

7 BEST KETTLEBELL EXERCISES TO STRENGTHEN CORE MUSCLES



Introduction

Kettlebell exercises are perfect for improving core strength and enhancing the strength and flexibility of all related muscles extending outward to the extremities. The reason for this is the fact that the shape and movement of the kettlebell at the end of your arm/s keeps you off balance and more muscles are required to stabilize your body. Since the kettlebell is not stationary in your hands, it adds to the dynamics of each movement, forcing your muscles to compensate for the changing center of gravity.

Unlike most other weight training activities which isolate muscle groups, kettlebell workouts require the cooperative coordination of all the core muscles as well as those in the shoulders and back. You can control the intensity of the workout for losing weight or maintaining a good level of fitness all while conditioning and toning your core.

Some the things covered in the book include:

- What are kettlebells?
- History of The Kettlebell
- How they work
- Choosing Your Kettlebells
- Benefits of kettlebells

- Kettlebell Training for Men
- The Kettlebell's Basic Techniques...and many more.

Kettlebells Explained

What Are Kettlebells?

Kettlebells are cannonballs or mini bowling balls with thick handles. As they are heavy in weight, they offer the benefits of dumbbell training while thick handles challenge grip resulting in enhanced muscle activity and working the body to the core.

How They Work

As weight of kettlebell hangs little below its handle, even regular movements require extra efforts. This extra muscle activity results in burning of calories, and thus reducing body fat especially in lower back area. Also, it involves use of multiple joints when kettlebell exercises are done targeting various body parts. Also, handles allow you to swing the kettlebells which pumps up the heart beats, resulting in cardio workouts. Research shows that a kettlebell workout burns at least 40 to 50 percent more calories than a standard strength-training workout.

Kettlebell exercises are dynamic and challenging, but it is advised that you build the routine slowly. First start with less weights and slow-motion exercises, and perform them in repetitions. As you get comfortable move towards advanced exercises that require more weight and speed.

Choosing Your Kettlebells

Weight

The nature of kettlebell workouts is quite different than that of barbells or dumbbells and the amount of weight used is also quite different. The free moving flow of kettlebell lifts and swings and the resulting changes in the center of gravity depend on the cooperative effort of many different muscles unlike those used simply for strength. Experience has shown that women tend to underestimate the kettlebell weight they can work with while men initially over-estimate.

For casual fitness routines, most women should start out with an 8kg or half a pood (18 lb.) weight (or just 4kg (8 lb.) if you are older or have been inactive for a while) and men with 16 kg, one pood (35 lb.) kettlebell. This depends on your overall fitness, comfort level and goals. As you become proficient or if you already are comfortable with such weight, you can progress to 12 kg (26 lb.), 16 kg (35 lb.), 20 kg (44 lb.) and 24 kg (53 lb.). The best way to

determine the weight you should purchase is to attend classes or find an instructor so you can see what works best for you.

Adjustable weight kettlebells are also available but many experts suggest avoiding them in the interest of safety. Weight can be changed by adding or removing plates or filling/emptying sand or pebbles from inside the bell. Given the dynamic nature of kettlebell movements and the frequency of overhead positions, the chance of something falling on you is to be avoided. They can also be dangerous if the weight shifts within the bell and your grip and positioning has to change with every move.

Changing weights is not as important with kettlebell training as it is with barbells. With the same weight, you can increase the intensity of your workout with more reps, slower, increasing reps within a certain time period and the addition of more difficult routines. In effect, you can actually use the same kettlebell for years!

If you are interested in strength training, body building or competition, then progressing through increasing weight loads is important. Another option is to buy a second kettlebell of the same original weight for doubles training after you have become comfortable with the next one or two heavier bells.

Shape and Size

Kettlebells are frequently referred to as cannon balls with handles. While that is a fairly accurate description, there is a bit more to the construction of a quality kettlebell. The best bells are solid, one-piece construction made from a mold that includes the handle. A kettlebell with a handle that is welded on can have seams or ridges that cause irritation to your hands and may even break apart!

Two sides of a kettlebell are flat so that the bell can rest more comfortably against the forearm in the racked position. The bottom is also flat so the bell stays in place when set down. Lesser quality kettlebells are often not completely flat at the base and wobble during exercises that use the bell as a ground fixture such as push-ups.

