

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

A muscular man is shown from the waist down, performing a squat with a kettlebell. He is wearing black shorts and bright green and black sneakers. He is holding a black kettlebell with both hands, positioned between his feet. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights his muscles. A large, bold, white text overlay is centered across the middle of the image.

KETTLEBELL TRANSFORMATION

Kettlebell Transformation

Building Incredible Functional Strength and Ultimate Health With
Kettlebells

Hey, have you heard about kettlebell training?

Likely you've seen them cropping up at your local gym and possibly you'll have seen a few YouTube videos on the subject. After all, kettlebells have very quickly become the latest massive trend for building functional strength and have grown massively in popularity over recent years.

What you might not realize though is just how fantastic kettlebells are for building functional strength, burning calories and greatly improving all-round health. Moreover, you might not have realized just what kettlebells *represent*. Specifically, kettlebells represent a move to an entirely new type of training and an entirely new philosophy surrounding it.

To be frank, right now your fitness routine is probably woefully insufficient. If you followed conventional fitness and training wisdom and combined that with a conventional lifestyle, then you may be doing untold damage to not only your body but also your brain. That is not to say that you have been misled, simply that we are discovering new information all the time and that this is constantly shifting paradigms with regards to the best forms of training.

This guide will explain everything in detail and introduce the solution: the kettlebell.



WHY YOUR CURRENT TRAINING AND FITNESS ROUTINE IS NOT ENOUGH

Why Your Current Training and Fitness Routine is Not Enough?

Consider for a moment the circumstances that led to our evolution and to our current state of being. Put simply, humans have thrived because we are able to adapt very well to our environment. To that end, we have a nervous system and musculature that is inherently plastic and able to change, warp and adapt as the situation demands. We grow new neuronal connections; we develop specific muscles and others atrophy all at the same time.

And our brains and bodies *love* to adapt in these ways. When we learn new movements and when we challenge our bodies in new ways, it triggers the release of reward chemicals – endorphins and dopamine

– which help to reinforce and cement the specific sequence of movements and thoughts that led to that effective movement. This triggers the formation of new connections and that in turn is what keeps the brain youthful, adaptive and learning.

In turn, this makes it easier for us to learn *other* new things and keeps our brain dynamic and growing. This has been shown to be highly protective against age-related cognitive decline and more serious cases of dementia and Alzheimer's. In short, if you don't use it, you lose it.

Meanwhile, complex and challenging movement is what allows us to train all of our supporting muscles, our proprioception, our balance and more. It's what maintains our flexibility and it's what gives us functional strength that can actually translate into useful power when we're working and playing.

But this is not what most of us get from our current routines.

Instead, most of us will spend a good 8-10 hours of every day working in an office. When we're not working in the office, we're commuting to and from work.

All this time we are sitting. In the dark. While highly stressed.

When we're not commuting in and out of work, we're probably sitting at home in front of the TV.

Sitting is *incredibly* bad for your health. For starters, it takes years off of your life due to the considerable lack of activity which allows your heart atrophy.

Meanwhile, it causes serious changes to your musculature. Your hip flexors – the muscles that you use to curl your legs behind you – will become stretched and weakened. Meanwhile, your hip extensors – the muscles in your legs that you use for kicking – will become tightened and shortened as your knees are constantly as high as your waist.

This creates an imbalance that results in more pressure being placed on one side of your pelvis than the other. This is what leads to an 'anterior pelvic tilt' where the pelvis leans forward forcing your buttocks outward and actually making you physically shorter! Of course, this isn't terribly good for your pelvis or your back either and can lead to pain and discomfort.

At the same time, being at the computer all day means that your neck is constantly craned upward, while your arms are stretched forward. This causes a similar tightness and shortness in the pectoral muscles while weakening and stretching your lats and traps. The result is that you end up with a hunch-back posture which once again isn't particularly attractive or functional.

Again, it's very simple really: you spend all day in a single position which causes your body to adapt to that position. Some muscles become tense and stiff while others weaken and atrophy. The complete lack of variety in your movement means you get practically frozen in that position and this isn't even a movement that we would have naturally used in the wild!

So, we go to the gym to fix all this. But if you're like most people, your version of fixing this will involve lifting weights through a very static range of motion using 'single joint' movements. These include the likes of bicep curls, which challenge you to curl a weight while bending only your elbow and bench press which further strengthens your pecs.

These exercises do not train the muscles in any functional manner because it isolates them. In the real world, we would only ever train our muscles in unison – working together as one tool and incorporating lots of smaller supporting muscles to help us balance and to give us more support as we go through various motions.

