

THE NAKED WARRIOR

GUIDE TO HANGING LEG RAISES—

For Functionally Tougher, Super-Strong Abs

By

PAVEL

THE NAKED WARRIOR

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Website <http://www.dbrigham.com>
Tel/Fax: (612) 827-3431 • Email: dbrigham@visi.com
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HANGING LEG RAISES—

FOR FUNCTIONALLY TOUGHER, SUPER-STRONG ABS

I have never known a single person who regularly practiced hanging leg raises and failed to develop a hard and useful set of abs. Ever. The HLR belongs in the training schedule of any hard comrade.

- Men in uniform get the strength and active flexibility to ace extreme obstacle courses.
- Fighters put more power into their kicks.
- Lifters up their squat and deadlift poundages.
- Everybody gets a healthier, more resilient back.

Start by finding an appropriate bar. Ideally you should be able to hang with your legs and arms straight with your feet clear off the ground. Your hip flexors will get a good stretch and your back will thank you for it.

Jump up and hang, your elbows locked. You may have to consciously tense your triceps if you have a hard time keeping your arms straight. It is important –HLRs with flexed elbows are likely to stress out your shoulders.

Another shoulder friendly tip: start with a narrow grip. You should almost be able to touch your thumbs if you straightened them out. The narrow grip pre-stretches the lats and thus unloads the shoulders. Eventually you should be able to move your hands out to shoulder width but staying with a narrow grip is fine too.



It goes without saying: do not use straps or other grip-assist gimmicks!

You must understand that you will not get very far if you simply try to raise your legs. The HLR action is similar to the ‘evil wheel’ –it is a jackknife. In other words, as you are lifting your legs you should be ‘lowering’ your shoulders by pressing down on the bar with your arms.

Take a breath and pull your straight arms down ‘into their sockets’. An observer would say that your arms have stayed straight but ‘got shorter’, retracted like a turtle’s head. ‘Tightening your armpits’ is another way to describe this action.

Simultaneously push down on the bar with straight arms as if you are doing a straight-arm pull-down –press hard! –and bring your legs up to the bar. Keep your toes pointed and your thighs tight.

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Raise your legs in a slow, controlled motion. Jerky moves are a total waste of time and are good only for amusing the bystanders. I have seen this character on the old Muscle Beach in Santa Monica. Decker out in the latest workout attire, the dude came with his own stool (!) that he used to get up on the bar. He strapped a pair of slings to support his elbows and proceeded to swing his knees up and down and to each side at the pace of two reps per second. I did not see this macho man's abs, and, based on the bulge in his designer T-shirt, I never will.

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Do not tilt your head back. While making the exercise easier, looking up converts the hanging leg raise from a strength exercise to more of a technique and leverage drill. So keep your chin slightly tucked at all times.

Lower your straight legs totally controlling the movement all the way down; don't fall through the bottom! Keep your lats firing on the negative. By the way, expect to get better at pullups, both weighted and bodyweight, from HLRs done by the book.



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When you have bottomed out release the tension in your waist, rib cage, and armpits; let your abs get a full stretch before another rep.

Chances are, you are lacking in both strength and flexibility to do a legit HLR as described above. If that is the case, practice hanging knee raises according to the same instructions.





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As your strength and flexibility improves gradually straighten out your legs more and more, especially on the negative. At the same time practice the following back and hamstring stretch from my book [*Relax into Stretch*](#).

Stand with your knees straight or bent ever so slightly. Slowly bend forward as far as you can without strain. Keep your head down. Take a deep breath, into your stomach if you know how. At the same time make fists and clench your glutes as hard as possible; imagine that you are trying to pinch a coin. Make sure that your body stays in place and does not come up any higher.

Hold your breath and tension for a second, then suddenly release both with a sigh of relief. Your body will sag and your stretch will increase. Keep repeating until your progress stops. This stretch may be inappropriate for people with high blood pressure and some other health conditions; check with your doctor.

