

KETTLEBELL HARD!



**CHALLENGING KETTLEBELL
PROGRAMS FOR TOUGH PEOPLE IN
HARD TIMES**

BY GEOFF NEUPERT

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See your physician before starting any exercise or nutrition program. If you are taking any medications, you must talk to your physician before starting any exercise program, including *Kettlebell HARD!*. If you experience any lightheadedness, dizziness, or shortness of breath while exercising, stop the movement and consult a physician.

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INTRODUCTION

Kettlebell HARD! is a book - a *compendium* - of Hard Workouts For Hard People In Hard Times.

Hard Times?

As I write this introduction, the world is some 18 months into “The COVID Era” and I have friends who are currently on their 5th or 6th Lockdown.

Stress, for many, is at an all-time high.

And one of the best ways to combat or blow off stress is with tough, challenging workouts.

Especially with kettlebells.

Inside *Kettlebell HARD!*, you’ll find some of the toughest, most mentally and physically challenging kettlebell workout programs known to man.

I know because men (and women - but mostly men) just like you, have told me so over the last decade.

Originally, this book was called *More Kettlebell Muscle*. I released it in March 2013 as a follow up to my shockingly successful first book, *Kettlebell Muscle*, released in January 2010.

MKM, as it became known, was devoid of any “scientificals” or rationale that were in the original. Instead, it was jam packed with programs built around the hardest kettlebell workouts known to man - **complexes and chains**.

It had one goal in mind – **to make you look more muscular, leaner, harder, more toned, or whatever you want to call it.**

In fact, there were TWENTY different complexes in it.

And if you performed each as a chain, you actually held close FORTY different kettlebell programs in your hand.

At the time, those training parameters reflected my understanding of bioenergetics and recovery - how the body fuels itself, and how that impacts performance.

More on that in a moment...

First, even though *MKM* was designed for rapid fat loss, and many people experienced exactly that - in almost every email and message there was a comment, or series of

comments of just how hard these programs were. Furthermore, the writer always elaborated on how good - how satisfying completing these programs were.

That satisfaction, that desire, that NEED to challenge oneself and “conquer” these workouts was the most exciting theme about those messages.

Second, almost all of these people had something in common -

They were high achievers, regardless of age. Men in their 30s right into their late 60s emailed and messaged me. Dads. Granddads. Corporate types. Entrepreneurs. Retired Military. BJJ players. Expats.

As a result, *Kettlebell HARD!* is the updated and revised version of *More Kettlebell Muscle*. It's based upon four concepts:

1. Expanded knowledge on how the body - especially one in its 40s *and beyond*, adapts to hardcore/intense exercise.
2. The acknowledgement that some of us, at certain times and periods of our lives, need tough, physically challenging workouts, to help us keep our sanity and actually feel good.
3. These workouts release enough “feel good” endorphins in us to overcome any or most negatives that could be or are normally produced by “normal” people who would attempt them.
4. How challenging these programs were to complete, and more importantly, how *satisfying they were to complete*.

In other words, these are -

Hard Workouts for Hard People during Hard Times.

As a result, you're now holding ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY different programs, because each is now split into 3 categories -

Beginner... Intermediate... and Advanced.

More on how to use that scale later. In the meantime, remember, at the end of the day, they're all HARD.

(Or *Hard*, *Harder*, and *Hardest* if you prefer.)

If you don't think so, you're either (a) a Mutant or (b) your kettlebells are too light.

The good news about these programs is that they can produce pretty much any outcome you want.

Want to pack on some more pure muscle size using complexes?

I'll show you how to do that.

Want to lean out – burn off that spare tire, those love-handles, or those thunder-thighs?

I'll show you how to do that too.

(And faster than you thought possible, compared to the amount of time you have to invest to achieve it. Rapid Fat Loss, minimum time investiture.)

And by default, you'll improve your health and stamina in the process, building "All-Day Energy" as a result.

At the end of the day, we all want to look, feel, and be our best. Whatever your best is, this book will help get you there.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

This is not a “how-to” book on double kettlebell technique. There are enough of those on the market already. In fact, I even have a few.

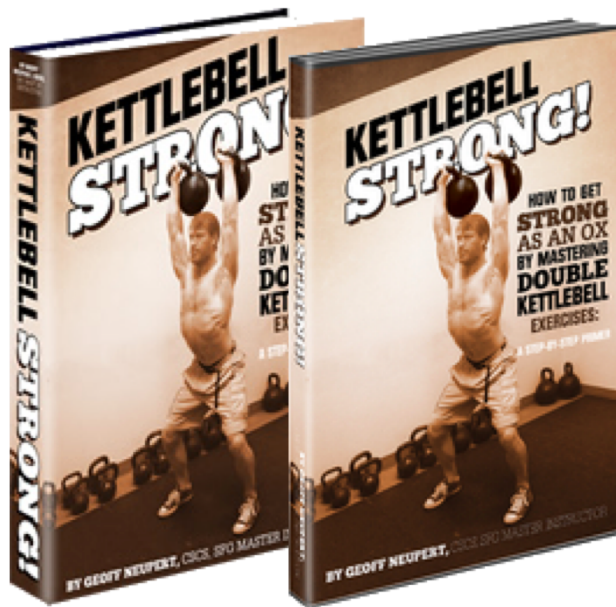
The original *Kettlebell Muscle* included some detailed instructions on technique, but this book does not. (I have however inserted coaching cues and anecdotes in the programs where I thought it necessary. Those, I’ve been told by one of my colleagues, are worth their weight in gold.)

If you want some free instruction on how to safely perform the double kettlebell lifts, check out these videos on my website below:

<https://chasingstrength.com/video/double-kettlebell-exercises/>

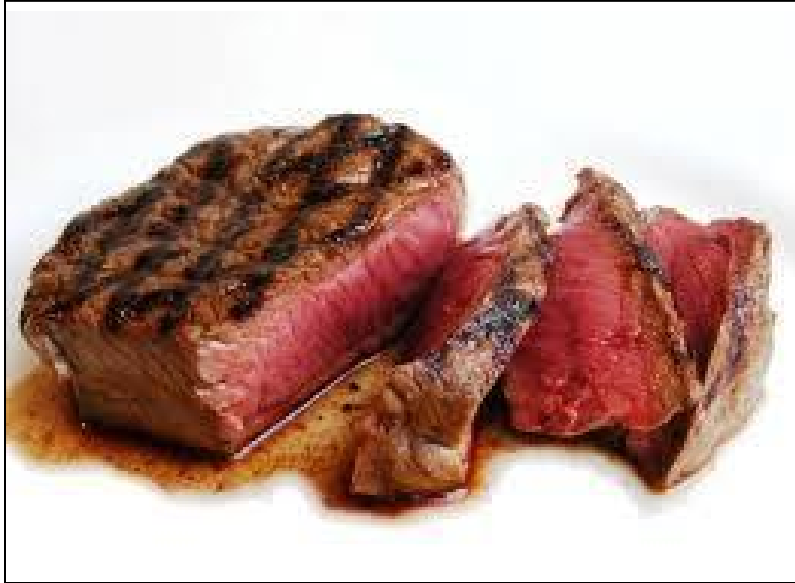
Again, this book is a “to do” not a “how to.”