Handles can be rounded or squared but should be large enough to accommodate your hand/s comfortably. There are some benefits to squared handles that form angles, but most instructors recommend curved or only somewhat flattened handles that can be gripped anywhere. Competition kettlebells have a slightly squared-off type of handle. The most important aspect of any handle, though, is its smooth connection to the bell.

Depending on the make of the kettlebell, sizes may be uniform as the weights increase or increase with added weight. Handle dimensions may also change. The benefit of same-size kettlebells such as those used in competition is that your positioning will always be the same (except for natural bracing to accommodate a heavier weight). In other words, the bell will sit on your arm

in the same way no matter what the weight. If use work with bells that are different sizes, you have to adjust your grip and positioning to take the added dimensions into consideration.

Materials and Finishes

Traditionally, kettlebells were made from cast iron. While that is still the case with some of the top kettlebells made today, professional grade bells are made from stainless steel. Some newer ones are made of hard, rubber-like material and there are also iron-sand filled neoprene bags of different weights. Lower grade kettlebells are available that are made from a variety of materials but many of these are not as durable as metal bells. Some brands containing bearings and swivels site convenience in their marketing but nothing beats the good old standard.

For the sake of appearance, some kettlebells are covered with colored vinyl. This helps differentiate bells of different weights but can cause friction on the hands during some moves if the vinyl also covers the handle. These covers are said to protect surfaces and this may be true for scratches but dropping a kettlebell can cause damage to virtually any flooring. Most cast iron kettlebells are natural black but many brands are painted or powder coated.

Most experts consider an unpainted, sanded metal handle to be the best for grip. The surface should be smooth but not glassy so that chalk will stick and help your hold. Some kettlebells come with a rubberized ring around the bottom, also for the protection of surfaces, but this can be uncomfortable when pressed against the arm.

Benefits of Kettlebells



More Fun Than Regular Workouts

In my opinion kettlebell workouts are easily the least boring workout that I have ever done. I think it's a tie between kettlebell workouts and jump rope workouts, but anyway I usually have more fun performing exercises with kettlebells. Most of my life I have been working out with the typical weights like dumbbells and barbells. I like to change it up a lot in order to stay focused and more engaged. If I were to do the same workout, with the same weights every week then I would really hate the whole experience. That's why I love kettlebell workouts.

Strength endurance

Kettlebell workouts are great for improving your strength endurance. This basically means your ability to perform fast explosive movements when your body is close to or at anaerobic levels. (See the reference section to learn more about anaerobic and how it's different than aerobic.) This is why so many athletes and people who participate in fighting sports use kettlebells in their workouts. You will learn that a lot of kettlebell exercises involve you to force the weight in fast motions, which is why your strength endurance is so much affected.

Strong grip

You will notice as you perform your weekly kettlebell workouts that your hands will become a lot stronger. Your grip may be may weak at first, especially when you are use a heavy kettlebell, but once you start doing the exercises regularly, you will be able to grip them a lot easier. This can also be done performing other exercises that involve dumbbells, but you get much more out of the exercises using heavy kettlebells. I think it's really important to have strong hands because this will allow you to perform exercises with heavier weight.

Strength and cardio

One befit why kettlebells are so popular is because they combine a great strength workout, as well as a great cardio workout as well. Both having the ability to increase your strength and at the same time getting your heart rate up and really useful if you don't have enough time to work out for long periods. Kettlebells enable you to perform really quick workouts and still achieve the same results (or better) as compared to regular workouts.

Fat Loss

Because kettlebell workouts help speed up your heart rate and its ability to help speed up your metabolic rate, naturally kettlebell workouts are great for losing excess fat. And the best part is that you really don't have to perform intricate exercises or workouts to make this happen. You usually will only have to perform one exercise if you want, to achieve some amazing fat loss results. (Take a look at the case study in the resources section to learn more about fat loss and how simple it is to do it using kettlebells.)

Stimulates Muscle Growth

I'm pretty sure that this point doesn't need that much explaining. What do you think is going to happen you start hurling around a heavy "rock" with a handle on it? But needless to say, kettlebells will definitely stimulate your muscles and you can potential pack some great muscle mass. Although some kettlebell exercises may be better than others because of the difference between their time under tension (TUT). The more TUT, using heavy weights, and involving explosive exercises will dramatically increase your testosterone levels and kettlebells are good for doing all three of these things.

Posture

This point is interesting. Performing kettlebell workouts on a regular basis will help improve your posture by improving your posture chain. This basically means the muscles that run along your backside, from neck to your feet. By strengthen them and involving movements from kettlebell exercises you will be able to stand up straighter.

