

Kettlebell Tour Introduction



Thanks for registering or at least considering grabbing a space on the Kettlebell Tour.

I have recently been training **a lady who has lost 42 lbs in 8 weeks using kettlebells and my nutrition system - no aerobics, jogging or gym membership.**

I'm also training a **Muay Thai fighter to be ready to step in the ring.**

I thought that might get your attention. Now listen up...

You are about to learn a set of training skills which will take all elements of your fitness to a whole new level!

Before the workshop, I want you to be crystal clear about why you are doing it and what it's all about.

This little document explains all you need to know!

P2 - Get out of your training rut!

P3 - What are kettlebells and Why train with kettlebells?

P7 - The importance of weight training in sport

P11 - Why kettlebells in particular for sport?

www.kettlebelltour.com

Get out of your training rut!

One of my favourite sayings is “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”.

Kettlebell training is a way of life which, if you really immerse yourself in, you will never want to turn away from. The purpose of this course is not to give you some ‘cookie cutter’ program like you have no doubt been given in a gym at some point in your life!

Kettlebell training is far too versatile, mentally and physically stimulating and, dare I say, enjoyable, to limit to specific robotic programming.

Every training session you do will leave more questions in your mind about how far you can go, how much you can achieve and what else these incredible tools can do.

Remember, effective training is not about complexity, it is about intensity.

It is my wish that you will become a ‘fisherman’ (not literally) and not just constantly surf the world wide web in search of another fish caught by someone else.

You will no longer watch people in the gym and wonder where they learnt how to train but be completely immersed in your own training session and be able to distance yourself from the commercial fitness rat race.

By the time you finish the course I hope you have more questions than answers.



This is not some cryptic course which won't provide what you are looking for though!

It will.

However, life is lived a lot better when you are constantly desperate to learn more and progress yourself on physical, mental and spiritual levels and that is what will happen when you realise just what is available to you if you are willing to embark on a kettlebell journey with me.

What are kettlebells?

The simplest definition for a kettlebell is a cannonball with a handle. However, this is like describing a Ferrari as a piece of metal with wheels!

Such a description does nothing to cover even the tip of the iceberg of the vast, vast benefits kettlebell training provides. Everyone has different reasons for training with kettlebells but the important thing to note is that I have yet to see someone start training with kettlebells then go back to their old methods.

Why? Because kettlebells become a lifestyle.

They become a way of life which you just can't do without. I have clients who take their kettlebells on holiday!

Kettlebells are far from being just another way to keep fit. Only when you have allowed yourself to be absorbed in a good few weeks of focussed kettlebell training will you understand.

Unfortunately, once you have performed the programs you will receive as part of the course, you are likely to feel like you have wasted a lot of time and money in the gym!

But we live and learn, and if you are committed to your fitness as a way of life rather than something you feel compelled to do because 'it's the done thing', you will certainly learn.!

Why train with kettlebells?

Location, location, location

Firstly.....anywhere, any time!

Kettlebells have been described as 'a gym in the palm of your hand'- a short but highly accurate statement!

Not only are they versatile in that they can be thrown in the back of the car and used to train in the park, in hotel rooms, in your back garden, in your friend's back garden, on the beach, the list goes on. Basically, if you have an area of around 2m x 2m and a height of 7-10 ft depending how tall you are, you can train with kettlebells.

This makes kettlebells the ideal tool for many people from all walks of life including:

- Those who are sick of training in commercial gyms, full of members who don't really care and managers who care even less.
- Those who need a portable training tool which gets results. This includes business people, soldiers and anyone whose lifestyle isn't conducive to regular visits to the local health centre. No gimmicks, no magic machines, just a proven method which gets results fast.

Variety

Aside from versatility of location, possibly the most widely talked about and most captivating element of kettlebell training is the versatility of training.

Let's face it, no matter how committed you are to fitness and exercise as the cornerstone of your life, it can get boring if you have no variety in your training.

I have never, ever trained in such a way which enables so many muscles to be worked in such a variety of directions with more advanced trainees being able to move smoothly from one exercise to the next with deft movements of the bell.

This enables the trainee to complete strength and cardiovascular training all in one go. It is true that if you want to be a powerlifter or bodybuilder you need to be working with super heavy weights with sufficient rest times in between.

