

CHALLENGE COMPLEXES

BONUS: 8 KB COMPLEXES



**BOOST METABOLISM
BUILD MUSCLE
BURN FAT**

SHAWNA KAMINSKI BKin, BEd, CPT, CTT
ШАВНА КАМИНСЬКА ВКІІ, ВЕД, СП, СТІ

ВОНУ ЇМА

8 Kettlebell Complexes (by Chris Lopez)

For your kettlebell complexes, the name of the game is practice.

You should be performing each exercise with perfect form. Move fast and explosively during your snatches, cleans & swings. Move slow and deliberate during your presses, squats and rows.

The last thing that you want to be doing, however, is “chasing reps” or treating this as a cardio workout where your goal is to zip through the complex to be able to get your heart rate up.

Trust me, if you **focus on technique** and being explosive when you’re supposed to be explosive and tense when you’re supposed to be tense, your heart rate will skyrocket whether you want it to or not.

Enjoy the challenge!

Chris Lopez, BScHK

StrongFirst Level II Kettlebell Trainer

Master Certified Turbulence Training

www.kettlebellworkoutsforabs.com

The Triple Threat

Three reps per exercise, per side is all you will need to tackle this complex. This complex, because of its lower rep number, will allow you to really focus on form and technique. Once you've established your technique, use a heavy enough kettlebell to make this a strength complex.

Snatch x 3 per side
Clean & Press x 3 per side
1-Arm Swing x 3 per side
Goblet Squat x 3
Row x 3 per side

-Perform 3 rounds of the complex
-Rest 90s between complexes

Snatch Attack

The snatch is the best Full Body kettlebell exercise. It involves coordination, athleticism and power. For those reasons, we don't need to add any additional KB exercises. Especially if you use a heavy enough kettlebell.

Snatch x 5 per side
Mountain Climbers x 10
Snatch x 5 per side
Hip Touch x 10
Snatch x 5
Push-Up Plank x 10
Snatch x 5

-Perform 3-5 rounds
-Rest 90s between complexes

Mr. Clean

The Clean is a very underestimated but effective exercise. Not only does it create a foundation of strength from which you can press & squat from, but when performed with a heavy enough kettlebell, it will create rock hard abdominals and a bulletproof core.

Clean, Squat x 5 per side
Clean & Press x 5 per side
Clean, Lunge x 5 per side

- Rest 60s, then do 4 reps of each
- Rest 45s, then do 3 reps of each
- Rest 30s, then do 2 reps of each
- Rest 15s, then do 1 rep of each

Mr Clean² (Double Kettlebell)

In this complex we will be using the “Hub and Spoke” format. The Double Kettlebell Clean - an awesome exercise for building the upper body - will be our “hub” and our spokes will alternate between Double KB Front Squats and Double KB Military Presses.

Double Clean x 5
Front Squat x 4
Double Clean x 5
Double Press x 3
Double Clean x 5
Front Squat x 2
Double Clean x 5
Double Press x 1
Double Clean x 5

- Rest 90s between complexes
- Perform 3-5 complexes

Flow Complex

The goal of this complex is to complete it in a “flow” fashion meaning one exercise directly leads into the other. Therefore, the goal is to NOT put the kettlebell down until the entire flow is over.

Snatch x 3
Get Down/Up x 1
1-Arm Swing x 3
Clean & Press x 3
Squat x 3
Get Down/Up x 1

- Perform the flow on one side and then rest 90s and complete it on the other side
- Perform 2-3 complex flows per side

The Countdown Challenge Complex

Don't be intimidated by the length of this complex. The reps slowly decrease the deeper you get into it providing you with both physical and mental relief.

Clean, Squat x 5 per side
Row x 10 per side
Clean, Press x 5 per side
Clean, Squat x 4 per side
Row x 8 per side
Clean, Press x 4 per side
Clean, Squat x 3 per side
Row x 6 per side
Clean, Press x 3 per side
Clean, Squat x 2 per side
Row x 4 per side
Clean, Press x 1 per side
Clean, Squat x 2 per side
Row x 2 per side
Clean, Press x 1 per side

- Rest only when necessary throughout the challenge
- Attempt the challenge ONLY TWICE within one workout
- Your goal is to try to beat your previous time each successive time you attempt the complex

Swing Savvy Countdown

The Kettlebell Swing is *THE* foundational exercise in kettlebell training. Having a great swing will result in a strong upper body and a great looking core and glutes.

