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Kettlebell Training for Sport

Disclaimer

The exercises and advice contained in this book may be too difficult or dangerous for some individuals, and the reader(s) should consult their physician before engaging in them.

Kettlebell Training for Sport

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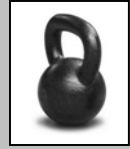
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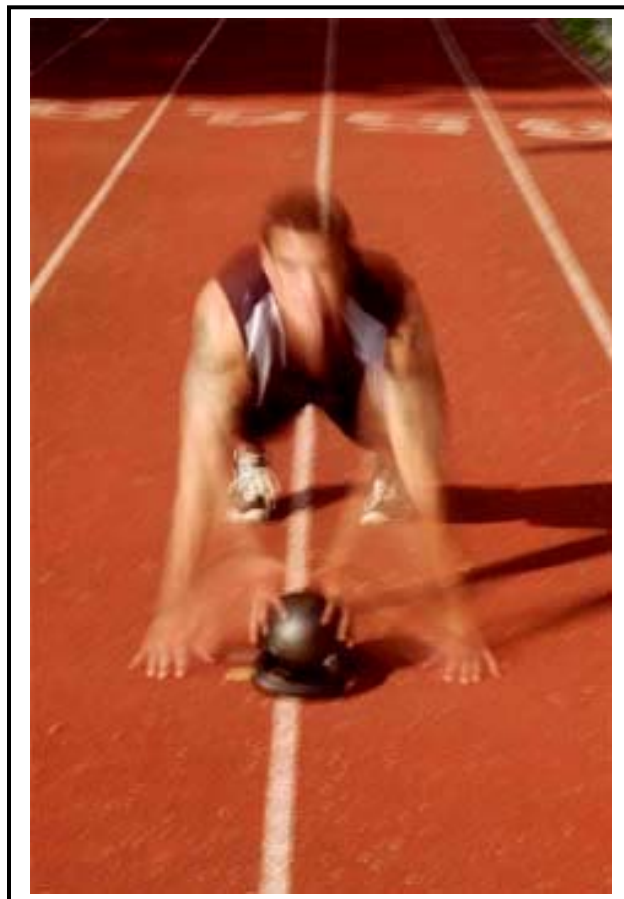
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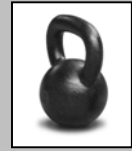
Introduction



Although historically very old, Russian kettlebells are a newcomer in the world of sports performance and strength training in western countries. The goal of this book is to educate and inform the sports performance coach and the athlete alike about the benefits of kettlebell training for sport, as well as illustrate the endless possibilities that exist in kettlebell training. Any strength and conditioning program worth it's salt should contain some element of kettlebell training in their program design. Any strength and conditioning facility worth visiting should also contain at least some form of kettlebell training option, whether it be cast iron models or plate loaded versions. The benefits that kettlebell training can offer the athlete are numerous and profound. Please allow this book to open up the world of kettlebell training for sport and start you on your way to increased sports performance and victories.



Equipment



Kettlebells have been in existence for many centuries and have been used successfully to enhance the performance of a wide group of individuals ranging from military personnel, Olympic athletes and the general population.

Despite their history, more recently several different styles of kettlebells have become available. As strength and conditioning professional I consider it my responsibility to deliver the highest quality coaching to my athletes as well as the other professionals that I work with. With this in mind I either own or have used every style of kettlebell on the market. I use several criteria to determine which kettlebells offer the most bang for your buck. This criteria includes:

- ✓ Initial Investment
- ✓ Versatility
- ✓ Life time value
- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Comfort
- ✓ Space

The most common kettlebell on the market is the solid, cast iron model. This is the model that I prefer and recommend to my clients and athletes. The initial cost may be

higher than some models but the lifetime value far outweighs the initial monetary investment. Cast iron kettlebells also offer the greatest amount of versatility. Cast iron kettlebells can be thrown, juggled and tossed better than any other model available. Their construction is solid which helps ease the concern of falling weight plates as you snatch the kettlebell overhead. They take up very little space within the training room and can be tucked away under other pieces of equipment. They can easily be taken outside for additional motivation and team drills. They are also the most comfortable when resting on your wrist.

Plate- loaded versions come in two models, one that loads vertically and one that loads horizontally. Plate -loaded versions share a lower initial investment since they can be used with standard weight training plates that are available in most sporting good stores. They also offer the benefit of increasing the load in small increments, something that cast iron models lack. Both of the plate- loaded models however can't be thrown for any amount of time without breaking down. They also can't be juggled or tossed from hand to hand, making both versions less versatile than the cast iron bells. Both plate-loaded models are less comfortable during some exercises such as the snatch due to the uneven surface made by the different size plates coming in contact with your wrist. The vertical version however, can be set-up to be more comfortable than the horizontal loading bell. Finally, there is the issue of moving parts. I personally don't want to be responsible for a kettlebell coming apart as my athlete snatches a 90lb kettlebell overhead. In fact, this is the biggest reason why I don't recommend plate-loaded kettlebells.

Another version of the kettlebell that is available is the **shot-loaded or sand –loaded** model. Their initial investment is somewhere between the cast iron and plate-loaded models. Weight changes can be made to the ounce simply by opening up the bell and adding or removing gravel or sand. Cleanup can be messy and quick weight changes are troublesome working within a team environment. Although shot-loaded bells are more solid than their plate-loaded counterparts, I still don't trust them to be thrown for any period of time. However, they are much more comfortable than plate-loaded versions as well as safer during overhead lifts.

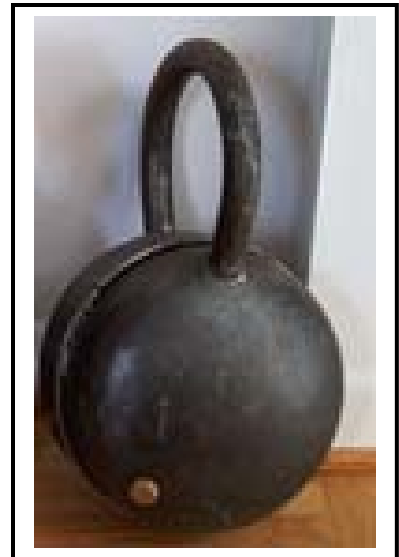
As you can see, the oldest and the original version still offers the most versatility, safety and lifetime value. If you have the opportunity to try out several versions, see which one fits your current training and economic needs and go from there. I would advise you however to take a good look at your future training plans as well before making up your mind.



Solid Cast Iron



Plate Loaded



Shot Loaded

Why Kettlebells?



I know a lot of hype has been written about kettlebells but it's all for good reason. Kettlebells boast some distinct advantages over their counterparts in a sports performance toolbox. Below are several reasons why kettlebells outshine their competition.

Kettlebell training produces strength at extreme ranges of motion. This longer range of motion recruits a stretch reflex, which increases your ability to produce force, change direction and be more agile. This stretch reflex is a naturally occurring neuromuscular function and kettlebells do an outstanding job exploiting it to better your performance.

This extreme range strength is what saves your muscles from being ripped apart during hard sparring, aggressive bodily contact and sharp changes of direction. This one aspect alone will take your injury prevention program to new heights.

Kettlebell training exposes your weaknesses and corrects imbalances. Since kettlebell training is usually performed one limb at a time, it does a great job of exposing weaknesses and imbalances throughout your entire body. This weakness may come in the form of grip endurance or one shoulder being tighter than the other. Regardless, within moments of kettlebell training, these deficiencies will be exposed and allow you to address them.

Kettlebell training creates strong yet flexible joints structures. Kettlebell training increases the demand for dynamic joint stabilization which reduces the potential for injury and allows for more efficient force production, “You can’t fire a canon from a canoe.” The kettlebell’s offset center of gravity plays havoc on control and forces your entire body to participate in the movement, recruiting more muscles and joints, providing a much more realistic approach to conditioning.

Kettlebells exploit endless exercise variations with just one tool. Simply by changing your grip or repositioning the kettlebell you can change the entire feel and complexity of the movement. This feature alone makes kettlebell training essential in a large group setting or team environment. This feature also allows you to get the most training from one kettlebell. You can progress from easier drills to very advanced versions using the same size kettlebell, reducing the need to acquire a large selection of kettlebells.

Kettlebell training teaches your body how to absorb force and redirect it. Since so many kettlebell drills are performed over every joint in the body, you train yourself to absorb force over the longest range of motion possible, using as many joints as possible. This will have great carry over as your opponent crashes into you from across the field or mat.

