



KETTLEBELL



101



MINDMAP

**HOW TO BURN CALORIES AND BUILD
LEAN MUSCLE WITH KETTLEBELLS**

Kettlebell 101

How to Burn Calories and Build Lean Muscle With Kettlebells

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Introduction

Right now, kettlebells are one of the big health fads that have everyone talking. Just about every fitness magazine and website seems to be advocating the use of kettlebells and they're showing up in a ton of gyms where they never were before.

Is this just another health craze that will fade over time? Or is there something more to it?

The reality is that kettlebells are a small part of a much broader movement. A *movement*.

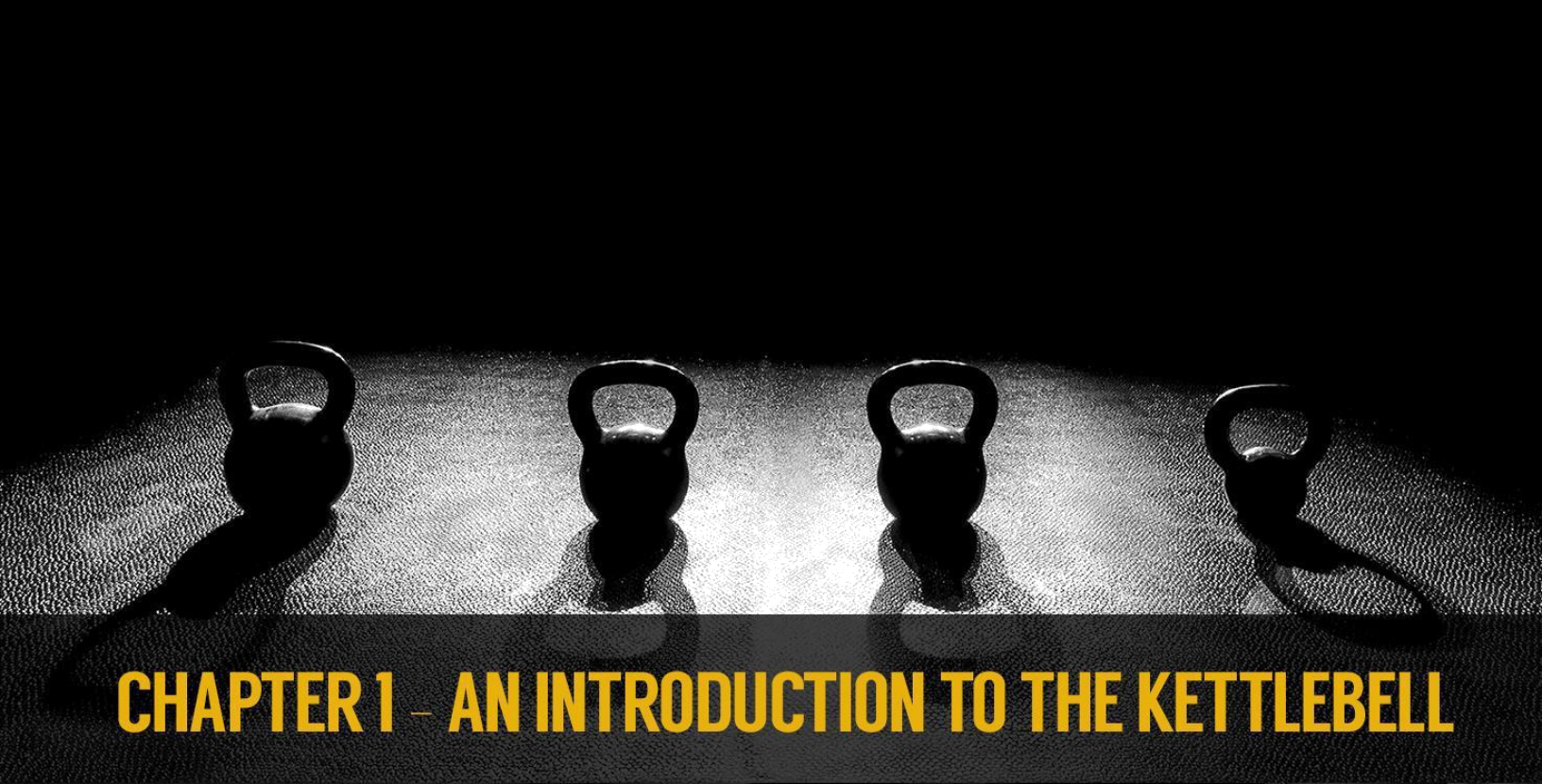
Suddenly, gym bros are going out of style as more freedom of information is helping us to get a better idea of what's best for our bodies. We now know that you can't fix a lifetime of sitting at a desk with 10 minutes of curling dumbbells. What's missing from our lives is *functional strength* and *mobility*.

Simply put: we aren't using our bodies the way that nature intended. And as a result, they're starting to deteriorate much more quickly than they should. Cue the 'Dad Bod' – the infamous physique that plagues guys who spend 65 hours a week in the office, 20 in front of the TV, 10 in the pub and 2 in the gym.

We need to start over. We need to use more creative tools to make training fun again, to explore using our bodies and to start developing real-world strength that we can apply to our everyday lives. We need to become powerful, flexible and mobile again. And kettlebells can help you to do just that. Let's explore what kettlebells are all about and why they represent such a paradigm shift.

In this book, you'll learn how you can create an entire workout using *just* kettlebells. And this won't be any old workout: this will be a workout that gives you the kind of body you always wanted along with the kind of *performance* you've only dreamed of. You'll be stronger, faster, more adaptable and more energetic. You'll feel more awake and even your brain will be supercharged beyond measure.

Don't believe me? That's fair enough – they're bold claims. But I promise that once you've finished this book, you'll understand *exactly* why that's possible and exactly why you need to start kettlebell training *today*.



CHAPTER 1 – AN INTRODUCTION TO THE KETTLEBELL

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Kettlebell

So let's start right at the beginning. What is a kettlebell? Where did it come from? And how do its unique properties make it such a truly effective training tool?

Essentially, the kettlebell is a small weight that can be used to provide external resistance in a manner very similar to a dumbbell. It has a handle and it comes in a range of different weights, allowing you to curl it or press it in just the same way.