Bend your knees into a semi-squat before standing up, an important measure for back safety. Repeat the stretch for three sets. You may alternate your stretches with your sets of ab exercises. You will notice that your abdominals are stronger than usual. They are because you have taken your body off 'the parking brake' of your tight lower back and hamstring muscles.

Do up to twenty-five total repetitions in sets of one to five. Once you have worked up to 5x5 of strict straight leg raises all the way to the bar make the exercise more challenging. Hold a ball or some other object between your knees or ankles. A pair of heavy boots will work too.

A simple way to make the HLR tougher and to challenge your obliques more is to touch the bar with your shins not in the center but slightly –slightly! –outside one of the hands.

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The secret to the angled HLR is pulling harder with one arm. A good way to implement this variation into your program is three way HLRs: left-right-straight for a triple or left-right-left-right-straight for a fiver.

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You can also make your hanging leg raises more miserable with ‘scissors’ negatives. There are two types of ‘scissors’, horizontal and vertical. To do the former slowly spread your straight legs as wide as possible when your feet are by the bar. Imagine that you are trying to ‘pull your hips out of their sockets’. Keep your toes pointed. Close the ‘scissors’ and cross your feet over as far as you can—while slowly going down. Keep abducting and adducting your hips all the way to the straight hang. One rep per set is usually enough with this highly concentrated exercise.



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The vertical scissors are even tougher. Once your shins have touched the bar lower one leg as deep as possible before lowering the other. Then raise your feet together to the bar as before and repeat starting with the other leg. Naturally, this exercise imposes great demands on your flexibility. You will have greater success if you imagine that you are trying to force your 'scissors' open as one of your legs is going down. That is, do not just focus on just lowering one leg; remember to keep pushing the other one up. Imagine that your goal is spreading your feet as far apart as possible, reach for the floor with one and for the ceiling with the other. Pointed toes as usual. If you count lowering your left and then lowering your right as one rep, one to two reps per set is plenty.

