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Training x Technique  
Train Like A Fighter

CIRCUIT TRAINING

# Triple Threat

Middleweight contender **Chris Weidman** combines strength, power, and some of the best cardio in the UFC

By ROB FITZGERALD Photography by JAMES LAW



## THE CHRIS WEIDMAN WORKOUT

**T**he perception of Chris Weidman's potential in the UFC can be summed up by the aftermath of his match with Demian Maia at *UFC on FOX 2* in early 2012. Despite taking the fight on short notice and cutting 32 pounds in 11 days, the Long Island native took all three rounds in a unanimous decision over the submission ace who once fought for the middleweight title. Despite earning the win under tough circumstances, Weidman was disappointed with his performance. "I knew my cardio would stand up, but I didn't have that pop I needed," he says. "I wanted to be much more explosive and powerful later in fights."

With the help of trainer Ray Longo and strength and conditioning coach Jamal Hamid, Weidman began reconstructing his lifting and conditioning regimen to focus more on what he calls "nonstop explosion." The result? A devastating second-round knockout of Mark Munoz in July at *UFC on FUEL TV 4: Munoz vs. Weidman*. "My thing was that if I got Munoz on the ground and we were there for a while, I wanted to still be able to keep hitting him with snap on my punches when he got back up, because nobody ever held him down before," Weidman says. "I was ready for the fight to go longer, and we trained to not let all that lactic acid that builds up from going for submissions

take away from my punches when we were standing up."

For Hamid, the key to Weidman's development is doing work that incorporates both explosiveness and endurance without compromising either capacity. "In MMA," he says, "there's no rest, so especially with Chris, he needs to be able to keep up his technical skill as a wrestler for five rounds. I don't ever want to take away from Chris' cardiovascular strength, so we'll do moves for explosion and speed, and then in between, we'll do something where he has to grind it out—like pushing a car or a sled."

With Weidman's rise in the rankings has come the responsibility to justify the hype through hard work. Deeply in the mix for a shot at Anderson Silva's middleweight title after just nine professional fights, removing his foot from the accelerator is something Weidman can't afford. With three daily workouts, including his thrice-per-week sessions with Hamid, the former All-American wrestler isn't letting up. It's not in his nature.

"He's absolutely relentless at everything he does," Hamid says. "If we do an exercise, and I tell him a good professional athlete can do 10 reps, and an elite athlete can do 12, Chris is looking to get 30. He wants to blow everyone and everything out of the water."

### TUESDAY

| EXERCISE                           | WEIGHT/SETS X REPS                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Front Squat                        | 135X15, 185X10, 225X3x6, 185X6, 135X6 |
| Hurdle Hop                         | 3X8                                   |
| Single-Leg Hurdle Hop              | 3X8                                   |
| Deadlift                           | 225X8, 275X8, 315X8                   |
| Reverse Hyperextension (With Band) | 3X15*                                 |

\* Perform first set at full speed, second set with a static hold at the top, and third set with a slow eccentric (negative) portion.

### THURSDAY

| EXERCISE                            | SETS/REPS                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Speed Row (With Bands)              | 5X30 With 10-Second Static Hold Every 10th Rep |
| Farmer's Walk                       | 3 Sets Of 30 Yards                             |
| Back Extension To Lateral Raise     | 3X10   |
| Banded Walking (Band Around Ankles) | 3X20 Steps, Forward And Backward               |
| Single-Leg Juggling On Bosu Ball    | 3 Sets Of 30 Seconds                           |
| Grappler's Toss                     | 3X15 (Each Side)                               |
| Resisted Dead Roach                 | 2 Min  |
| Dizzy Ladder                        | 1-2 Sets                                       |

### SATURDAY

| EXERCISE                       | SETS/REPS                                     |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Stadium Step Sprint            | 2 Sets X 1:30 (As Many Steps As He Can Cover) |
| Stadium Step Plyo Jump         | 3 Sets, 15 Stairs Each**                      |
| 100-Yard Sprint                | 8 Sprints, Racing Against Training Partner    |
| Bungee-Resisted Agility Ladder | 3-5 Sets                                      |
| Walking Lunges                 | 2X100 Yards                                   |

## FRONT SQUAT



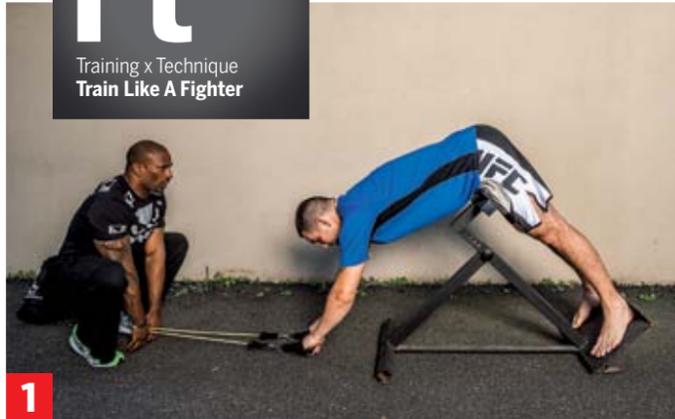
### TECHNIQUE:

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, supporting a loaded barbell across your collarbone and the front of your shoulders. Cross your arms in front of you with your hands on top of the bar to secure it in place. Push your hips back and descend into a squat until your thighs are parallel to the floor, and then explode back to the start position.