The worst part of it is that most people only train a select few muscles this way – specifically those that are on the front of their bodies. These are called the 'mirror muscles' because they're the ones that look the best in the mirror. But we often don't spend nearly as much time on our traps, our lats, our erector spinae or our transverse abdominis. The same goes for obliques, for forearms or for all the tiny muscles in between that do things like moving our toes.

This actually makes us even *more* maladapted. We've spent all day sitting down hunched over and then we train the muscles at the front of our bodies with heavy weights. The result is that we're likely to cause a serious injury.

Meanwhile, the lack of variety in our movements and in our activities allows our brain to become lazy. After the age of 30, most of us stop

learning much new at all and as such, we lose motivation, interest and fluid intelligence. We become quite literally 'set in our ways' and moving, thinking and growing become very difficult as a result.



HOW KETTLEBELLS SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS

How Kettlebells Solve These Problems

Kettlebells however can solve these issues in a number of ways by allowing us to move in new, more challenging ways and to train muscles that we had almost forgotten.

A kettlebell works like a dumbbell in theory but is quite different in practice. This is due to the unique design: the cannonball like body that is attached to a single handle. When you grab the handle, the weight will hang underneath and, in this way,, you are changing the center of gravity so that it is hanging underneath and so that the weight moves in more unpredictable ways.

This shape also allows you to swing the kettlebell in various ways: around your head, between your legs and more. It also means you can change the angle: pushing it from underneath or pulling it from above – all while maintaining the same grip on the top of the handle.

The kettlebell allows you to introduce momentum, pulling against you as it swings away and pushing toward you when it comes back. It is constantly changing, and your body needs to adapt in order to cope: you need to be able to stop it mid swing, or balance on one side as it weighs more to the left than the right.

Suddenly, you begin to train your body to learn new movements and every single swing is marginally different. Your brain is forced to wake up and respond to this, producing the neurotransmitters associated with growth once again like dopamine and BDNF (brain derived neurotrophic factor). This makes you a better learner, more energetic and more switched on to the world around you.

Meanwhile, your body responds by letting you rebuild those small supporting muscles that had long since been forgotten. You develop grip strength in your arm from holding onto the handle, you develop obliques as you press the weight overhead with one arm and you develop your transverse abdominis to protect against injury as you tighten your core through kettlebell swings.

The kettlebell also allows you to bring a range of new movements into your training that train your posterior chain: things like kettlebell swings, like goblet squats, like kettlebell clean and press and like deadlifts. A kettlebell can double for a bar and a squat rack as well as offering its own unique training advantages.

In short, the best kind of training is training that is unpredictable and that forces your body to adapt. That's exactly what you're getting with kettlebell workouts and it's why they're the perfect addition to your routine.

And there's something else you're going to notice once you start training with kettlebells too: it's fun.

No longer are you just lifting weights through boring, easy movements over and over again. All of a sudden, you're learning new movements, spinning around on the spot and learning. This is rewarding, fun and challenging and that's the sign that your brain is engaged and adapting along with your body.

Suddenly, you will *want* to train and you'll find it's much easier to find time in your routine to do something you actively want to do!



HOW TO GET STARTED WITH KETTLEBELL TRAINING

How To Get Started With Kettlebell Training

So how do you get started and begin to enjoy all these benefits?

Important is not to jump straight into heavy kettlebell lifts or intense workouts. The problem is that your body has become so adapted to a largely stationary lifestyle that introducing new movement suddenly can be enough to cause serious injury.

This is what happens when a lot of people introduce squats and deadlifts into their routine to begin with

- as they insist on starting with big heavy weights and performing movements that they can't cope with.

It only takes a short amount of time for something to snap or give way and they blame the deadlifts.

Again, the kettlebell is the perfect solution here because it is hard to find kettlebells as heavy as barbells in squat racks.

It's also important to recognize that in the wild, we would never have had a reason to squat with 200kg on our backs. Your aim is not to build massive size here or to break world records, your aim should be to restore normal full range of motion.

Try and touch your toes right now. Can you do it? And how about squatting all the way to the ground while keeping your heels flat on the floor? These are basic movements that the human body has been capable of and we're going to use kettlebells to first of all *restore* those movements.

When you do that, you will feel like a youthful teenager again in comparison to your current stiffness!

Again then, don't aim to build strength or challenge yourself: just aim to get *good at the movement* of squatting and of deadlifting. Squat down slowly, grab the weight and deadlift it slowly. Likewise, for goblet squats: grab a light weight and squat with it paying close attention to your range of motion.