Flexibility

Kettlebell exercises are excellent for improving your flexibility in your hip flexors, hamstrings, hip abductors, and any other areas of your body. The movements that you will be doing in your kettlebell workouts will increase your range of motion and as you progress, you will notice an improvement in bending in ways you probably may never have before.

More Coordination

The more exposed you get to kettlebells that better your coordination will get. It may seem a little awkward at first, if you have never used kettlebells before, but will be able to perfect your form, once you use kettlebells regularly. A lot of the exercises that involve kettlebells usually only require

you to use one hand at once. This means you will need a little more coordination skill, as compares to using a barbell.

Workout Anywhere

With kettlebells, you don't need that much space, you don't need to be indoors, and you certainly don't need a gym membership. You actually don't even need to buy your kettlebells at a store, you can make your own.

Kettlebell Training for Men

Great results in a shorter period of time make kettlebell training more and more attractive to busy men. Working with kettlebells provides a broader range of strength and fitness benefits and can easily be incorporated into any workout. Kettlebells, unlike barbells and exercise machines, are also easier to transport or store and can be used virtually anywhere.

Versatility is a key benefit to kettlebell training. It is perfect for casual fitness, as part of an athletic routine and even for competition. In other words, it can be adapted for all levels of fitness and designed for specific results. As a great all-around workout, kettlebell training does not interfere with sport-specific requirements but adds to the overall health and fitness of every individual.

Kettlebell Training for Women

Many women spend time and money searching for weight loss and fitness programs only to be disappointed with the results. Kettlebell training is becoming increasingly popular with women because the results are quicker, easier to achieve and don't require expensive gym memberships.

Since time is a factor that limits everyone, women are particularly pleased with great toning and fat loss in shorter workouts. This is what has attracted many celebrities to kettlebell training programs! Because of the dynamic nature of working with kettlebells, it is possible to burn up to 20 calories per minute which means 400 calories in just a 20-minute workout!

While men are most likely to pick up as much weight as they can, women tend to underestimate their capability. Since kettlebell movements are functional, mimicking daily activities, women quickly discover that they can handle much more weight than you would have expected. Just think about the typical things you do:

- Lift babies and small children
- Carry groceries and laundry baskets
- Stretch to vacuum, dust and wash windows
- Bend and squat to do all sorts of cleaning and other chores

Also, think about how heavy your hand bag or computer case may be and you will realize that you are much stronger than you ever would have imagined.

Good form is a key to successful kettlebell training and it is this attention to your position and movements that improves posture and tightens the core. The hip and pelvic movements needed to create the momentum of kettlebell swings are the best ways to firm and tone the butt for a great shape. What you learn and practice with the kettlebell transfers over to all your other motions and activities so that you are not only better able to avoid injury but you will also look leaner.

One concern that many women have when the issue of resistance or weight training comes up is building bulk. With kettlebells, the cardiovascular benefits address weight loss and the use of the weighted kettlebell helps boost fat loss without building muscle. Muscle tone is improved in general but the main targets are the waist, hips, butt and thighs and an overall increase in metabolic efficiency.

Osteoporosis is a major concern as women grow older but strength training has been proven to combat issues that accompany lower bone density. Kettlebell training is a fun way to engage in this type of fitness and is much easier for most women than other types of weight-related exercise.

The Kettlebell's Basic Techniques

It is good to briefly go over some of the basics, when it comes to lifting weights. If you are familiar with the basics, then you can skip this section, or you can scan it over quickly if you need a refresher.

These are the essential things you should do when you perform your kettlebell workouts. These things will help you avoid injury and get more out of your workouts.

Time Under Tension is important for muscle growth – Time under tension (TUT) is one mistake that people usually make. Many beginners don't realize the importance of TUT and they wonder why their results suck. Time under tension is basically what it sounds like, the amount of time your muscles are under tension while performing an exercise. Usually the more tension time you have, the more you will stimulate muscle growth.

A lot of beginners see professional bodybuilder working out and they are performing their reps really fast. But I think that they miss the point of, professional bodybuilder take steroids and they can get away with performing fast reps because their gains are aided artificially. So, for the

most of us performing, slow repetitions will give you the biggest bang for your buck.

Usually but not all the time considering the different exercises you will be performing, but for most of the time I suggest you perform 5 seconds for each motion you are moving the weight. So, for example, when you are performing a squat, go down 5 seconds and raise for 5 seconds.