The difference is in how the handle is positioned in relation to the weight. Rather than having weights on either side and a bar in the middle, the kettlebell is essentially a large, cast-iron ball that you can grasp in one hand from the top. This means that when you curl the kettlebell, the weight will hang underneath your hand and shift position in accordance with gravity so that it will always be pointing down toward the ground.

This adds a lot of extra movement to what is otherwise a fairly static and unchanging exercise. As the weight shifts, so does the angle of the resistance and this alters the precise muscles that will be involved in the exercise. In particular, the forearms are far more involved in a kettlebell curl than they would normally be.

What's more interesting still, is that the kettlebell allows you to hold it from a variety of different angles. You can grab it from the top for instance, or you can hold the ball itself with both hands. And if you *swing* the kettlebell by exercising using a rapid motion, then you can add an extra dimension of

momentum. Suddenly, the kettlebell gains its own force and trajectory and you now have to compensate for that while you're lifting.

This is where the true challenge of using a kettlebell comes in, because you are now going to have to constantly adapt to the changing angle, momentum and trajectory of the kettlebell. This in turn means you need to maintain your balance using your stabilizing core muscles, you need to grasp hard onto the handle using your grip and you need to recruit supporting muscles that you probably go long stretches without using the rest of the time.

This is what is meant by functional strength and it's what makes the kettlebell *much* more potent as a training tool than any dumbbell or barbell ever were.

A Brief History of the Kettlebell

But where did the kettlebell come from? And why is it only now making its way into gyms?

Actually, the kettlebell is *anything* but a new fad and can instead be traced back to the 1700s in Russia. In Russia, kettlebells are known as girya and are traditionally made from cast iron or cast steel. There's even a sport in Russia dedicated to kettlebell training called girevoy sport. Kettlebells even have their own unit of measurement – the 'pood' – which is 16 kilograms!

When kettlebells were initially invented though, it was not for the purpose of strength training *or* for sport. Rather, they were designed for weighing crops and were used by farmers. What happened though, is that those farmers found themselves becoming buff, which led to them display their feats of strength during festivals. This obviously got the attention of the burgeoning health and fitness industry, as well as the Soviet army who introduced them as a part of their physical training and conditioning programs in the early 20th century.

Kettlebells would also become popular among 'old time strongmen' who would demonstrate their power and size in travelling circuses alongside many other tools that allowed them to display this ability.

And then, they just kind of faded away...

Until the early 2000s that is, when they started to make a comeback. So what happened?

As mentioned, kettlebells became popular partly as a result of a greater understanding of functional fitness. As our understanding of health and fitness has progressed, so we have found new merit in old tools that allow us to use our bodies in more dynamic and challenging ways.

A few pioneers helped to spearhead this movement. One was the now-legendary Pavel Tsatsouline who published the book *Enter the Kettlebell: Strength Secret of the Soviet Supermen* and went on to appear on several high-profile blogs and podcasts. Another was Tim Ferriss, who became a champion of the kettlebell on his own blog and in his book *The 4 Hour Body*.

The kettlebell was then quickly adopted by the highly divisive CrossFit movement – and whether you love or loathe that particular school of training there is no denying that it has had a *huge* impact on the industry.

Is the kettlebell just a fad then, that is likely to drift out of popularity like yoyos and Pogs? Unlikely: the kettlebell, if anything, is a return to a time when we were more focussed on actually getting stronger and more athletic rather than just looking good. And *hopefully* that's not a fad at all! If anything, the kettlebell is something we should see more and more of as we continue to take mobility and functional movement seriously.

A black and white photograph of a man in a gym, lying on his back on a large exercise ball. He is holding a kettlebell with both hands above his head, performing a press. In the background, there are stacks of weight plates and other gym equipment. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

CHAPTER 2 – WHY FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH AND MOBILITY ARE SO IMPORTANT

Chapter 2: Why Functional Strength and Mobility Are So Important

We're going to learn later in this book just how many different options the kettlebell creates when it comes to our training. This is not just about being able to do curls at a slightly different angle: it's about things like the 'Turkish Get Up' which actually involves – quite simply – getting up. In short, the kettlebell challenges us to move in ways that we just wouldn't do normally and this is incredibly good for our fitness, our strength and our overall ability to move functionally and healthily the rest of the time.

Why is this such a game changer? Why do we so desperately need moves like this in our training regimes?

The simple answer is that we don't move any more – and it's killing our brains and our bodies.

Most of us will spend the vast majority of our day sitting in an office from 9-5 and then onwards to 6pm, 7pm or even 8pm. While we do this, we hold a single position: curled up in front of the computer with our back hunched, arms stretched forward in front of us and head craned upward. This position causes a huge number of health issues – it shortens our pectoral muscles, causing them to become tighter and less mobile, it forces us to develop a permanent hunch and it does even worse things to our legs.

In the sitting position, your leg flexors (leg muscles that pull your heel up toward your buttocks) will be shortened, meaning they become tighter and harder to straighten. Meanwhile, your leg flexors (which help your feet kick forward), will become lengthened and stretched meaning that they lose their normal

tautness and strength. This is enough to mean that your legs will now be exerting uneven force on your body and specifically on your pelvis. This will cause your pelvis to tilt forward slightly, creating what's called an 'anterior pelvic tilt' – causing your butt to stick out in an unattractive manner and your overall height to lose a couple of inches.

As you can imagine, this is *far* from functional and it robs you of a lot of movement. Simple things like bending over to touch your toes are an alien concept and knee pain and lower back pain become incredibly likely.

The way we sit at work even ruins our breathing. Specifically, our hunched position prevents us from breathing from our guts as we're supposed to and instead forces us to take shallow breaths from our chest cavity alone. This shallow breathing increases our heartrate and the release of stress hormones like cortisol and norepinephrine. In short, it's enough to make us highly wired and tired at all times and means we don't sleep as well, don't recover as well and generally spend all our time about to snap (sound familiar?).

We were never *meant* to sit. In the wild we didn't have chairs, so instead we would squat around campfires. This is something that most people now *cannot do*. Try right now to squat down, while keeping your heels flat on the floor and see if you're able to squat all the way down. Legs getting tight yet?