Kettlebell training amplifies your power output. Since kettlebell drills are performed quickly they develop a special quality known as power-endurance, or your ability to produce powerful movements over an extended period of time. This differs

from strength-endurance. Strength- endurance is your ability to produce force over an extended period of time. Power-endurance adds another time component; power-endurance is your ability to sustain fast muscular contractions over an extended period of time. Power-endurance is usually what determines who the winner is in sport.

Kettlebell training teaches your body how to contend with a constantly changing center of gravity. Since the kettlebell's center of gravity lies outside your grip, it replicates the forces that you'll encounter in sports and life in general, for example, during Judo competition; Judo players will grab a hold of one another's jackets or gis while trying to manipulate their opponent. Their opponent's center of gravity is not where the competitor takes hold but rather somewhere outside their grip. This feature of the kettlebell will help reinforce this aspect of sports performance.

Kettlebell training builds powerful forearms and a strong grip. Kettlebells possess a thicker handle than their barbell and dumbbell counterparts taxing your grip and developing greater forearm strength. As our society continues to move away from manual labor our grip strength continues to decrease as well. Kettlebell training will help reverse this trend.

Kettlebells improve your cardio –respiratory fitness. Since many kettlebell drills take place with your arms in an overhead position the muscles responsible for assisting the breathing process are engaged in muscular activity, not allowing them to assist in the respiratory process. This forces the muscles most responsible for breathing to play an even larger role in cardio-vascular fitness.

Kettlebell training eliminates the need for a large training facility. Kettlebells possess a very small footprint, meaning that they take up very little floor space.

Kettlebells don't require expensive racks; they can be stored in the corner or underneath other equipment.

Kettlebell training allows you to reduce overall training time, so you can devote your attention to other issues such as strategy, skill, rest and recovery.

Kettlebell training bridges the gap between strength training and cardio; sport doesn't respect the difference.

Kettlebell training allows you to never miss your workout. Train anywhere, the local park, beach, outside or inside.

Kettlebell training creates an iron will. Kettlebell ballistic drills done for high repetitions require you to reach deep down inside you and see what you're made of. The ability to drive forward through a grueling set of kettlebell snatches is what a champion's mindset is made of; this must be experienced to be believed.



General Physical Preparation

Before you take to kettlebell training full speed you should become very comfortable with your kettlebells. Kettlebells can place a lot of stress on joint structures and connective tissues, so take your time and develop a sound and thorough general physical preparation program (**GPP**). Learn the fundamentals and ease yourself into the ballistic movements such as the clean, snatch and jerk.

Below are several GPP drills that I run my athletes through. They are very demanding. Initially, work at a pace that is comfortable for you but as you progress start to time your sets and try to either better the distance covered in a set period of time or simply work for a longer time period. Both methods work well. Also, don't be afraid to incorporate body weight movements like push-ups and pull-ups into your GPP program. Bodyweight drills and kettlebells work very well together. In fact, most of our programs at Kettlebell Athletics revolve around the combination of kettlebell full-body ballistic movements and fundamental bodyweight drills. I refer to this combination as a kettlebell couplet. There are examples of kettlebell couplets in the sample program section later in this manual. All of the following GPP drills are best performed outside where you'll have no fear or reservations of dropping or throwing the kettlebell. If you feel like you're about to lose it don't hesitate to chuck the kettlebell.

Farmers Walk:

Exercise Description:

General physical preparation doesn't get anymore general than this. Simply pick up two heavy kettlebells and go for a walk. You can go for time or distance. You can also walk in a figure eight pattern, which adds a unique stress to the core musculature and torso. Walking on your toes is another valuable variation.

Performance tips:

Stay tight throughout the entire drill. Do not let any one part of your body become too relaxed and open for injury.



Waiters Walk:

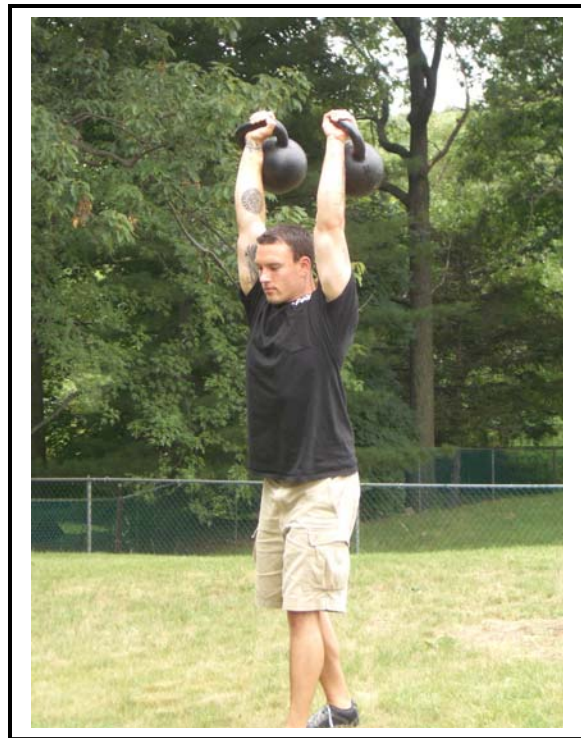
Exercise Description:

Get two kettlebells overhead however you like (snatch, jerk, press). While keeping your arms extended overhead simply go for a walk. You can go for time, distance or walk in a figure eight pattern. This can also be performed with one arm; as the unilateral loading pattern taxes your torso in a distinctive manner.

To make this a true waiters walk, place the spherical part of the kettlebell on your palm. This distinctive loading stimulus adds a new twist to dynamic shoulder stabilization and body awareness.

Performance Tips.

Keep your shoulder “packed” by keeping it pulled down and back using the muscles directly behind your armpits. This will add to shoulder stability and safety. Do not hesitate to throw the kettlebell if you’re about to lose it. There’s a saying in the kettlebell community, “Fast feet are happy feet.”



Shoulder Rack Walks:

Exercise Description:

Clean one or two kettlebells to the shoulder rack position and simply go for a walk. Again, you can go for time, distance or walk in a figure eight pattern. If you are using one kettlebell you can use the palm press position, which again does add some fun and danger to the movement.

Performance Tips:

Stay tight throughout the movement. Do not allow any one part of your body to become too relaxed and open for injury.



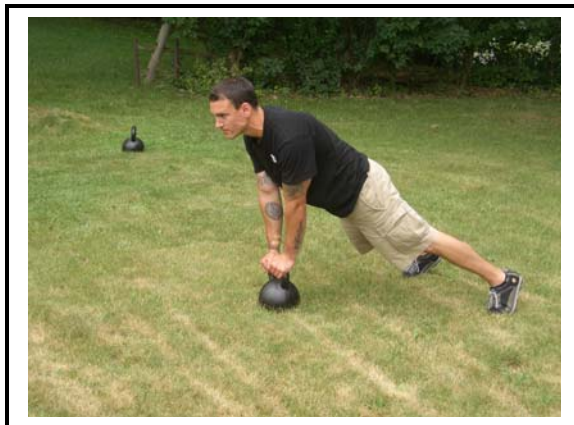
Kettlebell Burpee/Squat Thrust (Variation #1):

Exercise Description:

Place one kettlebell between your feet that are shoulder width or slightly wider apart. Bend over and place both of your hands on the kettlebell's handle. Quickly jump your feet back behind you to form the upper portion of a pushup. Quickly jump forward again, landing with your feet outside the kettlebell and stand up with the kettlebell in hand, basically performing a deadlift.

Performance Tips:

Maintain a straight back during the entire drill and do not permit your hips to drop down while in the push-up position. However, if training for grappling, you can drop your hips to work on sprawling. You can also jump forward enough to land with your feet slightly ahead of the kettlebell which would add to the length of the pull and greater hamstring involvement.



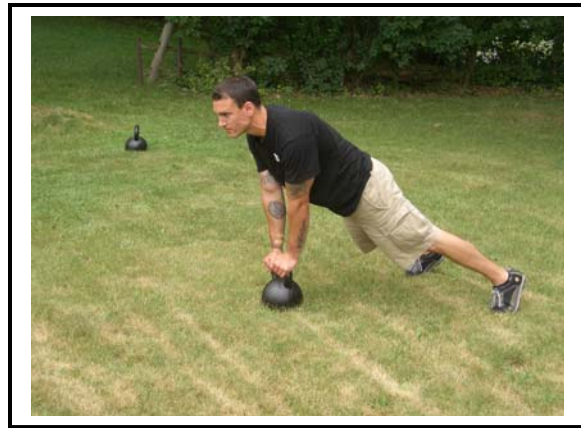
Kettlebell Burpee/Squat Thrust (Variation #2):

Exercise Description:

This drill is performed exactly like variation #1 but an explosive high pull is added at the end to complete the movement.