1-Arm Swing Left x 6
1-Arm Swing Right x 6
2-Arm Swing x 12
1-Arm Swing Left x 5
1-Arm Swing Right x 5
2-Arm Swing x 10
1-Arm Swing Left x 6
1-Arm Swing Right x 6
2-Arm Swing x 12
1-Arm Swing Left x 5
1-Arm Swing Right x 5
2-Arm Swing x 10

-Rest 120-180s
-Repeat 2-3 times

Bodyweight-Swing Complex

For this complex you will be using the “hub and spoke” format again, except the 2-arm swing will be your “hub”. The spokes will be various bodyweight exercises alternating from upper body to lower body exercises.

2-Arm Swing x 10
Prisoner Squat x 10
2-Arm Swing x 10
Push-Ups x 10
2-Arm Swing x 10
Reverse Lunges x 20 (10 per leg alternating)
2-Arm Swing x 10
Chin-Ups x 5
2-Arm Swing x 10

-Rest 90-120s
-Repeat 2-4 rounds

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What size kettlebell should I start with?

A: Ladies first... If you are an absolute beginner then start with either a 6kg or 8kg kettlebell. If kettlebell training is something that you'd like to continue - and I hope you do! - then you should be working your way toward a 12kg (if you are under 120lbs) or a 16kg (if you are over 120lbs).

Gentlemen, absolute beginners should start with either a 12kg or a 16kg. Your goal should be to be proficient with a 24kg kettlebell.

Q: What's the difference between "Clean, Press x 5" and "Clean & Press x 5"

A: Throughout this program you should notice the use of commas "," vs." and "&" when it comes to the Clean.

If you see "Clean, Squat x 5" for example, that means that you Clean the kettlebell into the rack position and then squat for 5 reps.

On the other hand, if you see "Clean & Press x 5", that would indicate that you perform a Clean AND Press for 5 repetitions. NOT Clean once, then press for 5.

Q: But I hear kettlebell training is bad for your back...

A: You're absolutely right. But so is barbell training, bodyweight training, using a TRX, riding a bike and tying your shoes. At some point all of these have caused some type of back injury. The truth about kettlebell training and injury comes down to technique...especially with the swing (and it's close cousins the snatch & the clean). When you bend down to re-swing the kettlebell you MUST make sure you are folding at your hips and not through your spine. If you are able to master this movement (also called a "hip hinge") your back and core will be bulletproof. I guarantee it. In fact many rehab practitioners that know what they are doing are now prescribing kettlebell swings to their low back patients to help strengthen their back.

Q: How do I prevent the kettlebell from smashing into my wrists when I clean & snatch?

A: Understand that the prevention of this is all about practice. First, you must understand that you are not "flipping" the kettlebell. You are "spearing it". What that means is that you are moving your hand around the kettlebell to beat it to where it wants to go. You know that the kettlebell has to go over your head to finish a snatch. Your job is to not wait for it to get there, but to actively PUNCH your hand through the handle and get your arm overhead before the kettlebell does.

I won't lie to you, this takes practice. But once you perfect it, you've got one of the best exercises to burn fat and build muscle that was ever created. Ever.

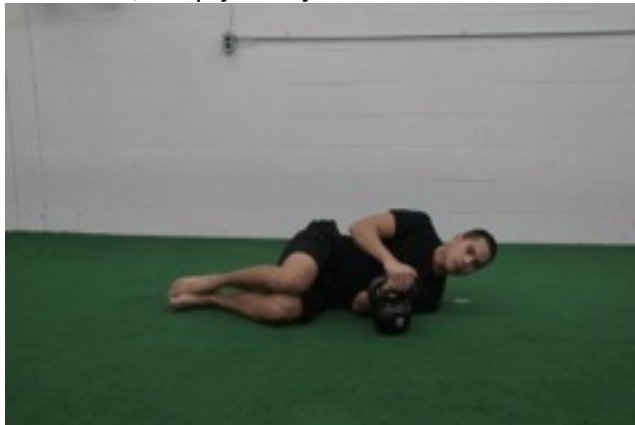
The Exercises

The Get-Up

The Get-Up, in my humble opinion, is one of the most perfect exercises in existence. When done properly, every possible human movement is covered in the Get-Up.

