



DIAMOND PROTOCOL

AVERAGE INTO ATHLETE • ATHLETE INTO MACHINE

TRAINING FOR FAT LOSS, STRENGTH, & CONDITIONING

ETHAN BENDA

Strength & Conditioning Coach

Performance Nutrition Coach

BJJ Competitor

Presenter/Educator

ABOUT ETHAN BENDA

Ethan Benda has been a Certified Trainer since 2000, and has over 15,000 hours of training experience.

He was born with an innate drive for fitness; he was the weird kid in the neighborhood that built obstacle courses and made the other kids have pushup contests.

Ethan is a Certified Personal Trainer, Certified Specialist in Performance Nutrition, and a Certified Training For Warriors (TFW) coach. He has completed the first level of Resistance Training Specialist (biomechanics) classes and is the developer of Functional Interval Training(F.I.T.) and The Diamond Protocol.

He has trained multiple amateur and professional athletes, special forces cadets, public servants, as well as general population clients. He specializes in the physical, psychological, and nutritional demands of competitive sport, creating athletes who “never get tired.”

Ethan has studied various forms of hand-to-hand combat including Judo, Krav Maga, Submission Wrestling, and Muay Thai. He holds a Black Belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu under Professor Jason Bircher (Renato Tavares Association), with multiple 1st place wins in jiu-jitsu competition. Ethan is also an All-Natural Physique Competitor & Body Builder with multiple top 5 finishes.

Ethan’s dedication to the success of his clients has made him one of Kansas City’s most popular trainers for years. He presents

seminars on fitness and nutrition, writes a blog focusing on motivation and goals, and is a contributor to Men's Health Magazine.

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DIAMOND PROTOCOL

12 WEEK TRAINING FOR FAT LOSS, STRENGTH, & CONDITIONING

The “Diamond Protocol” is something I’ve developed over the years to condition the non-conditioned, build fighters that “never get tired”, and prep soldiers for Special Operations Training. The name simply describes the layout of the program.

THE OPTIONS:

I’ve used this same protocol in a variety of ways, but here are the 3 main options:

1)ANTAGONIST MUSCLE GROUPS: BICEPS/TRICEPS, CHEST/BACK, ETC.

This is very effective for the more traditional bodybuilding workout. It’s essentially a high-powered super set.

2)COMPOUND LEGS: HAM & GLUTE DOMINANT/QUAD DOMINANT

This is a killer leg dominant workout. It’s definitely for the advanced lifter.

3)FULL-BODY: LEG/PUSH/PULL

This is the most effective for overall conditioning. It is easily modified for most levels of conditioning. This is the preferred option for metabolic conditioning and functional strength.

FOR THE PURPOSES OF OUR 12 WEEK PROGRAM, WE ARE USING THE MOST EFFECTIVE, WHICH IS THE FULL-BODY OPTION.

THE SETUP:

This workout requires some planning the first few times you do it. The first phases use 6 exercises per workout, and the last phase has 8. If you do the quick math, at minimum, you will be doing 36 sets. At Phase 3 with 8 exercises you will be doing 64 sets. Yes, you read that right; 8 sets of 8 exercises = 64

You will do one exercise, rest 20-90 seconds (less rest for the beginning and end of the diamond, more for the middle), then do that same exercise again and add one more, short rest, then 1 and 2, then add another. So on and so forth. When you get to the apex, you start subtracting off the front end. So, if each number represents an exercise, the programming for an 8 exercise diamond looks like this:

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1
1,2
1,2,3
1,2,3,4
1,2,3,4,5
1,2,3,4,5,6
1,2,3,4,5,6,7
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
2,3,4,5,6,7,8
3,4,5,6,7,8
4,5,6,7,8
5,6,7,8
6,7,8
7,8
8

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Hence, the name “Diamond Protocol”

THE EXERCISES:

The exercises I chose translate directly into functional movement, and have the most benefit for general strength, conditioning, and are easy to progress from very easy to very difficult over time. We will start with bodyweight movements and progress over 12 weeks to explosive, strength oriented movements.

THE WEIGHTS:

Phase 1 uses only body weight and a heavy resistance band (the cheap ones with the handles), Phase 2 uses 1 pair of dumbbells, and phase 3 uses 2 pairs of dumbbells. So, no need for fancy equipment, just a minor investment in some dumbbells. Due to the simplicity and use of minimum equipment, the workouts can be done in even the simplest of settings and is great for traveling as well since most hotel gyms have basic equipment like this.

THE REPS:

your rep range is going to vary depending on the exercises and the weights we are using. You will come to find that even though you will be pushing relatively low weight, you will gain a very practical amount of strength. You won't become a powerlifter by any means, but you will shred your body and build the kind of strength that translates very well into most athletics, especially combat scenarios. This is a killer workout for core strength as well.

