



Kettlebell Training – Part 2

Let the pain begin!

BY DON STEVENSON

In the last article, I outlined the reasons why military, police and fire personnel should use kettlebells in their training. Now it's time to outline some exercises and a basic kettlebell routine to get you started.

Selecting a kettlebell

One of the most frequent questions I get asked is about which type of kettlebell people should start with.

For most men you'll want a 16kg kettlebell to start. If you are over 90kg and fairly muscular or with a background in heavy weight training, then you could start with a 20kg. For women, start with an 8kg or a 12kg if you are bigger. If you are attempting the kettlebell exercises with a dumbbell you'll need to choose a dumbbell that is about 20 per cent heavier.

The exercises

Once you've got your kettlebell, it's time to get working.

The fundamental drills in a kettlebell program are the one- and two-arm swing, the windmill and the Turkish get up. An abbreviated program of these three exercises plus a bit of running, pushups and chinups is enough to keep most service personnel in pretty

good shape. Of course you can always add more, but if you only had a few minutes a day you could still maintain a reasonable level of fitness on this program.

The swing – is the first kettlebell exercise you should learn. It develops power and strength in the legs, hips and back and, when performed for high reps, it is a cardio treat. The swing is also the foundation for the clean and jerk, and snatch.

To perform the swing, set up with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart and the kettlebell on the ground between your heels. Bend the knees and push the hips back into a squat. Pick up the kettlebell with one or two hands and drive the hips forward, swinging the kettlebell to around chest height. Allow the kettlebell to swing back down between your knees and repeat for 5–50 reps.

Note that the swing is NOT an upper body exercise. All of the work is done by the legs.

For safety, you'll need to keep your head up and back flat at all times. Breathe in at the bottom of the swing and out at the top.

The windmill – is a great exercise for developing strength and flexibility in the lower back, glutes, hamstrings and abs. To start with, you can practice

this empty handed or with a light weight.

Stand with feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and facing a wall or a line on the ground so that you have a reference point. Now, turn both feet out in the same direction. The front foot (right foot if turning right) should be turned out so that it is almost parallel with the line, and the back foot should be at about a 45-degree angle. While turning the feet, make sure the hips and shoulders continue to face the line.

Now, you need to take the back hand overhead and press the weight up.

It is vital that you keep an eye on the weight the whole time and dump it on the ground if something starts to go wrong (practice outside).

Now breathe in, hold your breath and push your hips out along your reference line and fold over toward the front foot. Try to keep the chest up as much as possible and don't breathe out again until you are back upright.

Once you have done 3–5 reps on one side, swap hands, turn the feet out the other way and repeat. Once you can do multiple reps with 50 per cent of your bodyweight, you should have a pretty strong core!

The Turkish get up – This monster of an exercise is far too complicated to describe here, but if you want the low-down on this total-body exercise, you can email me and I'll send you out the training guide with full instructions on how to perform the get up and many other exercises.

The workouts

Add the following two workouts to your fitness program and I can guarantee that you'll end up with increased strength and endurance.

Workout 1 – Cardio killer

This workout is an example of how kettlebells, bodyweight and cardio can all be seamlessly integrated to make for a killer workout.

Your aim is to complete the whole workout as quickly as possible, your only rest is what you need to catch your breath and finish all the reps. Record your time and try to beat it next time out.

3 rounds of:

- > Run 400m
- > 21 swings with a 24kg kettlebell
- > 12 chinups

Workout 2 – Strength circuit

- > Windmill 5 x 5/5
- > Pushups 5 x 70 per cent max
- > Turkish get up 5 x 3/3
- > Kettlebell shoulder press 5 x 5/5
- > Chinups 5 x 70per cent max

Finish with 10 minutes of swings where you aim to do as many head-high swings as you can in the 10 minutes.

Next issue we'll look at what may just be the world's best conditioning system for military personnel and I'll show you how kettlebells fit into the mix as well. As always, if you want more information on anything fitness related send me an email at fitness@octogen.com.au or visit www.octogen.com.au and subscribe to our monthly newsletter.