However, the trainee who wishes to be achieve a more complete fitness profile by increasing strength, shedding body fat, improving flexibility and building a powerful heart and cardiovascular system will not find a better way to achieve their goals.

The nature of kettlebells means if you have a big enough set, you can be training anaerobic endurance one day, strength the next, power the next and power endurance the next. Exercises are easily manipulated to suit whatever fitness goal you may have.

Optimising physical capabilities

Crucially, the kettlebell is the single most effective way to learn how to use your body as one, solid, interlinked, inseparable chain of muscles and joints. It is accepted that free weights are galaxies ahead of fixed machines for functional training which is applicable to activities in daily life and on the sports field, but kettlebell training takes this to a whole new level.

The challenge to the core muscles is great enabling the trainee to build a very solid base from which to work with more advanced exercises. I once heard it said that 'you can't fire a cannon from a canoe'.

In other words, no matter how strong or powerful you think your legs or arms are, if you have a weak, dysfunctional core, you will never achieve the true physical potential. You must have a strong foundation on which to develop powerful, functional muscles.

Not only that, but due to the unique way in which the centre of mass of a kettlebell sits, such training is also a huge challenge to the smaller muscles around the body which primarily act to stabilize our joints.

In particular, the shoulders become rock solid after a few months of kettlebell training providing great benefits to those involved in racket sports, boxing or martial arts or who perform regular weight training of any kind.

I have first hand experience of the power of kettlebells in a rehab setting.

After a year of advancing through the stages of kettlebell training to the more advanced exercises, I suffered a partially dislocated shoulder in a cycling accident.

I believe that it is down to the kettlebell training that I was able to press a 28kg kettlebell within 5 weeks of the accident. This was achieved by first working with the light kettlebells in drills such as the windmill, 'walking in the wind' and the get up.

Body composition

The average person exercises to maintain or achieve low body fat. Even if they don't, it's always a nice bonus as a side effect of your training!

It has been proven that the most effective way to reduce body fat whilst maintaining muscle (after sound nutrition), is a combination of metabolic weight training and high intensity intervals.

Kettlebell training enables both methods to be achieved at once, enabling the busy person to gain maximum effect from their training in minimum time.

What more do you want?!

Not only do body fat levels drop like a stone (when combined with effective nutrition) but the full body movements involved in kettlebell training will produce a great body shape. You can expect to gain a lean, toned physique.

Ladies, a tight butt, sexy thighs and a slim, toned upper body will soon be on its way! I have recently been training a lady who has lost 42 lbs in 8 weeks using kettlebells and clean nutrition - no aerobics, jogging or gym membership.

Gents you can expect to develop a strong, lean, muscular physique once you have harnessed the power of kettlebells!

Your investment in fitness

For a beginner, an investment of around £100-150 will get you a full set of brand new kettlebells. For some people this can be 3 months gym membership,

The difference is, you don't have to queue; you don't have recurring direct debit fees for a gym you never use; you can train where you want, when you want; you can get your training done in half the time with twice the results; it's far more exciting than plodding on a treadmill or sitting on the pec dec breathing in all the putrid, recycled air of the average commercial gym and the routines you can create are limited only by your creativity!

Mental wellness

You will soon find yourself creating fantastic sessions which push you to your limits and make you feel incredibly invigorated afterwards. Kettlebells are almost guaranteed to blast your endorphins (the happy hormones) through the roof!

I've yet to experience a method of training which develops mental strength as well as physical ability as well as kettlebells.

I can't say I've ever studied or practiced martial arts but I suspect it is a similar way of life which captivates you and creates steely willpower and physical prowess beyond anything you've experienced before.

Posture

A word should also be given to the effects on posture.

Because the key kettlebell exercises demand a lot of work to be done by your posterior chain (the muscles on the back of your body such as glutes, lower back and hamstrings) as well as the core muscles, you will soon notice big differences in the way you stand.

Because of the way we sit at our desks all day hunched over a keyboard, coupled with the usual focus in the gym on the 'beach muscles' such as the chest, arms, abs and quads, our bodies become very 'front dominant'. Typical desk posture results in tight chest, tight hip flexors and tight hamstrings which more often than not lead to lower back pain directly or indirectly.

The use of the kettlebell swings and snatches helps address this by strengthening the previously weak glute (buttock) and lower back muscles. The mechanics of such movements also bring about repeat dynamic stretching of the hamstrings.