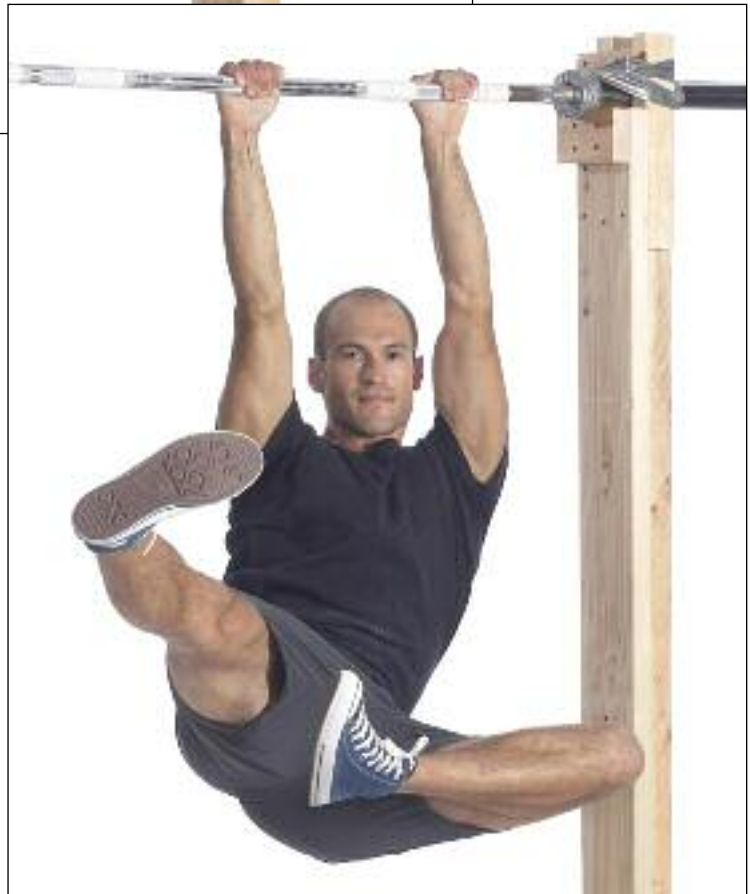


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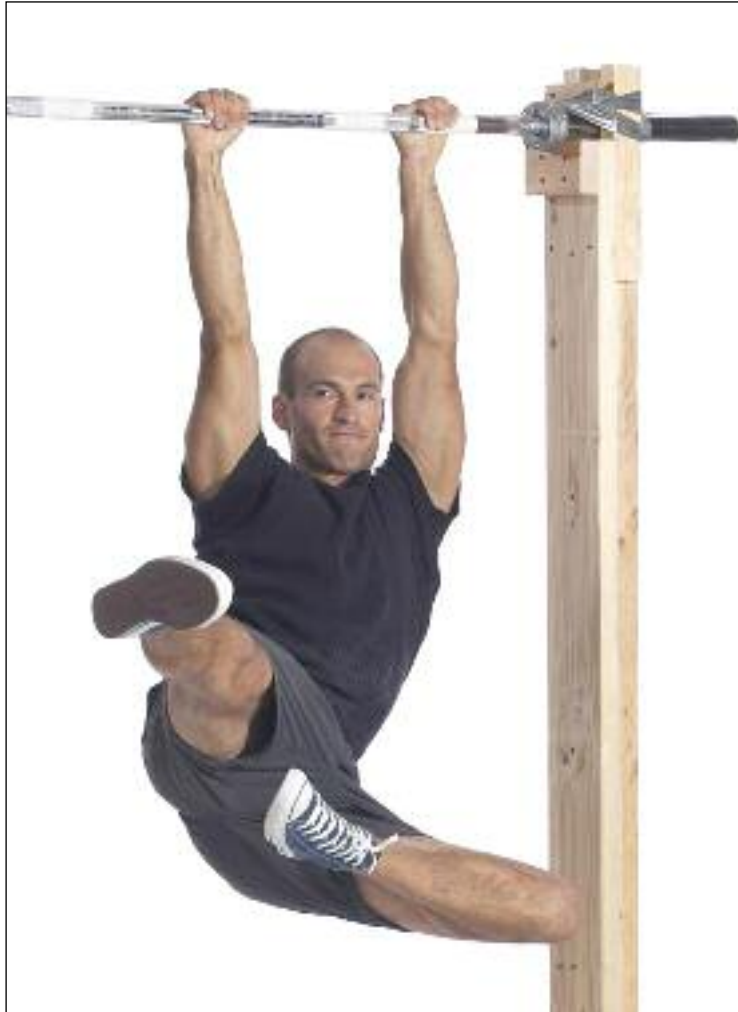
A cool martial arts variation is to bring your knees to your chest and then slowly imitate roundhouse, side, and front kicks. As with the angles HLR, pull harder with one arm but keep both straight. Form a wall with the muscles running down the front and the side of your ribcage.



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Once you are on the first name basis with HLRs you may try hip pullovers, a favorite gymnastic exercise in the Russian military. Unlike the hanging leg raise, it is done dynamically, with momentum. Start a pullup, raise your legs, and roll over the bar, all in one motion.



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The timing of this exercise takes a knack; practice. Enlisted men in the Soviet military had to do six hip pullovers in heavy boots to ace the PT test. Here are the rules as described in the armed forces regulations: “The hip pullover from a hang on a pullup bar. Perform from a hang with an overgrip. Pull up slightly, raise your legs to the bar, roll over it and finish in a support on straight arms. Pause in the hang and in the support for 1-2 sec. Lower yourself to hang free style. Bending and spreading of the legs and movement of the body are allowed. Leg kips are disallowed.”



Spetsnaz vet and one of the most respected hand-to-combat instructors in the former Soviet Union Anatoly Taras insists that a special operator or a fighter who cannot do 15-25 is a nobody. Personally I like to do this drill in the context of my morning recharge/joint mobility regime as it does not tax any muscle group directly and does an excellent job of loosening me up.

GTGing the HLRs would be great but it is not likely that you would have a handy pullup bar. So do them two to four times a week. If you move heavy iron they are great to finish with.