If you’d like a “deep dive” on double kettlebell technique so you can get even more out of *Kettlebell HARD!*, then I recommend you investigate *Kettlebell STRONG!* [here](#).



That being said, let’s jump in with both feet (and our clothes).

FOOD - FUELING THE CHANGE



Food. Glorious Food!

Always a controversial and convoluted topic...

High carb. Low carb. No carb. Yes. No. Maybe.

Here's the bottom line on what you should eat for maximum results:

If you want to grow muscle (and get stronger) - EAT MORE CARBS.

If you want to blow torch body fat - EAT LESS CARBS.

It's really THAT simple.

... Assuming of course you're eating enough protein, which should be set at approximately 1 gram per pound of desired bodyweight (or 2.2 grams per kilogram of desired bodyweight).

However, I realize that may be too simple for some, so here's a further breakdown if your goal is to burn body fat:

7 STEPS TO SUPER LEANNESS:

How To Strip Off Body Fat Using *Kettlebell HARD!*

1. **Obviously, eat less than you normally do.** Multiply your body weight by 10. That's your daily caloric limit. So, if you weigh 200 pounds, you'd eat 2000 calories. For kilos, multiply your weight by 4.184 and that's how many kilojoules you'll need.
2. **Make sure you get adequate protein** – about 1g per pound / 2g per kilo of bodyweight seems to be about right for most.
3. **Strip the starches out of your diet.** Only eat starchy carbs after your workouts, and in limited amounts. Like 50g. That's about the size of an average sweet potato or one cup of white basmati rice. The rest of the time, no carbs.
4. **The rest of your calories/ kilojoules should come from fat.** Supplement your fat levels with Omega 3 fatty acids, like fish oil, and monounsaturated fats like avocado.
5. **Eat A TON of vegetables** – to fill you up and reduce any acidity buildup from the extra fat and protein in your body. Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower and brussel sprouts are great. Spinach is also a “must have.”
6. **Drink lots of water** – about 0.5 ounces per pound of bodyweight. This helps flush out toxins associated with fat loss. (Toxins are stored in fat, away from vital organs. When you start burning fat, the toxins are released into your bloodstream.)
7. **Consider some form of Intermittent Fasting** - 16 to 20 hours without food. 4 to 8 hour “feeding window.” Many have written on this over the last decade, including yours truly, so we don't need to beat a dead horse here. Prolonged fasting releases Growth Hormone which preserves muscle and burns fat. That's a good thing for most. Do it. The End.



ABOUT THE PROGRAMS

Let's refresh.

This book is all about the two most hard core and time-efficient methods to pack on muscle and strip off fat with kettlebells – **Complexes and Chains**. (Chains have since been re-named by some, “Flows.” I’m Old School and refuse to change. So I’ll continue to call them “Chains.”)

In case you’ve forgotten or have never heard of them before, here are some definitions.

Complex: A series of compound exercises performed sequentially with the same weight and without rest. All the reps for one exercise are completed before moving on to the next exercise in the sequence.

So, here's an example:

Double Swing	x 5
Double High Pull	x 5
Double Snatch	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

Now Chains are slightly (and diabolically) different.

Chain: A series of compound exercises performed sequentially in which each exercise is performed once before the sequence is started again. Each time the sequence is performed is considered one repetition.

Here's an example:

(Double Swing + Double High Pull + Double Snatch + Front Squat) x 5

Many people have asked me the difference on the body between the two.

Complexes build up local muscular fatigue very quickly. So your work is limited by the weakest exercise in the complex. Chains, spread fatigue over the body and allow you to do more work overall. And that extra work, just like the fatigue it produces, just sneaks

up on you. This makes them more systemically demanding in my book. (See? Diabolical.)

ON PROGRAM DESIGN

You'll notice that the rep schemes are varied inside *Kettlebell HARD!*. Unlike *Kettlebell Muscle*, which only used 5s, we will be using anywhere from 3 to 10 reps per set.

Why the change?

Well each complex will bias a different outcome.

(NOTE: ALL of them, when eating for fat loss, will strip off body fat - *quickly*.)

Consider the following:

- Typically, for strength and even some hypertrophy, we can use 3-5 reps.
- For pure hypertrophy, we can use 5 reps.
- And for hypertrophy with added conditioning, we can use 5+ reps, such as 5-7 reps.
- And for pure fat loss and conditioning, we will use higher reps, such as 10.

You'll also notice that the rest periods aren't specified in minutes, like they are in *Kettlebell Muscle*. I've opted for the easy way out – let you decide, based on your current fitness levels.

How's that work?

Simple. We use the “work: rest” protocols. The rest periods are based specifically on your work periods, like so:

Work: Rest = 1:2, which means you'll rest for twice as long as it took you to do your work. So, if your set took you 90 seconds to complete, you'll rest 180 seconds (3 minutes) between sets.

This is where the update occurs from *More Kettlebell Muscle*. *Kettlebell HARD!* specifies “Beginner,” “Intermediate,” and “Advanced.”

If you've never done complexes or chains before, start at “Beginner.”

If it's been awhile since you've done any conditioning and have spent some time doing low rep strength work with long rest periods, I suggest “Beginner.”

The “Beginner” rest periods are **“As Necessary.”** This means what it says. But the caveat is “not too long.” Your heart rate should still be elevated, but you should be able to pass the “Talk Test” - which is to be able to speak in complete sentences without holding your breath.

If you’ve been doing TOTM/EMOM work or StrongFirst A+A / Q&D work for your conditioning, start with “Intermediate.”

These rest periods have a Work-to-Rest Ratio of 1:3-5. This means, if a complex takes you 60 seconds, rest between 3 and 5 minutes before doing your next one. And yes, it is fine and perfectly acceptable to start your next set if you’re recovered before then. If you’re not, then use the “Beginner” rest periods.

And if you’ve been playing around with complexes and chains, and have demonstrably proven high levels of fitness, feel free to jump right into “Advanced” mode.

These rest periods have a Work-to-Rest Ratio of 1:1-2. This means, if a complex takes you 60 seconds, rest between 1 and 2 minutes before doing your next one.

Next, you’ll also notice that we are also going to be using some timed sets. Timed sets allow you to truly get as much work done as possible, as compared to numbered sets.

How so?

Well, maybe you can get 20 Swings in 30 seconds and only 10 Front Squats. If you were using a typical numbered complex, say 10 reps per set, you’d only do half as much work for your Swings.

This makes it much easier for you to get the necessary reps in at your own pace and not be penalized on the rest end. Using the above example, if you can do your complex in 90 seconds, and I take 100 seconds to do the same complex, the training effect will be virtually identical for us based on the work-rest ratios. Not so if we used a hard rest period, such as 2 minutes.

Finally, we need to discuss -

WORKOUT DURATION

First, workouts / training sessions should be no longer than 30 minutes. For beginners, I recommend you keep them at 20 minutes until you get used to the effort level required for these workouts.