Performance Tips:

Allow the high-pull to be driven by your hips. Your arms should only direct the path of the kettlebell.



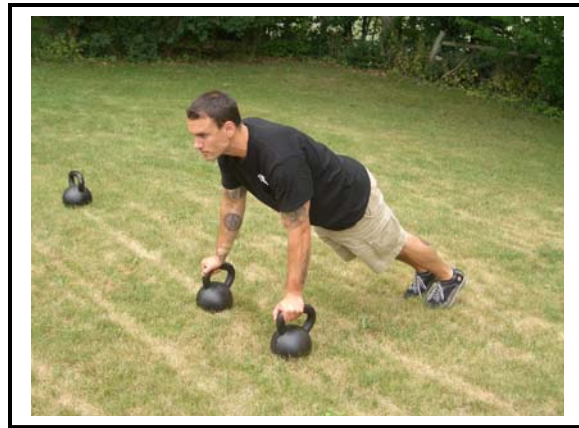
Kettlebell Burpee/Squat Thrust (Variation #3):

Exercise Description:

Place two kettlebells **outside** your feet, which are narrower than shoulder width apart. Squat down and place one hand on each kettlebell. Quickly jump back to land in an upper pushup position. Quickly jump forward again and stand erect and jump as high as possible with kettlebells in hand.

Performance Tips:

Maintain a straight back during the entire drill and do not permit your hips to drop down while in the push-up position. However, if training for grappling, you can drop your hips to work on sprawling.



Lower Body Drills

The drills in the following section are predominantly lower body movements. Don't be fooled however, your upper body will have to work overtime to maintain proper posture and stability.

There are three common loading patterns used when training with kettlebells, **the shoulder rack position, the hang position and the center hold position.**

Performing any kettlebell exercise from the **shoulder rack** position is very demanding and will challenge even the simplest squat variation. The shoulder rack position also transfers very nicely into kettlebell Olympic Lifts, such as jerks and cleans.

The **hang position** is usually more comfortable for beginners but is less useful for more advanced variations and exercises.



Shoulder Rack



Center Hold



Hang Position

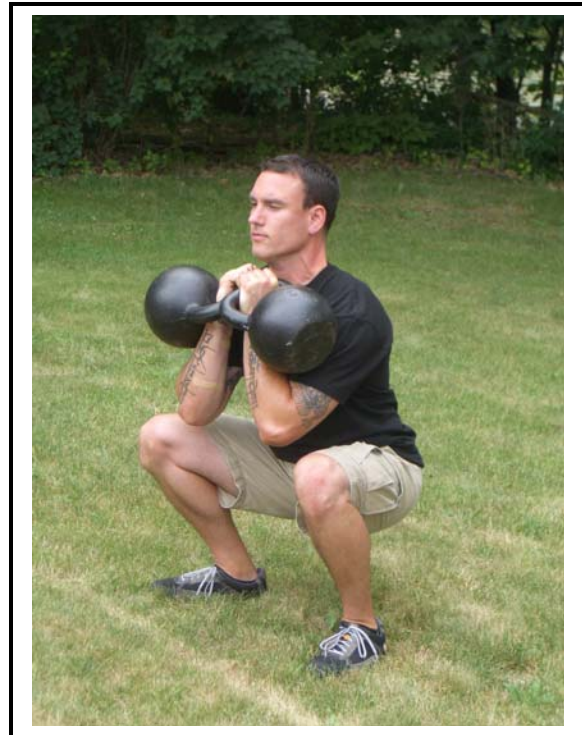
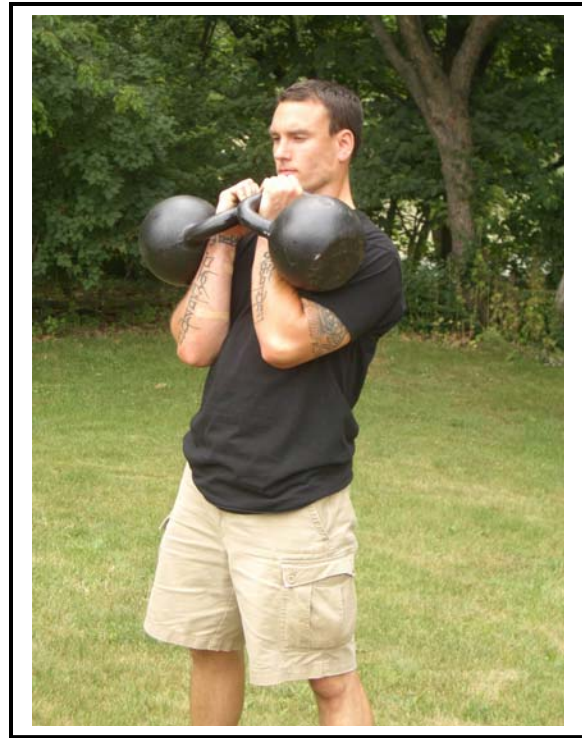
Kettlebell Front Squat:

Exercise Description:

From the shoulder rack position maintain a very upright posture and sit back with your hips until your thighs reach parallel or lower. Come up using the same path.

Performance Tips:

Keep your elbows tight and your weight on your heels. Look straight ahead or up slightly.



**Kettlebell Squat/Hang
Position:**

Exercise Description:

From the Hang Position sit back with your hips until your thighs reach parallel or lower. Maintain a straight back.

Performance Tips:

Look straight ahead or slightly up. Weight on heels.



Kettlebell Squat/ Center Hold Position:

Exercise Description:
From the Center Hold Position sit back with your hips until your thighs reach parallel or lower. Maintain a straight back.

Performance Tips:
Look straight ahead or up slightly. Maintain weight on heels. Keep elbows tight.



Kettlebell Squat/ Center Hold position with rotation:

Exercise Description:

Perform squat as usual. On way up rotate one heel to the outside. Rotate your waist away, toward the opposite side of your raised heel. Return to the center, squat again and repeat to the other side.

Performance Tips:

Look straight ahead or up slightly. Lead rotation with your eyes.



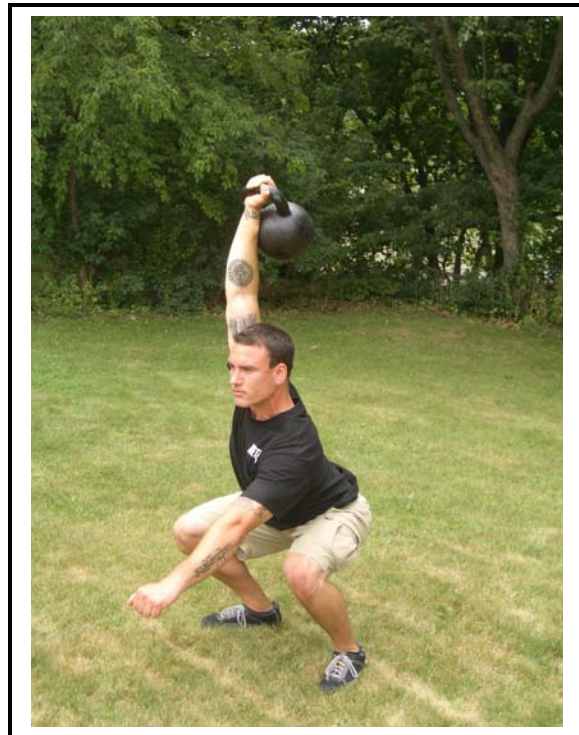
Kettlebell Overhead Squat:

Exercise Description:

Get one kettlebell overhead. Look up at the bell or straight ahead and sit back with your hips.

Performance Tips:

You may lean slightly to the side away from the kettlebell. This will allow more flexibility and range of motion. Using two kettlebells will challenge your flexibility to even great limits. Practice slowly and increase your range of motion over time. Do not allow the kettlebell to drift forward in front of your ears. This will increase strain on your shoulder joints.



