

The Definitive Guide to the Kettlebell Snatch Test



What comes to mind when you think of the kettlebell snatch test?

(The kettlebell snatch test is performing 100 reps with an **appropriately sized kettlebell** in 5 minutes or less.)

Here's what pops in my mind.

It's NEVER easy.

It's manageable, but I'd never say it's easy.

And, I'd say there's a stigma to the **kettlebell snatch test**, which is needed to pass the **SFG kettlebell certification weekend**.

For many of us, there's even an **anxiety** and a **stress** associated with performing such a performance task.

You need **strength**, a **high level of conditioning**, **mobility**, **proper technique**, and **mental toughness**.

It's the ultimate test of physical performance.

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Anyway, to help ease the stress and anxiety, I asked **many of my colleagues**, what they have done specifically to **prepare for** and **pass** the revered SFG kettlebell snatch test.

A huge thank you to those who shared their incredible training knowledge and experiences in this article.

The examples here are templates for our success.

A couple things to know before reading this.

There is a lot of information here.

Don't get overwhelmed by all the different approaches.

Keep in mind, there are many great tips and strategies to help us perform well with the kettlebell snatch test and even beyond the snatch test (*think how you can use these programming ideas in your training*).

Read them through and consider what tips you can use.

THEN, PICK THE ONE APPROACH that may be the best fit for you.

Start testing things out and consider all of the awesome advice listed below.

We're all different and there are several effective approaches to training and performance.

There is no one right way here.

The right way is the way that works best for you.

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One more thing.

There are some long and detailed programming approaches and there are some extremely short and concise ideas listed here.

They are ALL valuable and they all have practical application.

Check out these different approaches, but also look for common themes, as well.

If you can take away one big thing (or more) and apply it, this will definitely be worth your time.

Let's take a look...

Mark Snow of SGHumanPerformance.com said...

I train future instructors depending on their needs.

If it's a "**wind issue**" (conditioning) I work with rest breaks and shorten the times.

If it's a **technique issue** I have them practice starting at 3/3 on the minute or as many rounds in ten minutes, this is also good for those individuals who need to work up to their snatch sized weight.

If it's a **grip issue** I love heavy swings 1-2 kettlebell sizes higher on the minute and alternate with a technique day with the snatch size kettlebell.

If the **lockout** is the issue then fix any asymmetries and follow with heavy Turkish get ups and a press program.

Brett Jones program is rock solid.

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And, ROP (*Right of Passage – in Enter the Kettlebell*) worked for Nikki Garganno Snow and myself when we were beginners.

Keith Ciucci said...

I only snatched once a week.

One week I snatched the 24 kg for AMRAP (as many reps as possible) in 5 minutes.

The next week I'd snatch the **32 kg for 100 reps in 15 minutes**.

I alternated back and forth each week in that manner.

I developed this program in order to make the 24 kg feel easy for 100 reps in 5 minutes.

It works great but 100 Snatches with 32 kg is pretty tough on the hands, unless you're used to heavier one arm swings.

This program allowed me to snatch the **24 kg for 111 reps** without setting the bell down in 5 minutes.

Bill Been said...

I decided to embrace the unvarnished basic tenet of StrongFirst and train for strength first.

I did Geoff's program "*The Wolf*" from "*More Kettlebell Muscle*" with 20's, followed immediately by Geoff's **Strong program** – double clean and press program with 32's.

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I finished these 2 programs 2 months ahead of my January certification, then mostly focused on skill practice and “*Simple & Sinister*” for a couple weeks.

I tested my snatch test twice in that time – once in September again in October, passing each comfortably in the 4:45 realm.

My snatch bell is a 20 kg as I’m 51 years old.

I did one more snatch test in the beginning of December with a 24 and also succeeded.

Late in December I did one more with the 20 kg, using a 10 L/10 R and never put the bell down.

I did the same approach at my cert.

When all of your training has been with double 32’s, it makes a huge difference.

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Michael J. Lennon said...

I always try to get it done as quickly as possible so I'd use the **20/20, 15/15, 10/10, 5/5** which requires a bit of forearm strength.

Each week I had done 70 snatches 20/20 then 15/15.

I had also done 60 snatches 30/30 to have a bit in the tank.

Another workout I would do was carried walks with 2 x 24 kg's up 3 flights of stairs.

I did this 10 times, each time I got to the top I'd do 1/1 get up.

