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Training x Technique
Fight Like A Pro

POWER TRAINING

Getting Stronger

Heavyweight contender **Fabricio Werdum** is adding some brute strength to his world-class submission arsenal. *By MIKE CARLSON Photography by JAMES LAW*

Heavyweight contender Fabricio Werdum has been tying pro fighters into pretzels for most of his adult life. But he also relied on his technique and natural strength at the expense of his training.

"When it comes to jiu-jitsu, Fabricio is strong," says Jarrod Bunch, a former first-round draft pick for the New York Giants and a Brazilian jiu-jitsu black belt under Werdum. "But when I saw him fight Alistair Overeem, I told him, 'Man, you gotta get in the weight room.'"

After losing a decision to Overeem, in which the Dutch monolith easily shook off Werdum's takedown attempts, even he admitted he needed to

get stronger. Werdum had a dirty little secret though: He was a pro athlete and top-five fighter, but he had never lifted weights before. Bunch, a close friend who graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in physical education, agreed to become his trainer.

Three times a week, Bunch would drag Werdum straight from grappling practice to a small private gym across the street from Werdum's jiu-jitsu academy in Venice, California. Bunch put Werdum on a basic program that hit his whole body in less than one hour. In order to chart the fighter's progress, a contact at Maximum Human Performance arranged for Bunch and Werdum to use a lab at the University

of Southern California.

"After three months, he went from 24 percent body fat to 12 percent, but his weight stayed at 250 pounds," Bunch says. "When we started, he could do eight push-ups and zero pull-ups. Ninety days later, he could do 10 pull-ups and 60 push-ups."

Abs and exercise don't win fights, though, so the real test of his new regimen came when Werdum faced Roy Nelson this past February at UFC 143. For three rounds, the Brazilian man-handled his powerful opponent, securing a lopsided unanimous decision and winning Fight Of The Night honors in the process. The transformation from technician to juggernaut had begun.



Jarrod Bunch

A former NFL running back for the New York Giants and the Los Angeles Raiders, Bunch turned to training athletes and then to acting, after a knee injury ended his career. You can follow him on Twitter @JRBunch

THE WORKOUT

Trainer Jarrod Bunch knew that since Fabricio Werdum was a relative newbie to the weight room, he wouldn't have to torture him with brutally long workouts to get the desired results. Bunch designed a total-body workout that was performed three times a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) as well as a cardio program they did together on Tuesdays and Thursdays (see "10-Mile Workout"). As Werdum's fight loomed closer, Bunch utilized circuit training to shift the focus from strength development to overall conditioning (see "Circuit Breaker").

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Step-Up	3	20
Manual Hamstring Curl	3	20
Incline Press	3	20
Pull-Ups	3	10
"W" Press	3	12-9-6
Triceps Pressdown	2-3	20
Biceps Curl	2-3	20

MANUAL HAMSTRING CURL



While this move is often performed on a machine, Bunch likes the control this version gives him over Werdum's previously injured hamstring. Lie facedown on a bench with your legs outstretched. Have a partner stand behind you, and cup his hands on one heel. Slowly flex your knee and bring the heel toward your glutes as the partner applies firm and constant pressure. When you have brought your heel as far forward as possible, reverse the direction and fight against the pressure your partner is exerting. Switch sides and repeat.

STEP-UP



Stand in front of a stable platform such as a plyometric box that is approximately 24 inches high. Hold a dumbbell in each hand or a bar across your back. Place your right foot completely onto the box and step up. Fully extend your right leg and open your hips. Keep your chest up and the natural curve in your lower back. Bring your left knee up until it is bent 90 degrees. Pause for a beat and then bring your left foot down to the ground. Do not let the left foot touch the top of the platform. Switch sides and repeat.

Shot on location at Gold's Gym, Venice, California.

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Training
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INCLINE PRESS



Set an adjustable bench to a 45-degree incline. Sit on the bench, holding a dumbbell vertically on each knee. Lie back and use your knees to bring the weights to the starting position, held straight above you with your arms fully extended. In a slow and controlled motion, bring your elbows down until they are bent 90 degrees. Flex your pecs and extend your arms back up. Do not allow the weights to touch at the top of the movement.

W PRESS



Grasp a dumbbell in each hand and sit in a straight-back chair with your feet flat on the floor and your lower back, shoulder blades, and head pushing into the backrest. Begin with the dumbbells at chin level with your palms facing you. Slowly externally rotate your arms away from the body and slightly upward, leading with the pinkies. Imagine the path of the weights making a "W." Finish with the dumbbells slightly over your head and your palms facing away from you.

