

The Kettlebell Workout

All the rage in gyms, they can give you a leaner body and a stronger core.

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Kettlebells—cannonball-like weights with thick handles—were the weapon of choice for Russian lifters more than a century ago. They're just now getting their due in America. The weights offer all the benefits of dumbbell training, plus a few more. The super-thick handles challenge your grip, and the position of the weight in relation to the handle works your core extra hard.

Best of all, kettlebells are versatile. They're ideal for explosive exercises that work major muscles, burn body fat, and build power, but they also add a new dimension to classic moves like chest presses and flys. And you don't need a wall-length rack of them to get a great workout. One pair will suffice for this routine. Use them regularly and you'll see the body you've always wanted.

Why It Works

The weight of a kettlebell hangs a few inches below its handle, which makes it more difficult to control. Everything from your grip to your core has to work harder than if you were using a dumbbell, so you get more out of even standard dumbbell moves. This extra muscle activity means your body burns more calories. Couple that with exercises that target the whole body and you have a formula for significant fat loss.

Directions

Target Muscles:

Chest and Shoulders, Core, Grip, Legs

Workout Level:

Beginners

Frequency:

Twice per week.

How To Do It:

Perform the exercises as a circuit, completing one set for each, one after the other. Rest as needed between sets. If you're new to kettlebell training, complete two circuits. If you're more experienced, do three to five circuits. Choose a weight that allows you to complete 12-15 reps for each exercise.

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1 Swing

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold the kettlebell with both hands. Bend your hips back and swing the bell backward between your legs (A). Pause, then explosively swing it back up to eye level (B).



2 Squat

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold the kettlebell up at eye level so you can see through the handle, keeping your back straight (A). Squat down toward the floor as low as you can (B).



3 Shelf

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Stand with your feet outside shoulder width with a kettlebell on the floor to your right side. Keeping your lower back in its natural arch, pivot your feet to the right and bend down and pick up the bell by the handle (A). Raise it as you pivot and twist to the left, stopping when the bell is at chest height. (Imagine lifting a paint can from the floor and placing it onto a shelf behind you—that's the motion.) (B). Return the weight to the floor.



4 Power to the People

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Hold the bell in your right hand and extend your arm overhead (A). Lower your arm while simultaneously raising your right knee so that your elbow and knee nearly touch (B). Extend your knee and arm again. Complete all reps on that side and then switch sides and repeat.



5 Row

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Get into an athletic stance and let your arms hang with a kettlebell in each hand (A). Row the bells to your sides while rotating your palms forward (B).



6 Curl

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Hold a bell in each hand and stand with your arms at your sides (A). Curl the weights up (B) and then lower them back down.



7 Chest Press

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Lie on your back on a bench with a kettlebell in each hand at chest level (A). Press the weights over your chest (B) and then lower back down.



8 Fly

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Hold the bells over your chest as you did in the press, but turn your palms to face each other (A). Lower your arms away from you so your body forms a T shape (B). Squeeze your pecs as you bring your arms back up in a hugging motion.



9 Situp

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Lie on your back on the floor with your knees bent. Hold the bell at its base just below chest level (A). Contract your abs to sit up and press the weight in front of you (but don't lock out your elbows) (B). Lower yourself back down.



10 Russian Twist

Sets: 1 Reps: 12-15

Hold the ball as you did in the situp, except this time raise your torso so it's 45 degrees to the floor. Extend your arms in front of you and twist to one side (A). Twist to the other side (B).

