

Kettlebell Training

Adapted from:

The Kettlebell Bible

written by

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Kettlebell lifting is a strenuous activity; make sure you consult your Doctor before starting on any training programme.

What is a Kettlebell?

A Kettlebell is simply a ball with a handle. The balls can be of different sizes giving different weights; these are available from 6 k to 45 kilo.

The Nature of a Kettlebell:

Any weight will fight the gravitational pull of the earth. The Kettlebell, because of its unique yet simple construction, is always fighting the gravitational pull; wherever the Kettlebell is the weight is constantly fighting gravity. The sphere being suspended below the handle also increases the pull towards the ground. This makes the weight unique in its application for fitness and strength training.

What's the correct size of Kettlebell?

If you are healthy and currently taking regular exercise, an adult male could consider starting with a 16 kilo Kettlebell. This will be challenging to start with. For a female, a six or eight kilo Kettlebell would also be a good start.

When swinging the Kettlebell you need coordination within the body movement to get that Kettlebell up, but, as it comes down to the ground it is gaining speed and at the bottom of the swing you need to break the movement and swing it back to the top. At the bottom of the Kettlebell swing it is estimated that you will be pulling up to four times the weight of the Kettlebell.

Kettlebell Safety

The Importance of space.

Be aware of others around you. What to do if you feel you are losing control: DROP IT. It is very important to ease into Kettlebell training and practice. Do not over train or over strain; oak trees grow slowly and strong. If you experience lower back pain while swinging the Kettlebell, it is probably because you are using your upper body strength. This can be a problem for strong guys.

Use:

A Kettlebell is literally a total gym within a sphere. It will give you stamina and endurance, tone and strength, without looking like a muscle monster. It is always working the cardio vascular system and all muscle groups, especially the legs, backside and lower back. All these are found within the basic swing, because the hands or hand

is used to grip the handle, this gives you hand and forearm strength, thus increasing your grip strength.

Application:

The importance of a firm grip. Shift the weight back onto the heels as you start a pull to reduce injury risk and generate more power. Use one or two arms and swing to waist, shoulder and above head height, switching hands once you are familiar with the drill. One arm swings with a hand switch. Do not let the KB pull you forward. Let go if it does.

The Swing:

Important:

Lower back pain is caused by using upper body strength to move the Kettlebell. Do not let the arms straighten, always keep a slight bend.

The Two-hand Swing

The two-hand Swing is the most basic of the ballistic Kettlebell exercises. The techniques involved set the foundation for the more complex ballistic exercises and as such, diligence in learning the technique will serve you well in your future Kettlebell training

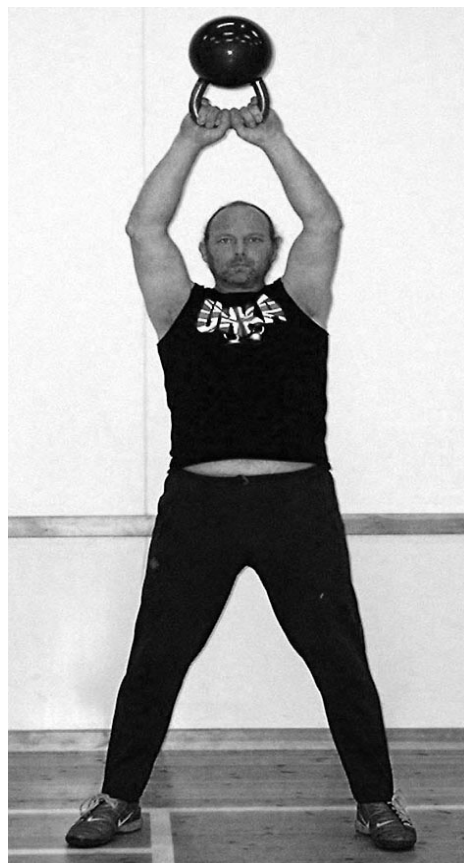
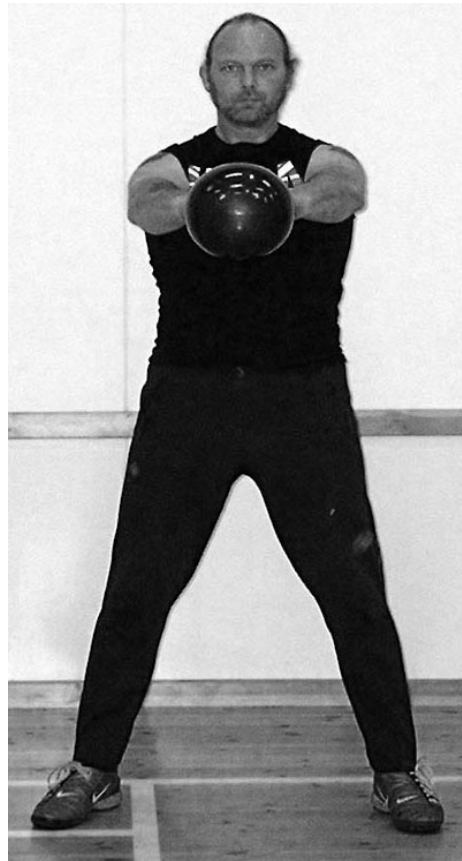
Adopt a comfortable stance with the feet approximately shoulder width apart, then, as per the Learning Squat, sit back keeping the shins

vertical and maintaining the natural curvature of the lower back, look slightly up to ensure the spine is correctly aligned. Pick up the Kettlebell, which should be advanced of the shoulders with a strong grip, the weight should not flop around in the hands during any Kettlebell exercise.

On lifting with the legs the Kettlebell should then naturally swing back between the legs to a point slightly behind the knees. As the weight swings back, fold at the hips keeping the head up and allow your weight to shift backwards on to the heels, if done correctly you should feel the hamstrings and *not* the lower back loading. Sit by reaching back with the hips as the Kettlebell travels backwards.

As the Kettlebell reaches its farthest point behind the legs, brace and initiate the forward swing by utilising the stored energy in the hamstrings, explosively contracting the buttocks and snapping the hips forward as you push up through the heel to toes.

Keep the arms slightly bent at all times, the power for the swing is generated from the hamstrings and hip drive; the arms are used only to control the path of the bell. As the Kettlebell reaches chest height, actively pull back against the resistance by drawing the shoulder blades together; this is vitally important for the transference of power to the Kettlebell,



which in turn means that you are controlling the bell and not the other way around. This drawing back of the shoulder blades will stop the lifter “reaching” for a Kettlebell that is forward travelling i.e. not controlled during other exercises such as those involving releases.

At the top point of the swing ensure that the glutes are locked tight, the quads contracted, tighten the abs momentarily and let out a short sharp breath. Allow the weight to free-fall back behind the legs, imagine following the Kettlebells path with the buttocks literally reaching back to sit on top of it! For those who can remember, picture the Kettlebell as a space hopper!

Importantly the body weight should transfer back and forth between the heels on the descent and the toes on the ascent. Lifting the heels clear of the floor is entirely acceptable and will occur when “Letting go with all you have” provided that the weight is transferred back to the heels just prior to the Kettlebell descending. Never decelerate the weight using the arms alone but catch the force by folding back from the hips and bending the knees in order to load the hamstrings once more in preparation for the next repetition.

At the bottom of the swing imagine that you have touched a hot stove in order to impart the necessary explosive speed to the upward movement from the heels.