I done the test in 4:20 at the cert, but have done it in 4 minutes in the past which is pretty quick for a guy my size (74kg).

Fionnbharr Toolan said...

I had completed the snatch test a couple of times with a 20 kg in approximately 4 minutes, which was pretty comfortable, but whenever it came to the 24 kg, it just wasn't.

I was following the **Brett Jones protocol** and I was snatching twice a week following the 5 each arm on the minute for 10 minutes and then gradually working towards 6 each arm on the minute for 9 minutes.

This eventually led up to 10 each arm on the minute.

I did eventually get the snatch test with a 24 kg in 4 mins 50 secs about 4 weeks before the certification.

After that, I knew in my head that I could achieve the snatch test.

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This worked wonders for my confidence going into the weekend.

I decided to ramp up the snatch test training and got to work with the 28 kg to make the 24 kg feel like nothing.

I completed this workout every Monday and Thursday for 3 weeks leading into the weekend.

8 snatches each arm with a 28 kg with 1 minute recovery.

12 snatches each arm with a 24 kg with 1 minute recovery.

5 sets with a total of 200 snatches.

Whenever using the 28 kg, I worked on pure technique and freedom of the movement.

Then with the 24 kg, I was actively throwing the bell back down to really have that hardstyle effect of the kettlebell snatch and to get the heart rate up.

The morning of the snatch test, I'll admit, I was nervous.

Nervous in a good way.

Before I stepped up to complete the snatch test, I decided to do some single arm swings with the 32 kg to warm up, 30 each arm to be precise (10/10 each arm).

I took a breather, took a drink of Gatorade, chalked up the hands and completed the snatch test in **3 mins 42 secs**.

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It was possibly the most awesome feeling I've ever experienced when I parked the bell back down like a professional.

The **snatch test is approximately 2% of the whole weekend** and everybody gets caught up in it.

It's definitely **more of a mental challenge than a physical challenge.**

It will only be a physical challenge if you haven't put the training in.

I attribute success in the snatch test to these two things:

- 1. Heavy swings**
- 2. A high volume of overhead carries**

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Philippe Til said...

I don't overly do snatches or snatch tests.

However, after **4 certs** (re-certs included) across "schools", I usually "own" it if not after the first attempt, definitely by the second (out of self shame if I failed the first, usually a matter of resilience or conditioning), but it has been different every time.

Here's 4 different examples of the approaches I used.

1-A **front load approach** of **20/20/10/10**, rest, **10/10**, **5/5**, **5/5**.

2-The next time was 10/10×5 with no more than a **6-second break in between sets** (*by the time I go again, it's 10 seconds, and I learn that you suck wind whether you rest or not, so remember the adage of "keep moving while the heart rate is high"*).

3-The next attempt I did **10/10 "on the minute"** during training, but during testing I did 10/10/10/10 then the 6 second breaks (ending up around the 4:06 to 4:26 mark).

4-And, finally I recently did a **front loading of 15/15/10/10** (first 50 out of the gate in 90 seconds), **then 10/10**, rest 6-10 seconds, then **10/10** (reached 90 by 3:50), then cruised the remaining **5/5**.

Age, mileage, injuries, conditioning, and desire have dictated my approach.

Is this a method or just madness?

It's what has worked.

My best cue is usually the **6-second break**, which logistically turns into about 10 seconds.

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With a solid cadence (30/min average for me), it can land you a nice snatch test with time to spare and be safe.

Mark Limbaga said...

Here's how I'm prepping at the moment.

Monday: Every minute on the minute – swings with 40 kg for 8 minutes.

Tuesday: Either 28 kg 6-8-10 or 32 kg 2-4-6 snatch ladder. The goal is to minimize setting bell down.

Wednesday: 44 kg 2 hand swings every minute on the minute for 8 minutes.

Thursday: I practice my snatch test rhythm, working up to 3 minutes without setting bell down

John Spezzano said...

I have found that working *Simple and Sinister* with a 32 kg makes snatching the 24 pretty comfortable.

You still need to get your hands back in shape for the snatch test volume.

And, of course, your lungs will need a reminder if you mainly train strength and avoid the “dishonor” of cardio.

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Mike Lindner said...

My approach to the snatch test is kind of a hodgepodge of concepts from various other prep courses I have read into.

There's a little **Brett Jones**, a little **Mark and Tracy Reifkind**, a little **Geoff Neupert**, and a little **kettlebell sport** in there as well.

