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S&C coach to 15
UFC, WEC, Bellator
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fighters, each issue
he presents his best
training tips



THE 5 FOUNDATIONS OF STRENGTH

Ensure your MMA S&C program is firing on all cylinders by following this simple guide to total-body conditioning



To succeed in every aspect of your life you need strength, endurance and mental awareness – especially in MMA.

Around 12 years ago I first heard a functional strength training seminar, presented by my friend and colleague Juan Carlos Santana, called the ‘Four Pillars of Human Movement.’

It focused on the ‘four’ basic human movement patterns we use, often unknowingly, in our everyday life: locomotion, level change, rotation, and pushing and pulling.

Of course, the more observant among you might be asking yourself right now, ‘Surely there are five there, Kevin?’

1. PUSH
2. PULL
3. LEVEL CHANGE
4. LOCOMOTION
5. ROTATION

If you were thinking that, you obviously have the mental awareness box ticked. But how about the strength and endurance?

As I said, these five types of movement occur regularly in daily life; just think about the action of getting into your car, for example. So to me it makes perfect sense that these concepts should make up the foundation, or the ‘meat and potatoes,’ of any athlete’s program.

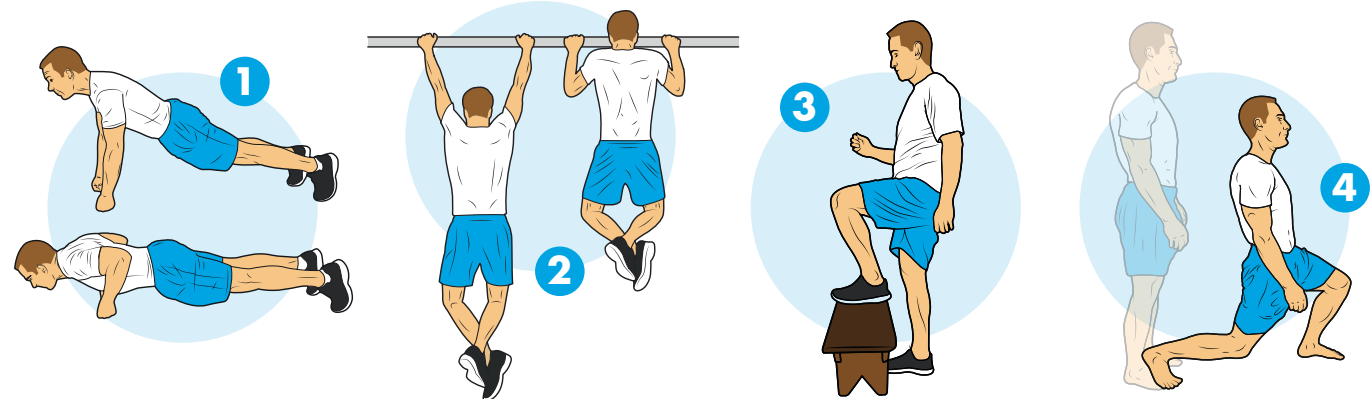
When you look at most exercise machines in the gym they are great for building muscle size and strength in a specific group. And that’s wonderful if

I BELIEVE YOU SHOULD INCLUDE THE ‘FIVE FOUNDATIONS OF STRENGTH’ INTO ALL YOUR WORKOUTS TO EDUCATE YOUR BODY TO GET INTO THESE POSITIONS AND ANGLES

you want to look like a cover model, but it’s unlikely this functional training will translate to the ring.

Combat is organized chaos and as my good friend and action star Olivier Gruner once said: “I can’t count on my arm being in the perfect position in a fight; a fight or combat is a mess, nothing happens exactly as it should.”

So that’s why I believe you should include the five basic movements on the opposite page – which I’ve called the ‘Five Foundations of Strength’ to avoid any confusion – into all your workouts to educate your body to get into these positions and angles, and therefore reduce, hopefully, any risk of injury because your muscles are more relaxed.



1. PUSH

The ‘push’ generally incorporates the large muscles in the front of the body; they include the core, chest, shoulders and triceps as primary movers. However, depending on how you perform this movement, you can also incorporate the legs, which I learned from my years practicing yoga. So our first exercise will be the push-up, but on the first two knuckles only as this will also work the smaller tendons in the wrist. [3 sets x 20 reps]

2. PULL

I’ve always been amazed by guys who can bench press 500lb, yet can’t do a single pull-up. You need to have balance between the anterior and posterior parts of your body, and one of the best ways to achieve this is by utilizing the pull-up. The trick is not to perform them more than shoulder width apart, so you don’t trash your shoulders. [4 sets x 10 reps]

3. LEVEL CHANGE

Another of my favorite exercises, which can be done almost anywhere, is the step-up. There should always be a bench or small wall nearby and so it can usually be done relatively easily. The best thing about a step-up is the level change involved in the movement. Plus, if you perform it at a fast pace you’ll also be turning it into a hip and ankle exercise. [3 sets x 20 reps]

4. LOCOMOTION

One of the most functional exercises known to man is the lunge. I always tell people that squats are great, but you can’t squat yourself out of the way of a moving car – or an elite striker’s right hook, for that matter. The trick with a lunge is not to let the knee pass the front ankle. Add some speed to this exercise and your heart will also get a great workout. [3 sets x 12 reps]

5. ROTATION

Any time your hips start to revolve you’re including a rotational factor into your exercising. And one way man has been doing this since we fist picked up tools is with a diagonal chop. It activates the core like very few other movements and is essential for every sport. And whether you perform it with a medicine ball, band, dumbbell or rock it’s going to target your gut. [4 sets x 10 reps each side]

Of course, these are just example exercises you can utilize to enhance your ‘Five Foundations of Strength.’ But the next time you’re lost for a training routine just bear them in mind and a full-body workout should quickly reveal itself. **FO**

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