Russian lifters are convinced that this drill does a fine job of decompressing the spine and normalizing the intra-abdominal pressure after heavy squats and pulls. Igor Shestakov who holds the All Time Historical World Record in the squat in the 181-pound class –854.3 pounds or 4.75 times his bodyweight or nine forty-five pound wheels per side! –starts and finishes his workouts with 2x20 strict HLRs and has an extraordinarily developed midsection as a bonus with his world record.

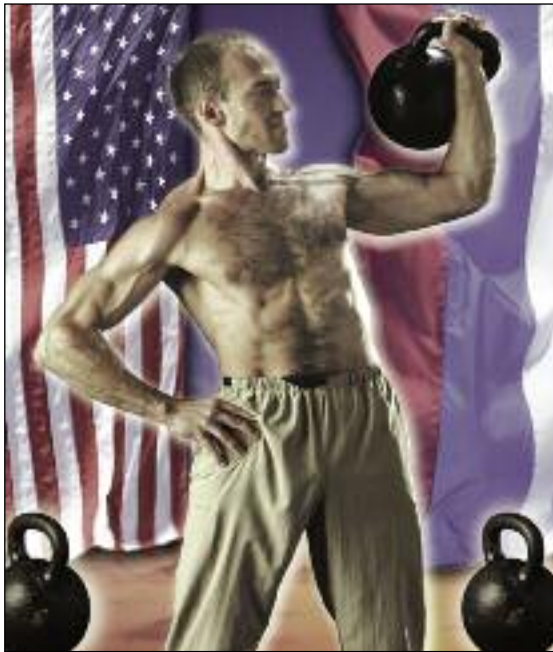
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Totalling 50 reps of HLRs in as many sets as it took three times a week after heavy iron was the standard operating procedure in the underground gyms of Lyubertsi in the 1980s. Street toughs from this small town in the greater Moscow were feared for their rare combo of fighting skills and muscle. I believe that low reps with high tension, e.g. 5x5, are best for strength while higher reps are preferable for back health. Either way, you cannot go wrong with HLRs.

Weenies hate the hanging leg raise because it is excruciatingly tough. It takes real strength in the waist, something the high rep crunch generation does not possess. It also takes flexibility and most muscle men are about as limber as astronauts in Moon suits. You have two choices. You could keep whining about how hard it is to hold on to the bar, how much your shoulders hurt, and how you do not feel anything in your abs. Or, you could rise up to the challenge. The bar is set high and it is waiting.

POWER TO YOU,
NAKED WARRIOR!
PAVEL

ABOUT PAVEL



Pavel Tsatsouline, Master of Sports, is a former Soviet Special Forces physical training instructor who has been hailed as “the modern king of kettlebells” for his role in fomenting the Russian kettlebell revolution in the West.

In 1998 Pavel introduced the ancient Russian strength and conditioning tool to an unsuspecting American public in his subversive article, *Vodka, Pickle Juice, Kettlebell Lifting, and Other Russian Pastimes*. The article was published by MILO, a magazine for tough hombres who bend steel and lift rocks. When Pavel started getting mail from guys with busted noses, cauliflower ears, scars, or at least Hells Angels tattoos, his publisher took notice.

In 2001 **Dragon Door** published Pavel's breakthrough bestseller *The Russian Kettlebell Challenge* and forged the first US-made Russian-style cast iron kettlebell. RKC™, the first kettlebell instructor course on American soil, kicked off shortly thereafter.

Finally Pavel, kettlebell in his fist, was voted 'Hot Trainer of the Year' by *Rolling Stone*. As the kettlebell invasion gained momentum Pavel appeared in media ranging from *Pravda* to Fox News.

Given the kettlebell's harsh reputation, Pavel's early students looked like they came from the federal witness protection program. Today these hard living men have had to begrudgingly share the Russian kettlebell with Hollywood movie stars and other unlikely kettlebellers.

Fed up with the touchy-feely drivel that was passed as fitness advice, smart folks have gone hardcore. In 2004 **Dr. Randall Strossen**, one of the most respected names in the strength world, stated, "In our eyes, Pavel Tsatsouline will always reign as the modern king of kettlebells since it was he who popularized them to the point where you could almost find a country filled with his converts..."