I took what worked for me and put it to use.

I used to only train snatches twice a week with the goal of increasing volume within the 5 minute time frame.

The first time I attempted the snatch test I felt like I was going to die at 84 reps with 30 seconds left on the clock.

What I was doing was not working.

I added a day of **heavy swings** and a month later I went to have my form checked from a local SFG before my level 1 weekend and she surprised me with a snatch test.

I marked a much noted increase to 86.

This only fueled my now “burning desire” to own this test, having felt beaten by it twice in a row.

Soon after I was reading Master **Mark Reifkind's blog** and I noticed how he always kept track of the volume on his sessions.

Out of curiosity I went back and tracked my sessions to date and noted the following:

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My **average volume** with kettlebell swings (heavy 2 handed, 1 arm, or double variations only) typically exceeded well over **10,000 kg**.

Doing some quick math told me that the snatch test is **2,400 kg**.

Sometimes just seeing the progress is enough of a motivator to just get the job done.

Please note that the following is **ONLY** the protocol I started for snatch test training.

Other lifts were done, either before or after for other training purposes, as well.

I'm just keeping the focus on the snatch test right now.

Day 1 – Double/Heavy 2 Arm Swing Day

I chose either heavy two-handed swings or double bells over one arm swing because initially I felt like my conditioning would give out on me before my grip or arms would.

This day was meant to fix that.

One arm swings of course will work this, but I found them to be a little taxing on the grip for the next training day.

I used two snatch test bells or a single bell closest to the same weight as two snatch test bells (Example: If your testing standard is 24 kg you're either using two of those or swinging a 40-48 kg kettlebell)

The focus was to build Power and conditioning.

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Protocol:

Start with 10 reps on the minute for 10 minutes.

The next week move up to 15 reps and stay there for two weeks.

Finally, when you can safely complete 20 reps on the minute for 10 minutes, you have officially earned the strength and stamina needed for the snatch test.

Day 2 – Long Snatch Sets Day

This day was heavily inspired by my kettlebell sport training as I couldn't help but notice how they keep the bell going for 10 minute sets without putting it down.

Also, I wanted to take a day to get as many quality reps in as I could without killing my shoulders or hands.

Single bell one below snatch standard, and a single bell two sizes below (Example: 24 kg is your testing standard – you will use a 20 kg and a 16 kg for this).

The focus is endurance, technique grooving, grip strength, and mental toughness.

Protocol:

We're going to go for some longer sets here to make sure that the mental and physical capacity to go through the test and everything will be solid.

The protocol was 3 sets, as follows:

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With the lighter bell – Set of 25/25

With the lightest bell – Set of 30/30

With the lighter bell – Set of 20/20

After running this for 4 weeks **I went from a score of 86 in 5 minutes to 114 in 5 minutes.**

As you can see, I had awesome success with it.

Obviously, there are many **ways to prep for a snatch test** and this was the first time that I ever wrote for myself.

Piers Kwan said...

Snatch test prep depends on the baseline.

I use Geoff Neupert's ***Snatch Season*** (from *Kettlebell Express*) to start and ensure people can snatch a bell one size up.

Then, with a couple months to go I switch to Geoff's **One Program** with one bell size lower than snatch.

Finally, nail down the protocol that they're comfortable with.

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Mike Provost said...

I've never done any specific prep for the snatch test.

Being able to complete the test was **always a side-effect of my training**, which usually consisted of heavy double-kettlebell work, done on a moderate, but consistent basis.

A big chunk of that moderate, consistent heavy double-kettlebell work was usually **double swings** and **double cleans**.

And, when I actually do the snatch test, my goal is to look like a metronome from beginning to end.

I make sure to switch hands every ten reps, non-stop because **you can always do ten more snatches**.

I usually complete the test in the 3:45 – 4 range, depending on the day.

I find that this rep scheme breaks the test into bit-sized chunks, and keeps spreading the fatigue.

This is what has worked for me.

Brandon Hoffer of KaizenKettlebell.com said...

The approach that I've been using with my clients involves approaching the goal from both sides (*strength and endurance*).

For the test, my clients use a 10R/10L per minute approach and finish right around the 4:50 mark.

Men use 24 kg and 16 kg to prep and ladies use 16 kg and 12 kg to prep.

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First, we build **volume up to 100 reps with the heavier weight**, beginning with 4R/4L per minute for 5 minutes, 40 total reps.