Once you've built up a fair bit of regular movement, you can then start to introduce the more complex kettlebell specific movements.

A great example is the kettlebell squat. This basically involves swinging the weight up in-front of you then back between your legs. You use your hip to thrust through the movement, thereby generating

the momentum and keeping the weight constantly swinging like a pendulum. This movement is brilliant for building the posterior chain and targets the slower twitch muscle fibers as well as the fast ones. It can help to give you a better jumping height, running speed and more and it will strengthen your back and leg extensors considerably.

Even better is the one handed clean and press. This involves picking a weight up from the floor in one hand and then pressing it above the shoulder in one hand. Here the movement uses your entire body as you're using your leg muscles, upper body muscles and core all at once.

It's also more challenging than a regular clean and press because you're using the weight in just one hand. This means you need to use your obliques to support your body on that side, while tensing through your legs to avoid falling over.

One of the most dynamic functional kettlebell movements of all though is the Turkish get-up. Here you literally just... *get up* off of the floor while holding a kettlebell in one hand. This builds all kinds of strength, mobility and movement and all of it is highly transferrable to a range of real-world activities.

Using this kind of training you can then expect to see some miraculous changes in the way you feel and look:

You will have more energy and more focus

You will develop much more athletic strength and power thanks to your newly developed supporting muscles

You will reduce pain and stiffness caused by sitting long hours You will improve your explosive jumping and running power

You will produce a lot more growth hormone and testosterone as a result of lifting using techniques that train multiple muscle groups all at once

You will improve your cardio fitness due to the aerobic nature of kettlebell training

And that's before we've even gone into the kettlebell swing in detail.



USING THE KETTLEBELL SWING FOR TONING AND AMAZING HEALTH

Using The Kettlebell Swing For Toning and Amazing Health

If you could only do one exercise for the rest of your life, then the kettlebell swing would be a great choice. As mentioned, this involves standing with the kettlebell in two hands and then thrusting through your legs and using your hips in order to drive the kettlebell upwards. Try to keep your back straight, your legs shoulders' width apart and your head looking straight forward.

Because you're creating a pendulum motion, gravity and momentum should keep the weight constantly moving. This in turn means you'll build muscle at the same time as burning through calories and raising your heartrate. Now the kettlebell training becomes both a form of cardio *and* a form of resistance training, which is a powerful combination that can absolutely melt fat.

Using high repetition movements on the posterior chain like this also just happens to be ideal. That's because it allows you to train the slow-twitch muscle fibers that are most suited for extended periods of exertion. This is the perfect match for muscles that are used

constantly as we walk around, carry objects and stand up for long periods.

The posterior chain is also, FYI, what you want to train if you're looking to get an attractive posterior and legs. Burning fat alone is not enough to get a toned and honed physique as it can leave you looking somehow skinny and flabby all at the same time! This is especially well suited to women and if you search for 'women who squat', that will give you a pretty good idea of what kind of results to expect...

These benefits become even greater when you combine the kettlebell swing with a HIIT protocol. HIIT stands for 'High Intensity Interval Training' and is the ideal tool for burning calories as well as improving your heart health and your 'VO2 max' for better long-distance athletic performance.

These workouts alternate between periods of high exertion at near max-heart rate and periods of relatively relaxed exercise that allows the body to recover. You might perform kettlebell swings with a heavy weight for 1 minute then before recovering for one minute by holding a low squat position against bodyweight.

HIIT allows you to effectively use up all of the available energy in your muscles and in your bloodstream by using intensive bursts of anaerobic training. This then means that when you switch back to lower intensity your body is forced to burn fat for energy. Moreover, it means that even after you've finished training, your body will have to

rely on fat stores for energy which actually means you burn more calories for an extended period after training. This is what is sometimes referred to as the 'after burn effect'.

Conclusions

As you can see then, the kettlebell is a highly versatile piece of equipment that is both very practical and transformative in its way. You can use the kettlebell as a tool to introduce new and more exciting forms of training that get you out of a rut and force you to use your body in a more dynamic and exciting manner. At the same time though, you can also use it as a way to increase your muscle size and strength with deadlifts, squats and a range of other conventional movements. It can strengthen your heart, burn fat and in general is the perfect, convenient antidote to our modern, unhealthy lifestyles.

Make sure to take it easy and to start light to begin with and that way you can safely introduce movement back into your routine. Once you do that, you'll see amazing benefits in just about every aspect of your health and of your life.