

The Need to Train Like A Man, Especially if you are a Woman

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Come on ladies! Are you sick of watching men do pull-ups and you can't even do one? I know I was!

As a fitness coach I stay current with the latest developments. I am always looking for workouts to stay in shape that are not only effective, but also fun. Since most of my clients are more concerned with having a lean physique than with developing real strength, it's been a challenge to convince them that training for strength is an excellent way to become leaner.

Many women have the illusion that if they even glance at free weights, they will end up looking like Arnold's long lost twin sister. As a result, women flock to aerobics classes and exercise machines every year with the hope of discovering the holy grail of fat loss.

I do not have to tell you what the end result is.

Think I am being too harsh? Go to an aerobics class today and take a mental note of the class. Now go back in a month and take a look at the results. See what I mean?

Results that are noticeable do not come from just cardiovascular exercise. Make no mistake about it, the best way to get a lean, sexy, and a well defined physique is with heavy weights and low reps. Why? Read the rest of the article to find out.

<http://www.dragondoor.com/kkb010.html?apid=steel16>

I am also going to go over what I believe is the most effective form of weight training for women and what it did for me. By the time you get to the end of this article, you will be over the irrational fear that lifting heavy weights makes women bulky. You will have a plan of action to develop a body that is super strong and conditioned. The body you have always wanted. Lets get started! Many woman who insist on training with light or medium weights and doing many reps end up building Sarcoplasmic Hypertrophy: bloated, soft and useless muscle. Proper strength training leads to gains in Myofibrillar Hypertrophy: strong and dense muscle. Using lower reps and heavy weights is the best way to achieve the lean physique.

Moreover, you will actually have strength that works; strength that will let you

achieve that pull up you've always wanted. And don't worry, most women do not have the testosterone levels to achieve the big bulky muscles. Men have 10 to 15 times the amount of testosterone women possess. Men still have to work very hard to put on muscle. In order to build big bulky muscles you have to have the right amount of testosterone levels, an increased caloric intake, and a regimen that includes lots of volume. Lots of volume can mean 5-10 sets per exercise. So what is the best way to develop real strength? I am firmly convinced it is kettlebell training. When I discovered kettlebells, I was hooked immediately and stopped training with dumbbells and machines. After training with only kettlebells 2-3 times a week for 10 weeks, I lost about 4-5% of my body fat. I am 5'3 and was 118 pounds with 18% body fat. Now I'm 114 lb, much stronger and more conditioned and have a body fat of 13%.



I look better now than I did in college. I was amazed and so were my clients and other trainers; they begged me to teach them what I was doing. The first kettlebell exercise I start my clients with is the swing. The SWING is the foundation of Russian Kettlebell training. It teaches (a) the hip thrust that is powerful and explosive, (b) compressed breathing, and (c) how to generate force quickly. This exercise gives you the skills necessary to excel in all Kettlebell lifts. Spend a lot of time perfecting your swings. Here is how to get started: Most women start with an 8kg weight and men with a 16kg kettlebell. Some women can start with a 12kg. (Exercise descriptions adapted from the Russian Kettlebell Challenge Certification manual.)

Another great resource is here: <http://www.dragondoors.com/kkb010.html?apid=steel16>

1. Take a natural squat stance making sure your knees are aligned with your ankles

- a. Keep your head up and looking straight forward
 - b. Keep a straight back- even when bending forward from hips
 - c. Sit back rather than dip down
2. Keep weight on your heels during swings until the top of the movement; you may shift your weight on your entire foot if that feels more comfortable.

. Maintain your balance at all times.

- a. At the bottom position, you should feel your hamstrings stretch.
3. Explode the hips while keeping your arms straight and loose. The power comes from your legs not your arms. (Do not try and muscle the swing). Keep your shoulders down.
4. Lock out the hips and knees at the top position. This is where you develop the power to swing the kettlebell.

. Squeeze the glutes tight every time you thrust

- a. Brace your abs to protect your spine.
5. Your breathing should be a power inhale to your abdomen in through the nose at the bottom of the swing. As you snap your hips you let out a little fast breath bracing your spine (like you would with power punches)

Start out by doing 3-5 sets of 15 swings with a lighter bell. When you can do this without overtaxing yourself, move on to a heavier kettlebell. If your seeking to get your heart rate up this is for you. If you are doing the swings correctly your glutes will be sore the next day.

There are many variations with swings you can do once you get it down. There are two-handed swings, alternating swings, double swing (if you have two kettlebells;

take a wider stance for this or say bye-bye to knee caps), walking swings, high swings, and so much more. Here are four other exercises you can add to your workout once you feel ready to move on.



The TURKISH GET-UP is an excellent exercise for shoulder stability, flexibility, and resilience. This is a very slow drill. Keep in mind to breathe shallow and keep your abs pressurized through out the set.

1. Lie on your back and press the kettlebell (KB) in the air
 - a. Elbow must be locked through the duration of the set
 - b. Keep the handle at the base of the palm and your wrist tight
2. Roll to your side and sit up keeping your eyes on the bell
3. Use your free elbow to prop yourself up and get on one knee
4. Carefully stand up
5. Slowly reverse the movement and return to the floor (keeping your eye on the KB at all times)



The CLEAN is not only an exercise but a safe means to get the KB's to your shoulders for other drills. Get in the same stance and pick the KB off the floor as you would for a swing.