They do the same reps for 2 or 3 workouts, depending on how much time we have to prep, and then add one rep on each side until they've built up to 10R/10L, occasionally dropping back as necessary.

Once we hit 10R/10L per minute, if we still have time before testing, we'll add an additional minute to be safe.

Second, we build in endurance and density with the lighter bell.

We start with 8R/8L every minute for 8 minutes, then add either one rep per side or one minute every 2 or 3 sessions, working up to 12R/12L for 10 minutes, occasionally dropping back as necessary.

Usually 2 to 3 snatch sessions/week.

Example Program:

4 months before event.

15 weeks of the program, allows for one week of rest or adjustment if necessary, and one week of light snatch workouts the week before event.

WEEK 1

4R/4L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

8R/8L per minute – 8 minutes – 16KG

4R/4L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

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WEEK 2

8R/8L per minute – 8 minutes – 16KG

5R/5L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

9R/9L per minute – 8 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 3

5R/5L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

9R/9L per minute – 8 minutes – 16KG

5R/5L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

WEEK 4

9R/9L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

5R/5L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

9R/9L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 5

6R/6L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

10R/10L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

6R/6L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

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WEEK 6

10R/10L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

7R/7L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

10R/10L per minute – 10 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 7

7R/7L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

10R/10L per minute – 10 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 8

8R/8L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

10R/10L per minute – 5 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 9

8R/8L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

11R/11L per minute – 8 minutes – 16KG

6R/6L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

WEEK 10

11R/11L per minute – 8 minutes – 16KG

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9R/9L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

11R/11L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 11

9R/9L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

11R/11L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

6R/6L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

WEEK 12

12R/12L per minute – 9 minutes – 16KG

9R/9L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

12R/12L per minute – 10 minutes – 16KG

WEEK 13

10R/10L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

8R/8L per minute – 10 minutes – 16KG

6R/6L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

WEEK 14

12R/12L per minute – 10 minutes – 16KG

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6R/6L per minute – 5 minutes – 24KG

WEEK 15

10R/10L – 8 minutes – 16KG

10R/10L – 6 minutes – 24KG

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Allan Phillips of PikeAthletics.com said...

The first time through RKC I followed the Jones template (*trained by Danny Sawaya*).

I made some adjustments, notably only going up to 5 x 10/10 on 24 kg snatch day.

I got greedy and careless one day that summer and blew a blister (*it get hot in Arizona*).

Advice to candidates: **a blister is an INJURY.**

I was not able to do any meaningful ballistic work for about **10 days**.

Ultimately, I never took a snatch test until the cert and then it went 4:03.

I passed the snatch test in practice in a 5 x 10/10 workout but this was a regular workout with each set on the minute.

LESSONS FROM THIS:

1) Consider the totality of your work.

High volume heavy swings are the foundation.

If you can swing heavy, the snatch will be there, provided your technique is decent.

2) **Don't neglect the 16 kg work.**

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I initially dismissed it but many people are surprised by how much this helps quickness and athleticism.

3) I **supplemented 24 kg snatch day with some extra swings** after the main set to get in a good volume day.

4) **Consider individual strengths.**

I come from a triathlon background.

Going hard for five minutes is no big deal to me.

Getting the 24 kg to feel manageable was a different story.

Technique work and power gave me more return on investment than long snatch workouts.

5) In my personal observation, **bad habits can creep in with high volume snatching**, with candidates trying to muscle the bell and get through the sets.

A greater emphasis on swings helps maintain quality control with technique and hip snap.

LESSONS FROM THE SFG RE-CERT:

1) I literally did three snatch test prep sessions.

The rest of the work was a “grease the groove” format in a modified-Jones plan.

2) Give yourself time to prepare.

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The totality of your work sets the base with snatch specific work is just the last refinement if your strength foundation is there.

3) I never did a test in practice before the recert.

Why?

Because I knew based on the strength of my overall training that I could do it at the recert.

This was not laziness, but instead having other training priorities that I did not want to interrupt trying to PR the snatch test.

GENERAL LESSONS.

1-**Have confidence and trust your training.**

Having passed the test in training is nice, but not essential.

You will know from your overall workouts how well your training is going, especially if you are guided by an SFG coach.

If you happen to pass the test in practice, great.

But, the full body of work is more important.

2-In marathoning, we don't run race marathons in training to prove we can race the marathon on race day.

We have **benchmark workouts** to measure our overall progress, but we **save the full blown effort for race day.**

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Eric Kenyon of KettlebellForm.com said...