One IMPORTANT word of note: **Wherever your eyes go, your kettlebell will go.**

Therefore, keep your eyes fixated on the kettlebell at all times.



Start in the fetal position laying on your right side with the kettlebell in front of you. The bell should be in line with your belly button.

Make sure that your spine is straight and that your shoulders are stacked, one over the other, and that your shoulders are as far away from your ears as they can be. (You'll hear me refer to this a lot).

Grip the kettlebell with your right hand and then bring your left hand over top of the right to support.



Pull the kettlebell toward your belly button and as you're doing this turn over onto your back.

Set your feet by fully extending your left leg, and bending your right knee so that your right foot is firmly planted on the floor. Both your legs should almost be at a 45-degree angle to your midline.

With the kettlebell now at your stomach, release your left arm and place it on the floor at a 45-degree angle from your body.



Verbal Cue (VC): Floor Press the kettlebell.

Grip the kettlebell tightly with your right hand and make sure your right forearm is vertical to the ground. Press the kettlebell up using only your right arm.



Verbal Cue: Sit-up to your elbow.

Brace your abs hard and elevate onto your elbow. Be aware of your alignment. You should have a straight line from the handle of the kettlebell through your right arm, into your upper back (with squeezed shoulder blades) and through your supporting (left) elbow which is on the floor.



Verbal Cue: Sit-up to your hand and into "Post".

Push your left hand hard into the floor, brace your abs and get up so that you are supporting yourself with the left hand on the floor. At this point you'll be in a seated position with your left hand on the floor and your right arm overhead holding onto the kettlebell.



left ankle/foot.

The position you are in now is an awesome position for posture. You should be forming a straight line through the ground from your right hand (holding the kettlebell) through your squeezed shoulder blades and right down through your left arm and down to your left hand which is on the floor.

Verbal Cue: Sweep your leg through.

Make sure your left hand and your right foot are firmly planted on the floor. Push into both - left hand and right foot - and elevate your hips with enough room to sweep your left leg through.

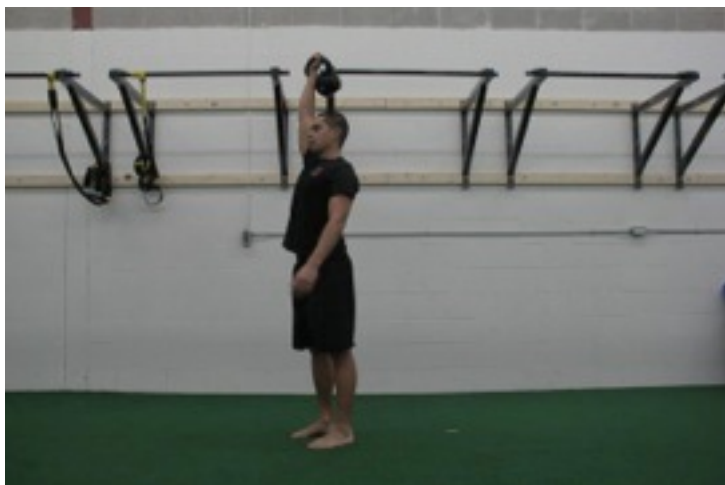
Your target is to get your left knee immediately under your left hip so that you create a perfectly straight line: left hand (on floor) in-line with left knee (which is above the left hip) in-line with



Verbal Cue: Go up into "Half Kneeling".

After your leg sweep, brace your abs hard to stabilize your spine and - while keeping your right arm (which is holding the kettlebell) vertical, bring your upper body to an upright position.

Adjust your legs as necessary so that you are in the proper alignment (as if you were on cross country skis).



Verbal Cue: Stand up from your lunge.

Curl your left toes so that they are now on the floor.

Push hard into your right leg and now stand up with the kettlebell overhead.



Verbal Cue: Now get down.