These are basic fundamentals of human movement that most of us *cannot* perform, simply because we don't use our bodies enough the way they're designed to be used!

Not only do we sit but we sit *all the time*. You go from sitting at work, to sitting on the train, to sitting in front of the couch! How many steps do you take in an average day? Do you feel like that's enough?

Meanwhile, our complete lack of challenging physical exercise means our hearts are weak, our cells are inefficient at using energy, our blood is thick and viscous and our muscles are next to useless.

So how do most of us go about fixing all these issues? We hit the gym!

But this actually makes matters even worse. The problem is that a lot of us seem purely interested in training our 'mirror muscles'. These are the muscles on the fronts of our bodies – our biceps, pecs and abs – and they're the muscles at the tops of our bodies.

Of course this doesn't look terribly good when you wear shorts but there are more pressing concerns. When you only train the muscles at the front of your body, it once again creates uneven pressure. Your hunched back and tight pecs get worse, creating even more of a hunch and even more potential back pain. Likewise, your abs are also pulling your body forward, as are your biceps. Is it any wonder that you're liable to snap and injure your back at any point?

And the way we're training doesn't really translate to real world strength. Think about how often you perform any kind of move resembling a bicep curl in real life – you just don't! When was the last time you had to curl anything through a straight arc in your day-to-day routine?

Real world tests of strength involve pushing heavy objects, pulling them, turning them, launching ourselves off of uneven ground and carrying items of varying weights in different hands. It is *very* rare for us to work in a manner that resembles the way we train in the gym and thus its usefulness is limited.

The problem with something like a dumbbell curl is that it only uses one muscle group. In this regard, it is known as an 'isolation exercise' or a 'single joint exercise'. Now combine this to a better move like a squat where you're using a whole number of different muscles in conjunction. This is how the body is *designed* to be used and when you perform exercises in this manner, you are challenging yourself to coordinate your body and to maximize its potential strength output: this is hugely more valuable than training each muscle on its own through a limited range of motion.

As you can see, traditional forms of training only compounded the problems that many of us already experienced and this makes a big problem.

But the kettlebell can change all that, as one of the most practical and versatile pieces of functional strength training equipment in the world...



CHAPTER 3 – GETTING STARTED WITH THE KETTLEBELL

Chapter 3: Getting Started With the Kettlebell

Before we go into detail discussing advanced kettlebell moves, let's first look at how you can add a kettlebell into your current routine.

Right now, you probably train in either a home gym or a gym with paid membership. Or perhaps you're just setting up your gym for the first time?

Either way, you can very quickly and simply improve the quality of your set-up by adding in a kettlebell (or a few!). Let's take a look at how to incorporate a kettlebell into your workout with basic exercises.

Kettlebell's for Leg Training

If you're currently working out from a home gym, then you probably have a few dumbbells and you probably have a pull up bar. This is absolutely fine for training the vast majority of your body but it sure does make it a little bit difficult to train your legs. Sure, you can use dumbbells to perform some squats and lunges but it's awkward at the best of times.

To train legs normally in the gym, you might use a barbell and a squat rack. You would then lie the bar across your shoulders and squat down to the ground. This is a great exercise because it combines lots of muscles in unison and because it allows you to add a lot more weight to your movements.

Unfortunately though, most of us don't have the space for a squat rack or the finances to afford a barbell, a squat rack and several hundred kilograms worth of weight! Thus we are left with dumbbell lunges.

But by simply introducing a kettlebell into your home routine, you open up a ton of new possibilities and specifically when it comes to training the legs. One example is the goblet squat. This is a squat performed using any heavy weight that can be held in two hands – in this case you grab the kettlebell and hold it against your chest and then perform the squat. If you have a kettlebell that is very heavy (they can go above 50kg), then this is actually quite a challenging move. Plus, the increased control you get over the weight (due to the better grip), means that you can perform more elaborate moves.

Likewise, you can also use the kettlebell for clean and press moves – with either one or both hands. Here, you are squatting down to the weight, grabbing it off the floor and then pressing it overhead.

Later, we'll look at the kettlebell swing and how this move can be used to train the legs *and* core and give you the perfect buttocks!

Here are some basic and easy moves you can perform with the kettlebell to target your legs:

Goblet squats/Front squats – As mentioned, here you will simply hold the weight in front of you and then perform regular squats. This moves the direction of the resistance forward slightly, challenging the muscles in the fronts of the legs more and ultimately making it a more difficult movement for those who are already used to regularly squats. This will train the legs, the core and the back

Deadlifts – While the kettlebell is something of a hugely popular 'fad' in fitness right now, so too is the deadlift. The deadlift has always been a popular move and is inarguably a great one but it has recently become overwhelmingly popular for all the reasons that the kettlebell itself has. Deadlifts are another exercise that are hard to perform without a barbell but it is possible using a deadlift – you just have to lie it on the floor in front of you, squat down and then stand up holding it (using correct form of course – back straight and legs shoulders' width apart).

Straight legged deadlift – This is a variation on the deadlift that even more ideally suited to the kettlebell and that is particularly useful for strengthening the lower back muscles, called the 'erector spinae'. Here, you simply perform the same deadlift movement described above, except that you will be keeping your legs straight (no prizes if you guessed that). Simply pivot at the waist, grab the kettlebell and then lift it straight up.

Clean and press – The one armed clean and press is a particularly effective move when performed with a kettlebell. With it on the ground, simply squat down to grab it and then stand up, curl it up to your shoulder and then press it above your head (it should dangle from your hand as you do this). This movement is excellent because it trains almost the entire body combining a curling movement, a squatting movement and a pressing movement. What's more, is that it challenges you to lift a heavy weight on just one side of your body, which in turn means you need engage the smaller stabilizing muscles even more – particularly the obliques that are located on either side of your abdominal muscles.

Squat press – Hold the kettlebell from either side, either by cupping the underside of the kettlebell on either side, or by holding onto the handle from both sides. Now squat and lower the kettlebell, then stand up and press the kettlebell over your head. Essentially, you are combining a simple squat with a simple shoulder press and this is a fantastic way to train the entire body.