My wife Alison and I did our RKC in February of 2008.

Since then I have done the snatch test 5 additional times, all with the 100 reps snatch requirement.

The snatch test has been getting easier and easier for me.

The 2nd time we prepared for the test, and every test after, we have started with doing snatches in the 30/30 interval for 100, and progressively taking away the rest time.

1) **Do 10 cycles of 30/30** (30 seconds work, 30 seconds rest) snatches.

Do 10 snatches each work cycle which is 100 reps total.

So, you've done 100 snatches in 9 min 30 sec.

2) **When you feel ready cut the rest interval down to 25 seconds.**

When you feel ready again, cut it down to 20 seconds, then 15.

3) Next time you feel ready to progress, **combine work intervals.**

Here's what I mean.

The next session would be 5 cycles of 60/30.

You do 20 snatches each 60 second work interval so it's still 100 snatches, total time would be 7 min.

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4) The next progression is to **reduce the rest interval to 25 seconds**, then 20 then 15, now you're doing 100 snatches in 6 minutes..

5) **Combine the work intervals again.**

Now you're doing a 90/30 interval, 30 snatches in 90 seconds, followed by 30 seconds of rest.

You'll perform 3 intervals like this, then the last work interval is just 10 snatches for your 100 reps.

6) **The next progression** is to reduce the rest interval to 25 seconds, then 20, then 15.

Now you are doing 100 snatches in 5 minutes, 45 seconds.

7) Next, **combine the intervals again.**

Now you are doing a 120/30 interval, 40 snatches in 120 seconds and 30 seconds of rest.

On the last cycle you do 20 snatches and that's the end.

8) When you are ready reduce the rest to 25 seconds, then 20, then 15.

Now you're doing 100 snatches in 5 minutes 30 seconds.

9) Next, **combine the intervals again**, now you are doing 100 snatches in a 150/30 interval.

50 snatches and a 30 second break, then 50 snatches again.

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10) Now reduce the rest to 25 seconds then 20, then 15.

Now you're doing 100 snatches in 5 minutes 15 seconds.

11) By now you will have a very good sense of the timing and rhythm of the test.

Cut 5 seconds off each work interval.

12) At this point, the test looks like this: 50 snatches in 145 seconds, a 15 second rest, then 50 snatches in 145 seconds.

That's 100 snatches in 5 minutes 5 seconds.

13) Take 5 more seconds off the work intervals, **140/15/140**.

That's 100 snatches in 4 min, 55 seconds.

14) Finally, if you like, take out that 15 seconds rest, or take an additional 5 sec off the work intervals.

It's your call.

Make the test fit your preference at this point.

That would be 100 snatches in the 4 min, 40-45 sec.

The extra time at the end of the test will keep you calm and conserve nervous energy.

The last time I tested I did 60 snatches then set the kettlebell down and took some slow, deep breaths.

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Then did the final 40 and finished at **4 minutes 40 seconds**.

I've guided a few RKC and SFG candidates with this system and they also achieved success.

We found that 15 seconds is the shortest rest time worth practicing.

That's how this method came to be designed as it is.

Another important element that I think is decisive, is **the high hand switch**.

I always switch hands every ten snatches.

I do that at the top of the lift.

Just as I start the descent from the 10th snatch, I pass the kettlebell down into the new hand (*this definitely require practice*).

The exchange takes place high up, starting above head level.

This eliminates the time and energy wastage of the extra swing in the conventional switch.

David Whitley has a great video on youtube, from 2008 that shows how to do this.

It's best to practice with a light kettlebell and outdoors when learning this technique.

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Rick Elliot said...

If you can do 10/10 on-the-minute for ten minutes, two bell sizes up from your snatch sized bell, it helps a great deal.

That's how I did it (after I didn't pass doing the cert weekend from doing snatches only).

Zac Zech said...

I've also had the best results while doing ROP and on snatch days I roll a pair of dice and that's how many rounds of either 30/30 or 15/15 snatches I do with the 32 kg.

I've found **using the 32 kg for all my snatch practice made a huge difference** and I started fly through the snatch test like buttah.

James Hatcher said...

How did a **72 year old guy** decide to attend a Level 1 cert and, perhaps more importantly, prepare for the rigors of three intense days of physical training?

As I gained more confidence in the tested skills and the strength tests, I **increased my one arm and two arm swings** and I **increased the weight above my snatch test bell** as much as I could handle.