Use these times whether you complete the prescribed sets or not.

This will ensure your Testosterone-Cortisol ratio doesn't get too far out of balance and that you can actually recover from these workouts. If it does, not only will recovering from workouts be a challenge, the suppressed Testosterone and elevated Cortisol will make you drop muscle and put on body fat. The opposite of what we're going for.

This won't be a problem for someone using the "Advanced" rest periods.

And second, you'll notice that the "light" days training sessions are short - some amazingly short - 10 minutes or less.

That's by design because the "heavy" days are longer. This is "variability" that stimulates faster adaptation and therefore faster results.

If you find you have "extra" energy after a "Light Day" workout - Good! Put that energy to good use elsewhere in your life and store it up for when you'll need it most - "Heavy Day."

Up next...

THE PROGRAMS

As mentioned earlier, there are 20 different programs within *Kettlebell HARD!*. Each has a different feel, emphasis, and loading parameters, designed for different outcomes. They are written as *both* complexes *and* chains (also an update from *MKM*).

The choice between complex or chain, beginner, intermediate, or advanced, suddenly gives you 120 different programs. That's the beauty of understanding program design.

Here's how to get the best results from these programs:

1. **First and foremost, these are DOUBLE kettlebell programs.** You should have a pair of kettlebells, preferably the same size. Several pairs are better. Somebody will inevitably ask, "*Can I use just one kettlebell?*"

Yes, you can. The complexes and chains will take you twice as long. And the results won't be as great.

I suggest that if you don't have a pair of kettlebells, borrow an extra. Or buy one.

2. **Weight selection is stated.** You'll notice that they are based on an RM - a Repetition Maximum. For example: 10RM means your 10 rep max for a specific lift. And it is based on ONE lift in the complex or chain. It too, is stated. And remember, it's based on the DOUBLE kettlebell lift.
3. **You may round up or down by 2 reps.** For example: A 10RM can be either an 8RM or a 12RM. This allows for more flexibility. If you find things "too easy," rest less between complexes/chains. Or use bigger kettlebells.
4. **Do no more than 18 weeks of complexes/chains in a row before taking a break** and shifting to a lower rep, longer rest pure strength type of programming. This avoids neuro-endocrine and mental burnout. 18 weeks was about the max my test subjects could make it on complexes.
5. **Pick a program that looks the most interesting/exciting/challenging to you.** They're all hard. Some are harder than others. Remember, the higher rep sets and the timed sets are more biased toward fat loss.
6. **You may do the same program 18 weeks in a row if you wish.** Simply start using "Beginner" rest periods. Run it again with "Intermediate" rest periods. Then run it a final time with "Advanced" rest periods. Each will produce a novel stimulus on your body.

For any other questions, email me at: Support@chasingstrength.com.

Now, on to the programs...

1. THE SHOULDER SMOKER

Looks are deceiving. This little monster puts a hurt on your shoulders and upper back. After you're done with this cycle – should you choose to overeat – you'll probably need new shirts.

Weight selection: Use your Press 12RM.

COMPLEX:

Day 1:

Swing	x 6
High Pull	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6

Day 2:

Snatch	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Press	x 6

Day 3:

Clean	x 6
Press	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Push Press	x 6

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Swing + High Pull + Snatch + Press) x 6

Day 2:

(Snatch + Front Squat + Press) x 6

Day 3:

(Clean + Press + Front Squat + Snatch + Push Press) x 6

Shoulder Saver Tip

As your grip fatigues, you'll be tempted to pull with your arms. Don't. This will only make your arms more tired and it will unpack your shoulders, causing you to shrug your kettlebells.

This is potentially dangerous on the AC joint and the supraspinatus tendon (one of the rotator cuff muscles) as the shrugging puts slack in the joint and causes a whip-like action on the shoulders at the point where the kettlebells drop into the backswing.

No only that, but having that slack may cause lower back strain coming either out of the high pull or out of the rack transitioning to the backswing.

Both are bad. Therefore, remember, this cue:

"The hips drive and the arms guide."

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5

2. THE OLYMPIC 3.0

In *Kettlebell Express!* I introduced you to “The Olympic,” a training program based on the Olympic lifts – the Snatch and the Clean & Jerk. In this variation, we go all out and mix up our lifts, really challenging the body based on the kettlebell cousins of the Olympic lifts and their variations.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Snatch or Press 10RM.

COMPLEX:

Day 1:

Front Squat	x 5
Press	x 5
Clean	x 5
Push Press	x 5

Day 2:

Clean	x 5
Press	x 5
Snatch	x 5

Day 3:

Front Squat	x 5
Clean	x 5
Press	x 5
Front Squat	x 5
Jerk	x 5

About The Jerk...

On Day 3, by the time you get to the Jerk, you will be tired. You're supposed to be.

However, the Jerk strikes a certain fear into people, especially when they are tired or uncertain.

So, remain calm, and take a few extra breaths if you need to making the transition from the Front Squat to the Jerk. And feel free to take an extra breath or two between reps of the Jerk.

The point here is to slow down, relax your mind, control your breathing, and be calm.

The Jerk is an explosive move and if you fail to control your mind and breathing, despite fatigue, then there's a good chance you'll fail your Jerks.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Front Squat + Press + Clean + Push Press) x 5

Day 2:

(Clean + Press + Snatch) x 5

Day 3:

(Front Squat + Clean + Press + Front Squat + Jerk) x 5

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 4</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1

3. THE BASIC

We don't have to get complex (Ha! Nice pun!) nor fancy with our complexes to make them effective. Here we have a very simple and basic Light – Medium – Heavy template that uses the basic double kettlebell exercises. In fact it's so basic that we don't even use reps, just time. Looks easy. Looks can be deceiving.

Weight Selection: Use your 12-15RM on your Press for this complex.

COMPLEX:

Day 1:

Swing	x 20 seconds
Clean	x 20 seconds
Snatch	x 20 seconds

Day 2:

Swing	x 20 seconds
Clean	x 20 seconds
Front Squat	x 20 seconds
Snatch	x 20 seconds

Day 3:

Swing	x 20 seconds
Clean	x 20 seconds
Front Squat	x 20 seconds
Snatch	x 20 seconds
Press	x 20 seconds

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Swing + Clean + Snatch) x 60 seconds

Day 2:

(Swing + Clean + Front Squat + Snatch) x 80 seconds

Day 3:

(Swing + Clean + Front Squat + Snatch + Press) x 100 seconds

More On Timed Sets...

Timed sets let you get more work done per unit of time than just straight sets. We've already covered that.

But they are also great for finding your pace and your rhythm on individual lifts, both of which are critical for maximizing power output.

The key then for maximum power output during timed sets is not to sprint all out so your pace slows down, but to try to keep the same fairly rapid pace all the way through each set.

This isn't so much a fatigue-sparing strategy like you'd find in GS, but more of a fatigue-managing strategy – subtle difference.

I recommend using an 8 out of 10 for pacing – 10 being all out.