THE TIME:

This is what always surprises people. The 6 exercise diamond, when done correctly, will take about 18-35 minutes (yup, 36 sets in 18 minutes). The 8 exercise diamond will take close to an hour. How is it possible that you can do 64 sets in an hour? Simple answer: you ain't resting much, Jack. Your rest time is capped at 90 seconds, and for most of the diamond it's going to be less.

THE FREQUENCY:

DO NOT do this protocol more than 3 times a week. It's just too taxing on your neurological, cardio, and muscular system, and recovery gets to be an issue. On the in-between days you can do some light cardio, technical sport training, or just rest and recover.

THE PROGRESSION:

I've done a good job of building a progression into the program, whether it's exercise difficulty, reps, weight, or all 3. However, you can increase the intensity by shortening rest times on your own.

NEVER SACRIFICE FORM FOR REPS!!! If you simply can't do ALL the reps, then don't. Do it NEXT TIME.

FOLLOW UP:

This program will get you shredded if you follow it for 12 weeks along with a solid nutrition program. Once the 12 weeks are up, you can use any part of the program to supplement into any other form of training. For example, I will do traditional strength training 2-3 days a week, then supplement with a diamond protocol to keep conditioning up.

THE RESULTS:

I have used this for years with great results in strength, hypertrophy, and metabolic increases for me and my clients. Several years ago when I was really into developing this system, my own Resting Metabolic Rate (calories I was burning at rest) when testing on a gas-exchange test after doing ONLY this type of workout for over a year was around 2400 calories (it was around 1800 before starting the program). Translation: my metabolism was cranking.

I was 192 lbs. at around 8% body fat, and my bench, squat, and deadlift tested at around 80% of my 1 RM from the previous year of doing traditional absolute strength training; However, my 10 REP MAX was SIGNIFICANTLY higher in all those lifts (almost 45%), and my heart rate was trained to recover within 90 seconds.

This has been the case for EVERY client I've put through the system.

Some people will ask why the workout doesn't vary much over the weeks of a phase. The reason is simple: we are building a fortress. We don't want too much variety. We want something we can build and improve upon each week.

I encourage you to take 'BEFORE' photos to document progress. I think you will be amazed.

Track your progress!

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12 WEEK DAMOND PROTOCOL

PHASE 1: General Conditioning-Fat Loss Primer

Equipment: Bodyweight/Heavy Resistance Band

WEEK 1, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)BODYWEIGHT SQUATS	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
2)PUSHUPS	REP GOAL: 10	REP ACTUAL:
3)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
4)ALTERNATING REVERSE LUNGE	REP GOAL: 20 TOTAL	REP ACTUAL:
5)BAND ROWS	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
6)RUSSIAN TWIST	REP GOAL: 30	REP ACTUAL:

WEEK 2, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)SQUAT HOPS	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
2)PUSHUPS	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
3)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 30	REP ACTUAL:
4)JUMPING SPLIT SQUAT	REP GOAL: 20 TOTAL	REP ACTUAL:
5)BAND SPEED ROWS	REP GOAL: 30 SECONDS	REP ACTUAL:
6)RUSSIAN TWIST	REP GOAL: 50	REP ACTUAL:

WEEK 3, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)TUCK JUMPS (KNEE TO CHEST)	REP GOAL: 15	REP ACTUAL:
2)PLYO PUSHUPS	REP GOAL: 10	REP ACTUAL:
3)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 40	REP ACTUAL:
4)JUMPING SPLIT SQUAT	REP GOAL: 20 TOTAL	REP ACTUAL:
5)BAND SPEED ROWS	REP GOAL: 30 SECONDS	REP ACTUAL:
6)RUSSIAN TWIST	REP GOAL: 50	REP ACTUAL:

WEEK 4, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)SPRAWL TUCK JUMP	REP GOAL: 15	REP ACTUAL:
2)WIDE/NARROW PLYO PUSHUPS	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
3)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 50	REP ACTUAL:
4)JUMPING SPLIT SQUAT	REP GOAL: 20 TOTAL	REP ACTUAL:
5)BAND SPEED ROWS	REP GOAL: 30 SECONDS	REP ACTUAL:
6)RUSSIAN TWIST	REP GOAL: 50	REP ACTUAL:

PHASE 2: Competition Ready-Lean, Strong, & Explosive

Equipment: pair of dumbbells aprox. 20% of bodyweight each (round up). Example: If you weigh 200 lbs, you would use 40# db's