When combined with a sound flexibility program, an upright, painless posture results.

The Importance of Weight Training In Sport

There is no longer any doubt that effective, targeted resistance training is not just beneficial but critical to improvements in sports performance. Sports such as rugby, American Football, and rowing have employed weightlifting techniques of some form for what seems like forever. However, these are sports where the size of the athlete has in the past been viewed as ‘bigger is better’ hence the enthusiasm for lifting weights.

Fortunately now, even coaches in sports which have traditionally ignored weight training for fear of ‘bulking up’ realise that weight training can be programmed in such a way as to cause dramatic improvements in performance without large increases in muscle mass.

It is not my intention to provide vast amounts of studies confirming the importance of weight training in sport as many highly-detailed books already exist.

I am more interested in giving you the practical knowledge you need to train hard and effectively whether you have a keen interest in a particular sport or just want to find the most effective, time-efficient ways to achieve particular fitness goals.

In recent times we have seen the emergence of Rafael Nadal as the tennis World Number 1 following 4 years of domination by Roger Federer. There is no doubt in my mind that, aside from his raw talent, Nadal’s intense training in the gym has paid a massive part in his success. Whenever his matches are featured on TV, the conversation inevitably turns to his impressive physique and seemingly infinite supply of energy on court!

Whilst talking of tennis I am reliably informed that Laura Robson, recent winner of Junior Wimbledon in 2008, has spent the last few years training with kettlebells.

Closer to home, and on a level which is probably more relevant to you, my personal training clients at BodyClocq in Nottingham have experienced fantastic results on the sports field. Some of these people play sport as a serious (or not so serious) hobby.

For instance, I currently train a guy whose primary concern is fat loss. A combination of sound nutritional practices and kettlebell training have resulted in fat loss of around 3 stones.

However, a noticeable side effect of powerful swings has been my client's delight with the dramatic increases in the length of his golf drive off the tee. At this point I have yet to do any direct rotational power drills with him but we have worked extensively with kettlebell windmills and get ups to improve hip mobility, hamstring flexibility and core stabilization - all key elements on the golf course.

Another client at BodyClocq who trains with my business partner recently embarked on a structured weight training routine for the first time. As a cyclist weighing in the region of 55-60kg he cannot afford to be adding unnecessary weight to his frame.

A combination of kettlebell swings and snatches in his training have dramatically increased his strength and power on the bike culminating in 2nd place in the British National Pursuit Championships and 3rd place in the European Championships. Power out of corners has been particularly noticeable according to our client.

So what's happening here and why is weight training so important?

Again I don't intend to fire too much science at you but it will aid your learning if you understand the key concepts behind weight training in sport.

Every sport has its individual requirements but I will take some of the most popular British sports to use as examples of how weight training can improve performance on the sports field.

Football / soccer (and most team sports)

Most team sports involve repeat bursts of speed over short distances with periods of low intensity activity in between.

Soccer players for instance (bar the goalkeeper) are required to move around the field at relatively low intensity before being called into action for usually anything between 5-20 seconds at a time. Clearly different positions will have slightly different requirements.

However, at a basic level, every player needs the ability to be able to produce fast sprints repeatedly for 90 minutes. This is known as power endurance – the ability to produce power over the entire duration of the match. An inability to maintain speed on sprints can be the difference between winning or conceding late goals which change the result in an instant.

Before you can develop power endurance, you must have power in your muscles. If you were listening in physics class you'll know that...

$$\text{Power} = \frac{\text{Force} \times \text{Distance}}{\text{Time}}$$

In other words to maximise power over a given distance you need to be able to maximise the force your muscles can produce and minimise the time it takes to complete the movement.

Another equation you may recall is that...

$$\text{Force} = \text{Mass} \times \text{Acceleration}$$

Now you might be thinking (and rightly so) that the mass you are required to move on the sports field remains (relatively) constant as it is your bodyweight.

A lot of improvement can be gained by training with bodyweight through the use of 'plyometrics' such as jumping, bounding and leaping to increase the acceleration part of the equation. However these gains are limited, and at a certain point the introduction of working against added weight of some form is crucial if continued gains are to be made.

The force a muscle can produce will increase greatly if you are able to move increasing amounts of resistance explosively. This requires strength in your muscles which can only be increased noticeably by working against external resistance (weights).