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 3</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 4</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 5</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1

4. THE LONG HAUL

Here's another complex that uses time instead of reps. It's brutal. You'll need to go light – lighter than you expect on these. This program is a major test of mental fortitude – a real gut check, simply because on **Day 2** you'll be working for so long. Not only that, but this puppy will melt the fat off your body like ice cream on a hot summer's day.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Snatch or Press 10RM.

COMPLEX:

Day 1:

Snatch	x 30 seconds
Press	x 30 seconds
Front Squat	x 30 seconds
Swing	x 30 seconds

Day 2:

Clean	x 30 seconds
Front Squat	x 30 seconds
Press	x 30 seconds
Snatch	x 30 seconds
Swing	x 30 seconds

Day 3:

Snatch	x 30 seconds
Press	x 30 seconds
Swing	x 30 seconds

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Snatch + Press + Front Squat + Swing) x 2 minutes

Day 2:

(Clean + Front Squat + Press + Snatch + Swing) x 2 minutes, 30 seconds

Day 3:

(Snatch + Press + Swing) x 90 seconds

Why?

There's no doubt about it, this complex is a tough one. It's one of the longest working complexes in this book.

That's for good reason.

This program is designed to really strip off your body fat. And to do that, we have to increase the duration of your work – to really ensure that you're not only burning off stored carbohydrates but to produce lactic acid.

We will guarantee that this happens by training between 90s and 2 and-a-half minutes each complex. And when that lactic acid increases, your body will release growth hormone, which will in turn signal fat burning.

It's a great mechanism for fat loss even though the process is less than enjoyable.

Not only will you be much leaner in 9 weeks, but also your conditioning levels will be through the roof. Expect things like the SFG Snatch Test to feel like a piece of cake after this.

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 7</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 8</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 6	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 9</u> : 6 sets.	Same as Week 8	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1

5. THE UP AND OVER

This particularly nasty brute starts on the posterior chain at the beginning of the week, hits both the posterior and anterior chain in the middle of the week, and then punishes the anterior chain at the end of the week.

The waviness of load isn't routine, like M-L-H from a volume perspective – the volume is held constant on each day – but on the effort level, as you shift throughout the week from the posterior chain to the anterior chain.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Snatch or Press 12RM.

COMPLEX:

Day 1:

Swing	x 6
High Pull	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Push Press	x 6

Day 2:

High Pull	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6
Front Squat	x 6

Day 3:

Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Push Press	x 6

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Swing + High Pull + Snatch + Push Press) x 6

Day 2:

(High Pull + Snatch + Press + Front Squat) x 6

The Anterior Chain

Pretty much everybody's heard of the "posterior chain" – it's the group of muscles that runs down the backside of your body and responsible for extension/acceleration and decelerating flexion.

In the coaching world we've only just started talking about the "anterior chain" which are the muscles running up the front of your body. They're responsible for flexion and decelerating extension.

The Press, Front Squat, and Push Press all stress the anterior chain – especially when using a pair of kettlebells. These exercises will teach you how to compress your "core" and breathe behind the shield.

On day 3 of this complex, you'll learn and develop isometric core endurance – your entire abdominal cavity will be loaded and under pressure for about 90 seconds, repeatedly. Your abs will get stronger.

And as a result, your entire body will get stronger.

You'll notice that your hip snap will get better as the program progresses. That's because training the anterior chain increases the strength of the posterior chain.

Day 3:

(Snatch + Press + Front Squat + Push Press) x 6

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1:</u> 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 3:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 4:</u> 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 5:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 7:</u> 6 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 8:</u> 6 sets.	Less than Week 7	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 9:</u> 6 sets.	Less than Week 8	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1

6. CLEAN 'EM UP

The double kettlebell Clean is one of the most underrated exercises of all time. When you actually spend some time with it, you fall in love with it. It's a beautiful exercise that works your entire body quite thoroughly, especially if you use StrongFirst methodology and forego the energy conserving techniques of kettlebell sport.

This beauty uses the Clean as its foundation. And we also change the loading parameters on this as well – the Heavy day comes midweek, so there is no calm before the storm like there is in the original *Kettlebell Muscle*.

You may also find yourself wondering, “why 7 reps?” That's because the Clean is a fantastic muscle builder and we're working in the outer range of strength and muscle building, which is 5 to 7 reps, according to Dr. V. Zatsiorsky, Russian strength specialist. Plus, it'll be a mental challenge for you as well.

Finally, we're going to be really pushing the volume on this one, and unlike other programs, we'll be holding the rest constant. Trust me, you'll thank me on week 6.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Snatch or Press 12RM.

Day 1:

Clean	x 7
Front Squat	x 7
Snatch	x 7
Press	x 7

Day 2:

Clean	x 7
Press	x 7
Snatch	x 7
Front Squat	x 7
Press	x 7

Day 3:

Clean	x 7
Press	x 7
Front Squat	x 7

RESIST! (The Backswing)

One of the keys to maximizing your Clean is being able to maximally load the backswing -

That point where you fold in half and the kettlebells load up the posterior chain - your gluts and hamstrings.

Many people rush this and start folding as soon as the kettlebells exit the rack.

This can not only damage the lower back, but it makes the Clean less efficient in a bad way.

So, once the kettlebells exit the rack and hurtle toward your groin, stay upright as long as possible and only get out of the way at the last minute.

This will force you to shove your hips back hard and will add a big stretch in your posterior chain, as your kettlebells pass under your body between your legs - loading them up for your next Clean.

Furthermore - at the peak of the backswing, you will feel the bells “hang” or “pause” momentarily if you are patient enough. Resist the urge to stand up too soon. Let them do so and then *explode* out of the hole. This creates even more power.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Clean + Front Squat + Snatch + Press) x 7

Day 2:

(Clean + Press + Snatch + Front Squat + Press) x 7

Day 3:

(Clean + Press + Front Squat) x 7

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<u>Week 1:</u> 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2:</u> 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3:</u> 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 5:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 6:</u> 6 sets.	Same as Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2

Heavy Double Cleans – The Most Neglected GPP?

GPP – General Physical Preparedness – one of the fitness/strength & conditioning buzzwords of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It's simply generalized training that contributes to the foundation upon which an athlete's work can be performed.

And speaking of work, nothing beats the Double Kettlebell Clean to boost up work capacity. Russian sports scientist and world champion weightlifter, Dr. Arkady Vorobyev, stated that one set of 10 cleans with a pair of 32kg bells elevated elite weightlifters' heart rates and kept them there for ten minutes!

Not only that, but they are tremendous hip strength and power developers along with packing large amounts of muscle in short order on the arms, shoulders, and upper back.

They are a great exercise for athletes of all sorts from jumpers to grapplers. They are an especially great exercise for combat sports athletes.

Many favor the Double Swing, but I'll take the Double Clean any day!

7. BALLISTIC BEATDOWN

This puppy is all ballistics all the time, with the exception of an easy rest period on **Day 2** we call the “Front Squat.” By the time this is over, you’ll wish you had more “rest” periods! The volume on this dog is significant. It will strip off your unwanted body fat at a rapid pace.