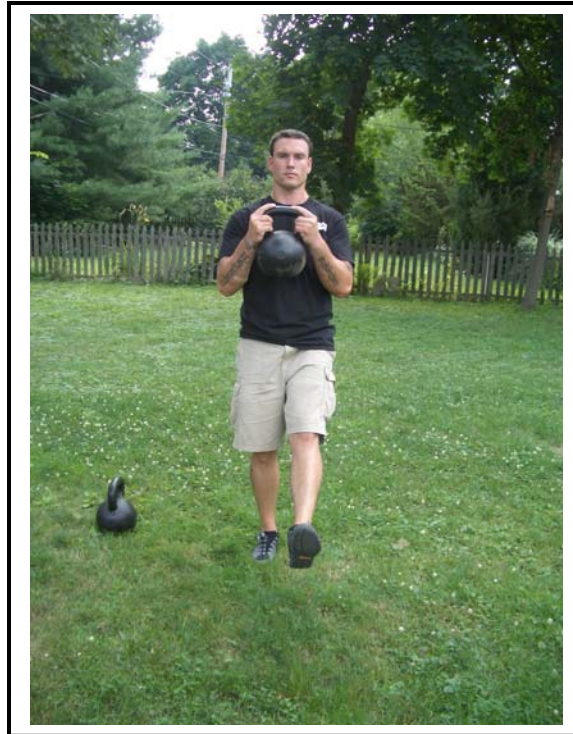
Pistol:

Exercise Description:

From the center-hold position take a light kettlebell and hold it chest or waist high. Pick up one leg and sit back into a one-legged squat. Attempt to keep your free leg as straight as possible.

Performance Tips:

Track your vertical shin with the kettlebell. This will help focus the weight and steady your movement. On the way up contract your abs and glutes hard.



One-Legged Deadlift:

Exercise Description:

Grab two kettlebells in the hang position. Lift one leg into the air. Fold at the hips while maintaining a straight back. Keep a small bend in the supported leg. Squeeze your glutes and hamstrings while coming back up.

Performance Tips:

Tighten everything, your grip, glutes hamstrings and back. Curling your toes into the ground will help increase tension as well. As you come up, actively pull yourself up by squeezing your glutes and hamstrings.

This dill can be performed with one kettlebell, either on the same side as the supported leg or the opposite. Each variation offers it's own benefits.



Tactical Lunge:

Exercise Description:

Holding onto one kettlebell drop into lunge. While in the down position, swing the kettlebell underneath your lead leg using your opposite arm, catching with the arm on the same side as your lead leg. Perform the same thing on the other side. You can use a front, reverse or a 45-degree lunge.

Performance Tips:

Use a light bell until you develop the proper coordination. Reverse lunges are usually easier to pick up. If using a heavy bell use a straight back. If using a lighter bell your back can be rounded.



Upper Body

Kettlebell Overhead Press:

Exercise Description:

From the shoulder rack position press the kettlebell up and behind you, so that your upper arm is alongside or slightly behind your ear.

Performance Tips:

Squeeze the kettlebell hard as you press it overhead, this will increase muscular tension and recruit other muscles to assist in the movement. You can use two kettlebells as well. As you lower the bell, actively pull it back down using your lats and other upper back muscles instead of passively lowering it. Place the handle across your palm so it rests mostly on the fleshy part directly below your little finger. This will recruit an extensor reflex and activate your triceps muscles to a greater degree.



Kettlebell Palm Press:

Exercise Description:

From the shoulder rack position, place one kettlebell on the meaty part of your palm, directly below your little finger. Press overhead and slightly behind you so that your upper arm tracks alongside your ear or slightly behind it.

Performance Tips:

Actively pull the kettlebell back down using your lats and upper back muscles. Practice with caution and don't hesitate to throw the kettlebell should you feel like your losing it. Remember, "Fast feet are happy feet"



Kettlebell Thumb Press:

Exercise Description:

This drill is great for boxers, mixed martial artist as well as any athletes that use sticks in their sport.

Place a light kettlebell onto your thumb so that the kettlebell rests on the **inside** of your wrist. Press overhead using the same technique as above.

Performance Tips:

This drill has a slightly different groove than the standard overhead press. Start light and practice caution.



Bottoms –Up Press:

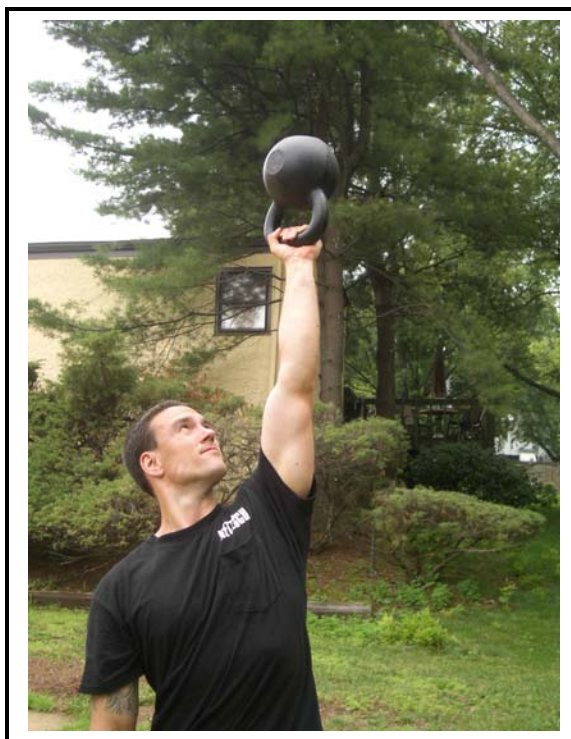
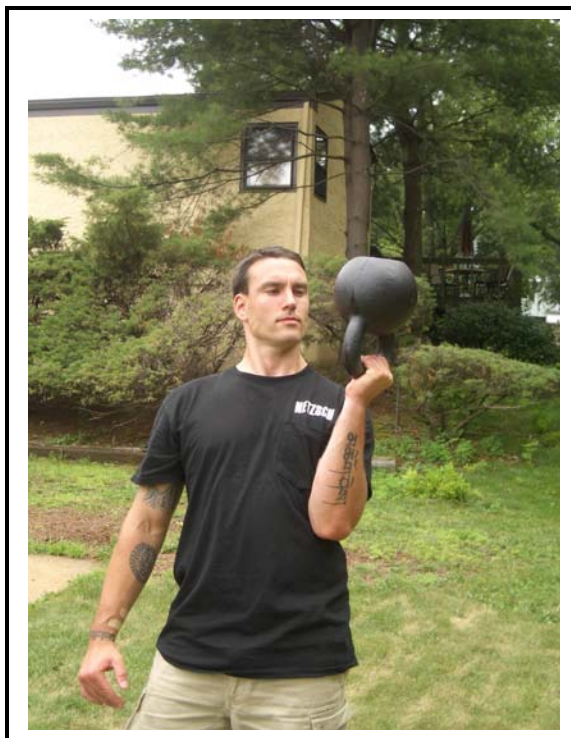
Exercise Description:

This drill brings into play a great deal of body awareness and balance.

Turn the kettlebell upside down so the handle points towards the ground. Grip the handle tightly, pressurize your abdominals and lock down with your glutes. Tighten everything. Press overhead.

Performance Tips:

Tighten everything, grip, abs, glutes and lats. Don't hesitate to throw the kettlebell if you're about to lose it



See Saw Press:

Exercise Description:

Get two kettlebells to the Shoulder Rack Position. From there, tighten everything and press one kettlebell overhead. As you lower that kettlebell start to press the other one. Both kettlebells should be moving at the same time. One moving up and the other down.

Performance Tips:

Imagine that a string is attached to both kettlebells. This string should be tight and straight the entire set.



Plyo Pushups:

Exercise Description:

Place a kettlebell on its side so the handle faces you. Begin with your hands outside the kettlebell. Do a pushup and launch your body into the air. Land on the kettlebell in a close-grip position. Explosively launch yourself into the air again and land with your hands alongside the kettlebell.

Performance Tips:

Keep your abs and butt tight throughout the drill. Work on speed. Stop the set while you're still able to move quickly.



Renegade Row:

Exercise Description:

This drill can also be performed with dumbbells but the shape of the kettlebell offers additional stability requirements and makes it even more challenging.

Place two kettlebells on the ground spaced shoulder width apart. Get into an upper push-up position. From there, row one kettlebell into the air. Lower and repeat with your other arm.

Performance Tips:

Tighten everything, especially your abs and glutes. Your supporting arm should feel like it's driving hard, directly into the ground. Your grip and lat should lock down on your supporting side as well.



Alternating Bent-Over Row:

Exercise Description:

This drill is great for rowers and grapplers. Pick up two kettlebells and fold at the hips, not at the back. With one kettlebell in the down position row the other to your hip. Lower and repeat with your other arm.

Performance Tips:

There are several ways to perform this drill. You can hold one kettlebell in the up position while you row the other. You can keep one bell down while rowing the other. Or you can row them in a seesaw fashion, as one is coming up, the other is being lowered. Also, don't be afraid to work some rotation into this movement. You can also vary the pulling pattern, turning your palms to face inward, underhand or overhand. Experiment.



Two Kettlebell One-Arm Row:

Exercise Description:

Support one arm with a bench or your own leg. Grab two kettlebells in one hand. Use a thumbless grip and row.

