

Kettlebells and the “F” word

No, it’s not what you think. It’s not a fad. It’s the real deal. And it simply is an awesome implement to strengthen and condition the body as a whole. There was a reason that Eastern European athletics programs used it in their training regimens. It worked. It helped athletes get strong and in shape fast. This is what trainers, athletes and coaches alike need to return to: simple, usable, effective strength training modalities.

So what can kettlebell training do for you? Some of the benefits of training with these implements are improved grip strength, improved muscular endurance, improved explosive power, and an increase in overall body strength.

Ever since the evil Russian, Pavel Tsatsouline (speaking of which, check out **The Russian Kettlebell Challenge**, a great DVD on the topic) popularized the implement here in North America, kettlebells are everywhere from your local gym to martial arts clubs. Its’ popularity continues to grow and with it the legion of fans.

Kettlebell Basics

The Kettlebell Swing



Step 1

One hand grasps the kettlebell with an overhand grip. The other can be placed on your hip or remain free. The goal of this exercise is to push your hips forward explosively. Start with your hips bent, back arched in a tight lordotic arch. Do not round your back! The arm holding the kettlebell should remain relaxed.



Step 2

As you thrust your hips forward and go into full hip extension, your arm “goes for a ride”. The momentum created by the forceful hip extension will naturally “raise” your arm (with kettlebell) up towards eye-level.

Step 3

Once the kettlebell reaches its peak, let gravity take over and lower the kettlebell back to its start position. It’s important that your core remain rigid, and resist the kettlebell’s pull downward. Repeat the movement.

Turkish Get-Up



Looks simple enough but this exercise is gruelling to say the least!

Step 1

Start the exercise by laying on your back with your arm and kettlebell fully extended. There are 2 things one needs to remember when doing this exercise: 1) your arm must remain fully extended and locked out for the duration of the exercise, and 2) you have to keep the kettlebell above your head at all times!

Step 2

Get up! Yup. Sounds easy right? Go ahead and try it. It doesn’t matter how you get up, just follow the above 2 rules.

Step 3

Once you finally get up, you now have to return back to your starting position. As I mentioned in the previous step, it doesn’t matter how you go back down, all that matters is that you follow the above 2 rules.

Now that wasn’t so bad, wasn’t it?



Kettlebell Windmill



Step 1

Begin by cleaning and pressing the kettlebell above your head.

Step 2

Lock out your arm above your head. Your arm must remain locked out and straight throughout the duration of the exercise. The same 2 rules apply to this exercise as the Turkish Get-Up.

Step 3

With your free hand, reach for the floor while keeping your arm locked out and above the head. Once you've touched the floor, return to the start position.

With all of these exercises it's important to start with an easy weight and progress to a heavier one. It's also wise to make sure that the same number of reps are completed for both sides of your body.

If you want to learn more about kettlebell training, check out Dragon Door's [The Russian Kettlebell Challenge](#). Hey! There's a reason why the Soviet Special Forces and numerous world-champion Soviet Olympic athletes used these in their training!