Weight selection: Use your Snatch 15-20RM.

Day 1:

High Pull	x 10
Snatch	x 10
Push Press	x 10

Day 2:

Swing	x 10
High Pull	x 10
Snatch	x 10
Front Squat	x 5
Jerk	x 10

Day 3:

Snatch	x 10
High Pull	x 10
Swing	x 10

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(High Pull + Snatch + Push Press) x 10

Day 2:

(Swing + High Pull + Snatch + Front Squat + Jerk) x 10

Day 3:

(Snatch + High Pull + Swing) x 10

LOADING:

FAST! = FAT LOSS!

One of the greatest scientific discoveries in the past 5 years was something that I stumbled upon 15 years ago simply from observation: Explosive lifting produces fat loss.

Of course, you have to eat for fat loss too.

But even with slight overeating, a fair amount of explosive lifting will keep you lean.

Why?

Glucose management and increased insulin sensitivity. Your body no longer has to release as much insulin as it once did to shuttle blood sugar into its cells.

And that's a good thing because high amounts of insulin released after meals means a higher likelihood of storing your foods as fat.

So, train explosively, lose your fat.

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1

8. THE WOLF

Any athlete will tell you – “The legs feed the wolf.” The stronger and better conditioned your legs are, the stronger and better conditioned your whole body will be. Very few things do a better job of making that happen than the Squat. Make sure you get plenty of food and rest so you can recover from these workouts, especially **Day 3**.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Press or your Snatch 10RM.

Day 1:

Clean	x 5
Front Squat	x 5
Press	x 5
Clean	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

Day 2:

Front Squat	x 5
Press	x 5
Clean	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

Day 3:

Snatch	x 5
Front Squat	x 5
Press	x 5
Front Squat	x 5
Clean	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Clean + Front Squat + Press + Clean + Front Squat) x 5

Day 2:

(Front Squat + Press + Clean + Front Squat) x 5

Day 3:

Brutal Conditioning

When I look back at the times in my life when I've been supremely conditioned, it's when I focused a lot on my squat. When I was doing post-graduate work, I was squatting heavy three days per week and riding my bike daily across hilly campuses.

My body fat was low (single digit) and so was my resting heart rate (42bpm).

The problem is that squatting is brutal.

On the heart. On the lungs. On the legs. And on the psyche. Very few venture into the world of the Big Squat because of the work required to get there.

Squatting, a fundamental movement pattern, is made harder with a pair of kettlebells. It's also safer, as the body can align itself more naturally than it can with a bar. So more work can be done with less wear and tear on the body. Plus, it's a great loaded hip mobility exercise too.

Expect great things from yourself after a cycle of “Brutal Conditioning.”

(Snatch + Front Squat + Press + Front Squat + Clean + Front Squat) x 5

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5

9. THE “A & P”

This is a tough one. It's 4 days per week and contrasts loading between the anterior chain (the “A”) and the posterior chain (the “P”). (Similar to the “Up and Over.”) Days 1 and 3 the anterior chain takes a beating and then on days 2 and 4 the posterior chain takes a beating. Don't worry though, the loads wave. Days 1 and 4 are “light” and days 2 and 3 are “heavy.” And yes, take a day off between days 2 and 3.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Snatch or Press 12RM.

Day 1:

Press	x 30 seconds
Front Squat	x 30 seconds
Push Press	x 30 seconds

Day 2:

Swing	x 30 seconds
Clean	x 30 seconds
High Pull	x 30 seconds
Snatch	x 30 seconds

Day 3:

Front Squat	x 30 seconds
Press	x 30 seconds
Front Squat	x 30 seconds
Push Press	x 30 seconds

Day 4:

Swing	x 30 seconds
High Pull	x 30 seconds
Snatch	x 30 seconds

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Press + Front Squat + Push Press) x 90 seconds

Day 2:

(Swing + Clean + High Pull + Snatch) x 120 seconds

Active Recovery

This program is 4 days per week, which is a lot to do complexes with. I usually prefer every other day for complexes and chains and high-density work like this.

However, every once in awhile I like to break my own rules. But in order to do that, you have to know how to break them. In this case, the only way to get away with this is to institute “active recovery” measures after your workouts and your days off.

Here are some simple ones:

	Cold showers
	Contrast showers –
between cold/hot	
kind	Yoga – the really gentle
easy	Stretching – again, very
	Sauna
	Steam room
	Self massage/ massage

About 10 to 15 minutes is about right.

Day 3:

(Front Squat + Press + Front Squat + Push Press) x 120 seconds

Day 4:

(Swing + High Pull + Snatch) x 90 seconds

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1:</u> 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2:</u> 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3:</u> 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4:</u> 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5

10. MORE CORE

This is the ultimate “core developer.” This is the only program in this book where you’ll use just one kettlebell for the complex.

I put this puppy together about 6 or 7 years or so ago for one of my hardcore clients. She loved the sheer brutality of this. How hardcore is she? Well, she’s probably tougher than you: She presses the 24kg for reps. And Snatches it for reps too. Oh yeah, and she’s a single mom stuck in the corporate mire chained to a desk all day.

It’s so powerful, that I’m not even writing it as a full program. Only do this once per week in addition to your other [hopefully “freestyle”] workouts, if you’re not using one of the programs in this book.

Weight selection: Use a light to medium kettlebell.

Get Up, L	x 2
Press	x 2
Windmill	x 2
Overhead Squat	x 2
[Sots Press	x 2]
Press	x 2
Snatch, L	x 2

- Then hand-to-hand switch from L to R

Snatch, R	x 2
Press	x 2
[Sots Press	x 2]
Overhead Squat	x 2
Press	x 2
Windmill	x 2
Press	x 2
Get Up, R	x 2

CHAIN:

Just do 1 rep per exercise, then repeat that same side.

Then switch hands to the other side.

LOADING:

Set your timer for 15 minutes and do as many complexes or chains as you can in 20 to 30 minutes.

What Is The Core, Really?

Besides being the most overused and abused term in the fitness/exercise/strength industry in the last 20+ years, the “core” is really a large group of muscles responsible for maintaining static and dynamic postural control – like standing, running, planting, cutting, throwing, bending, twisting, rolling, jumping, landing, etc.; and transmitting and reducing force from the lower to upper body and vice versa. They are found in the center of your body and along the spine and around the pelvis.

Here are some of them: Pelvic floor musculature, diaphragm, transverse abdominus, internal and external obliques, rectus abdominus, multifidus, paraspinals, erector spinae muscle group, latissimus dorsi, gluteal group: maximus, medius, minimus.

But training these muscles doesn't have to be boring – hence “More Core.”

11. OH ROW YOU DON'T!

Rows are one of the most underrated and underutilized exercises in the kettlebell world. They are fantastic for balancing out the forward slump we get from excessive sitting. And they are great for keeping your shoulders healthy – they counteract all the pressing work traditionally found in kettlebell work.

Weight selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Snatch or Press 10-12RM.