This was my strategy for increasing my endurance and to strengthen my forearms and grip.

As it turned out, this may have been one of the **most important parts of my training**.

I also did a lot of walking and climbing stairs.

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Kris Moulton said...

I follow simple advice from **Mark Snow** (above).

Heavy Turkish get up's, 32 kg single arm swings, then “roll that dice” like Zac Zech said.

Other than that **Brett Jones Protocol** is flawless and it's the starting point for all students of mine.

Frankie Mecono said...

I have always followed ROP with the 24 kg and then on to the 32kg.

It's been a no brainer every time.

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Betsy Middleton Collie of RapidResultsFitness.net said...

Here's my experience of training students and clients in preparation for not only **mastering the 5 minute snatch test**, but actually **understanding** and perfecting their snatch technique.

In general, I use a **varied style of training** that reinforces some of the major components in snatch technique.

There are many ways to reach this goal of understanding and performing snatches and, of course, mastering the 5 minute snatch test.

Many people do not understand that the snatch recruits the same powerful hip drive as the swings, the cleans, and the high pulls.

Many kettlebell enthusiasts actually treat it as a metcon movement rather than a strength movement.

Also, they look at the snatch movement and think more about the use of the arm or upper body strength and do not utilize the lower body and hip drive as they should (*this is very important to understand*).

When their bodies are linked together through proper positioning and muscle contraction correctly **this movement becomes seamless**.

When the individual disconnects from the hip drive, it disconnects the arm from the body on the hike pass, fails to pack the shoulder and complete the movement properly, then they begin to **move their body as a collection of parts instead of a solid contracted unit**.

This disconnect forces the individual to "*muscle the bell up*" by depending on upper body strength alone, which in turn leaves them failing the snatch test and possibly worse by facilitating an injury.

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From that standpoint, I begin to drive home the importance of **rooting through the floor** with the feet.

This is a **solid foundation from all kettlebell movements**.

After technique is in place for the 2 hand swings, I progress my students to “heavy” kettlebells with this.

This insures 3 main things.

1. A powerful hip drive
2. Arm connection to the body in the hike pass (thinking about “glueing” the triceps to the inside of your legs or side of torso)
3. Stronger abs in the stand tall lock out position (knee caps pulled up, etc.)

From there I progress to 1 arm swings.

Working their way up to HEAVY 1 arm swings.

And, insuring that **all swings are at chest height to begin with**.

Chest height and finding the “float” of the bell at the top is created by strong ab contraction and an explosive hip drive in a tall standing position.

Once that’s mastered, I have them take that same heavy bell (usually one up from the bell size they are trying to snatch test with) and then perform 1 arm swings at approximately eye level.

The use of heavier 1 arm swings at eye level reinforces **loading and driving with the hips, bracing of the abs, and strengthening the base of support**.

Another drill I find extremely useful is to **perform 1 arm swings with snatches**.

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Here's an example.

Perform 3 one arm swings and on the 4th hike pass snatch overhead.

Perform left then right 5 times, then rest as needed.

Perform 5 sets like this.

This combination reinforces the fact that **the hip hinge should look and feel the same**, regardless of whether the person is swinging or snatching.

I also use single kettlebell **power cleans from the floor** (*Mark Reifkind introduced this some time ago – thanks Rif!*).

This drill reinforces the proper load of the hips.

It's an excellent tool for improving hip loading in general and can be used with swings, high pulls, and snatches.

In actual time spent training the snatch itself, a preference is doing ladder style snatch sessions.

This style of building volume with snatching not only allows for safety of the movement and manages fatigue, but also allows for hand safety, without trashing them.

The truth is, if technique is off and you set out with too high volume of snatches, you WILL end up with discomfort and torn hands.

That alone will compromise your form the more you attempt to train with trashed hands (*or worse, a trashed back or shoulder*).

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Building volume slowly is the way to go.

For example, a descending ladder may look like this.

- 7/7 rest (7 left, 7 right)
- 6/6 rest
- 5/5 rest
- 4/4 rest
- 3/3 rest
- 2/2 rest
- 1/1 rest

When this can be done comfortably with minimal rest in between, take it to ladders beginning with 10.

I may actually use this as a **finisher** with my clients at the end of their normal training.

I rarely have them snatch over and over again each session in preparation for the snatch test.

Look at it like this, if you're going to run a marathon, you don't TRAIN for it by RUNNING the MARATHON each time you train.