Pavel is the author of numerous other bestselling titles that have helped change the face of exercise in America, including his seminal strength classics *Power to the People!*, *Beyond Bodybuilding*, *Enter The Kettlebell!*, and *The Naked Warrior*.

To further develop your kettlebell knowledge and skills base and to possibly receive direct feedback from Pavel, visit Dragon Door's forum at RussianKettlebells.com.

The Graduate Course In Instant Strength Gains

"I went from 5 to 10 pullups in one week."

"Last night I did 15 one-arm pushups with each arm. Two months ago I couldn't do one complete rep."

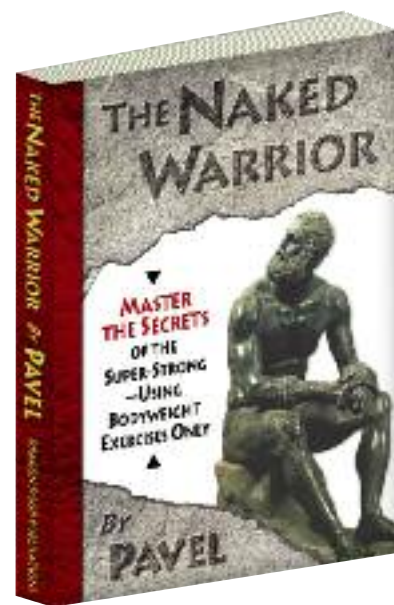
"I could do one wobbly one-legged squat... [Two weeks later] I did 5 clean, butt-to-ground pistols."

Have you noticed—the greater a man's skill, the more he achieves with less? And the skill of strength is no exception. From the ancient days of Greek wrestling, to the jealously guarded secrets of Chinese Kung Fu masters, to the hard men of modern spec ops, warriors and allied strongmen have developed an amazing array of skills for generating inhuman strength.

But these skills have been scattered far and wide, held closely secret, or communicated in a piecemeal fashion

that has left most of us frustrated and far from reaching our true strength potential.

Now, for the first time, Russian strength expert and former *Spetsnaz* instructor Pavel has gathered many of these devastating techniques into one highly teachable skill set. In *The Naked Warrior* Pavel reveals exactly what it takes to be super-strong in minimum time—when your body is your only tool.



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The Naked Warrior

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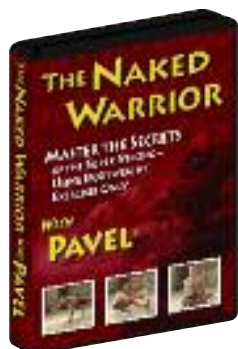
"Pavel's Naked Warrior DVD is worth its weight in gold!"

"The Naked Warrior DVD is worth its weight in gold! I just completed several honest one arm pushups after viewing the NW DVD. Despite reading the book and practicing, I just couldn't make it happen. I watched the DVD and finally understood that I was letting my shoulder drift. Tightened up and several honest square-to-the-floor one arm pushups were mine!!"—siameeser, dragondoor.com forum, 5/13/04

"NW DVD is fantastic ! I had the book & have been working toward full range pistols and OAPUs for a while. A HUGE help to see Pavel doing the movements. Results: Before watching DVD - I could do 2 OAPUs on a good day with so-so form. First workout after watching DVD: 1 set of 3 and 2 sets of 2 with good form. For pistols (at about a foot off the floor). Before I watched the DVD - 2 reps with shaky form. First workout after watching DVD - 2 sets of 5 and one set of 4 solid. Very impressed with DVD - thanks Com. Pavel."—dkaler, dragondoor.com forum, 5/17/04

The Naked Warrior

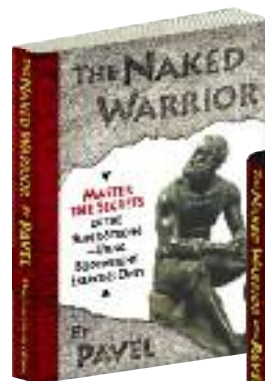
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“Kettlebell Training...The Closest Thing You Can Get to Fighting, Without Throwing A Punch”

—Federal Counterterrorist Operator

The kettlebell. AK-47 of physical training hardware. Hunk of iron on a handle. Simple, sinister, brutal—and ferociously effective for developing explosive strength, dramatic power and never-say-die conditioning. The man’s choice for the toughest, most demanding, highest-yield exercise tool on the planet. Guaranteed to forge a rugged, resilient, densely-muscled frame—built to withstand the hardest beating and dish it right back out, 24/7.