Breathe correctly – Out of all the things, it is most important for you to learn how to breathe correctly while working out. If you aren't breathing correctly, or not breathing at all while you are working out, you WILL eventually damage your body in one way or another. You can easily pull something if you are holding your breath while you perform exercises with heavy weight. That is why you must always breath and do it the right way to avoid some serious issues down the road.

In order to breathe correctly you must do two simple things. To make it less confusing let me again use the squat example. When you are lowering your body while performing the squat you want to breathe in. When you are bringing your body up you want to breathe out. The same concept applies to every exercise, like for example when you are performing a bench press. As you lower the weight you breathe in and when you are pushing the weight up, you should breathe out.

Medium Grip – This one is especially important for using kettlebells. Depending on the exercise you are performing you will generally want to

have a medium grip while holding the kettlebell. You want to make sure that you are not holding it too tight so like it's a death grip, but you also don't want to hold the kettlebell too loose so that it falls out of your hand.

As you learn some exercises like the kettlebell snatch you will learn why this is important to know. Basically, some exercises involve you moving your grip on the kettlebell to perform the exercise. So just remember to most of the time keep your grip in the middle.

Keep your head up looking in front up you – This point and the next point are two of the most crucial things you need to do in order to prevent injury while you work out. It is best to always to keep your head straight with your eyes looking in front of you, although some kettlebell exercises require you to look at the kettlebell while performing the exercise. But for the most part you want to keep your head up, especially if you are performing an exercise where you are standing or are bent over. This will help avoid injury in your neck and upper body.

Keep You back Straight – The other thing that is really important if you want to prevent injuries while working out is to keep you back straight. This is recommend for practically any type of exercise you may be doing. Picture a line being drawn down you back as you are exercising. If you don't follow this you will experience some painful injuries that you may never be able to correct in the future. You can easily pull a muscle if you don't follow this point.

7 Best Kettlebell exercises

Kettlebell Goblet Squat

If you have ever done a front squat then you will know how to perform these. But essentially in this exercise you begin by grabbing your kettlebell by the handle on the sides. Then with your feet shoulder width apart you perform a squat. Make sure your back is straight and you are bending your knees so that your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. Ideally you want to go down a little further than that to make these the most effective.

Kettlebell Deadlift

For deadlifts you actually have a few options because there are a couple of variations that you can perform. The first option is to perform deadlifts with the kettlebell in between your feet. If you perform this variation you will have to perform the exercise with your feet slightly further apart than shoulder width. The second option you have is to use two kettlebells. This obviously involves you to use two kettlebells that are the same weight.

You can perform this with the kettlebells in between your legs like the first variation or you can perform it with the kettlebells on the outside of your legs. When you perform the latter, just make sure to space your feet a little closer than shoulder width to avoid hitting your feet with your kettlebells. (Ouch!) The deadlift is really easy. Essentially you pick up the weight and bend down at the waist. Just make sure to keep your back straight.

Kettlebell Swing

Probably the most known kettlebell exercise. This is where you space your feet about shoulder width with your knees slightly bent. Then pick up the kettlebell by slightly bending at your waist, and then swing it between your legs. Then in a fast motion swing the kettlebell up, so that your arms are parallel to the ground. Repeat. Breathing is practically important for this exercise. If you aren't breathing correctly, you will tire out really quickly. Just like deadlifts, you can also perform the swing with 2 hands or 1.

Turkish get up

This one is a little complicated to explain in writing. But with this exercise you start by laying on your side on the floor with your legs bent. Then grab your kettlebell and lay on your back with your arm straight up in the air holding the kettlebell. At the same time, you also want to bring the heel of

your feet so that your knee is straight up in the air. (Same side as the arm that you are holding the kettlebell.)

Now you want to sit up, put your other hand on the floor, and lifting the rest of your body off of the ground all in the same motion. This is all done with the kettlebell up in the air with your arm straight. Then continue to stand up all while keeping your back straight.

Kettlebell Snatch

This is another popular kettlebell exercise. This is really similar to the kettlebell swing, but the difference is you are going to bring the kettlebell all the way above your head. This one may take some practice to get used to it because you need the right amount of grip in order to make sure the “bell” part of the weight is pointing down the top of this exercise. You may also want to start this exercise by performing a kettlebell swing and then working out way up to a snatch. This will give you a little more momentum to get the kettlebell all the way up above your head. You can also use both of your hands or just one.