Day 1:

Row	x 6
Clean	x 6
Front Squat	x 6

Day 2:

Row	x 6
Clean	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Push Press	x 6

Day 3:

Row	x 6
Clean	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Press	x 6

Row Tip #1

To ensure maximum contraction of the lats and rhomboids while rowing, make sure you push your chest out and pull your kettlebells low to your waist.

Use either conventional or sumo stance, whichever you prefer.

I prefer conventional stance, with feet close together as it allows me to “wrap” the bells around my body, giving a deeper lat and rhomboid contraction.

The sumo tends to send a majority of the load into my lower back. Plus I have reduced range of pulling motion, which reduces the amount of work performed.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Row + Clean + Front Squat) x 6

Day 2:

(Row + Clean + Front Squat + Snatch + Push Press) x 6

Day 3:

(Row + Clean + Front Squat + Press) x 6

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:4-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 5</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 6</u> : 6 sets.	Same as Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2

12. CLEAN 'EM UP, 2.0

Very similar to its little brother, this Big Boy uses a cumulative loading pattern – the load progresses throughout the week, and adds in the Jerk and the Row just for good measure. You'll like this even less than the original.

Weight Selection: Use Press 10RM

Day 1:

Clean	x 6
Press	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Front Squat	x 6

Day 2:

Clean	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Jerk	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Swing	x 6

Day 3:

Clean	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6
Swing	x 6
Row	x 6

Keep The KBs From Banging Your Wrists

A lot of people ask me how to keep the bells from smacking the back of the wrists.

The answer is simple: Check your position.

For many, if not most, a change in set up position usually helps.

Head should be up, eyes on the horizon and your chest should be pushed out at all times.

Keep the upper arms close to the body the whole time and the bells should practically "roll" up the front of the body into the rack.

For more, see *Kettlebell STRONG!**.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Clean + Press + Snatch + Front Squat) x 6

Day 2:

(Clean + Snatch + Front Squat + Jerk + Swing) x 6

Day 3:

(Clean + Front Squat + Snatch + Press + Swing + Row) x 6

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:4-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 7</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 8</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 9</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 6	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1

* *Kettlebell STRONG!* can be found [here](#).

13. “LUCKY 13”

What’s so lucky about this workout? The fact that you get to really jack your heart rate up with the inclusion of Alternating Reverse Lunges, that’s what!

And what’s so lucky about that?

Metabolic Stress – when loaded they burn a TON of calories. Great for leaning out. *“Tell me now [punk], you feel lucky?”* (Yeah, s’posed to be Dirty Harry...)

Weight Selection: Use Press 8RM

Day 1:

Swing	x 5
Clean	x 5
Alternating Reverse Lunge	x 5 each leg
See-Saw Press	x 5

Day 2:

Clean	x 5
Press	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

Day 3:

Snatch	x 5
Press	x 5
Alternating Reverse Lunge	x 5 each leg
Clean	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

On Lunging

The Lunge is not a part of the traditional kettlebell exercise arsenal. However, it is found in the Get Up.

The Lunge, when performed correctly, is a powerful leg exercise. Its power comes not from the fact that it’s a unilateral exercise and you’re overloading one limb, but rather from the effect that unilateral exercise has on the body and brain.

Unilateral exercises, especially when they’re contralateral or alternating, make you stronger from the inside out.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Swing + Clean + Alternating Reverse Lunge (each leg) + See-Saw Press) x 5

Day 2:

(Clean + Press + Front Squat) x 5

Day 3:

(Snatch + Press + Alternating Reverse Lunge (each leg) + Clean + Front Squat) x 5

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:4-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 5 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 6 sets.	Same as Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5

14. OH ROW YOU DON'T, 2.0

Similar to its little bro', the 2.0 is based on the humble Row. But this one is a killer, make no mistake. It's a higher volume of lifts per workout and **Day 2** is just downright nasty. On top of that, you now have to deal with the inclusion of the Renegade Row.

The payoff? There's a higher growth hormone response and therefore, your body will use more fat as fuel. (And if you're eating a surplus of calories, you'll gain more muscle of course!)

Weight Selection: Use Snatch 8-12RM

Day 1:

Row	x 20 seconds
Clean	x 20 seconds
Press	x 20 seconds
Snatch	x 20 seconds
Front Squat	x 20 seconds

Day 2:

Renegade Row	x 20 seconds
Clean	x 20 seconds
Front Squat	x 20 seconds
Snatch	x 20 seconds
Press	x 20 seconds
Swing	x 20 seconds
Row	x 20 seconds

Day 3:

Row	x 20 seconds
Snatch	x 20 seconds
Press	x 20 seconds
Clean	x 20 seconds
Front Squat	x 20 seconds
Row	x 20 seconds

Row Tip #2

When rowing, the tendency is to look at the floor and keep the head neutral.

This is not the best idea as it tends to make the upper back slump and preferentially recruit the biceps, fatiguing them out early.

Even worse is that the body will start to follow the eyes so the lower back will actually start to round as well. Bad news for your lumbar discs.

A better strategy is to look straight ahead with your neck in extension as this facilitates shoulder extension, and makes the lats do their job. It also facilitates the extensor reflex making it easier to maintain your natural spinal curves.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Row + Clean + Press + Snatch + Front Squat) x 20 seconds each

Day 2:

(Renegade Row + Clean + Front Squat + Snatch + Press + Swing + Row) x 20 seconds each

Day 3:

(Row + Snatch + Press + Clean + Front Squat + Row) x 20 seconds each

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:4-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 3</u> : 3 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 4</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 5</u> : 4 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 4 sets.	Same as Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1

15. YOU DON'T KNOW SQUAT 2.0

In my book *Kettlebell Express! ULTRA* – time-efficient training using double kettlebells – I covered several programs based off the Front Squat. One of the concepts I introduced at the old RKC kettlebell instructor certifications was technique on the major lifts could be enhanced (refined) by pairing each exercise with a Front Squat and putting them in a complex.

And we discovered this quite by accident. We were in Hungary teaching an RKC in 2009 and we had a large group and a communication problem. Every set of instructions had to be translated by the interpreter from English into Hungarian. This ate up large chunks of time. So, we had to be as efficient as possible. And so, the use of complexes with the Front Squat as the backbone to clean up technique was born.

“You Don’t Know Squat 2.0” is based on that idea.

And don’t let the “low” reps in this program fool you. It’s incredibly challenging and metabolically demanding with the inclusion of all the squats. It’s very nice for leaning out. And of course, if you combine an excess of food with that higher volume, you’ll put some meat on your legs if you want to.

You’re welcome. ☺

Weight Selection: Use whichever is weaker - Sntach or Press 6RM.

Day 1:

Front Squat	x 3
Swing	x 3
Front Squat	x 3
Clean	x 3

Day 2:

Front Squat	x 3
Clean	x 3
Front Squat	x 3
Press	x 3
Front Squat	x 3
Swing	x 3

Day 3:

Down Or Back?

There are lots of cues for squatting.

“Sit down and back.”

“Push your hips back.”

“Break at the hips first.”

“Open your knees and sit between your legs.”