Once the prized and jealously-guarded training secret of elite Russian athletes, old-school strongmen and the military, the kettlebell has invaded the West. And taken no prisoners—thanks to former Soviet Special Forces physical training instructor and strength author, *Pavel Tsatsouline’s* 2001 publication of *The Russian Kettlebell Challenge* and his manufacture of the first traditional Russian kettlebell in modern America.

American hardmen of all stripes were quick to recognize what their Russian counterparts had long known—nothing, nothing beats the kettlebell, when you’re looking for a single tool to dramatically impact your strength and conditioning. A storm of success has swept the American S & C landscape, as kettlebell “Comrades” have busted through to new PRs, broken records, thrashed their opponents and elevated their game to new heights of excellence.

With *Enter the Kettlebell!* Pavel delivers a significant upgrade to his original landmark work, *The Russian Kettlebell Challenge*. Drawing on five years of developing and leading the world’s first and premiere kettlebell instructor certification program, and after spending five years of additional research into what really works for dramatic results with the kettlebell—we have *Enter the Kettlebell!*

Pavel lays out a foolproof master system that guarantees you success—if you simply follow the commands!

- Develop all-purpose strength—to easily handle the toughest and most unexpected demand
- Maximize staying power—because the last round decides all
- Forge a fighter’s physique—because the form must follow the function

Enter the kettlebell! and follow the plan:

1. The New RKC Program Minimum

With just two kettlebell exercises, takes you from raw newbie to solid contender—well-conditioned, flexible, resilient and muscular in all the right places.

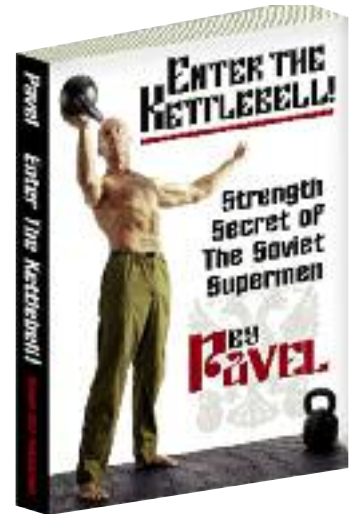
2. The RKC Rite of Passage

Jumps you to the next level of physical excellence with Pavel’s proven RKC formula for exceptional strength and conditioning.

3. Become a Man Among Men

Propels you to a Special Forces level of conditioning and earns you the right to call yourself a man.

When you rise to the challenge—and *Enter the Kettlebell!*—there will be no more confusion, no more uncertainty and no more excuses—only raw power, never-quit conditioning and earned respect.



Enter the Kettlebell!
Strength Secret of The Soviet Supermen
by Pavel #B33 **\$34.95**
Paperback 200 pages 8.5" x 11"
246 full color photos, charts, and workouts



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- **Boost your physical resilience**—to repel the hardest hits
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- **Forge a fighter's physique**—so form matches function
- **Be independent**—world's #1 portable gym makes you as strong as you want to be, anywhere, anytime

Kettlebells Fly Air Force One!

“There’s a competitive reason behind the appearance of kettlebells at the back doors and tent flaps of military personnel. When Russian and US Special Forces started competing against each other after the Soviet Union broke up, the Americans made a disturbing discovery. “We’d be totally exhausted and the Russians wouldn’t even be catching their breath,” says... [a] Secret Service agent... “It turned out they were all working with kettlebells.”

Now, half the Secret Service is snatching kettlebells and a set sometimes travels with the President’s detail on Air Force One.”—*Christian Science Monitor*



Pavel's Kettlebell FAQ

What is a 'kettlebell'?