Lunge press – Stand holding the kettlebell in one hand and then lunge forward, while pressing the weight above you in one hand. You can perform this either by keeping your arm extended the entire time, or by pressing it up each time you lunge forward.

Kettlebells for Everything Else

What makes the kettlebell such an ideal piece of training equipment is that its unique shape lends it to just about every other type of exercise too. You can use this to train pulling movements such as curls, rows and even lateral raises. At the same time though, you can also use it to perform presses (simply holding the kettlebell from underneath with two hands, or grasping onto the handle from either side) or for the vast range of other pulling movements you can use it like a dumbbell.

This means that you can perform:

Kettlebell curls – Simply hold the handle in one hand using an underhand grip and then lift it up and through the arch movement of a curl. This will train the biceps.

Kettlebell hammer curl – This is a more difficult variation that moves the centre of gravity considerably to make a more difficult movement. Just hold the handle so that the body of the kettlebell is pointing out sideways and curl in front of your body. This means you're using a neutral grip and it will really challenge the forearms to keep the kettlebell steady in that position. This will train the biceps as well as the forearms.

Chest press – Lie on the ground or on a bench and hold the kettlebell in two hands over the center of your sternum. Lower and then press upward. This way, you can perform what is essentially a bench press, except that you are bringing the arms closer together and thereby making it into more of tricep-centric movement. This will train the pecs, the serratus muscles, the triceps and the shoulders.

Shoulder press – You can perform this either by holding the kettlebell from either side and pressing upwards, or by holding the kettlebell underneath and doing the same. This will train the shoulders and pecs.

One armed shoulder press – Simply hold the kettlebell in one hand by the handle (so it is hanging by the side of your arm) and press above yourself on just the one side. You can do this either sitting down or standing up. This will train the shoulders.

Kettlebell lateral raise – Take a lighter kettlebell in one hand and then raise your arm out to the side, keeping your elbow straight and pivoting at the shoulder. This will train the outer shoulder – the medial deltoid head (the shoulder muscle has three ‘muscle heads’ that can be targeted individually).

Kettlebell upward raises – This is the same movement as before, except now you will be raising the kettlebell directly up in front of you and lowering it, again keeping straight arms. This works the anterior deltoid – the front muscle head on the shoulder.

Kettlebell reverse flies – Now you’re going to take two kettlebells, one in each hand and then lean slightly forward with them hanging in front of you, arms bent. Now, keeping your arms in that position, raise the kettlebells up behind you like you’re a chicken flapping its wings. This will train the rear deltoids and should look like the opposite to a fly in terms of the motion.

Kettlebell flies – Yes, we can also perform regular flies. Simply lie on a bench and hold a kettlebell in each hand, stretched out above you. Now lower the kettlebells out to the sides and then pull them back up into the middle. This will train the pectoral muscles.

Kettlebell row – To perform a row, kneel down on a bench and place one hand in front of your knee so that your back is parallel with the ground and with the bench itself. Now grasp the kettlebell in just one hand and raise your arm up directly in order to use your lat muscles. If you don’t have a bench, then you can perform the same movement by placing one hand against a wall, or by leaning forward and placing a hand on your own upper leg. This will train the lats.

Kettlebell upward row – The upward row will likewise work your lats but also your traps and your biceps among other things. To perform this movement, simply grasp the weight in both

hands at the handle and then pull it directly up in front of you while you are standing upright. You should find that you are able to bring the kettlebell up nearly to the point of your chin.

Kettlebell shrugs – Holding two kettlebells that are as heavy as you can find and letting them hang down by either side, you are now going to shrug as though you don't know the answer to a question. This will train your traps, which are the muscles on either side of your neck. These don't get much training in regular routines and the amazing thing is that they can therefore be used to very quickly add a lot of size.

Tricep kickback – This movement trains the triceps. Get into the same position that you did for the bent over row and then bring your arm up so that your elbow is bent at a right angle and the kettlebell is pointing at the floor. Now simply straighten your arm, so that the kettlebell ends up pointing backward.

Tricep pull over – The pullover is a move that trains the lats. Lie flat on a bench, holding the handle of the kettlebell in both hands and with your head right near the end. Now, with your arms straight and above you, let them start to lean back until they are pointing behind you at the far wall and the kettlebell is hanging below your leg. Engage the lats by tensing and then straighten them gradually to bring your arms back to the starting point.

Kettlebell skull crushes – This is another move for the triceps that is similar to the pullover. The difference is that you are bending the arms at the elbows instead, allowing the kettlebell to dangle just over your face (hence the name) and then straightening them again. Don't let go!

This will train the triceps.

Kettlebell crunches – These are regular crunches but the difference is that you will be grasping the kettlebell to your chest, thereby enabling you to add extra resistance that will train your rectus abdominis (the front sheet of muscle on your stomach). As you can probably guess, this same logic can be applied to practically any regular exercise for the abs including sit ups, twisting crunches, v-sit ups etc.

Kettlebell pass – If you have ever used a medicine ball then this one will be familiar. Here, you will simply sit on the floor with the kettlebell behind your back. Twist to pick it up and then place it in the middle behind you and then twist back the other way to pick it up again. These moves allow you to train the obliques, which run down the abs on either side and are responsible for allowing your torso to generate torque.

Kettlebell Russian twist – This move involves sitting on your buttocks but with your legs raised off of the ground. Now, while holding the kettlebell in both hands in front of you, twist on the spot.

Weighted tricep dips – Find a raised surface such as a bench or even a sofa or a step. Place your hands on it so that you are resting your weight on your palms. Now dip your body down until your buttocks touch the floor and raise back up. The difference? You're going to place a kettlebell on your lap for added resistance!

Kettlebell tricep extension – This is much like a skull crusher but the difference is that you're standing up. Simply hold the kettlebell in both hands and hang it behind your head, so that your arms are bent back over your face. Now straighten your arms to raise the kettlebell while avoiding hitting the weight into the back of your head...

As you can see then, the kettlebell is an incredibly versatile tool simply as something that can replace your dumbbells *and* your barbells. If you're looking for a cheap and easy home gym solution that won't take up much space but also won't limit what you can do, then look no further than getting yourself a set of kettlebells.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of the regular exercises that can be performed with kettlebells either. Suffice to say that kettlebells truly allow you to train the entire body and can be an entire gym solution on their own.