Performance Tips:

To get the kettlebells into position, set them next to one another with their handles running parallel. Fold each handle inward so they meet in the middle.



Full Body Drills

Two kettlebell One-Arm Deadlift:

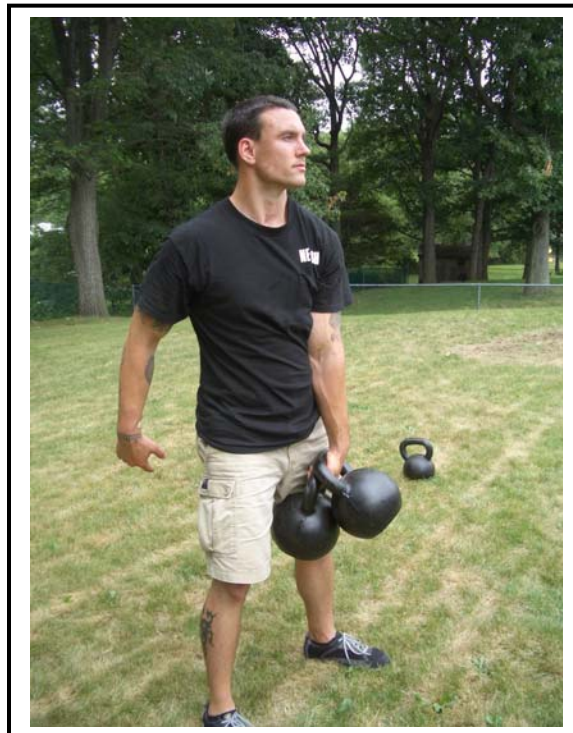
Exercise Description:

Every athlete needs a strong back and a strong grip; this drill meets both those needs perfectly.

Take a shoulder width stance. Place two kettlebells with their handles running sideways between your legs. Fold at the hips and deadlift both bells in one hand.

Performance Tips:

Use a thumb less grip. Lock down on everything before coming out of the bottom position, abs glutes and lats. Actively straighten your working arm by contracting your triceps. Fold at your hips and not your back. Look up slightly.



Kettlebell Swing:

Exercise Description:

Swings are a great way to learn the fundamental hip snap that so many other kettlebell drills rely on. They add a lot of horse power to your glutes, hamstrings and lower back and provide an outstanding power – endurance workout.

Place one kettlebell between your shoulder width feet. Pick up the bell with both hands. Loading your glutes and hamstrings. Allow the bell to swing behind your legs. With a powerful snap from your hips propel the kettlebell forward and up. The height of the swing can vary from waist, chest or head height.

Performance Tips:

Your arms simply go along for the ride. Your hips should be doing most of the work. If the kettlebell droops down while being swung, you're using too much shoulder.



Kettlebell High-Pull:

Exercise Description:

This drill along with the Swing are the building blocks of successful kettlebell training. Perform this drill just like the Swing, however, instead of using straight arms, finish the movement with an explosive upright rowing motion. The kettlebell's path should be vertical and close to your body.

Performance Tips:

Your elbows should lead the vertical pull. You can also use a second dip at the top and meet the kettlebell $\frac{3}{4}$ on the way up making your pull much shorter and powerful.



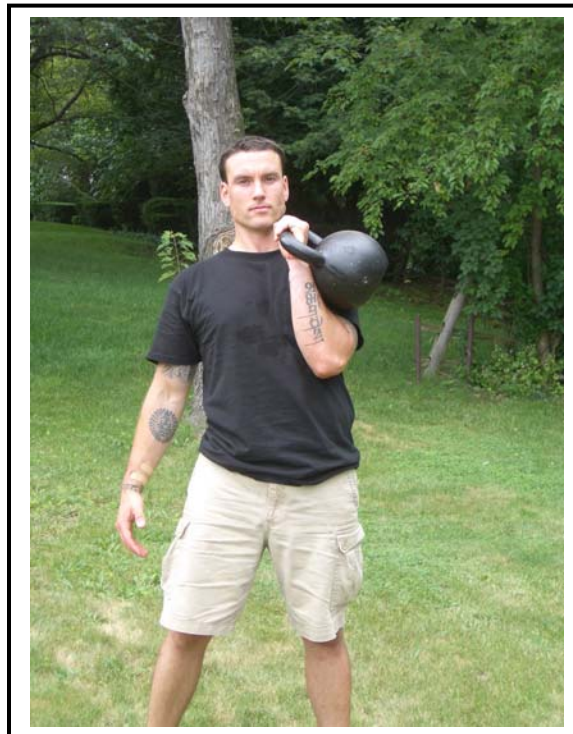
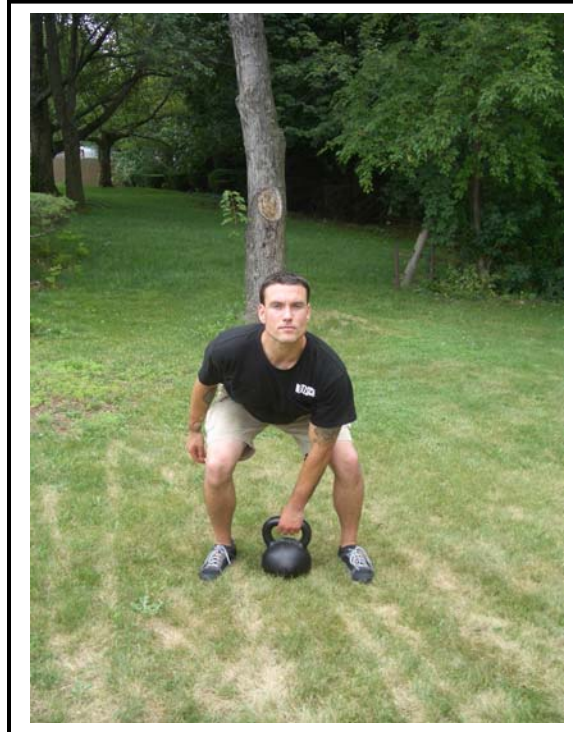
Kettlebell Clean:

Exercise Description:

This drill is basically a snatch but you end up in the shoulder rack position.

Performance Tips:

The same punching action applies to the clean that applies to the Snatch. You can also perform a second dip and let out some air out as you receive the kettlebell in the shoulder position. This will train your body to absorb force more effectively.



Kettlebell Thruster:

Exercise Description:

From the shoulder rack position, sit back into a full Front Squat. As you come out of the Front Squat go directly into an overhead press. There should be no break in your movement.

Performance Tips:

During the Front Squat keep your elbows tucked into your sides. Use the momentum from the Front Squat to aid in your overhead press. This is not a shoulder exercise but a full body smoker.



Kettlebell Jerk:

Exercise Description:

From the shoulder Rack Position, dip at your hips to start the movement. As you explode out of that dip send the kettlebell overhead using the momentum from your upward leg drive. As the kettlebell passes eye height perform a second dip and receive the kettlebell with a straight arm.

Performance Tip:

This drill takes timing. Your second dip should be crisp and quick and you **should not press** your arm out to complete the movement.



Explosive Power

Overhead Scoop Toss:

Exercise Description:

Tosses train your body to produce force and then release it. Throws are excellent at building power since you don't have to slow down the movement at your end range of motion. You can use a pre-swing to build momentum or work on starting strength by going from a dead stop. Both options have their place in training.

Place a kettlebell between your shoulder width feet. Reach down and grab the kettlebell by the horns. Swing the bell back and in a motion exactly like the Swing snap it forward, as the kettlebell reaches its highest point release it into the air above and behind you.

Performance Tips:

You can work on height distance or speed. Use a light kettlebell and use caution.



Hand-to-Hand Swing:

Exercise Description:

This drill is a basic release drill that revs up your metabolic engine while working on hand – eye coordination. Follow the same guidelines layed out for the Swing, however, as the kettlebell reaches it's highest point release with one hand while quickly catching with the other.

Performance Tips:

Match your breath with your force. Try to move the kettlebell as quickly as possible and try to utilize the stored elastic energy built up in your hamstrings and glutes.

Don't chase a falling kettlebell. Allow it to fall to the ground. Mind your toes.



High-Pull-Catch-Throw:

Exercise Description:

Perform a High-Pull as described earlier. As the kettlebell reaches chest height, release it and quickly move your palms underneath it to catch it. Once you catch the bell on your palms dip into a quarter squat. With an explosive drive upward launch the kettlebell forward and away from you into the air. The majority of the force should come from your hips and legs but your shoulders will be heavily involved.

You can use a staggered stance or a parallel stance.

Performance Tips:

You can work on height, speed or distance. You can also use a heavier kettlebell in this drill as compared to the Scoop tosses. You can toss the bell in one direction and sprint off in the opposite to work on changes in direction.