Which one is right?

The Double Kettlebell Front Squat can answer that question for you. How?

Well if you can't keep your torso upright during the descent, then gravity will literally peel the kettlebells right out of your hands and your rack and fold you in two like a piece of paper.

So, if you learn how to push your knees apart and sit down between them, you'll find you'll be able to keep your torso upright.

Front Squat	x 3
Snatch	x 3
Front Squat	x 3
Press	x 3
Front Squat	x 3
Clean	x 3
Front Squat	x 3
Push Press	x 3

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Front Squat + Swing + Front Squat + Clean) x 3

Day 2:

(Front Squat + Clean + Front Squat + Press + Front Squat + Swing) x 3

Day 3:

(Front Squat + Snatch + Front Squat + Press + Front Squat + Clean + Front Squat + Push Press) x 3

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:4-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
<u>Week 1:</u> 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2:</u> 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3:</u> 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4:</u> 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 7:</u> 3 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 8:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1

Week 9: 5 sets.

Less than Week 6

Work: Rest = 1:3

Work: Rest = 1:1

16. SIR SNATCH-A-LOT

Do you love the Double Snatch? Well turn your love into full-blown passion with this program that embraces the DSN. There isn't a more explosive kettlebell lift around except maybe – *maybe* the Jerk. But I doubt it... When you're done with this beauty you'll have a new appreciation for power.

Weight Selection: Use your Snatch 10-12RM

Day 1:

Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6
Front Squat	x 6

Day 2:

Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6
Clean	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Swing	x 6

Day 3:

Snatch	x 6
Press	x 6
Front Squat	x 6
Snatch	x 6

Snatch vs. Double Snatch

The single kettlebell Snatch can be performed in one continuous motion from top to bottom.

So can the Double Snatch.

But it's not recommended due to safety concerns for the lower back. Especially under fatigue, which is the hallmark of complexes.

Therefore I recommend you use what's come to be known as the "Half Snatch," which is where you lower the kettlebells to your shoulders in the rack position and hike them between your legs from there.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Snatch + Press + Front Squat) x 6

Day 2:

(Snatch + Press + Clean + Front Squat + Swing) x 6

Day 3:

(Snatch + Press + Front Squat + Snatch) x 6

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 5</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 6</u> : 6 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-5	Work: Rest = 1:2

17. THE UPPER BACK ATTACK

Want a powerfully strong upper back for more pulling strength? This mammer-jammer will make it happen. This is a great one for improving your general conditioning for your single kettlebell snatch work. Expect those numbers to jump through the roof after completing this program.

Weight Selection: Use your Press 10RM.

Day 1:

Swing	x 5
Clean	x 5
Press	x 5
Snatch	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

Day 2:

High Pull	x 5
Snatch	x 5
Press	x 5

Day 3:

Swing	x 5
High Pull	x 5
Snatch	x 5
Front Squat	x 5

The Double High Pull

The Double High Pull is an excellent transition exercise for a powerful Double Snatch. It teaches you how to powerfully snap your hips and then direct the kettlebells with your arms – and in the right path too.

The DHP teaches you how to keep the kettlebells close to your body both on the way up and equally as important, on the way down.

The key to success during the High Pull is not to focus on the bells in your hands, but rather on your elbows. Pull them up and back so the bells float and then stall by each side of your head or slightly above. This creates the space and timing needed to punch the bells overhead on the Double Snatch.

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Swing + Clean + Press + Snatch + Front Squat) x5

Day 2:

(High Pull + Snatch + Press) x5

Day 3:

(Swing + High Pull + Snatch + Front Squat) x5

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1.5-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1</u> : 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3</u> : 6 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4</u> : 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5</u> : 6 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : 7 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5

18. THE UNIVERSE

“The Swing is the center of the kettlebell universe,” quoth Master Kettlebell Instructor, Mark Reifkind. Why not take advantage of that? (Yeah, that’s what I thought too.)

You’re going to do a lot of Swings in this program. And you’ll be re-enforcing that beautiful hinge pattern with some other exercises – some grinds and some ballistics. You’ll hate both – in a good way. Regardless, in each workout you’ll always start and finish at the “center of the universe.”

Weight Selection: Use whichever is weaker - your Double Snatch or Press 10RM

Day 1:

Swing	x 5
Clean	x 5
Swing	x 5
Snatch	x 5
Swing	x 5

Day 2:

Swing	x 5
Front Squat	x 5
Swing	x 5
Press	x 5
Swing	x 5

Day 3:

Swing	x 5
Clean	x 5
Swing	x 5
Snatch	x 5
Swing	x 5
High Pull	x 5
Swing	x 5

The Advanced Athletic Swing

A couple of years ago now I put up a video of me doing what I called the “Advanced Athletic Swing.” It’s called that because the traditional Swing is taught off the deadlift, with the weight of the body towards the back of the foot, and shins relatively upright.

The AAS, by contrast, is taught off the Vertical Jump and the weight is kept in the midfoot. This allows the knees to shift forward over the foot more, loading the calf complex along with the hamstrings and gluts.

This recruits more musculature and allows for a more explosive Swing. Initial force plate studies have confirmed the difference in power output between the two styles, affirming that the AAS has greater peak and mean power outputs when compared to the traditional Swing style.

Here’s the video of that Swing:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4Y53liib7Q>

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Swing + Clean + Swing + Snatch + Swing) x5

Day 2:

(Swing + Front Squat + Swing + Press + Swing) x5

Day 3:

(Swing + Clean + Swing + Snatch + Swing + High Pull + Swing) x5

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1.5-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1:</u> 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2:</u> 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3:</u> 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:4-5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4:</u> 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:3-4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5

19. JERK WERK

This nasty lil' program is going to make you work the Jerk – a lot. Hence the name. (I think it's German or something like that... ;-]) You're going to want to start light on this especially if you haven't done Jerks in awhile.

Weight Selection: Use Double Snatch 10RM

Day 1:

Clean
Jerk
Front Squat
Jerk

Day 2:

Clean
Jerk
Snatch
Jerk
Front Squat

Day 3:

Clean
Jerk
Snatch
Jerk
Front Squat
Jerk

The Jerk: A “3-D” Exercise

Most people get confused on the Jerk. They have a hard time with dropping under the weight and locking the kettlebells out overhead simultaneously.

Here's a quick way to remember how to Jerk properly: The Jerk is a “3-D” exercise – Dip, Drive, Drop.

1. Dip: Keeping your torso vertical, dip down with a quick, shallow, quarter squat.

2. Drive: At the bottom of the quarter squat, reverse the squat and quickly stand up driving the bells off your chest, guiding with your arms, to at least top-of-the-head height.

3. Drop: When the bells have passed over the top of your head quickly drop back into a squat, simultaneously fixing the kettlebells overhead by locking out your arms. You are literally wedging yourself between the ground and the kettlebells.