### BENEFIT:

"Front squats engage your core more than back squats by making you fight to keep proper form," Weidman says. "When you go to pick someone up or drive through them, they're not leaning over your back. They're more out in front of you, so you need to be strong in that direction."

## BACK EXTENSION TO LATERAL RAISE



1



2



3

**TECHNIQUE:**

Position yourself on a back extension unit with your arms hanging straight down, holding a dumbbell (or resistance band) in each hand. Bend at the waist until your upper body is perpendicular to the floor, then use your lower back and hamstrings to raise your torso back to parallel. From this position, keeping your elbows straight and your palms facing the floor, raise the dumbbells to your sides until they're level with your shoulders. Return to the start position.

**BENEFIT:**

"The lateral raise at the top strengthens your lower traps, your rhomboids, and your rear deltoids," Hamid says. "It also adds a degree of difficulty to the back extension, which works your hamstrings and lower back. This helps Chris maintain his posture when he's grappling, and it also builds a base of stability for his punching power."

## DEADLIFT

**TECHNIQUE:**

With a loaded barbell on the floor, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your shins nearly touching the bar. Hold the bar with a grip slightly wider than your feet. Drop your butt slightly to begin the lift, then raise the bar in a straight line until you're standing erect.

**BENEFIT:**

"This is another move that builds the posterior chain—the hamstrings and lower back," Hamid says. "Anything that works those muscles will improve Chris' overall strength, explosiveness, and the speed with which he can move around the cage and attack and defend."



1



2

## GRAPPLER'S TOSS

**TECHNIQUE:**

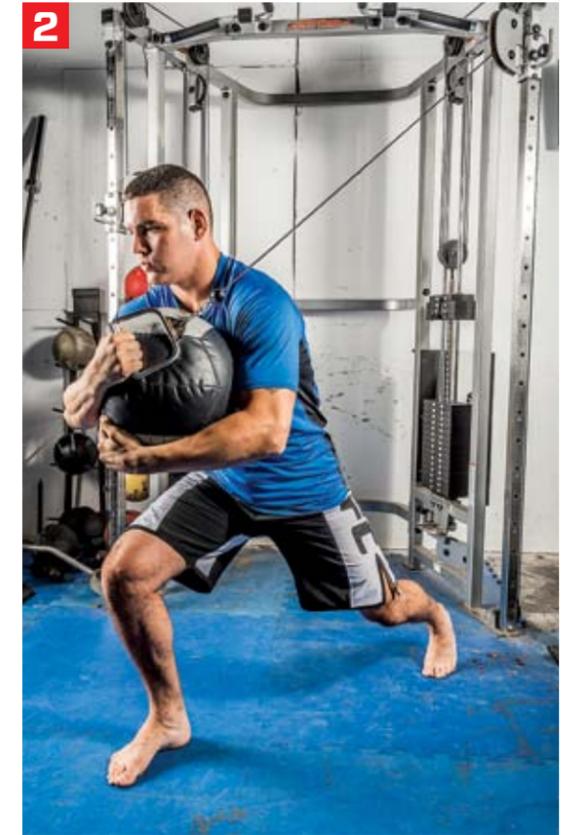
Technique: Attach a single handle or a rope to the cable of an adjustable-height machine pulley. Standing with the weight stack directly to your side, hug a physio ball around its center, holding the handle tightly with both hands. Using your hips and obliques, explosively turn against the resistance and rotate in a direction opposite the weight stack, mimicking the motion you'd use to throw an opponent. Vary both the height of the pulley and your angle of rotation with each set.

**BENEFIT:**

Benefit: "When Chris is in the clinch, in tight with his opponent's body, I want to strengthen the smaller muscles that work when he tosses someone, and not just his hips, back, and shoulders," Hamid says. "By doing this move from that hugging position, he's learning to torque his obliques and add some extra strength in the clinch."



1



2

## BENCH PRESS (WITH BAND)



1



2

**TECHNIQUE:**

Attach an elastic band to both ends of a barbell by running it under the bench. Lie flat on the bench and grasp the bar at shoulder width. Lower it to your chest, then explode up to various heights. Hamid will hold his hand at different levels, forcing Weidman to explosively touch his hand with the bar then lower it back to his chest.

**BENEFIT:**

"Having the band on the bar makes me give an explosive push off my chest," Weidman says. "And when every rep is at a different height, it helps me react to unpredictable situations. I have to focus more on what I'm doing, and I also have to keep control over the acceleration and deceleration of the bar."

## HURDLE HOPS

**TECHNIQUE:**

Place a series of hurdles on the floor in a straight line, approximately one yard apart. Stand in an athletic position, with your knees and elbows slightly bent, and perform a broad jump over the first hurdle. Land on your toes and quickly jump again, keeping your ground-contact time at a minimum and trying to bounce over each hurdle.