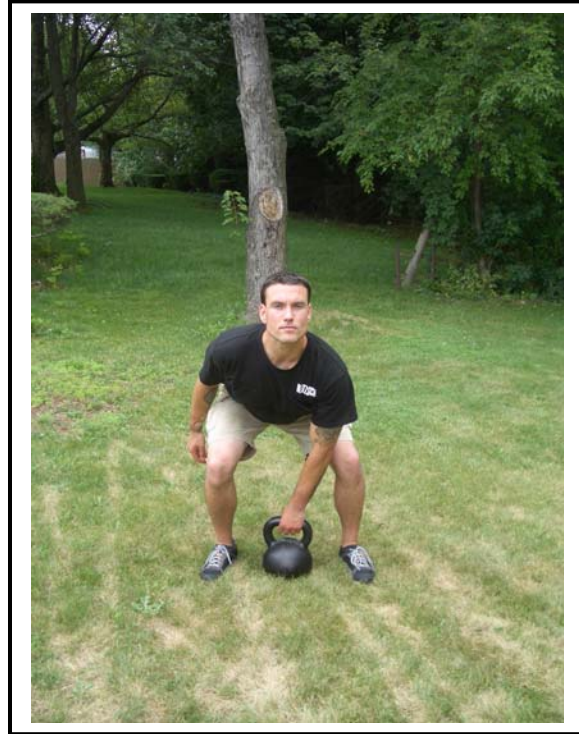
Snatch Throw:

Exercise Description:

Perform this drill just like a Snatch. At the top of the movement release the bell above and behind you.

Performance Tips:

Use a light bell. Practice
Extreme caution!!!



Core Conditioning

Windmill:

Exercise Description:

This movement resembles the Triangle pose in Yoga. You may get the KB overhead however you like, (clean + jerk, press). Kick out the hip on the side that is supporting the kettlebell, so that you leg and your overhead arm form a straight line. Maintain most of your weight on this foot. Point this same foot slightly to the inside, about 30 degrees. Look up at the kettlebell the entire time and fold at the hip until you reach the limits of your flexibility. Contract your glutes and come up following the same exact path that you took down. Do not twist at any time during this movement.

Performance Tips:

Make sure to contract your glute when rising from the down position. Don't hesitate to drop the bell if you feel like you may lose it. Only go as far as your flexibility allows.



Kettlebell Slingshot:

Exercise Description:

This drill is a fun way to work on your grip, core and hand eye coordination all at once.

From a standing posture start swing a kettlebell around your waist. As the kettlebell passes behind you release it into your other hand. Continue swinging until you release in front of your body again.

Performance Tips:

Match your breath with your force. Exhale as you catch the bell and absorb the force. Remember, "Fast feet are happy feet."

Work in both directions.



Under the Leg Pass:

Exercise Description:

This is another drill that works the grip, core and hand-eye coordination in one shot.

Fold at the hips and start to swing a kettlebell between and through your legs working in a figure eight pattern. Your weight may shift from one leg to the other. Your weight should be on the same side as the kettlebell.

Performance Tips:

Work in both directions.
Match your breath with the force, exhale to receive the kettlebell.



Hook Swing:

Exercise Description:

The Hook Swing is basically a Russian Twist while in the standing. Take one kettlebell in both hands using a pistol grip. Once your grip is secure, bring the kettlebell to waist height. Swing the kettlebell to one side while pivoting on the opposite foot. Quickly change directions using your abs and obliques and repeat on the other side.

Performance Tips:

Exhale as you reach the limits of your rotations. Just some quick sharp breaths. For extra conditioning and to train your body to absorb external forces you can allow the kettlebell to drive into your arms as you reach the final stage of your rotation.



Kettlebell Loading:

Exercise Description:

Kettlebell Loading adds tons of horse -power to your rotational strength and creates a strong and forceful trunk. Stand next to an object that is sturdy enough to hold the weight of your kettlebell. Place the kettlebell on the outside of your outside leg. Reach down and grab the kettlebell by the horns. Use your back and rotational muscles to lift and place your kettlebell on the object to your side. Pick up your kettlebell and place it on the ground using the same groove that you used to pick it up.

Performance Tips:

You may bend your knees during the entire drill. Maintain a very tight midsection and back during the entire drill as well. Start very light.



Blueprints for Success

I am a strong believer in short intense workouts for the majority of athletes. If you can't complete your workouts in 45 minutes you are either talking too much between sets or are performing way too much work. When designing a program, total training time must be taken into consideration, this includes dynamic warm-ups, strength and conditioning, agility, speed and skill work. With this in mind, below are just several of the programs that I use with my athletes. They are short and intense but address all the needs of those athletes.

The intention of this section is not to provide some generic set and rep scheme or some general program design template but rather provide you with workouts that have been the most productive and enjoyable.

Our programs revolve around kettlebell ballistic movements carried out at high intensities. This in no way limits our inclusion of other training tools such as medicine balls, dumbbells, barbells, sandbags, elastic bands and bodyweight drills.

Program #1 Strength –Endurance Emphasis:

Dynamic Warm-up -

Jog x 2 laps
Skip x2 lengths
Carioca x 2 lengths
Walking Lunge x 2 lengths

A1) Kettlebell Swings- 25,20,15,10,5

A2) Push-ups- 25,20,15,10,5

B1) Kettlebell Snatch- 12,10,8,6,4,2 (reps performed on each arm)

B2) Dips – 12,10,8,6,4,2

C1) Two Kettlebell Overhead Press- 6,6,6

C2) Pull-ups – 6,6,6

D1) Bodyweight Squats- 20,20,20

D2) Jump Rope – 1 min, 1 min, 1 min

Perform all sets for the prescribed number of repetitions before moving onto the second exercise. Sets may be broken down into smaller groups of repetitions but don't change drills until you complete all the reps for that set.

For example, a 25 rep set of kettlebell swings may have been easy for you, however, you could only manage sets of 10 push-ups, break up those push-ups until you reach 25 and **then** move on to the next set of swings.

All exercises are performed back-to-back, superset exercise **A1** with exercise **A2** and so on.

Program #2, Strength –Speed Emphasis:

Dynamic Warm-up

Bodyweight Squats- 5,10,15

Push-ups-5, 10,15

Pull-ups or bodyweight horizontal Rows-5, 10, 15

A1) Kettlebell Front Squat- 5,5,5,5,5

A2) Kettlebell Jump Shrug- 5,5,5,5,5

B1) Two Kettlebell One-Handed Deadlift- 5,5,5

B2) Kettlebell Snatch- 5,5,5

- C1) Kettlebell Overhead Press- 5,5,5
- C2) Kettlebell Jerk- 5,5,5

The first drill in each superset should be heavy enough to make you work for the 5th rep. For the second exercise, pick a weight that you can accelerate very quickly

Program #3 Power Emphasis:

Dynamic Warm-up

- Bodyweight Squat-5, 10, 15
- Push-ups-5, 10, 15
- Pull-ups or Bodyweight Horizontal rows-5, 10,15

- A1) Kettlebell Snatch-3, 3,3
- A2) Kettlebell Snatch Throw- 1,1,1

- B1) Kettlebell Swing- 5,5,5
- B2) Kettlebell Overhead Scoop Toss-1, 1,1

- C1) Kettlebell Jerk- 3,3,3
- C2) One-Handed Push Throw- 1,1,1

Perform every drill as quickly as possible.



Sample Programs

There is no better training for a sport than the sport itself. However, a properly designed strength and conditioning program can elevate your performance and reduce injuries on the field. Training programs will differ according to the time of year and the position you play. The following programs are samples of what a well -constructed program could look like.

Volley Ball

Volley Ball players will benefit greatly from the use of kettlebell ballistic lifts. Their need to express their power vertically will be met perfectly with kettlebell Olympic Lifting variations and their hybrids. Volley Ball is an extremely physical sport and the more resilient and powerful the player, the more likely they are to have a successful season and career.

Monday:

A1) One- arm kettlebell Snatch (from the floor) – 10 x 3/3

B1) Two kettlebell Jerk- 5 x 3

C1) Kettlebell Thruster- 5 x 5

C2) Pull-ups- 5 x 5

D1) Jumping Lunges- 3 x 5/5

D2) Multi-lateral Lunge 3 x 12/12

E1) Abs

Wednesday:

A1) One-arm Clean and Jerk (from the floor) - 5 x 3/3

B1) One –arm kettlebell Snatch- 5 x 5/5

C1) Kettlebell Front Squats- 5/5

C2) Pull-ups- 5 x 5

D1) Hand- to- Hand Swings 5 x 10/10

E1) Abs

Friday:

A1) One – arm Swings- 5 reps (per hand) on the minute for 10 minutes. Start each set on the top of each minute until 10 minutes is completed.

