



ARM WORKOUTS FOR WOMEN

The MMA-Style Upper-Body Conditioning and Mobility Workout

This hard-hitting session will increase your endurance and agility while delivering some new muscle and definition to your back, shoulders and arms.

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Does your same old training program and workout need a shot of adrenaline? Feel like you're beating yourself up in the gym without making progress? We can help you with those two problems by giving you a rut-busting MMA workout designed to smash training plateaus and get your muscles reacting positively again.

"Sometimes our bodies simply stop responding to our workouts because we keep doing the same things over and over," explains top U.K. strength and conditioning coach **Dan Roberts**, founder of The Dan Roberts Group and a former professional muay Thai fighter. "By trying something radically different, such as what a boxer or mixed martial artist may do to prepare for a fight, you can deliver the type of shock that will prompt an adaptation response from your muscles."

In the following upper-body-focused MMA-style workout, you'll incorporate elements of conditioning, **mobility** and endurance — which are not the usual aims of a bodybuilding-style workout but as a side effect can still do wonders for growth and development — while training multiple bodyparts synergistically, including your back, chest, shoulders, biceps, triceps and **core**.

You'll be using a mix of counting reps and counting seconds, with longer-than-typical sets (up to three minutes) that will test your mettle to the max.

"I'd suggest trying this as a break from your usual routine, anywhere from once per week to once per month, or just occasionally when you think you need a spark," Roberts suggests. "I think you'll love it because you'll feel your muscles working in ways you may not have before — and after a few times through the gauntlet, you'll be stronger, more confident, and have more stamina when you shift back to your traditional weight workouts."

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EXERCISE	SETS	TIME/REPS
Alternating Renegade Row Into Press	3	100 seconds
Medicine-Ball Kneeling Chop	6	15
Half Turkish Get-Up	2	3 minutes
Kettlebell Halo Roll	3	1 minute
Weighted Front Plank	1	to failure
Unilateral TRX Row	2	50 (per arm)

Alternating Renegade Row Into Press

Place two hex-shaped dumbbells (hex shaped for stability) on the floor in front of you and get down into a four-point position, your lower body balanced on your toes behind you, legs splayed for balance, and one hand holding each handle. From this position, row one dumbbell up to your flank, then hold it there as you turn your body into a sideways position. Next, press the dumbbell straight up toward the ceiling, then lower it back to your body, turn and lower the weight back to the floor. Repeat with the opposite arm.

Roberts' Rules: "This is technically a superset, as you're working two opposing muscle groups back-to-back. For mixed-martial arts athletes, doing supersets is a smart training strategy because in a fight, you're always changing which muscles are engaging and how —concentrically, eccentrically and isometrically. For these, take a full 90 seconds of rest in between sets to recover adequately for the next bout."

Medicine-Ball Kneeling Chop

Get into a half-kneeling position, with your left foot forward and planted and your right knee on the floor, holding an 8- or 10-pound medicine ball at your chest with both hands. Extend the ball out in front of you, then twist toward your right as you bring the ball lower toward the floor. From here, with your arms still extended, twist to the left as you bring the ball up so that it finishes at a point higher than your left shoulder. Slowly rotate the ball back down to the right. Repeat for 15 reps total. For the next set, switch positions so that your right foot is forward and your left knee is on the floor, and you twist from the lower left to the upper right.

Roberts' Rules: "This movement replicates the range of motion of a lot of strikes, and it is also fantastic for developing the shoulders, lats and obliques — both external obliques that help with rotational power endurance and the internal obliques that are part of the core."

Half Turkish Get-Up

Lie on the floor, legs extended, and press one 8- or 10-pound kettlebell to full elbow lockout with your left arm. Holding it there, bend your left knee and slide your left foot toward your left hip, and using your right hand and left foot as a support, sit up toward your left side to lift your torso. Now lift your hips off the floor by supporting yourself on your right hand and left foot, assuming a side-plank position while still holding the kettlebell in your left arm overhead. Reverse the sequence to return to the floor.

Roberts' Rules: "The get-up works shoulder stabilizer strength, endurance, your abs and obliques, and develops coordination and core stability. In addition, you'll also develop concentration and mental toughness, as three minutes of doing anything in the gym is very hard. In those long sets, you'll be developing strength endurance — which is what most trainers actually mean when they say 'conditioning.'"

Kettlebell Halo Roll

Assume a comfortable stance, feet shoulder-width apart, and hold the kettlebell goblet style — weight side up and at your upper chest, holding the handles in each hand with your arms at your sides. From there, you'll lift the kettlebell up and to one side of your head, slowly and under control circling it around by moving your arms. You'll feel your shoulder muscles firing as the kettlebell makes its revolution all the way around to the other side. When you reach the front position, reverse the motion and go back around the other way, continuing in this style for one minute.

Roberts' Rules: "By developing mobility around the neck and shoulders, the halo roll is very functional for elbow strikes — but it's great for everyday upper-body mobility, as well, and is just as good for people who sit at a desk all day with their shoulders and neck in compromised positions."

Weighted Front Plank

Get into a modified push-up position, balancing your body on your forearms and toes with your body in a straight line from head to feet. Have a partner place a 25-pound plate on your back and then simply hold your position, flexing your core to keep your hips from collapsing to the floor, for as long as you can manage it without your form breaking. (If you don't have a partner to assist, you can wear a weighted vest instead.)

Roberts' Rules: "All strikes, including kicks, knees and throws, require a strong core. The core and gluteus medius stabilize the pelvis, which allows for more efficient movement and protects your lower back. In essence, the plank targets the entire foundation on which an athletic body is built. In this test of your core endurance, 30 seconds is average, above one minute is good, and over two minutes is excellent."

Unilateral TRX Row

Using a TRX Suspension Trainer anchored to the ceiling, start faceup holding a handle in one hand, arm extended with your upper body at about a 135-degree angle in a "plank" position — your torso and legs aligned and your feet in contact with the floor. Using a 3-1-3 tempo, contract your lats and bend your elbow fully to pull your upper body toward the anchor point over a three-second count. At the apex, your working arm will be fully bent and tucked into your side. After a one-count, lower yourself over a three-count to the start. Concentrate on keeping your body faceup throughout; don't let it turn. Switch back and forth, doing 50 reps with each hand without resting in between, until you complete 200 reps total.

Roberts' Rules: "Swapping sides without stopping to rest boosts endurance in your back, biceps and forearms. The pulling and rotation help to develop thoracic mobility of the spine and boosts coordination and motor recruitment as you stretch out the latissimus dorsi. Make sure you maintain good posture, and don't let the hips do the work by generating momentum in them."

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