



Technical Lifting Class
Kettlebells & The Kettlebell Complex

By

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What Are Kettlebells & Where Do They Come From?

Kettlebells were originally used in 18th century Russia to weigh crops. They were recorded being used by circus strongmen in the mid 19th century in Russia. In 1885 the first ever competitive kettlebell competition was held at the 'Circle for Amateur Athletics'.

I was first introduced to Kettlebells by watching a video of **Pavel Tsatsouline** an ex head of fitness for Russian special forces **Spetsnaz**. Pavel wrote a book called 'Enter the Kettlebell' which I highly recommend if you wish to know more about kettlebell techniques and workouts. I would credit Pavel as the guy who made Kettlebells popular in western culture.

Kettlebells are used now by you average gym goer through to top level athletes. There are even events to compete at kettlebells.



What The Kettlebell Does

The kettlebell is a **ballistic exercise that improves strength, conditioning, flexibility and mobility**. It has a large crossover to athletic performance and improves your ability to perform everyday tasks.

The main movement is the kettlebell swing. This works core, the whole posterior chain (Upper & Lower Back, Glutes & Hamstrings), Quads, Grip Strength, Deltoids. Along with **strength and power** the kettlebell is an excellent way to increase **strength endurance**. I defy anyone who performs kettlebells correctly to be gasping for breath after a workout. Before the latest trend in exercise **High Intensity Interval Training or HIIT** experienced kettlebell users argue that they have been using this approach with the kettlebell swing for years.

Because of the use of the **anaerobic and lactic pathways** during the swing of the kettlebell. The kettlebell is a great tool for burning fat. Anyone who has attended my weight training for fat loss class will know how important Lactic Acid and incomplete rest is for fat loss.



How To Perform A Swing

There are several ways to perform a swing although many will argue there is only one way to swing a kettlebell. Depending if you are hip or quad dominant you may use the high hip style or the low hip kettlebell swing. Again nothing is right or wrong depending on what you are trying to achieve. If you want to improve mechanics of your movement then go with the high hip style. This is sometimes called **swooping and can be classified as a fault**. All that is happening is you are transferring your weight to the quads. This is only a problem if you are losing balance. I would suggest as a beginner start with what's comfortable and adjust as you get more used to the movement. This may not be optimal but I believe if you can't hip hinge correctly to begin or create torque through the midsection this can lead to lower back issues. We all have to start somewhere.

Select a reasonable weight. Too heavy and you won't swing you will lift. Too light and it's very difficult to move correctly. I've seen more injuries with light Kettlebells than with ones that maybe 4kg too heavy. You will notice during the class I will use a heavy ish weight. I'm not showing off I actually do it with better form than with a light weight.

Set Up Like A Deadlift Back flat and stomach braced with a slight bend in the knees. I've always said it's a deadlift with dynamic movement. The hips should be lower than the shoulders with a slight bend in the knees. Keep the Shins at 90 Degrees from the Floor.

Set the Kettlebell In Front Of The Shoulders Unlike the deadlift set up you place the kettlebell in front of the shoulders and the handles tilted towards you.

Take the Slack Out The Body and create torque. A good way to test if you are in the right position is let go of the kettlebell and if you fall back you are probably in the right position.

Initiate The Hips Forward Keeping Torque in The Upper Body This will raise the kettlebell off the floor and it will start swinging. Hike the Kettle backwards between the legs to assist the natural swing. Keep stomach tight and when you hit end range.

Squeeze the Glutes & Hamstrings with Force. Remember you just relaxing the arms and using the hips to stand up with as much power as you can and the end position isn't when the kettlebell is in front of you it's when the hip flexors are fully extended. Then repeat the beginning by hiking the kettlebell back through the legs. Do not use the arms they are just hooks.

The Kettlebell Complex

A **complex of exercises** are a group of different exercises that join together to create a set. There are so many variations of the kettlebell exercises If you get bored of doing the same thing you could create a different complex each time you workout until you die. Please don't die as the paperwork takes ages to complete.

