes can also be found at:

<http://KettlebellsforCombat.com>

<http://MMAexperts.com>

<http://UltimateCombatKit.com>

****USC Members: Check our Underground store for discounts on these products!**