B1) Plyo Push-ups –5 x 5

B2) Alternating Bent-over Row- 5 x 5/5

C1) Burpee w/ jump- 5 x 10

C2) Kettlebell Overhead Press – 5 x 5/5

D1) Abs

Ice Hockey

To improve their speed and power Ice Hockey players should use kettlebell explosive lifts for the majority of their exercises. Also, since kettlebells train the body to absorb force they are an essential ingredient of the Ice Hockey athletes injury reduction program.

Monday:

A1) Kettlebell Clean/Front Squat/Jerk – 5 x 3/3

B1) Jumping Lunges- 5 x 10

C1) Lateral Lunges- 3 x 10/10

D1) Hand –to Hand Swings – 3 x 10/10

D2) Push-ups- 3 x 20

E1) Kettlebell Hook Swing – 3 x 20

Wednesday:

A1) Two kettlebell Jerk- 5 x 5

A2) Alternating Bent Over Row – 5 x 5/5

B1) Two kettlebell Clean- 5 x 5

B2) Pull-ups – 5 x 5

C1) See-Saw Press- 3 x 5/5

C2) Rotational Squats – 3 x 10

D1) Kettlebell Hook Swing- 3 x 20

D2) Kettlebell Loading – 3 x 6/6

Friday:

A1) One-arm Jerks- 3 x 10

B1) Two Kettlebell Thrusters –3 x 10

B2) Renegade Row- 3 x 5/5

C1) Lateral Lunges- 3 x 8/8

C2) Jumping Lunges- 3x 20

D1) Jump Shrug – 5 x 5

E1) Abs

Wrestling/Combat Grappling

Wrestling and combat grappling is a grueling one on one match that may require you to sustain powerful movements for up to 10 minutes. Your ability to tolerate fatigue and continue to overpower your opponent will ensure your victory. Kettlebell training is ideal for these sports since it builds great amounts of power-endurance and pain tolerance.

Monday:

A1) Hand-to Hand Swings – 20,18,16,14,12,10,8,6,4,2

A2) Push-ups- 20,18,16,14,12,10,8,6,4,2

B1) Kettlebell Clean – 5 x 5/5

B2) Kettlebell Jerk – 5x 5/5

C2) Kettlebell Thrusters – 10,8,6,4,2

C3) Pull-ups- 10,8,6,4,2

D1) Kettlebell Hook Swing- 3 x 20

D2) Kettlebell Loading – 3 x 6/6

Wednesday:

A1) Kettlebell Clean/Front Squat/Jerk – 3 x /10/10/10

B1) Kettlebell Snatch/Swing/High Pull- 3 x 10/10/10

C1) Kettlebell Squat/Lunge/Jumping Lunge- 3x 20/20/10

D1) Pull-ups

D2) Abs

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Snatch/High Pull/Clean- 3x 5/5/5

B1) Kettlebell Front Squat- 12,10,8,6,4,2

B2) Pull-ups –12,10,8,6,4,2

C1) Kettlebell Burpee w/jump- 3 x 20

C2) Dips- 3 x 20

D1) Burpee w/ High Pull -3 x 10

D2) T-Stability Push-ups- 3 x 10

E1) Abs

Football

Monday:

A1) One arm kettlebell Clean-10 x 3

B1) One arm kettlebell Jerk- 10 x 3

C1) Kettlebell Thruster – 5 x 5

D1) One –legged Deadlift- 5 x 5

E1) Abs

Wednesday:

A1) Two kettlebell Clean (from the floor) -5x3

B1) Two kettlebell Jerk- 5x 3

C1) One kettlebell Front Squat- 5 x 5/5

D1) See Saw Press- 5 x 5/5

E1) One kettlebell two –handed Deadlift- 5 x 5/5

F1) Abs

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Clean and Jerk- 5 x 3

B1) Kettlebell Snatch (from the high hang)- 5 x 3/3

C1) Kettlebell Swing- 5 x 5

C2) Dumbbell Incline Presses- 5 x 5

D1) Abs

Racket Sports

Kettlebell training will work wonders for athletes involved in racket sports. Racket sport athletes are notoriously one-sided and unbalanced. Uni-lateral kettlebell training will develop strength in the underused side and help correct imbalances due to their sport's requirements. Also, since racket sports involve short explosive motions, kettlebell training will boost power output tremendously.

Monday:

- A1)** One –arm kettlebell Snatch- 5 x 5/5
- B1)** One-arm two kettlebell row- 3 x 8/8
- C1)** Lateral Lunges- 3 x 8/8
- D1)** Kettlebell Front Squats w/ rotation- 5 x 5/5
- E1)** Kettlebell Hook Swing- 3 x 20

Wednesday:

- A1)** One-arm Bottoms-up Clean- 5 x 3/3
- B1)** One-arm kettlebell Jerk- 5 x 3/3
- C1)** Hand to Hand Swing – 3x10/10
- C2)** Kettlebell Slingshot – 3 x 30 seconds
- D1)** Tactical Lunges- 3 x 12/12

Friday:

A1) One-arm kettlebell Clean- 5 x 3/3

B1) Bottoms-Up Press- 5 x 3/3

C1) Alternating Row- 5 x 5/5

D1) Kettlebell Thruster- 5 x 5

E1) Under-the-leg-pass- 3x 30 seconds. (Both directions)

Basketball

Explosive kettlebell lifting will increase vertical power and the ability to remain physical. Although not considered a contact sport, basketball contains situations where athletes push, shove and manhandle one another to get into position and make a shot or a get a rebound. The basketball athletes' ability to contend with external forces is paramount.

Monday:

A1) Kettlebell Hang Snatch- 5 x 3/3

B1) Overhead Squat- 3 x 3/3

C1) Kettlebell Front Squat- 5 x 5

D1) Pull-up-3 x max

D2) Tactical Lunges – 3x 12/12

E1) Between the Leg Pass- 3 x 30 seconds

Wednesday:

A1) Kettlebell Clean and Jerk – 5 x 5,4,3,2,1 (L/R)

B1) Kettlebell Front Squat w/rotation- 3 x 12

C1) Renegade Row – 3 x 5/5

D1) Kettlebell Burpee – 30 seconds on 30 seconds off for 3 minutes.

E1) Hook Swing- 3x12

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Swing – 5 x 5

A2) Squat Jumps – 5 x 5

B1) Kettlebell Thruster- 5,4,3,2,1

B2) Pull-ups- 5,4,3,2,1

C1) Kettlebell Loading- 3 x 5/5

Throwing (shot put, discus)

Kettlebell lifting and throwing events have a much in common. Both rely on explosive triple extension of the ankle, knee and hip as well as a powerful upper body movement. Kettlebell throws and tosses as well as Olympic lifting variations will increase power production and teach the athlete to recruit their entire body in explosive movements.

Monday:

A1) Kettlebell Hand Clean – 3 x 5

B1) Kettlebell High –Pull- 3 x 5

C1) Waiters Press- 5 x 5

D1) Two kettlebell one-arm row- 3 x 5/5

E1) Abs

Wednesday:

A1) Kettlebell Jerk- 3 x 5

B1) One-arm kettlebell Front Squat –3 x 5

C1) See-Saw Press- 5 x 5

D1) Renegade Row- 3 x 5/5

E1) Kettlebell Loading- 3 x 5/5

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Snatch- 10 x 1

B1) One –arm Thruster –5 x 5/5

C1) Kettlebell Swing – 10 x 3

D1) Plyo Push-up- 5x5

E1) Pull-up-5 x max

F1) Abs

Baseball

Baseball players need to be fast from a dead stop and move well laterally while facing forward. Level changes and rotation is a large part of their game. Baseball players

will benefit greatly from the added hip drive and explosive leg strength that kettlebell training delivers.

Monday:

A1) Kettlebell Lateral Swing – 3 x 5/5

B1) Front Squat from center hold position- 5 x 5

C1) Multi-directional Lunge- 3 x 12

D1) One-legged Deadlift- 3 x 5/5

E1) Kettlebell Slingshot- 3 x 1 minute

Wednesday:

A1) Walking Swing- 3 x 30 yards

B1) Kettlebell Snatch – 5 x 5

C1) Front Squat from center hold position- 5 x 5

D1) Between the leg pass- 3 x 30 seconds

D2) Thumb Press – 3 x 5

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Clean and Jerk- 3 x 5/5

B1) Hand –to Hand Swing- 5 x 10

C1) Two kettlebell One-arm Deadlift- 5 x 5

D1) Alternating Row- 3 x 5

E1) Windmill- 2 x 5/5

Lacrosse

Lacrosse players need a tremendous amount of power-endurance and stamina. Their ability to recover quickly is an important part of their success as well. Kettlebell circuits and interval work will ensure that the athlete possesses those qualities plus some.