A 'kettlebell' or gilya (Russ.) is a traditional Russian cast iron weight that looks like a cannonball with a handle. The ultimate tool for extreme all-round fitness.

The kettlebell goes way back – it first appeared in a Russian dictionary in 1704 (Cherkikh, 1994). So popular were kettlebells in Tsarist Russia that any strongman or weightlifter was referred to as a girevik, or 'a kettlebell man'.

“Not a single sport develops our muscular strength and bodies as well as kettlebell athletics,” reported Russian magazine Hercules in 1913.

“Kettlebells—Hot Weight of the Year”—*Rolling Stone*

Why train with kettlebells?

Because they deliver extreme all-round fitness. And no single other tool does it better. Here is a short list of hardware the Russian kettlebell replaces: barbells, dumbbells, belts for weighted pullups and dips, thick bars, lever bars, medicine balls, grip devices, and cardio equipment.

Vinogradov & Lukyanov (1986) found a very high correlation between the results posted in a kettlebell lifting competition and a great range of dissimilar tests: strength, measured with the three powerlifts and grip strength; strength endurance, measured with pullups and parallel bar dips; general endurance, determined by a 1000 meter run; work capacity and balance, measured with special tests.

Voropayev (1983) tested two groups of subjects in pullups, a standing broad jump, a 100m sprint, and a 1k run. He put the control group on a program that emphasized the above tests; the experimental group lifted kettlebells. In spite of the lack of practice on the tested exercises, the kettlebell group scored better in every one of them! This is what we call “the what the hell effect”.

Kettlebells melt fat without the dishonor of dieting or aerobics. If you are overweight, you will lean out. If you are skinny, you will get built up. According to Voropayev (1997) who studied top Russian gireviks, 21.2% increased their bodyweight since taking up kettlebelling and 21.2% (the exact same percentage, not a typo), mostly heavyweights, decreased it. The Russian kettlebell is a powerful tool for fixing your body comp, whichever way it needs fixing.

Kettlebells forge doers' physiques along the lines of antique statues: broad shoulders with just a hint of pecs, back muscles standing out in bold relief, wiry arms, rugged forearms, a cut-up midsection, and strong legs without a hint of squatter's chafing.

Liberating and aggressive as medieval swordplay, kettlebell training is highly addictive. What other piece of exercise equipment can boast that its owners name it? Paint it? Get tattoos of it? Our Russian kettlebell is the Harley-Davidson of strength hardware.

“Kettlebells—A Workout with Balls”—*Men's Journal*

[Click Here To Order Dragon Door Kettlebells](#)

Who trains with kettlebells?

Hard comrades of all persuasions.

Soviet weightlifting legends such as Vlasov, Zhabotinskiy, and Alexeyev started their Olympic careers with old-fashioned kettlebells. Yuri Vlasov once interrupted an interview he was giving to a Western journalist and proceeded to press a pair of kettlebells. "A wonderful exercise," commented the world champion. "...It is hard to find an exercise better suited for developing strength and flexibility simultaneously."

The Russian Special Forces personnel owe much of their wiry strength, explosive agility, and never-quitting stamina to kettlebells. *Soldier, Be Strong!*, the official Soviet armed forces strength training manual pronounced kettlebell drills to be "one of the most effective means of strength development" representing "a new era in the development of human strength-potential".

The elite of the US military and law enforcement instantly recognized the power of the Russian kettlebell, ruggedly simple and deadly effective as an AK-47. You can find Pavel's certified RKC instructors among Force Recon Marines, Department of Energy nuclear security teams, the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team, the Secret Service Counter Assault Team, etc.

Once the Russian kettlebell became a hit among those whose life depends on their strength and conditioning, it took off among hard people from all walks of life: martial artists, athletes, regular hard comrades.

"I can't think of a more practical way of special operations training... I was extremely skeptical about kettlebell training and now wish that I had known about it fifteen years ago..."

—Name withheld, Special Agent, U.S. Secret Service Counter Assault Team

Am I kettlebell material?