But that's not really what's exciting about a kettlebell...

What's exciting about the kettlebell are all the functional training possibilities that we discussed in the last chapter. For that, you're going to need some more exciting movements that are entirely exclusive to the kettlebell.

And as it just so happens, you'll be able to find those in the next chapter of this book!



CHAPTER 4 – UNIQUE KETTLEBELL EXERCISES FOR DEVELOPING TRUE FUNCTIONAL STRENGTH

Chapter 4: Unique Kettlebell Exercises for Developing True Functional Strength

In order to benefit from the unique advantages of the kettlebell, you need to train in such a way that takes advantage of its unique properties. And to that end, you need to get a little more advanced. Let's take a look at how to do that with some of the more exciting moves.

The Kettlebell Swing

When you say the word kettlebell, it will be almost synonymous with the word 'swing' as far as many people are concerned. That's because the kettlebell swing is a movement that has so many incredible benefits that it has become somewhat famous in its own right. We'll be discussing this move a lot more throughout this book but for now let's just learn how to use it.

To perform this move, you are going to take the kettlebell and place it between your legs with your feet planted about shoulders width apart and feet pointing forward. Now, bend the knees slightly in order to pick the weight up off the ground and then stand with it hanging directly in front of you, held in both hands. Stand up fully straight before you begin.

What you're now going to do is to bend the knees just slightly and allow the kettlebell to hang between your legs. Now, stand up by driving through the floor and only moving the knees slightly but *pop* the hips forward as you do. You should be contracting the glutes, abdominals and lats as you do this and it

should then force the kettlebell to swing up into the air in front of you. Your arms remain straight and now your legs are almost straight but the weight should be hanging at around chest level directly in front. Eventually, gravity will take over and the weight should begin to fall again. As this happens, allow your body to drop and let the kettlebell swing back through the legs behind you again. Then thrust forward and up again and repeat the process.

By the end, you should now be thrusting the hips repeatedly in order to get the kettlebell to swing up in front of you. This should involve your legs a little but shouldn't actually involve too much knee movement. The back should also remain straight throughout the movement – imagine that you have a meter stick ruler pushed down your tshirt along your back and you can't break it.

This will build your posterior chain muscle, which are the ones used in jumping. It's also a fantastic form of cardio that can be just as effective as going for a run. We're going to explore this a lot more later on.

American Swing

The kettlebell swing can also be referred to as the 'Russian Swing' which is to differentiate it from the American alternative. The American swing meanwhile involves a very similar basic movement except that the aim is to get the weight to swing up much higher – almost to the point of being overhead. You are still avoiding using the arms during the motion however.

Single Armed Kettlebell Swing

This is another movement that involves a twist on the classic kettlebell swing. This time, the difference is that you're only using one arm. You can alternate arms, or take it in turns. If you want to be very fancy, then you can actually throw the kettlebell in the air and catch it in the alternate hand. Likewise, you can also perform a slight throw and a catch when performing the regular kettlebell swing. This adds a little flare and makes it a little more fun!

Turkish Get Up

The Turkish getup is another movement that utilizes the kettlebell in a truly unique manner for the kind of fitness that you simply couldn't get with a dumbbell.

In this case, you will be aiming to stand up while holding the kettlebell. This is easier than it sounds, as you will learn...

The starting position involves lying next to the kettlebell on one side and holding the handle with both hands. Knees should be bent and pulled up to your stomach. You should gaze lovingly at the kettlebell.

Now you are going to roll onto your back and place the kettlebell on your stomach. From here, you are now going to plant one foot on the ground with the knee bent, while the other is stretched out in front of you. If you are lifting the kettlebell with your right hand, then the right knee will be bent and planted on the floor. Your other arm should be out to one side, bracing you against the floor, while you look straight up.

Now, holding the kettlebell on your stomach in just one hand, you are going to press it directly upward over your shoulder and lock out that arm.

Now, push up on the arm and foot that are flat on the ground, moving your weight onto the foot that is flat on the ground while keeping your eyes firmly on the kettlebell that is raised above you.

Push through the floor with the leg on the working side and roll the other arm up onto the elbow and then onto one hand. You can now bring your buttocks off of the ground. You'll be squeezing your glutes and your hips at this point and you'll want to maintain a vertical extension in the arm with the weight.

Now bring the flat leg underneath yourself so that you're on one knee, with the weight still up in the air. The knee should be pointing at a 90 degree angle to your other foot. With your neck still looking up, it's time to raise up into a lunge and then stand straight up. You should end up standing right up and with the weight above you in one hand.

What now? Now you lie back down of course!

To do this, you are going to lower yourself down onto one knee again so that it is perpendicular to the leading leg. Then place one hand on the ground and use this to hold your weight while you bring the leg back out and lie it flat.

Roll down onto your elbow and then onto your shoulder. Grab the kettlebell with both hands if necessary and lower it down onto your chest or stomach. Place it onto the floor next to you and roll back into the starting position. Time to repeat the move on the other side!

This is an insane move, yes. But it's also one that trains nearly every muscle in the body, builds contralateral strength, balance and coordination and can generally greatly enhance your athletic performance.

Kettlebell Figure-8

This is another slightly more technical move, though not half as technical as the one we just covered! This time, the aim is to start with your legs just wider than hip-width apart and then to get into a quarter-squat position. Now you're going to grab your kettlebell in one hand – let's say the left hand shall we? – and swing it around the outside of the leg on that side. Now come back in through the middle and go around the outside of the right leg, switching hands as you do. As you can imagine, this basically draws a figure of eight around your legs and will work the obliques as well as the core and legs.

Kettlebell Halos

The halo is a very unique exercise that involves swinging it around your head! Stand in a similar position to a kettlebell tricep extension, so that the weight is hanging behind your head. Now, bring the weight around in front of you clockwise and then sling it over your other shoulder before continuing through the same motion. As you circle your head with the weight, you can move your body in accordance, turning this into a great oblique and core workout.