1. Keeping your arm loose: the KB is lifted with your hip thrust.
2. Keep your elbow in and quickly flip your elbow under when the bell has almost reached your shoulder. Do not pull with your arm or try and cheat curl it up to your shoulder! The power is from your hip thrust.
3. Right before the KB has landed on your forearm, quickly dipping your knees and getting under it will take away the impact.
4. When returning the KB to the bottom position, keep your arm very loose. Swing it back between your legs and repeat.



The FRONT SQUAT is an outstanding leg strength, back, abs, and flexibility developer. This is by far the most practical of all squatting movements. It can be done with one or two KB's.

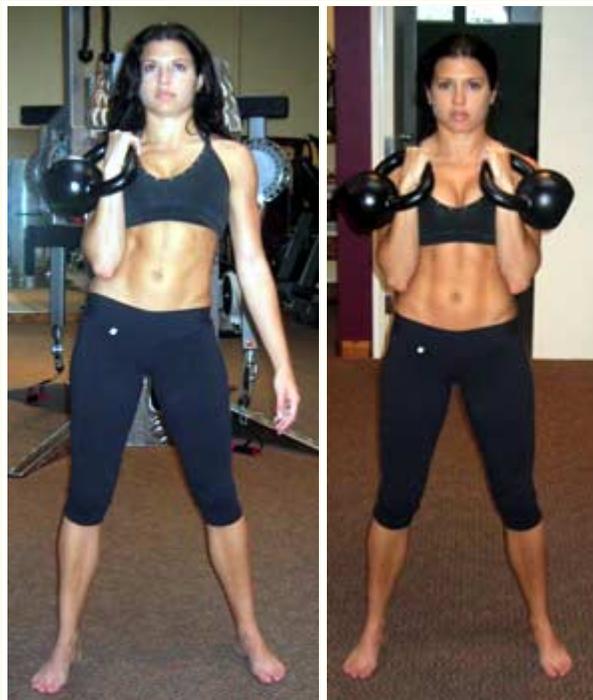
1. Clean the kettlebell and let it rest in the crook of your elbow
2. Take a breath through your belly before descending
3. Squat down as deep as you feel comfortable. Pause for 2 seconds
4. Pressurize your abdomen and straighten out
5. Push steadily through your heels as you ascend back to the top position

Hint: Never release all the air in your abdominal cavity at one time



The ONE-LEGGED DEAD LIFT is a great exercise that strengthens the hamstrings, glutes, and is important for both athletic power and back safety. It will teach you the very valuable skill of overall tension and staying tight.

1. Have two KB on the ground side by side with enough room for your foot to fit between them.
2. Grip the ground with your toes and keep the muscles around your ankle and on the bottom of your foot tight.
3. Hinge over at your hips with a semi-squat and grab the KB's. (Eyes are looking straight).
4. Tense the glute of the loaded leg and brace the abs for that imaginary punch.
5. Staying very tight throughout the body, push straight down with your leg and squeeze the bells off the ground.
6. Try to maintain a straight spine. Do not attempt to recover lost balance by fidgeting; this could injure your knee.



Here is a sample program to get you started with the five exercises you just learned. Just to keep it simple for beginners, I would recommend 1 minute rests between each set. If you become very fatigue to where you lose your form, I advise you to stop immediately or go down to a lighter weight. If you are looking for higher intensity do one set of each exercise without stopping, then take a 1-2 minute break after all are completed and repeat 3-5 times.

Monday

One Arm Clean 3x6 on each arm

Front Squat 3x8

Two Arm Swing 3x20

Wednesday

Turkish-Get Up 2x3 per side

One-Legged Dead Lifts 3x5 per leg

One Arm Swing 2x15 on each arm

Friday

Double Clean 2x5

Double Front Squat 2x5

Turkish-Get Up 2x3 per side

Alternating Swings 3x15 per arm

So there you have it. Real strength and power exercises with weights for women and men that will get you that lean physique and real strength. Don't be surprised if your athletic performance improves after 4 weeks of adding this type of training in to your life.

There are endless possibilities of fun and extremely difficult things you can do with kettlebells. Last important thing is to always play it safe! While its good to push your body to the limits, it's imperative to know when you are over exerting yourself. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at Lauren@SoCaltrainer.com.

References: <http://www.dragondoor.com/kkb010.html?apid=steel16>

Zatsiorsky, V. (1995) Science and Practice of Strength Training. Human Kinetics. Russian Kettlebell Challenge Certification Manual About the Author Lauren Brooks is a fitness and strength trainer in San Diego, CA. Lauren earned her B.S. in Kinesiology with an Emphasis in Fitness, Nutrition, and Health from San Diego State University. Lauren Brooks is Certified by American Council on Exercise and Russian Kettlebell Challenge. She is available for online nutrition and program designs as well as private and group sessions. You can contact her at Lauren@socaltrainer.com or go to www.Socaltrainer.com