Kettlebell training is extreme but not elitist. At the 1995 Russian Championship the youngest contestant was 16, the oldest 53! And we are talking elite competition here; the range is even wider if you are training for yourself rather than for the gold. Dr. Kravetskiy, the father of the kettlebell sport, took up training at the age of forty-one and twenty years later he was said to look fresher and healthier than at forty.

Only 8.8% of top Russian gireviks, members of the Russian National Team and regional teams, reported injuries in training or competition (Voropayev, 1997). A remarkably low number, especially if you consider that these are elite athletes who push their bodies over the edge. Many hard men with high mileage have overcome debilitating injuries with kettlebell training (get your doctor's approval). Acrobat Valentin Dikul fell and broke his back at seventeen. Today, in his mid-sixties, he juggles 180-pound balls and breaks powerlifting records!

"... kettlebells are a unique conditioning tool and a powerful one as well that you should add to your arsenal of strength... my experience with them has been part of what's led me to a modification in my thoughts on strength and bodyweight exercises... I'm having a blast training with them and I think you will as well."

—Bud Jeffries, the author of *How to Squat 900lbs. without Drugs, Powersuits, or Kneewraps*

How do I learn to use the kettlebell?

From Pavel's books and videos: *The Russian Kettlebell Challenge* or *From Russia with Tough Love* for comrades ladies. From an RKC certified instructor; find one in your area on RussianKettlebell.com. Kettlebell technique can be learned in one or two sessions and you can start intense training during the second or even first week (Dvorkin, 2001).

"...I felt rejuvenated and ready to conquer the world. I was sold on the kettlebells, as the exercises were fun and challenging, and demanded coordination, explosion, balance, and power... I am now on my way to being a better, fitter, and more explosive grappler, and doing things I haven't done in years!"

—Kid Peligro, *Grappling* magazine

What is the right kettlebell size for me?

Kettlebells come in 'poods'. A pood is an old Russian measure of weight, which equals 16kg, or roughly 35 lbs. An average man should start with a 35-pounder. It does not sound like a lot but believe it; it feels a lot heavier than it should! Most men will eventually progress to a 53-pounder, the standard issue size in the Russian military. Although available in most units, 70-pounders are used only by a few advanced guys and in elite competitions. 88-pounders are for mutants.

An average woman should start with an 18-pounder. A strong woman can go for a 26-pounder. Some women will advance to a 35-pounder. A few hard women will go beyond.

"Kettlebells are like weightlifting times ten."

"Kettlebells are like weightlifting times ten. ...If I could've met Pavel in the early '80s, I might've won two gold medals. I'm serious."

—Dennis Koslowski, D.C., RKC,
Olympic Silver Medalist in Greco-Roman Wrestling



CLASSIC KETTLEBELLS (SOLID CAST IRON/POWDER COATING)

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#P10P	14lb	\$69.95	S/H \$16.50	\$66.50	\$38.00
#P10M	18lb	\$76.95	S/H \$20.50	\$73.50	\$46.00
#P10G	12kg (approx. 26lb) – .75 pood	\$82.95	S/H \$28.50	\$88.50	\$56.00
#P10A	16kg (approx. 35lb) – 1 pood	\$89.95	S/H \$33.50	\$104.50	\$68.00
#P10H	20kg (approx. 44lb) – 1.25 poods	\$99.95	S/H \$40.50	\$122.50	\$80.00
#P10B	24kg (approx. 53lb) – 1.5 poods	\$109.95	S/H \$44.50	\$139.50	\$92.00
#P10J	28kg (approx. 62lb) – 1.75 poods	\$129.95	S/H \$47.50	\$157.50	\$101.00
#P10C	32kg (approx. 70lb) – 2 poods	\$139.95	S/H \$48.50	\$175.50	\$111.00
#P10Q	36kg (approx. 79lb) – 2.25 poods	\$159.95	S/H \$53.50	\$193.50	\$125.00
#P10F	40kg (approx. 88lb) – 2.5 poods	\$179.95	S/H \$58.50	\$211.50	\$138.00
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