Kettlebell Windmills

Looking for something even more dynamic and challenging? Kettlebell windmills are it! Here, you are going to stand with one kettlebell held over head in one hand and your feet shoulder width apart. Your toes will be pointing away from the kettlebell.

Now bend at the hip. Your torso should be slightly twisted so that one side is facing down (the other side) and this is going to allow you to bend and touch the ground with your free hand. This is a great move for training pretty much the entire body, including the core, the obliques, the shoulders and the back. It's also great for challenging mobility.

Again, this is not a comprehensive list. However, you can hopefully start getting some idea as to the more complex and challenging moves that are possible with kettlebells. And this is certainly enough to begin challenging yourself with a highly effective workout routine that does a lot more than simply sculpting your guns...

Carries

Carries are exactly what they sound like – exercises where you simply *carry* the kettlebell. You can do this any way you want but the idea is that you're going to cover distance while working the muscles. A

good example is the farmer's walk, which involves holding a kettlebell (or another weight) in each hand and then walking a long distance. Why not take your kettlebell with you next time you make a trip to the shops? You can leave it outside and rest assured no one will steal it!

A black and white photograph of a man with a shaved head and extensive tattoos on his arms and torso. He is sitting on the floor in a cross-legged position, leaning forward with his hands on a large kettlebell. He is looking down at the kettlebell with a focused expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

CHAPTER 5 – HOW THE KETTLEBELL CAN TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Chapter 5: How the Kettlebell Can Train Your Brain

Just to demonstrate how truly incredible the kettlebell is for your fitness and health, let's take a look at how this kind of training can *also* work wonders for another part of your anatomy – your brain.

Because there's another problem with spending all day sitting in an office: it's terrible for your grey matter.

The brain you see, loves movement and it loves learning. The vast majority of brain regions are dedicated to some aspect of our bodies – whether they help us move or interpret data from our senses. The very purpose of our brain's capacity for learning is to help us move more efficiently through our environments.

When you're constantly moving, exercising and challenging yourself, you will be helping your brain to grow. Each time you attempt a new movement, you will first visualize it. You then attempt to carry out the movement and your brain becomes highly tuned to the feedback it gets from your senses. This means not only sight but also proprioception and touch.

Using this information, we then are able to tell if the movement was successful or not. If it was, the brain releases reward hormones and neurochemicals like serotonin. These, along with increases in dopamine and BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) enhance brain plasticity and help us to become better at learning, more focussed and more. This causes the neural pathway that led to the correct movement to be reinforced and strengthened via a process called myelination. This means that the next time we attempt the same movement, it will now be easier. Each time we practice the same movement, the same pathways get stronger and stronger and we become better and better at it.

The brain absolutely loves this process and the more it engages in it, the more plastic and adaptive it becomes – the better we are at learning *other* things, the more energetic we feel and the more awake.

Exercise in general is fantastic for the brain. Exercise encourages blood flow, it improves the energy efficiency of our cells and it helps to reduce stress and restore white matter. Exercise improves our memory, it combats depression and it generally helps us to perform and feel *much* better.

But it's only *challenging* exercise that really gives our brain that incentive to grow. It's complex movement that helps it to become more agile and better at learning and that really combats things like age related decline. If you keep challenging yourself with new movements, then you can keep your brain constantly growing and developing – constantly ready to take on any new challenge.

Just like your body can get set in its ways and become stiff from lack of use, so too can the brain. And in *both* scenarios, functional training is actually the very best treatment. When you practice these moves you are developing incredibly coordinated movements against resistance and you are drastically enhancing your performance. This is the true power of the kettlebell and of the functional movement movement in general.

A black and white photograph of a muscular man with extensive tattoos on his arms and chest. He is wearing a dark tank top with the letters 'MS' and 'WUSA' visible. He is sitting and eating from a clear plastic container with a spoon. In the background, there is a gym setting with a barbell and weights.

CHAPTER 6 – EATING RIGHT WHILE TRAINING WITH KETTLEBELLS

Chapter 6: Eating Right While Training With Kettlebells

Now you know what kettlebells are all about and you know just *why* they're so incredibly powerful. Moreover though, you should also now understand your options when it actually to training with them. You now know how to work out using a kettlebell to replace regular equipment and you know how to use a kettlebell for its unique benefits as a tool for true functional strength and movement training.

This means you now have enough of a foundation for us to start putting all that into practice with some programs that will help you build strength, lose weight and gain more explosive power.

But before we get into *that*, let's first look at the diet aspect. This is not a diet book but we will provide you with enough basic information that you can back up your training with the right diet to match your goals.

The Basics of Health Eating

Food has two basic roles. It is at once a fuel source and a source of raw materials.

That is to say that you are going to use food in order to provide your body with energy so that you can go about your day, train and generally exert yourself. But you're *also* going to provide your body with food so that it can use it to make repairs, help you grow and help you adapt. Proteins are used to create muscle tissue, neurotransmitters and enzymes. Vitamins and minerals help to support your immune system, strengthen your bones etc.

Calories

In terms of fuel, you need to identify your goals and then eat accordingly. If your aim is to lose weight, then you need to consume fewer calories than you are burning in a day. This will put you in a calorie *deficit*. So in other words, you can work out the number of calories you burn and then make sure that you're not giving your body *enough*. Therefore, your body will need to turn to your fat stores in order to provide energy and this will lead to you losing fat.

However, this process can also lead to the breakdown of muscle. Muscle is highly energy demanding and if you have low blood sugar, then your body will recognize this as a sign that you need to reduce the energy cost of your body. You will thus release cortisol and myostatin and this will lead to the muscles being burned along with the fat.

If you want to *gain* wait however – whether that's fat or muscle – then you need to maintain a calorie surplus. This means you need to consume more calories than you burn, which means you'll have left over energy at the end of the day. This will prevent your body from going into that catabolic state where it conserves energy and breaks down muscle. Instead, you will be in a more anabolic state and this will help you to keep adding muscle.

If you're an ectomorph who really wants to gain a ton of weight, then you should do a 'dirty bulk' meaning that you drastically increase your caloric intake while training with heavy weights.