Kettlebell Armbar

This exercise is great for increasing your strength, but it also one of the best kettlebell exercises you can do in order to help fix any shoulder pain that you have. To perform this exercise, start by laying on your back on the ground. Then grab your kettlebell with your palm up. Then press the kettlebell straight up in the air above you.

Now bring in the same side foot as the arm you are holding the kettlebell so that your foot is flat on the ground. Now you want to say on your side, still keeping your arm straight up in the air so that it is perpendicular to the ground. Next bring the hip and leg over, so that your lower body is facing the ground, but the arm that's holding the kettlebell is still straight up in the air. Usually you hold that position for a couple of seconds. Then bring the exercise back to its starting position.

Bent over row

This is another exercise you are probably familiar with if you have been working out for a little bit. The only difference is you are using this exercise with a kettlebell(s) instead of dumbbells or a barbell. Start by bending over with your back straight. Then pick up the kettlebell and raise it straight up. Bring your elbow straight up so that it's at the height of your back or higher.

Controlling the movement of kettlebell is crucial to this exercise so that it's effective for you.

Kettlebell Exercise Mistakes to Avoid

Kettlebell requires practice and may lead to injuries if not performed with care. Here are some tips to avoid injuries and blisters.

- Do not generate force only with your upper body. You should generate the thrust from your legs and hips. Kettlebell exercises involve full body moments, hence avoid applying force only from your upper body.
- Avoid using a high speed to swing the kettlebell. Kettlebells are very heavy in weight, and swinging them too fast will injure shoulder muscle.
- Do not bump your hands with kettlebells as it may hit your body. Also avoid bumping your feet or jumping a lot with kettlebells. Take special care in 'snatch' and 'throw' exercise moments.
- Do not neglect the position details and postures. If you do not understand a posture, ask help from an expert. If you take a wrong posture, it will stretch the muscles and cause injury.

- Do not keep your feet more than hip or shoulder-width apart as mentioned in each exercise. If you keep them more apart, or too close to your body, it will cause a change in your posture and lead to imbalance.
- No matter how expert or well-trained you have become with kettle bells do not invent your own exercises and postures. Instead of turning effective, it may lead to a long term injury.
- Do not do kettlebell exercises with improper footwear. Your footwear should be comfortable and help you with your exercise rather than causing discomfort.
- Some exercises vary between men and women, so first understand whether the exercise is apt for you or not, before trying it.
- Do not try with very heavy weights from start. Start with lighter weights, and then increase the weights slowly. Do not increase kettlebell weights until you are not comfortable with the initial weights.
- Do not handle the kettlebell lightly. Make sure that you have a tight grip on it, else it can injure your wrist muscles.

Perform one exercise, rest and then repeat the same or create sets of different exercises and then repeat the entire sets to make a workout pattern. You can allocate different days to different workout patterns to ensure that you don't get bored with the same exercises and your entire body gets addressed. As these are high power exercises, it may cause body pain or tiredness initially,

but soon the body gets used to it. Consult a doctor if you face any serious injury, muscle stretch or any other discomfort.

Kettlebell is versatile exercise equipment and its benefits are being revealed slowly. They engage all large body muscles, multiple joints thus giving exercise to the entire body and burning fats. Not just fat building, kettlebell exercises are also known to build stamina, power and strength. Though new, kettlebells are going to be around for long and are a smart way to juice up your regular fitness workout. Whether you are at the beginner or an expert, you will always find new challenging exercises to give you great results.

Conclusion

Now that you have had a thorough look at the world of kettlebell training, you are probably ready to jump right in! With the information in this book, you have the basics for including kettlebell exercises in your workout routine and the resources for finding out more.

Kettlebelling is a fun, dynamic way to improve your overall fitness and assist in weight loss. Easy to do at home, in a gym or at a professional training center, it is more than just one more exercise fad. Kettlebell workouts may not fulfill all your fitness needs but for most people, they are plenty - resistance training and cardio all rolled into one session. For others, specific kettlebell exercises fill the gaps created when their workouts focus too intensely on activity-specific practice or limit the muscle groups that are addressed.

Please be sure to follow all the safety advice and precautions to avoid possible injury while working out with kettlebells. Remember that you need to start slowly with lighter weights until you perfect the basic moves. As you are ready to progress, practice new moves without weight to be sure you are using the proper form.

For an overall better toned body and weight maintenance, kettlebells offer a quick, fun way to exercise, achieve your fitness goals and have fun.

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