This is a good time to point out that as a sportsperson you shouldn't be looking to just lift heavier and heavier weights. You do need to lift heavy weights to improve strength and power but your focus should be on your ability to recruit your muscles fast and explosively as is required on the sportsfield. For this reason, if when you are doing squats for instance, ensure you move the weight as fast as possible. If it takes more than a second to take the weight through the full range of motion of the muscle, you should reduce the weight until you can perform the exercise quickly but under control.

Before things get too confusing, let's sum up what we have discussed so far.

Power endurance is the ultimate requirement of most sports, particularly team sports



Power must be developed before we can ‘endure’ it or repeat it over the time span required



Power requires strength



Beyond limited gains with bodyweight, strength increases require weight training

You should now understand why everything in sport comes down to strength. If a netball player lacks the power to accelerate their body high enough off the ground to jump and catch a ball, there is little point wondering how to improve their performance in the final minutes of the game! Develop strength, convert it to power, then develop the capacity to do it over and over again.

On a more basic level, if you aspire to do 20 push ups with your bodyweight you need to be able to generate the strength to do one repetition properly before you can build up the strength endurance to do 20 reps.

Golf

Golf differs to most team sports in that whilst repetition is an element of the game, the repetitions are spread out much more in terms of the time between them.

Returning to my golfing client, aside from the skills required for a good ‘short game’ around the greens, he requires the ability to drive the ball off the tee on to the fairway as close to the green as possible. This requires a one-off, powerful movement with significant rest time in between. Power endurance is therefore not required in the same way as in rugby for instance.

If we can develop a powerful swing on the tee, my player then has a large amount of recovery time before he must tee-off at the next hole. Whilst he has shots to perform to complete the current hole they don’t require the maximum effort as at the tee.

Tennis

Similar to team sports, a tennis player needs to repeatedly generate power in various forms throughout the course of the game. The difference is that, whereas soccer players for instance have longer periods of rest between bursts of activity, tennis players have very little chance of recovery. This requires a strong anaerobic base of fitness enabling them to recover and be able to generate power over and over again as they move through each point.

If we dissect an actual point, we can see why power is crucial to a tennis player. Firstly, the power required on the serve is often the difference between a good player and a great player with a powerful weapon in their arsenal! Contrary to first impressions, a powerful serve comes from the ability to transfer power from the legs through the hips and into the upper body. It does not simply require a strong shoulder! A strong shoulder is important however, and weight training of a more prehab based structure is also crucial.

Once the serve is complete, assuming the ball comes back, a tennis player now needs to be able to perform repetitive sprints of up to 5 metres, sometimes for up to 30 seconds in a long rally. This is a great test of power endurance.

Having completed a sprint to reach the ball, hip drive and rotational power is also required to play a powerful shot.

So you can see that every single facet of the game of tennis can ultimately be broken down to strength and power and the ability to generate power for anything from 1 hour to 5 hours in some of the men's 5 set epics!

We could analyse every sport going and the patterns would be the same. To progress beyond a bog-standard amateur player, you must employ strength and power exercises into your training.

Why kettlebells in particular for sport?

Why can't we just use the traditional strength methods of barbell squats, deadlifts and bench pressing?

The truth is that any good athlete will use a variety of tools in their training rather than naively assuming that they have found **the** way to train. However, there are a number of reasons why training with kettlebells will dramatically improve your sports performance in ways which traditional lifting may not.

Converting to power

The traditional methods for improving strength (squats, deadlifts and bench press) are highly effective hence the reason they are employed often exclusively as the exercises of choice of those who train only for size and strength.

However, as we have discussed, once you have built up sufficient strength, you need to be able to convert this strength into more explosive movements which will transfer on to the sports field enabling you to accelerate quicker, run faster, jump higher, hit harder etc.

Building from the barbell movements mentioned above, you would move into performing exercises as seen on the Olympics (and so named the ‘Olympic lifts’) such as the snatch, the clean, and the jerk.

Whilst there is no doubting that these exercises are highly effective in developing power, they are highly complex movements which require many, many hours of dedicated technique work before they can be performed effectively with little weight, never mind the weights required for power development.

Added to this is the fact that due to our largely chair-based lifestyles, the average amateur sportsperson (and in fact many professionals) lack the flexibility and mobility to perform the Olympic lifts properly.