If you're a mesomorph though – someone with an average metabolism who is perhaps struggling with skinny arms and a flabby stomach – then you can try and keep your calories in and out at a rough equilibrium and instead focus on toning muscle. It's all about finding that sweet spot for your goals.

Endomorphs meanwhile, who are large and who struggle to lose weight, will want to go as calorie low as possible in order to burn through lots of fat.

To work out how many calories you burn in any given day, you will need to calculate your 'AMR' or 'Active Metabolic Rate'. You can find lots of online calculators that will do this for you and they only require that you enter your height, age, weight etc.

Another option is to wear a fitness tracker, which will also need that data and then use this in conjunction with your activity levels and heartrate throughout the day.

To measure the calories coming in meanwhile, you can either keep constant record by using an app like MyFitnessPal (or even just a notebook), or you can roughly work out the calories in your most regular meals and use this to generate a rough estimate.

Either way, increase the number to gain weight and lower it to lose it!

(To get a rough idea, the average AMR for men is 2500 and for women it is 2000. If you're really unsure about calculating your AMR and calorie intake, just try and keep it below these figures to begin with and see if you progress.)

Macros

As well as monitoring your calories, you also need to think about where your calories are coming from. This is what we call 'macros' or 'macronutrients'. Here, the goal is to make sure that you are getting your food from the right sources and there's a lot of debate over how much this matters and what the correct course of action is.

One thing that *is* proven (although some people still don't believe it), is that you need to be consuming 1 gram of protein for every 1lb of bodyfat. This is because our body gets its amino acids from proteins and amino acids are what it uses to create muscle tissue. You need protein because it literally serves as the 'building block' of your muscles. Otherwise, it's like trying to build a Lego castle without Legos... So if you weight 170lbs, you need to be eating 170 grams of protein.

Seeing as a gram of protein is 4kcal, this will instantly have taken up a fair proportion of your allowance in terms of calorie. That is 680 calories and this is likely going to be higher seeing as few sources of protein are so lean that they don't contain any additional calories. A piece of chicken for instance will also contain fat.

The good news is that protein doesn't convert readily into fat, so whether you're trying to lose weight *or* gain it, increasing your protein intake is a good option. Using protein shakes is fine but there's actually no need if you can get the necessary amount from your diet. Eggs are a very health source, so is tuna and so is chicken.

Next up are your carbohydrates. Carbohydrates provide us with the most readily available form of sugar and energy and this is *slightly* less likely to be stored as fat compared with actual fat. Meanwhile, carbohydrates are again 4kcal per gram and are handy for keeping yourself in an anabolic state.

The problem is that for weight loss, carbohydrates (and specifically 'simple carbs' like cake and bread) can cause a sudden spike in blood sugar that leads to a sudden spike in energy, followed by a trough and an intense hunger. Moreover, a spike in the blood sugar will lead to other problems like an increased likelihood of fat storage (lipogenesis). Basically, if the body gets a sudden 'dump' of sugar, then it will have nothing to do with it other than burn through it quickly, or store it as fat.

The problem here is that simple carbs are too quickly absorbed by the body and thus release all their sugar at once. Fat is superior in this regard, because it is more slowly digested and thus will release energy more slowly into the bloodstream. This steady trickle of energy means you can keep exerting yourself without tiring out and means you won't be left with a sudden sugar surplus that needs to be stored as fat.

Fat is also useful for aiding with the absorption of nutrients and it's actually what the body uses to make testosterone – so it's a necessary inclusion in your diet as well. And contrary to believe, fat is not bad for your heart – this belief was based on old studies that have since been debunked and disproven.

The only problem with fat? It contains 9 calories per gram instead of 4, so you can afford to eat a lot less without breaking through your calorie goal. What's more, is that the slow release is not as useful for providing immediate energy when you're feeling low and it's not as useful for keeping you in an anabolic state.

A half-way house are 'complex carbs'. These are more natural carbohydrates that are starchy or filled with fiber and fat and generally take longer to digest. Examples include sweet potatoes and oats. This is why an oat porridge breakfast is excellent for supplying a steady stream of energy throughout your day.

Ultimately, we need both carbs and fats in our diet, so the best thing to do is to calculate how much protein you need and then divide the remainder of your calorie 'budget' across fats and carbs respectively.

Nutrients

Finally, you also need to make sure that you are getting plenty of nutrients. The nutrients found in natural foods are like performance enhancing drugs – in many cases they can increase muscle mass, improve brain power, give you more energy or help you to sleep better. Nutrients can increase testosterone, enhance mitochondrial function, provide more dopamine, increase brain plasticity...

And unfortunately, a lot of what we eat these days is processed to the point where all of those crucial nutrients are missing. These are what we call 'empty calories' and some prime examples are things like sausage rolls, Big Macs, chocolate bars, crisps and ready meals. If this is what you're living off, then you're supplying your body with huge sugar dumps and none of the goodness it craves – no decent protein, no vitamins, no minerals... as such, you will contain 'craving' foods because your body will know something is missing. And at the same time, you will feel tired and sluggish and be unable to put on muscle.

And most processed foods are simple carbs, precisely because they have had all the nutrients and fiber removed and so will digest much too quickly in the body.

Get rid of the junk food and seek out things that are wholesome, natural and full of goodness. You'll feel 100 times better and reach your goals *much* more quickly.

With all this in mind, you should now know how to design your diet in order to get the best results. All that is left is the training!

A black and white photograph of three fit individuals—a woman and two men—performing kettlebell swings in a gym. They are captured in the middle of the swing, leaning forward with their hips hinged and arms extended. The woman is on the left, wearing a sports bra and shorts. The two men are on the right, shirtless and wearing shorts. The background shows gym equipment and large windows.

CHAPTER 7 – THREE KETTLEBELL PROGRAMS FOR DIFFERENT GOALS

Chapter 7: Three Kettlebell Programs for Different Goals

You know the moves, you know the science and now you know how to eat for the best results. Now it's time to take that theory and put it into practice with three kettlebell training routines to help you reach three very different goals.

First up, weight loss...

Program 1: Weight Loss Program

If your goal is to lose weight, then the first thing you're going to do is to fix your diet to contain fewer calories than you burn and you're going to make sure that you're eating lots of nutrients and not too many carbs and fats.