Obviously I can't go into every complex of them but here are some ideas.

Time Complex

With a time complex you set a clock and obey the timeframe. Each exercise you select will be timed or you will have to complete a certain amount of exercises with good form within the time frame. This is very popular in sports like Crossfit. Heres an example of a -

5 minute Complex. (Advanced)

- A1] Kettlebell Swing **60 secs**
- A2] Kettlebell Clean **60 secs**
- A3] Kettlebell Front Squat **60 secs**
- A4] Kettlebell Renegade Row **60 secs**
- A5] Kettlebell Suitcase Carry **60 secs**

Rep x Exercise Complex

This is where you would set the amount of reps x exercise complex. Say

Select 3 Exercises and perform 6 reps.

- A1] Kettlebell High Pull **6 Reps**
 - A2] Kettlebell Turkish Get Up **6 Reps**
 - A3] Kettlebell Thruster **6 Reps**
- Rest 30 secs

Ladder Complex

I'm not going to kid anyone this can be hell. I once worked out with a friend and suggested kettlebells. He laughed and said maybe as a warm up and what are we going to do after? I replied sleep. We did 3 rounds of a Ladder Complex and he was lying on his back panting for about 20 minutes.

We select one exercise and add another each set until failure. You can use time or reps. Lets use reps for the example. I like an upper body lower body blood shunting complex.

Rep Ladder Complex

A1] Kettlebell Swing x 8 reps

Rest 60 secs

B1] Kettlebell Swing x 8 reps

B2] Kettlebell Front Squat x 8 reps

Rest 60 secs

C1] Kettlebell Swing x 8 reps

C2] Kettlebell Front Squat x 8 reps

C3] Kettlebell Push Press

Rest 60 secs

D1] Kettlebell Swing x 8 reps

D2] Kettlebell Front Squat x 8 reps

D3] Kettlebell Push Press x 8 reps

D4] Kettlebell Suitcase Lunge x 8 reps

Rest 60 secs



And so on.....

The possibilities are endless and the internet is filled with complexes.

A List Of Kettlebell Exercises

There are so many different exercises that you can perform with a kettlebell. Here are the ones I can remember off the top of my head.

Kettlebell Swing
Single Arm Kettlebell Swing
Russian Swing
American Swing
Double Kettlebell Swing
Kettlebell High Pull
Kettlebell Single Arm High Pull
Kettlebell Clean
Kettlebell Single Arm Clean
Kettlebell Double Clean
Kettlebell Press
Kettlebell Single Arm Press
Kettlebell Jerk
Kettlebell Double Jerk
Kettlebell Snatch
Kettlebell Double Snatch
Kettlebell Push Press
Kettlebell Double Push Press
Kettlebell Floor Press
Kettlebell Single Arm Floor Press
Kettlebell Single Arm Row
Kettlebell Row
Kettlebell Renegade Row
Kettlebell Turkish Get Up
Kettlebell Deadlift
Kettlebell Sumo Deadlift
Kettlebell Double Deadlift
Kettlebell Romanian Deadlift
Kettlebell Romanian Single Leg Deadlift
Kettlebell Staggered Deadlift
Kettlebell Windmill
Kettlebell Burpee
Kettlebell Front Squat
Kettlebell Off Set Front Squat
Kettlebell Goblet Squat
Kettlebell Stott Press
Kettlebell Thruster

Kettlebell Overhead Squat
Kettlebell Pistol Squat
Kettlebell Lunge
Kettlebell Overhead Lunge
Kettlebell Suitcase Lunge
Kettlebell Reverse Lunge
Kettlebell Kosak Squat
Kettlebell Carry
Kettlebell Suitcase Carry
Kettlebell Overhead Carry
Kettlebell Arm Bar
Kettlebell Sling Shot
Kettlebell Figure of 8
Kettlebell Halo
Kettlebell Russian Twist

I know I've forgot something