WEEK 1, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)SINGLE ARM DB SNATCH	REP GOAL: 8 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
2)SINGLE ARM FLOOR PRESS	REP GOAL: 12 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
3)SITUP W/ DB	REP GOAL: 15	REP ACTUAL:
4)DB JUMP SQUAT	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
5)DB ROW	REP GOAL: 12 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
6)TOE TOUCH CRUNCH W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:

WEEK 2, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)SINGLE ARM DB SNATCH	REP GOAL: 10 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
2)SINGLE ARM FLOOR PRESS	REP GOAL: 15 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
3)SITUP W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
4)DB JUMP SQUAT	REP GOAL: 15	REP ACTUAL:
5)DB ROW	REP GOAL: 15 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
6)TOE TOUCH CRUNCH W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:

WEEK 3, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)SINGLE ARM DB SNATCH	REP GOAL: 10 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
2)SINGLE ARM FLOOR PRESS	REP GOAL: 15 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
3)SITUP W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
4)DB JUMP SQUAT	REP GOAL: 15	REP ACTUAL:
5)DB ROW	REP GOAL: 15 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
6)TOE TOUCH CRUNCH W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
7)PLANK ROW W/ DB'S	REP GOAL: 10 TOTAL	REP ACTUAL:

WEEK 4, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)SINGLE ARM DB SNATCH	REP GOAL: 12 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
2)SINGLE ARM FLOOR PRESS	REP GOAL: 15 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
3)SITUP W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
4)DB JUMP SQUAT	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
5)DB ROW	REP GOAL: 15 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
6)TOE TOUCH CRUNCH W/ DB	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
7)PLANK ROW W/ DB'S	REP GOAL: 16 TOTAL	REP ACTUAL:

PHASE 3: Pure athlete. Pound for pound the strongest, leanest, and best conditioned you can be.

Equipment: same db's from Phase 2 + another pair of DB's that are 20 lbs. heavier

WEEK 1, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)DB FRONT SQUATS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
2)PUSHUP ROW-PHASE 2 WT	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
3)DB JUMP SQUATS-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 8	REP ACTUAL:
4)CURL/PRESS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 10	REP ACTUAL:
5)REVERSE LUNGE-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 6 EACH LEG	REP ACTUAL:
6)KNEE TO ELBOW PENDULUM	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
7)SINGLE ARM SNATCH-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 6 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
8)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 20	

WEEK 2, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)DB FRONT SQUATS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 15	REP ACTUAL:
2)PUSHUP ROW-PHASE 2 WT	REP GOAL: 14	REP ACTUAL:
3)DB JUMP SQUATS-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 10	REP ACTUAL:
4)CURL/PRESS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 10	REP ACTUAL:
5)REVERSE LUNGE-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 8 EACH LEG	REP ACTUAL:
6)KNEE TO ELBOW PENDULUM	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
7)SINGLE ARM SNATCH-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 6 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
8)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 20	

WEEK 3, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)DB FRONT SQUATS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
2)PUSHUP ROW-PHASE 2 WT	REP GOAL: 14	REP ACTUAL:
3)DB JUMP SQUATS-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 10	REP ACTUAL:
4)CURL/PRESS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
5)REVERSE LUNGE-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 8 EACH LEG	REP ACTUAL:
6)KNEE TO ELBOW PENDULUM	REP GOAL: 20	REP ACTUAL:
7)SINGLE ARM SNATCH-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 6 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
8)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 20	

WEEK 4, 3 DAYS A WEEK

1)DB FRONT SQUATS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
2)PUSHUP ROW-PHASE 2 WT	REP GOAL: 14	REP ACTUAL:
3)DB JUMP SQUATS-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
4)CURL/PRESS-PHASE 2 WT.	REP GOAL: 12	REP ACTUAL:
5)REVERSE LUNGE-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 10 EACH LEG	REP ACTUAL:
6)KNEE TO ELBOW PENDULUM	REP GOAL: 30	REP ACTUAL:
7)SINGLE ARM SNATCH-HEAVY WT.	REP GOAL: 8 EACH ARM	REP ACTUAL:
8)SHIN GRABS	REP GOAL: 30	

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PHASE 4 ?

Sa, what's next? Now that you understand how the protocol works, you can experiment on your own with different exercises. You could add in things like sprints, sled pushes, or heavy bag work. Really the possibilities are endless. Some people like to go to a more traditional weight training program and use the Diamond once a week to maintain conditioning. I have even used the Diamond Protocol to train antagonistic groups like a traditional bodybuilding superset. Play around with it. Just don't hurt yourself, use proper form, and have fun.

CONTACT INFO:

Web: <http://www.ethanbenda.com>
Email: bendacoaching@gmail.com
IG: @ethanbenda
FB: @ethanbenda