Then you're going to start doing kettlebell swings. *Lots* of kettlebell swings. Why? Because kettlebell swings are absolutely ideal not only for burning fat but also toning your body to provide you with the ideal physique.

When you train with a kettlebell swing, you are performing what is known as 'resistance cardio'. This means that you're combining cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise with a form of resistance. This has been shown to help burn through more calories than cardio alone because the body has to work harder by engaging the muscles.

What's more, is that kettlebell swings are a compound movement, meaning that they utilize lots of muscles at once. This causes more muscle damage than training just one muscle group and the body responds by producing more growth hormone and testosterone to build more muscle. This tones you up (and having muscle burns more fat) but it also helps you to burn fat.

Finally, the kettlebell swing is perfect for creating toned legs and buttocks. Women particularly love the kettlebell swing because it is so effective at creating round and firm glutes that only the squat can come close to providing normally.

We are also going to be using something called HIIT – High Intensity Interval Training. This means we're switching between high intensity exercise and periods of rest/low pace activity. Doing this is ideal because it allows you to burn through more fat, triggering something called the 'after burn' effect that lasts long after you've finished exercise. It also means you can get in more exertion in less time and a short HIIT workout will help you lose more weight than a significantly longer steady state workout.

This is important because you need a training routine that is going to be easy to fit into the day. Many of us are out of shape because we lack the time and energy to workout. Trying to start a routine that takes 7 hours a week then is a non-starter. Instead, you can get an incredible workout 5 times a week with just ten minute sessions.

Simply:

Perform kettlebell swings for 1 minute

Rest for 1 minute

And repeat.

Try to see how many kettlebell swings you can complete in that one minute and how many rounds you can do. Start with five – it's going to be more than enough by the last set, trust me. As you get more confident, you can build up to rounds lasting 20 or even 30 minutes. Make sure the weight is heavy enough that you are just starting to struggle by the end of the first 10.

If you are even more pushed for time, or you're feeling particularly sadistic, then you can try what is known as the 'Tabata protocol'. This involves exerting yourself at maximum capacity for 20 seconds and then resting for 10 seconds before going again. You can find lots of MP3s and YouTube videos online to talk you through it. It might sound easy but Tabata will absolutely kick your ass and leave you in a heap!

Note: Tabata is not for first time trainees – build up to it by creating a base level of fitness first and only then give this a go!

Program 2: Strength Program

Using the program above will help you to build some strength but this is not the best option for gaining lots of muscle quickly. Instead, you need to focus on a routine that will create microtears in the muscle and help to encourage the build up of metabolites.

This is where it becomes useful to use some of those more old fashioned exercises that let you focus on one muscle group. Why? Because this way, you can keep going until *that specific muscle* fails. With a bicep curl for instance, you're not going to get tired and you're not going to lose form until the bicep is so full of blood and growth hormone and lactic acid that it hurts. This lets you tear muscle fibers, in turn leading to growth overnight.

Some bodybuilders will do this by focussing on a single muscle group per day – but that takes a lot more time and effort than most of us have and it's not terribly functional. Instead, we're going to use something called PPL. This stands for **P**ush, **P**ull, **L**egs. That means one day for all pushing movements, one day for pulling and one day for legs – as the name implies.

This makes a lot of sense because a pushing movement like the chest press will use lots of the same muscles which tend *not* to be used in a pulling movement like a pull up. Pull ups use lats, biceps and abs, while presses use pecs, triceps and traps.

You have the list of exercises in the earlier chapter, showing you how to use your kettlebell for all the most popular *regular* movements. We're going to group these based on targeted muscle and perform three workouts a week.

What's more, is that we're going to start each workout with a couple of compound full-body movements. This will generate better strength by forcing us to use muscle mass in unison and it will also help us to produce more growth hormone and testosterone. Ultimately, all this will mean more growth and strength.

Then we're going to follow each session with lots of protein, lots of calories and lots of sleep – sleep is when we grow! The leg day is also going to do a *lot* of this.

Push

The push workout will consist of:

3 x 10 Kettlebell Clean and Press

3 x 10 Kettlebell Shoulder Press

3 x 10 Kettlebell Flye

3 x 20 Press Ups

3 x 10 Kettlebell Kickbacks

3 x 10 Kettlebell Tricep Extensions

Pull

3 x 20 Kettlebell Swings

3 x 10 Kettlebell Upward Row

3 x 10 Kettlebell Curls

3 x 10 Kettlebell Bent Over Row

3 x 10 Kettlebell Pull Overs

3 x 10 Pull Ups

3 x 10 Kettlebell Crunch

Legs

3 x 10 Kettlebell Clean and Press

3 x 10 Kettlebell Lunge Press

3 x 10 Kettlebell Deadlift

3 x 10 Goblet Squat

3 x 20 Kettlebell Swing

Program 3: All Rounder Performance Program

Finally, for those who want a bit of everything, a circuit routine will do the trick. This works like a HIIT workout because you're constantly moving (with a one minute break at the end of each round) and because it's fast and easy to implement. We're going to be using the most compound and technical movements here though and a whole body routine, which means you'll build explosive performance and coordination, while also toning and honing.

The circuit is designed to alternate between upper body and legs, which will allow you to keep the heart working harder as it is forced to divert blood first upward and then downward.

Spend 30 seconds at each station, with a 1-minute break between rounds.

Kettlebell Clean and Press

Kettlebell Lunge Press

Kettlebell Overhead Press

Goblet Squat

Press Ups

Kettlebell Swing

Rest

Perform this routine 3 times for a quick workout or 5 times for an intense session. Use four times per week for best results.

Conclusion

Now you know exactly how to make full use of a kettlebell and get the body you want from swings, squats and presses. More importantly though, you should understand the science behind it and recognize the importance of challenging your body with unexpected and complex movement. We spend far too long sitting and we don't challenge ourselves enough. If you allow this to continue, your body will become weak and atrophied and you will be inviting injury. So keep challenging it with real movement and with functional training exercises. The kettlebell is just one way to do this that is particularly effective and convenient but once you get a handle on this, why not branch out with some other forms of functional strength. How about some hand balancing?

You'd be amazed at what your body can do once you start using it again...