Make sense?

Over the course of a few months I may only have them actually perform the 5 minute snatch test 2 or 3 times.

That's it.

In terms of completing the snatch test, I have them perform a ladder like this.

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- 10/10
- 9/9
- 8/8
- 7/7
- 6/6
- 5/5
- 5/5

This is **easy on the hands** and **easy neurologically**.

Because you are going down in number it FEELS so much easier.

I do have them get a baseline of how long it takes for them to do this, but after practicing these other movements and **building adequate hip drive strength** and **stronger lats and abs**, there usually is never a time factor to worry about.

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Derek Miller said...

I've got 2 routines that I have used on myself and others to prepare for the snatch test.

I'm in the school of thought that if you want to get better at snatches, then do more snatches.

One thing that I'm certain helps with the snatch test is **a strong deadlift**.

Anyone who I am training for the snatch test is also running some sort of deadlift cycle simultaneously.

Let's face it, the deadlift is the KING of all exercises.

Snatch Prep #1 – Endurance Protocol

This method is better for people who may not have perfect technique or are beginners.

It is based on a **15-25 RM** with the person's snatch size bell.

If they can't hit that rep range with a snatch size bell, I'll have them do a different routine.

Snatch – 10 each hand

REST – 60sec

Snatch – 2×10 each hand, one hand switch, not setting the bell down

REST – 60sec

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Snatch – 3×10 each hand, two hand switches – I usually time this set for reference

This workout can be done up to 3x a week.

I usually stick with 1 or 2x a week.

I'll have someone do this workout for **3-5 weeks** depending on their recovery.

Once the person can “comfortably” complete the last set, I move them to the following sets:

Snatch – 2×10 each hand

REST – 60sec

Snatch – 3×10 each hand

REST - 60sec

Snatch – 4×10 each hand; same rules

If they can complete the last set without setting the bell down, they can pass the snatch test – easy.

Snatch Prep #2 – Strength Protocol

This method is better for mentally tough people, stronger people, or people who just like lifting heavy (that's me).

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It's meant for people who can easily put up 20+ reps with snatch size bell or someone who doesn't want to lose top-end strength when prepping for the snatch test.

I've based this protocol on the amount of total work completed during the snatch test, **2400kgs for men.**

I've only used this method on one female.

I have no doubt it would work with weight adjustments.

Let us look at how this can be broken down:

100 reps @ 24kg = 2400kg

86 reps @ 28kg = 2408kg

75 reps @ 32kg = 2400kg

67 reps @ 36kg = 2412kg

60 reps @ 40kg = 2400kg – I did this last time I had to prep.

50 reps @ 48kg = 2400kg

The only catch is that **all reps on a given weight must be completed in under 5 minutes.**

I like to have a few more swings in the program when using this protocol.

Same as before, this workout can be done up to **3x a week** but I usually stick with 1 or 2.

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I allow **3-5 weeks** of training before I will do the snatch test.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Not that you need any additional resources after all of this great content, but here's more things to consider.

These are additional resources and links to help with the kettlebell snatch test, including the proven Brett Jones Protocol.

[Brett Jones Protocol](#)

[Peaking and Assessment as Prep for the SFG](#) by Dan John and Mike Warren Brown

[Enter the Kettlebell by Pavel](#) (which contains the Right of Passage – ROP)

[How to Prepare For and Pass the SFG](#)

[The Escalating Snatch Protocol](#)

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Closing Thoughts.

While this article is about improving performance with the kettlebell snatch for SFG preparation purposes, it's very important to remember that the snatch test is only **one small part** of the certification process.

Even though there's this "stigma" to the snatch test, the reality is that it's just **one small piece of the SFG experience**.

But, it's this small piece that typically causes the most anxiety and stress.

There's a lot of information in this article and I'd like to **graciously thank those who contributed** their time and amazing knowledge and experiences.

If you have questions about any of these approaches, I'd encourage you to reach out to the specific contributor.

Remember, there are MANY ways to approach the snatch test or training, in general, for that matter.

The intent of this article was to present many different methods so that we all can be successful.

Your goal is to **pick the ONE approach** that makes the most sense to you and **implement that approach**.

There are great training ideas here, beyond the snatch test.

Learn and apply.

Pick the one that will serve you the best.

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This article is an incredible **training resource**, especially since so many contributed valuable insight.

Thanks again to all those that contributed.

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