For instance the barbell snatch requires full range of motion at the hips and excellent mobility in the shoulder complex to perform it proficiently and with minimal risk of injury. Neither of these requirements are found very often in the average person!

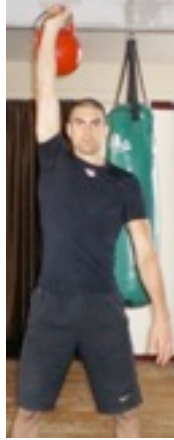
Kettlebells however, offer the perfect solution. Because the training involves movements which can be performed either one arm at a time or with a kettlebell in each hand, the limitations caused by problems of shoulder and hip mobility are greatly reduced. Whilst you should be actively working on these issues, they will not stop you from progressing well.

Not only this, but you don’t even need to be proficient at performing the kettlebell snatch to improve your power and power endurance.

The kettlebell swing can be performed effectively by most people after 3-4 weeks of coaching and practice, developing snap in the hips and power from the glutes, a muscle which is largely inactive in the Western world despite being the largest muscle group with the most potential for power generation along with your quads!



Also, once you have mastered clean and overhead press, you jerk. Compared to the barbell



the basic exercises such as the swing, will be ready to introduce the kettlebell jerk this has a number of advantages.

Firstly, it can be performed with one arm at a time. This is good for those yet to improve the mobility of their thoracic spine (the top of your spine where the shoulder blades are) sufficiently to perform the two arm movement.

Secondly, performing one arm kettlebell jerks also closely replicates many sports in which the individual is required to transfer power from the hips into the upper body. The tennis serve and punching in boxing do exactly that.

Bruce Lee's famous one-inch punch serves to show how power in boxing and martial arts comes not from having big biceps or thick shoulders but from being able to effectively transfer power from the lower body into the upper body in one swift movement.

The start position for the kettlebell jerk requires the individual to rest the elbow of the lifting arm on their hip bone (feel for the bit that sticks out almost at belly button level). This differs from barbell jerks in which the bar begins resting on the front of the shoulders with the elbows high.

Power must then be generated by a fast dip and drive which transfers power from the legs, through, the hips into the elbow, up the forearm and into the kettlebell. All this happens as fast as possible.

Whilst the barbell jerk is undoubtedly an excellent training method for power generation I believe the kettlebell jerk is superior for teaching the transfer of power from lower body to upper body for a sporting context.

Clearly if you are able to do so effectively with a 24kg kettlebell you will see massive improvements in your ability to power a 60g tennis ball towards your opponent or deliver a knock-out blow in the ring!

Finally, barbell lifting can be tough on those with shoulder and wrist issues. The free movement of the kettlebells enables the lifter to alter the position of the bells according to their own biomechanics thus enabling them to perform the lifts without risking joint health.

(Please note that whilst kettlebells are renowned for improving the function of restricted joints and dramatically increasing shoulder strength, it is still wise to exercise caution when you begin training with kettlebells until you can perform movements proficiently)

All of the above points also apply to snatches.

The aim of the kettlebell snatch is to drive the kettlebell from the start position (either hanging between the knees or swinging back through the legs) to the overhead lockout position in one smooth, powerful motion.

Again this teaches perfect coordination of the body as one unit with power being transferred from the legs and glutes into the upper body via a strong pull from the upper back muscles.

As mentioned in the discussion of progressing from developing power to power endurance, kettlebell snatches and jerks can be performed in high repetition sessions which develop phenomenal power endurance, a very high anaerobic and aerobic work capacity and great mental strength!

What more could an athlete want?!

So what are you waiting for?

If you haven't booked on the Kettlebell Conditioning Tour yet but you're thinking about it get over to www.kettlebelltour.com and book your space!

You can check out some of the videos of exercises you'll learn and me training at a course with internationally renowned kettlebell expert and martial artist, Steve Cotter.

Don't forget, not only will you learn all the key moves but you'll also get strength and conditioning programs to set you on your way, nutrition systems, flexibility manuals and much more!

www.kettlebelltour.com

If you are still in any doubt as to how much your body, fitness and life in general will change by taking the Kettlebell Conditioning Tour, then please email me with any questions!

jon@stormforcefitness.com

I look forward to working with you and teaching you the way of the Kettlebell so that you start seeing fantastic results!

Jon Le Tocq

www.kettlebelltour.com