Monday:

A1) Kettlebell Burpee w/ High-Pull- 30 seconds on, 30 seconds off for 3 minutes.

B1) Kettlebell Swing- 20,15,10,5

B2) Push-ups- 20,15,10,5

C1) Jumping Lunges 5 x 5/5

C2) Kettlebell slingshot- 3 x 12/12

D1) Farmers Walk- 5 x 50 yards

Wednesday:

A1) Kettlebell Swing- 20 seconds on 10 seconds off for 4 minutes.

B1) See -Saw Press – 5 x 5

B2) Alternating Row- 5 x 5

C1) Front Squat- 5 x 5

D1) One-legged Deadlift- 5 x 5

E1) Hook Swing- 3 x 12

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Snatch/Clean/Swing- 3 x 5/5/5

B1) Walking Lunges 3 x 30 yards

C1) kettlebell High-Pull – 20,15,10,5

C2) Push-up – 20,15,10,5

Soccer

Much like Lacrosse, Soccer requires huge amounts of power-endurance and stamina. Quick changes of direction and single-leg strength are a must for Soccer athletes. Hip drive and quick recovery rates are also needed. Kettlebell circuits as well as interval work will allow the athlete to maintain peak power output during the entire game.

Monday:

A1) Lateral Swing- 3 x 20

B1) Pistols – 3 x 5

C1)- Lateral Lunges-3 x 12

D1) See-Saw Press -5 x 5

D2) Alternating Row- 5 x 5

Wednesday:

A1) Lateral Clean – 5 x 5

B1) Kettlebell Snatch- 10,8,6,4,2

C1) Jumping Lunges- 3x10

C2) Push-ups- 3 x 10

D1) Kettlebell Slingshot

Friday:

A1) Kettlebell Snatch- 20,15,10,5

A2) Jog 50 Yards

B1) Kettlebell Clean- 15,10,5

B2) Side Shuffle – 50 yards

C1) Two Kettlebell Burpees- 20,15,10,5

C2) Farmers Walk – 50 yards.



Complex Training

There are two training methods that are known as complexes. One involves following a strength movement with a plyometric movement or vice versa and the other involves stringing together different drills to make one seamless movement. Both are incredible ways to train and both offer distinct benefits

The first version should be employed to increase the speed and explosiveness of your movements. The initial strength movement primes the nervous system and prepares it for a quicker and more powerful contraction during the second plyometric movement. Your first drill should be heavy but doable. Your second drill should be very high speed so use lightweights and move as quickly as possible. Take about 3 minutes rest between drills. Below are several complexes that have worked well for me in the past.

Complex Routine #1

A1) Kettlebell Front Squats 5x5

A2) Kettlebell Jump Squats 5x5

B1) 2 Kettlebell One-Arm Deadlift 5x5

B2) Kettlebell Snatch Toss 5x1

C1) Kettlebell One Arm Press 5x5

C2) Kettlebell Push Toss 5x1

Complex Routine #2

A1) Kettlebell Reverse Lunges 5x5

A2) Kettlebell Jumping Lunges w/rotations 5x 10

B1) Kettlebell Squat 5x5

B2) Kettlebell Jump Shrug 5x5

C1) Kettlebell Overhead Press 5x5

C2) Kettlebell Jerk 5x5

Complex Routine #3

A1) Kettlebell Swing-10, 10, 10

A2) Kettlebell Overhead Scoop Toss 1,1,1

B1) Kettlebell Front Squat –5, 5, 5

B2) Medicine Ball Push Pass against wall- 20, 20, 20

C1) Kettlebell Overhead Press-5, 5, 5

C2) Kettlebell Jerk-5, 5, 5

This brings us to the other form of training known as complex training.

Complexes blend several distinct movements together to form one seamless drill.

Kettlebell complexes are an outstanding way to fire up your metabolic conditioning and training intensity. They're also a great way to complete lots of work in little time. There are three different ways to arrange your complex training:

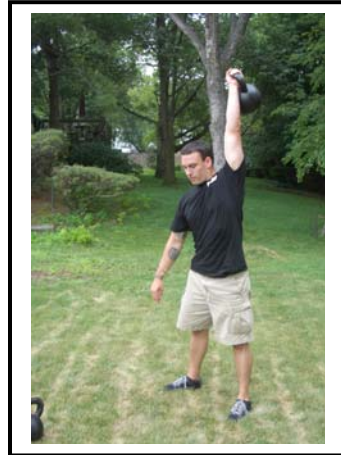
- Succession
- Sequence
- Combination

Doing complexes in **succession** is the easiest way to learn. With the succession method you complete all the desired reps of one drill before moving onto the next.

In **sequence** you shift from one drill directly into the other until you finish the entire complex.

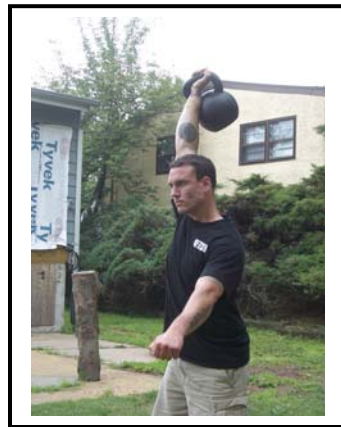
In **combinations** you join several drills together to form one smooth drill.

Here is how a kettlebell complex involving a clean and jerk would look like using the succession model:



Perform 5 Cleans and then perform 5 Jerks

Here's how those same drills would look using the sequence model:



Perform 1 Clean directly into 1 Jerk until the set is done.

For the combination model it becomes a little trickier to find movements that flow into one another. Snatches and lunges work well as do cleans and squats. Make sure to combine the drills in a way that makes the two separate drills invisible.

Here's what it would look like:



The classic high pull is an excellent example of a complex performed in the combination method. The squat flows directly into the upright row without any interruption.

Once you master two movement complexes you should strive to develop three movement complexes and eventually four movement complexes.

Here are some of our favorites:



5 Snatches into 5 Cleans into 5 Swings



5 Overhead Squats into 5 Front Squats into 5 Cleans



5 Snatches into 5 Cleans into 5 High Pulls



5 Swings into 5 High Pulls into 5 Snatches

The previous illustrations are all performed in succession. If you were to change the way you arranged these drills into a sequence the entire set would take on a completely different feel and challenge you in an entirely new way. There is no right or wrong when it comes to complex training. Simply pick drills that flow into one another well, have a high metabolic demand, use a lot of muscle mass and spreads the fatigue across the entire body as opposed to one muscle group.



Conclusion

This book is not designed to be the be- all -end -all of kettlebell training information. It was written to inform you of the possibilities that exist in kettlebell training for sport. Kettlebell training will continue to make its way into weight rooms and facilities across the world. As it does, the performance of athletes will rise along with it. Kettlebell training will evolve into a fundamental component of strength and conditioning programs. As it does, you owe it to yourself to be the most educated and prepared athlete in your sport. I suggest you learn as much as possible about kettlebell training and reap the benefits of its unique power. The choice to embrace kettlebell training is up to you. You can choice to continue your stale outdated programs or solidify your spot at the top by becoming a kettlebell athlete.

About the Author

Jason C. Brown is a strength coach, sports performance specialist, and unabashed [kettlebell](#) zealot. These passions invigorate his training style, which is at once energetic, highly motivational, and informed by over fifteen years of weight lifting experience. Jason's client-based training approach assesses the goals of each client with the discerning eye of a clinician, dispensing specifically tailored programs, be they for athletes in search of improved performance, or individuals in search of slimmer, stronger physiques. He is a full-time professional trainer who devotes his considerable energies into spreading his philosophy to a diverse population that includes, but is not limited to, runners, basketball players, hockey players, and weekend warriors.

Jason possesses a wealth of technical and scientific knowledge obtained both as a student in Human Movement Studies at Temple University where he completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology, and as a successful athlete in his own right. In 2003 he placed first and second in the heavyweight division of the first ever U.S. kettlebell meet, lifting 32 and 40 kg kettlebells respectively. Jason, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, is also a student of various martial arts, with an emphasis on Brazilian jiu-jitsu. He is a member of the National Strength and Conditioning Association and is certified by that organization, as well as the Russian Kettlebell Challenge. Jason is currently a columnist and resident kettlebell expert for [SportSpecific.com](#).