CHAIN*:

Day 1:

(Clean + Jerk + Front Squat + Jerk)

Day 2:

(Clean + Jerk + Snatch + Jerk + Front Squat)

Day 3:

(Clean + Jerk + Snatch + Jerk + Front Squat + Jerk)

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest (W:R) = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest (W:R) = 1:1-2

	Beginner	Interm.	Advanced
<u>Week 1</u> : Ladders. (1,2,3,4) x 2.	As necessary	W:R = 1:4-5	W:R = 1:2
<u>Week 2</u> : Ladders. (1,2,3,4) x 2.	Less than Week 1	W:R = 1:3-4	W:R = 1:1.5
<u>Week 3</u> : Ladders. (1,2,3,4) x 2.	Less than Week 2	W:R = 1:3	W:R = 1:1
<u>Week 4</u> : Ladders. (1,2,3,4,5) x 2.	As necessary	W:R = 1:4-5	W:R = 1:2
<u>Week 5</u> : Ladders. (1,2,3,4,5) x 2.	Less than Week 4	W:R = 1:3-4	W:R = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6</u> : Ladders. (1,2,3,4,5) x 2.	Less than Week 5	W:R = 1:3	W:R = 1:1

* **For Chains**: When performing ladders, simply go through the chain the prescribed number of reps on each rung of the ladder.

How To Perform "Ladders"

Ladder are a powerful fatigue-sparing form of loading.

They are written like so:

1,2,3,4,5...

You will perform one set of 1 rep. Then rest. Then one set of 2 reps. Then rest. Then one set of 3 reps. Then rest. Then one set of 4 reps. Then rest. Then one set of 5 reps. Then rest.

When you see a ladder designated the following way -

(1,2,3,4,5)2

... That means do 2 ladders.

So once you finish your set of 5 reps, you start over at 1 rep and "climb" back up the ladder.

20. HERKY JERKY

Oh goody. Even more Jerks. Yes indeed! The Jerk is a vastly underrated exercise. None of us do them enough. And we all should. This little piece of magic will ensure you get them in. In spades. If you haven't done Jerks in awhile, don't start here. Do "Jerk Werk" instead.

Weight Selection: Use Jerk 12RM.

COMPLEX:

Day 1:

Front Squat	x6
Jerk	x6
Clean	x6
Jerk	x6

Day 2:

Jerk	x6
Clean	x6
Jerk	x6

Day 3:

Clean	x6
Jerk	x6
Front Squat	x6
Snatch	x6
Jerk	x6

CHAIN:

Day 1:

(Front Squat + Jerk + Clean + Jerk) x6

Day 2:

(Jerk + Clean + Jerk) x6

Day 3:

(Clean + Jerk + Front Squat + Snatch + Jerk) x6

Finishing the Jerk

It's very easy to get out of your Jerk groove when you're sucking wind and tired.

So remember, aim to keep your arms in line with your ears or slightly further back. This means that you will have to direct the bells up and back on your Jerk instead of just up.

Also, keep your eyes straight ahead or maybe even slightly up. Resist the temptation to look down.

Although this will make it feel easier to get and keep the bells overhead, it will pull your body into flexion, make you drop your chest, and increase the strain on your lower back when the bells are overhead in the lockout position. And that's bad.

LOADING:

Beginner - Rest as necessary between sets

Intermediate - Work: Rest = 1:3-5

Advanced - Work: Rest = 1:1-2

	<u>Beginner</u>	<u>Intermediate</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Week 1:</u> 3 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 2:</u> 4 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 3:</u> 5 sets.	As necessary	Work: Rest = 1:5	Work: Rest = 1:2
<u>Week 4:</u> 3 sets.	Less than Week 1	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 5:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 2	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 6:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 3	Work: Rest = 1:4	Work: Rest = 1:1.5
<u>Week 7:</u> 3 sets.	Less than Week 4	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 8:</u> 4 sets.	Less than Week 5	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1
<u>Week 9:</u> 5 sets.	Less than Week 6	Work: Rest = 1:3	Work: Rest = 1:1

FINAL THOUGHTS

At first glance through *Kettlebell HARD!*, you may be tempted to pick and choose your workouts. Don't. That misses the whole point and the tortuous beauty of these programs – that they're not just stand alone “workouts” or “finishers” for the end of your workout.

Rather, they are *programs* so you can make extreme progress in your strength, conditioning, or fat loss.

The complex, and her fraternal twin, the chain, are truly the pinnacle of hardcore, time-efficient training, regardless of your goal, but *especially* if you're looking to whittle away the pounds. The sheer effort and density of each workout will have you burning calories (*fat!*) for hours afterwards. Especially, when you follow the programs here in *Kettlebell HARD!*.

Finally, people will want to know the “best way” to use all these programs.

Here's what you should do:

You should do no more than 18 weeks of complexes or chains and then switch to a low volume, low effort program for about 6 weeks – something like *Kettlebell STRONG!*, or a program from *Kettlebell EXPRESS!*. Then come back and reload. Pick a more challenging complex or chain. Rinse and repeat.

Take your time going through these. If you laid each program end-to-end you'd have 129 weeks of complexes. Just complexes. Double that number for chains. So in total you'd have 258 weeks of pure kettlebell “fun.” (For you math majors, that's 4.96 years of workouts.) Not to mention if you went from Beginner to Intermediate to Advanced.

ENJOY!



Geoff Neupert

F.A.Q.s

Here are the answers to some Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What if I only have a single kettlebell? Will these still work?

Yes, they will. They will just take twice as long to perform. And no, you don't need to rest between sides (unless you find you have to).

2. Can I use a pair of mix-matched kettlebells?

Yes.

3. What else can I do besides the *HARD!* programs?

That depends on your conditioning levels. Generally speaking, nothing much. Just rest, recover, and enjoy your free time to get other things done.

I do recommend walking though. Walking is good for everyone.

4. What can I / should I do on my “off” days?

Rest. Recover. Enjoy your free time.

If you don't like that answer, use “active recovery” techniques. Use joint mobility work, stretch, and go for a walk.

Finally, many people just don't want to do that. So the other most valuable thing that you can do that makes you “feel like you're doing something” is to work on your technique. Spend 15 to 20 minutes working on your double kettlebell lifts. Nothing fancy. Low, low reps. Low, low volume. For best results, study the techniques found inside [*Kettlebell STRONG!*](#)

And remember, you should walk away from these sessions feeling “fresh.” These are not “hard” workouts.

5. How do I combine these with barbell work?

Barbell work should be done first. And it should be low rep, low volume - 5 to 20 reps total. Intensity should be between 60 and 80% of your max. No more than one or two exercises per session.

6. How do I combine these with bodyweight work?

Treat your bodyweight like strength training. Do it first. Then your *HARD!* program. Use the same loading parameters you would for the barbell work.

7. Can I combine these programs with *[PROGRAM NAME HERE]*?

Personally, I wouldn't. I'd put all your focus and effort on your *HARD!* program. If you "have to," do it the way I suggested in FAQs 5 & 6.

8. What about cardio? Do I need to do cardio along with the *HARD!* programs?

HA!HA!HA!HA!... NO.

Seriously.

You can add in some very low intensity work after you're done with your workouts and walking on your "off" days.