

# Kettlebell 101

By Dr. Robert Silverman

There is a lot of excitement and “buzz” about kettlebells in the athletic performance and rehab world these days. Kettlebell workouts are intended to increase strength, endurance, agility, and balance - challenging both the muscular and cardiovascular systems with dynamic, total body movements. Of Russian origin, a kettlebell is a cast iron weight that looks like a cannonball with a handle attached to it.

Kettlebells come in several sizes/weights - ranging from 5 lbs. up to 106 lbs. You can do standard weight-training exercises with kettlebells, including bench presses, overhead presses, curls, squats, rows, etc... However, a unique value of kettlebells is derived from ballistic (fast exercise) work, such as snatches, swings, cleans, and jerks.

## The All-In-One Workout Tool

The kettlebell develops all-around fitness and teaches kinetic linking. It gets you connected to the ground, drawing energy from the ground up and transferring the energy through the shoulders. The kettlebell enhances awareness of your posture, position, breath, and grip. I especially like the cardio benefits that kettlebells can provide. It is also easy to perform interval training principles (slow, fast, repeat) with them.

So, why choose kettlebells instead of dumbbells?

The primary benefits of kettlebell training lie in the philosophy of the movements allow functional human patterns. Kettlebell drills have historically focused on working many muscle groups in unison, while dumbbells are more commonly used for isolation drills (curls, lateral raises, etc...) in traditional western weight-training techniques. Kettlebells are actually more challenging than using dumbbells. The kettlebell handles are much thicker, therefore will train you to have a vice grip in no time. Also, the off-centered weight of a kettlebell will force you to use more stabilizer muscles, and work the targeted muscles, through a longer range of motion.

## Dr. Rob’s Super 6 Kettlebell Exercises

### I) Turkish Get-Up

- 1) Lying on your back, bend your right knee, put the kettlebell in your right hand (extended towards the ceiling) *Fig. A*
- 2) Using your abs, punch the kettlebell towards the ceiling and raise yourself up onto your left elbow. *Fig. B*
- 3) Raise up onto your left hand while keeping your right hand vertical
- 4) Raise your body up so you are supporting yourself up by your left hand and right foot. *Fig. C*
- 5) Send your left foot back behind you and rest on your knee. *Fig. D*
- 6) Come off your left hand into a “lunge” position. *Fig. E*
- 7) Pushing off your back foot, lunge forward and stand up. *Fig. F*
- 8) Reverse the steps to get back to start-position. Switch hands



Fig. A



Fig. B

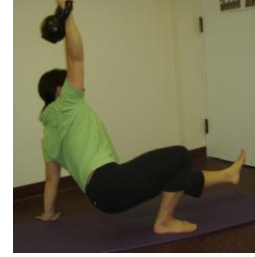


Fig. C



Fig. D

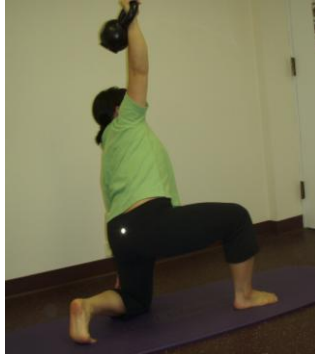


Fig. E



Fig. F

## II) Swing - one or two-handed

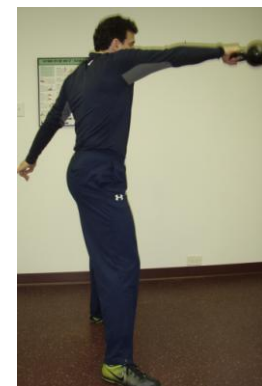
- 1) Start with kettlebell centered between legs with the front of the kettlebell lined-up with the back of your heels
- 2) Driving your hips forward, swing the kettlebell to chest-level. Be sure to drive with your legs and glutes, snapping your hips at the top. The kettlebell must form an extension of the straight and loose arm(s) on the top of the swing
- 3) Instead of bringing the kettlebell back to the starting position, guide the kettlebell between your legs, staying close to the groin (like passing a football to someone behind you), and swing it back up to chest-level
- 4) Remember:
  - a. Keep your head up
  - b. Keep your back straight
  - c. Sit back, not down



Start



Finish



(one-handed finish)

### III) Front Squat

- 1) Grasping the kettlebell by the handle with both hands by your chest (approximately 6" from the chest region), squat down to a rock bottom" position (elbows should touch the inner thighs)
- 2) Drive up through your heels and push yourself back up to the starting position
- 3) Remember always to squat back, not down



Start



Finish

### IV) One-Arm Kettlebell Snatch

- \* Follow every point that applies to the swing, minus the requirement to keep a straight arm.

- 1) Place a kettlebell between your feet
- 2) Bend your knees and push your butt back to get into proper starting position
- 3) Drive explosively with your hips
- 4) Pull the kettlebell towards your body as if you are starting a lawn mover
- 5) The trajectory of the kettlebell will resemble a "j" curve rather than an arc
- 6) Lean into the kettlebell at the top
- 7) As the kettlebell rises to your shoulder, open your hand and spin your hand around the bell rather than letting the bell flip over and bang on your wrist
- 8) Punch through straight overhead to complete the snatch



Start



Finish

### V) Clean

- \* Follow every point that applies to the swing, minus the requirement to keep a straight arm on the top.

- 1) Drive the kettlebell explosively with your hips
- 2) Bring the kettlebell straight up using body momentum (don't curl it)

- 3) Open your hand and get your hand around the handle rather than letting the bell flip over and band your wrist



Start



Finish

### VI) **Kettlebell Renegade Row**

- 1) Get into the top position of the pushup holding onto two kettlebells that are less than shoulder width apart
- 2) Take a shoulder width stance and push one kettlebell into the floor forcefully while you pull the other kettlebell in the working arm
- 3) Hold the kettlebell in the working arm in the top position for a second and then lower the kettlebell under control back to the floor
- 4) Switch arms after each repetition



Start



Finish

### FYI

The U.S. Service's 10-min. snatch test is 200 reps with a 53 lbs. kettlebell for males and 35 lbs. for women.

### Start out with the right kettlebell

<u>If you are:</u>	<u>Kettlebell to start with:</u>
An average strength lady	18 lbs
A strong lady	26 lbs
An average strength gentleman	35 lbs
A stronger than average gentleman	44 lbs
A very strong gentleman	53 lbs

Source: *Enter the Kettlebell* by Pavel, pg. 3

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