TRICEPS PRESSDOWN

Attach a triceps rope to a high pulley, and grasp one end in each hand. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, your shoulders retracted and down, your knees slightly bent, and your head in neutral alignment with your spine. Slowly extend your arms downward, spreading them apart as your arms reach the lockout position. Keep your elbows close to your sides and make sure you do not bend at the waist. Slowly bring your hands back to chest level and repeat.



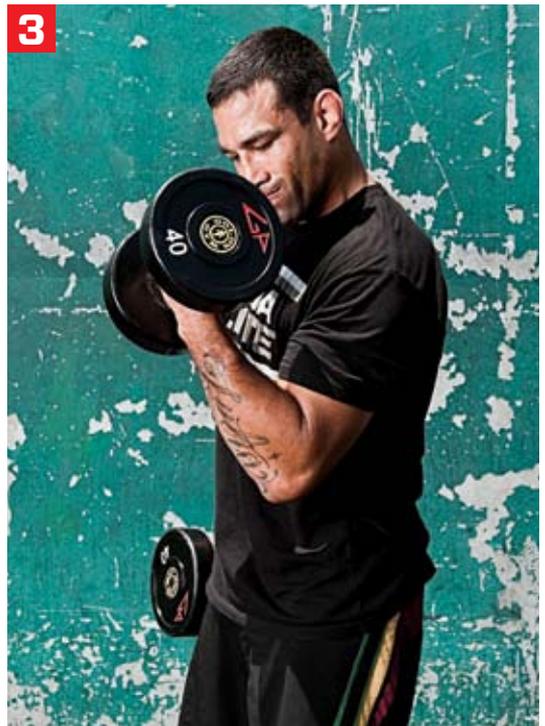
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BICEPS CURL

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, your shoulders retracted and down, your knees slightly bent, and your head in neutral alignment with your spine. Grasp a dumbbell in each hand and let them hang at your side, with your palms facing your leg. Keeping your elbow close to your side, slowly flex your left arm and bring your hand almost to your shoulder as you rotate your palm to face you. Do not bring the weight so high that the tension comes off the biceps. Slowly lower the weight and repeat with the other side.



10-MILE WORKOUT



Like any good trainer, Jarrod Bunch never asked Fabricio Werdum to do anything he wasn't willing to do himself. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the two BJJ black belts would skip the weights for a pure cardio session always performed on an indoor bike to save the wear and tear on Werdum's knees. Some nights they would do 40 minutes of steady-state cardio. Other nights it got interesting.

"We would have a contest on the bike," Bunch says. "We would do a 25-minute hill program. The goal at the end of 25 minutes is to get at least 10 miles. To do that, you have to have it at 100 RPMs or higher the whole time."

Since the ex-football player had been doing this workout for years, Bunch would set Werdum's bike to an easier setting to make it fair for the fighter. Two weeks later, Werdum was beating Bunch's best efforts at the same level.

"His stamina is insane," Bunch says.

“I FEEL A LOT MORE POWERFUL IN MY PUNCHES AND ESPECIALLY IN THE CLINCH WHEN I THROW KNEES.”

—Fabricio Werdum

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CIRCUIT BREAKER

In an effort to change up the workout and move to a more conditioning-oriented program that is lighter and thus easier on his joints, Werdum will perform a circuit for time, moving from one exercise to the next with no rest.

"I will put a clock on him and say 'Let's go,'" trainer Jarrod Bunch says. "When the workout is over, I write down his time. Then he has to beat that time at the next workout."

After completing the circuit and a short rest, Werdum goes through one more nausea-inducing exercise: 100 nonstop leg presses.

"You have to remember, he has already done MMA, wrestling, or boxing training before this workout," Bunch says.



TRI-SET

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Bent-Over Row	5	10
Push-Ups	5	10
Pull-Ups	5	10
THEN		
Leg Press	1	100

Body Movin'

Trainer Jarrod Bunch had a good reason to include push-ups and pull-ups in this program. Bodyweight exercises promote the type of muscular endurance that pays dividends in MMA and Werdum can perform max efforts of both exercises without burning out his joints or nervous system. And since heavyweights have a hard time with bodyweight moves, this meets the criteria of any good training program: to work on an athlete's weakness.

↓ A strong Muay Thai clinch and freight-train knees opened up a massive gash on Roy Nelson's forehead in the very first round of their fight, which "Vai Cavallo" would go on to win by unanimous decision.

