

THE WORLD OF THE

# MMA WARRIOR

+ MIXED MARTIAL ARTS,  
OR SIMPLY **MMA**,  
IS CAGE FIGHTING  
THAT MIXES KICKING,  
PUNCHING AND  
GRAPPLING.

It is this intoxicating combination of athleticism, intensity and fighting that is so intriguing and has people throughout South Africa, and across the world, lining up to watch it, thus making it one of the most popular and fastest growing sports today in countries such as the USA, Europe, Japan and Brazil! ▶

There are specific rules in MMA to protect the athlete. For example, kneeing your opponent to the top of the head is illegal.



Modern MMA only emerged in 1993 with the Ultimate Fighting Championships. The championship was based on the concept of pitting different fighting styles against each other in competition with minimal rules, in an attempt to determine which system/martial art would be more effective in a real, unregulated combat situation. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, MMA competitions implemented additional rules for the safety of the athletes and to promote acceptance of the sport, while maintaining as much of the original no-holds-barred concepts as possible.

There are very few rules in MMA, all of which were established over the last ten years. Before that it was a brutal combat sport in which the health of the fighter was always at risk. The rules dictate that certain moves, including head butts, biting, eye gouging, attacks to the groin area, kidneys, striking to the back of the spine and trachea, are prohibited. Because there is no worldwide association presiding over MMA, rules vary from country to country and from tournament to tournament.

+ SINCE THESE CHANGES, MMA HAS GROWN RAPIDLY TO THE POINT OF SETTING PAY-PER-VIEW RECORDS, WITH VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS AND COMPETITIONS IGNITING THE EXCITEMENT IN THE WORLD OF MARTIAL ARTS AGAIN.

## THE EARLY DAYS

MMA has been around since man discovered the need to defend himself using various methods of combat. It was, however, the late Bruce Lee who made the movement more structured by creating a unique fighting style that combined everything from western boxing, to karate, to fencing. That's right, it was the renowned Lee that coined the phrase, "The best style is no style, the best form is no form." He later stated that you must take what works from different martial arts and discard the rest. This is exactly what MMA is based on; two competitors attempting to defeat each other by utilising a wide variety of fighting techniques, including manipulating areas of striking and grappling.

Lee devoted his life to studying martial arts and even went to the extent of creating his own 'style', Jeet Kune Do, which incorporated various styles into one in the late '60s and literally means 'Way of the Intercepting Fist'

"The best fighter is not a boxer, karate or judo man. The best fighter is someone who can adapt to any style. He kicks too good for a boxer, throws too good for a karate man, and punches too good for a judo man." - Bruce Lee

Today, fighters are attempting to follow these steps, taking the best of what they have studied and bringing it into the ring. The best MMA fighters, like George St Pierre, Vitor Belfort, Anderson Silva, and Junior Dos Santos, are those who continually cross train in several realms of striking and grappling to become the ultimate warrior.



## THE WORLD OF THE MMA WARRIOR

What is a warrior? One definition is, someone who engages in or desires combat. History's greatest warriors have, however, shown us that being a warrior is more about gaining control over oneself in all aspects of life. There have been many famous cultures of the past that glorified the warrior. For example, the Spartans, Romans, Persians, Knights Templar, Mongols, Vikings, and Samurai were societies that were famous for the development of their warriors. The legends of those warriors have been passed down because of the impact they made on the consciousness of the world.

The warrior tradition is still alive today. Since every generation has its own warriors, we have lost sight of how to recognise one. A new breed of warriors has evolved through the vehicle of MMA, such as George St Pierre, one of the world's best pound-for-pound fighters. It is these men and woman who will be the role models that future generations use as a gauge of their own warrior status. Even though they may not be battling in a life-or-death scenario, the main attributes of these modern-day warriors are the same as those of the warriors of the past.



Ground fighting.

## STYLES IN MMA

MMA is the most complex form of combat known to man. When Royce Gracie shocked the world at UFC1 in the 1990s, everybody thought that BJJ (Brazilian JiuJitsu) was the ultimate art of fighting. A style that could beat every other discipline of fighting. Many people thought that learning BJJ was enough to compete in the UFC. But with the growing popularity of the UFC and more and more talented fighters from different horizons coming to compete in the octagon, it was rapidly proved that BJJ was not enough. Fighters started to borrow skills from different styles and slowly invented the cross-training art of fighting. Today, only a well-rounded fighter using a highly elaborated cross-training style can succeed in MMA.

MMA is a hybrid martial art that combines all ranges of unarmed combat, as well as the most effective techniques and training methods of the various styles, into one.

### STAND UP FIGHTING

The MMA athlete needs to be able to throw punches like a boxer and kick like a Thai boxer/kick boxer.

### CLINCH FIGHTING

Here, the MMA athlete will draw from various systems, and styles like punches, knees, elbows and takedowns are the order of the day. Greco Roman wrestling, freestyle wrestling and Muay Thai forms a strong foundation in the clinch.

### GROUND FIGHTING

Arguably the most technical range in MMA. The MMA athlete needs to be able to dominate superior positions on the ground to set up devastating submissions and ground-and-pounding. Brazilian JiuJitsu, submission wrestling and sambo/shoot wrestling form the foundation here. ▶



THE WORLD OF THE

# MMA WARRIOR

Morne Swanepoel, a world-renowned coach and fighter who won the 2013 award for Best Coach and Fighting Gym in South Africa. Watch the video above for the official announcement.



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Morne dominating his opponent with a 'knee on the belly' technique and executing a ground-and-pound fighting style.

## BECOME A WARRIOR

Everybody in the MMA world trains to be winners, but not everyone is willing to do the preparation it takes to win. Expose yourself to stand up, clinch and ground fighting to ensure you become a complete fighter. How well you train, how well you plan your training and how hard you work is all up to you. If you train athletically, with fewer restrictions, you have more options that you can actually apply. These are the aspects you have control over:

- Fighting knowledge
- Developing a combat athletic mindset.
- Becoming fighting fit through combat athletics.

+ WHETHER ONE IS A FIGHTER OR JUST WANTS TO TRAIN LIKE ONE, ANYONE CAN DEVELOP THE FITNESS OF BODY AND THE STRENGTH OF CHARACTER OF A WARRIOR.

## WARRIOR MINDSET

The mind of the warrior is just as important to work out as any muscle. Without the cooperation of the warrior's mind and body, no success is possible. Although you can train certain muscles of the body only every once in a while, the mind of the warrior can and must be trained consistently every day. The mindset of the warrior will eventually determine his destiny as a fighter, MMA athlete and his eventual destiny in life.

To control the mind is to control one's thoughts. When this is done correctly, the warrior is able to control his actions. This goes for anyone wanting to start MMA training as well. Most people are put off training for reasons such as fear and negativity - "I can't do that stuff," or "I am too old," or "I don't need this, I can look after myself," and so on. Acquiring the ability to quiet the mind and stop it from running wild with these types of emotions and thoughts is often one of the toughest tasks for the new warrior. The results are so rewarding when one leaves one's ego at the door and takes this first step to a better lifestyle by obtaining the warrior mindset.

The demanding training of MMA is well worth the effort as it develops the mindset so that no matter how hard life throws you to the ground, you will always get back on your feet and hold your head high! •



For more information on MMA fighting and coaching, visit [www.combatcoaching.com](http://www.combatcoaching.com)



Clinch fighting.

One of the ways to win a MMA fight is via submission. Here Morne demonstrates one of the most effective submissions in MMA called the 'rear naked choke'.





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