**BENEFIT:**

"This helps Chris stay on his toes, and it teaches him to be explosive from the foot position he's in when he's moving around the cage or throwing a punch," Hamid says. "The idea here is to make him work hard to get over the next hurdle without having to gather himself and start the jump all over again."

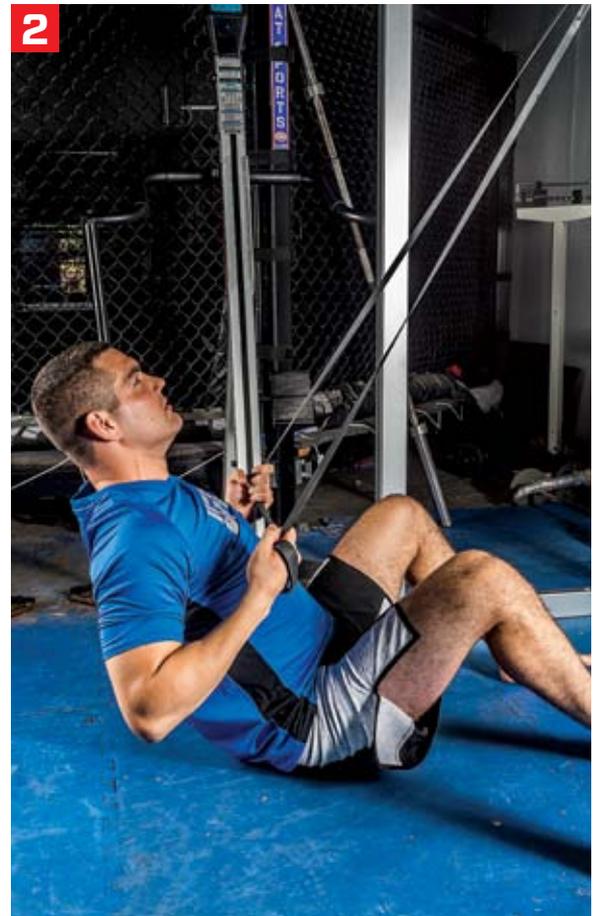
## SPEED ROW (WITH BANDS)

**TECHNIQUE:**

Attach a heavy elastic band to a pull-up bar, then sit directly under the bar with your legs together and extended. Lean back, with your chest held high, bearing the weight of your torso with your abs as though you were at the midway point of a crunch or Russian twist. Reach over your head and wrap one side of the band around each hand. Explosively pull downward as far as you can, using your back and biceps to statically hold the band in place at the bottom position for 10 seconds every 10th rep.

**BENEFIT:**

"This is for situations where Chris has someone in a submission, and he's been cranking it for a while and can't get it," Hamid says. "If the guy slips out and gets up, I want Chris to have the endurance to get up with him, hold his hands up, and throw punches without being exhausted from going for a submission and holding it."





## SINGLE-LEG JUGGLING ON BOSU BALL

### TECHNIQUE:

Designed to develop hand-eye coordination, Weidman will stand on one leg on an unstable surface and juggle while Hamid throws two additional balls at him. Depending on the color Hamid calls out, Weidman will dodge one object and catch the other, trying not to drop the balls he's already juggling.

### BENEFIT:

"When he's on the ball, he's fighting to keep his balance, so he's got two things going on at once," Hamid says. "He's working two sides of his brain to keep everything moving, the same way he needs to think and react in a fight."

NOT PICTURED

## DIZZY LADDER

### TECHNIQUE:

In this unique move, Hamid will have Weidman spin around in place until he gets dizzy then work him through various footwork drills using the agility ladder.

NOT PICTURED

### BENEFIT:

"With this one, I want him to be able to do everything by feel," Hamid says. "If he gets hit, and he's a little woozy and doesn't have his wits about him, he's still going to instinctively be able to regain his good footwork and get himself out of bad situations."

## REVERSE HYPEREXTENSION

### TECHNIQUE:

There's a specialized machine for these, but Weidman will frequently perform a homemade version. Position yourself facedown on the apron of a boxing ring with your lower body hanging off. Anchor an elastic band to a heavy object under the ring, then loop it around your ankles. With your legs perpendicular to the ground and your knees locked, raise your legs behind you until your body is parallel to the ground.

### BENEFIT:

"These activate your glutes and your lower back for overall posterior chain strength," Hamid says. "They really make a difference when Chris has to push forward or drive with his legs, and it's also a great recovery exercise for his lower back."

NOT PICTURED

## RESISTED DEAD ROACH

### TECHNIQUE:

Lie on your back with your eyes closed and your knees bent at 90 degrees (so your calves are parallel to the floor). Extend both arms toward the ceiling. Have a partner alternate pushing and pulling various limbs (two at a time), and use your core to react to his touch, resist his motion, and hold yourself in position.

NOT PICTURED

### BENEFIT:

"This helps train Chris to be more reactive to what his opponent is doing," Hamid says. "If there's a guy on top of you trying to mount you or change positions, as soon as you feel that movement when the guy's about to explode, you want to be able to move and adjust instantly so he can't get into the position he wants."