



KETTLEBELL



101



MINDMAP

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

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How to Burn Calories and Build Lean Muscle With Kettlebells

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CHAPTER 1 – AN INTRODUCTION TO THE KETTLEBELL

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Kettlebell

So let's start right at the beginning. What is a kettlebell? Where did it come from? And how do its unique properties make it such a truly effective training tool?

Essentially, the kettlebell is a small weight that can be used to provide external resistance in a manner very similar to a dumbbell. It has a handle and it comes in a range of different weights, allowing you to curl it or press it in just the same way.

The difference is in how the handle is positioned in relation to the weight. Rather than having weights on either side and a bar in the middle, the kettlebell is essentially a large, cast-iron ball that you can grasp in one hand from the top. This means that when you curl the kettlebell, the weight will hang underneath your hand and shift position in accordance with gravity so that it will always be pointing down toward the ground.

This adds a lot of extra movement to what is otherwise a fairly static and unchanging exercise. As the weight shifts, so does the angle of the resistance and this alters the precise muscles that will be involved in the exercise. In particular, the forearms are far more involved in a kettlebell curl than they would normally be.

What's more interesting still, is that the kettlebell allows you to hold it from a variety of different angles. You can grab it from the top for instance, or you can hold the ball itself with both hands. And if you *swing* the kettlebell by exercising using a rapid motion, then you can add an extra dimension of

momentum. Suddenly, the kettlebell gains its own force and trajectory and you now have to compensate for that while you're lifting.

This is where the true challenge of using a kettlebell comes in, because you are now going to have to constantly adapt to the changing angle, momentum and trajectory of the kettlebell. This in turn means you need to maintain your balance using your stabilizing core muscles, you need to grasp hard onto the handle using your grip and you need to recruit supporting muscles that you probably go long stretches without using the rest of the time.

This is what is meant by functional strength and it's what makes the kettlebell *much* more potent as a training tool than any dumbbell or barbell ever were.

A Brief History of the Kettlebell

But where did the kettlebell come from? And why is it only now making its way into gyms?

Actually, the kettlebell is *anything* but a new fad and can instead be traced back to the 1700s in Russia. In Russia, kettlebells are known as girya and are traditionally made from cast iron or cast steel. There's even a sport in Russia dedicated to kettlebell training called girevoy sport. Kettlebells even have their own unit of measurement – the 'pood' – which is 16 kilograms!

When kettlebells were initially invented though, it was not for the purpose of strength training *or* for sport. Rather, they were designed for weighing crops and were used by farmers. What happened though, is that those farmers found themselves becoming buff, which led to them display their feats of strength during festivals. This obviously got the attention of the burgeoning health and fitness industry, as well as the Soviet army who introduced them as a part of their physical training and conditioning programs in the early 20th century.

Kettlebells would also become popular among 'old time strongmen' who would demonstrate their power and size in travelling circuses alongside many other tools that allowed them to display this ability.

And then, they just kind of faded away...

Until the early 200s that is, when they started to make a comeback. So what happened?

As mentioned, kettlebells became popular partly as a result of a greater understanding of functional fitness. As our understanding of health and fitness has progressed, so we have found new merit in old tools that allow us to use our bodies in more dynamic and challenging ways.