(The photo to the left is a reverse angle to show you the intricacies of the get-up and the various positions.)

Step back and lunge with your left leg and put your left down onto the floor so that you are back to half-kneeling.



Verbal Cue: “Windshield wiper” your leg

This next step is VERY important to ensure proper spinal alignment and to eliminate any spinal lateral flexion.

Rotate the left leg so that your left ankle is underneath the kettlebell. That is, turn your left leg with your left knee on the ground so that if you were to accidentally drop the kettlebell, it would land on your left

foot.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DROP THE KETTLEBELL TO CHECK, please.



Verbal Cue: Now, put your left hand down so that it forms a straight line with your left knee & ankle.

Push your hips back as far as you can and reach for the floor with your left hand. You are now trying to recreate the same alignment of hand-knee-ankle.



Verbal Cue: Sweep your leg back through and get back to “Post”.

Push your weight into your left and right foot and sweep your left leg back into extension while bringing yourself down to rest on your rear end and your left hand.

You should now be in post.



Verbal Cue: Down to your elbow.

Keeping your chest open, roll down to your left elbow, again maintaining the correct line of force.

Verbal Cue: And back down to your back.



Brace your abs hard and roll down to your back.

Bring your left arm up to support the right arm and guide it down back to your midsection.

Turn onto your right side and back into the fetal position and rest the kettlebell on the ground.

The Goblet Squat

Unlike a barbell squat where you initiate the movement by pushing your butt back, the kettlebell goblet squat occurs in a more vertical plane.

Instead of thinking “push back”, you want to mentally imagine that you are standing over top of a hole and you want to get down into the hole.

This means that the Goblet Squat occurs between your knees with your hips facilitating the descent.

Doing your squats this way requires a more upright spine and more abdominal activation since the load is carried in the front of the body.

Hold the kettlebell by the horns (the upright part of the handle) and stand with your feet shoulder width apart with your toes slightly turned apart.



Pull your knee caps up by contracting your quads, squeeze your glutes tight, brace your abs and pull your shoulders away from your ears by contracting your lats.

This is your “root” position. REMEMBER IT!



Start your descent by actively pushing your knees apart. Doing this “creates space” to allow room for your hips to fit through.

As you push your knees apart, keep your abs contracted and allow your hips to sink through your knees all while keeping your spine straight.

Keep both feet - toe through to heel - firmly planted on the ground gripping the floor with your big toe and heel.

Once you’ve reached the bottom, seep in a little air and think about “pushing the floor away”. Doing this will keep your body inline and connected.

“Push the floor away” and squeeze your glutes tight to get back to the “root” position (see, I told you to REMEMBER IT!).

Your goal on the squat is to get back to the root and pause there for at least one second between reps. Repeat the squat for the required amount of reps.

The 2-Arm Swing

The swing is the foundation of all things kettlebell. It's the exercise that made the kettlebell popular among the Big Box Gym crowd and probably part of the reason what kettlebells are so popular today.

The problem with the kettlebell swing is that hardly anybody does it right.

Now, we are talking about the HARDSTYLE Kettlebell Swing for which I am familiar with and am very comfortable teaching.

There is also a SoftStyle swing which is meant to conserve energy, minimize tension and allow you to perform reps of swings until the cows come home (or for a very long time).

This style (softstyle) is not the style or type of swing that I teach. To learn softstyle, you will need to consult and AKC coach or one that is more versed in Kettlebell Sport (GS).

Back to Hardstyle...

First, let's understand what the swing is NOT.

The swing is NOT a sumo-squat, front delt raise hybrid of an exercise.

It is a hip hinge exercise - and a very powerful one at that.

What that means is that the Hardstyle Swing is likened more to a deadlift than it is to a squat. If you're able to understand that concept, then you'll be better equipped to swing properly - at least the way that I will teach you.

To perform the Hardstyle Swing...



Place a kettlebell on the floor in front of you. Now stand and "root" yourself (there's that term "root" again - REMEMBER IT!) approximately 1-3 feet away from it (1 foot if you're short, 3 feet if you're tall).

The kettlebell should be an arms-length in front of you.

Now you are going to bend (or hinge) at your hips and reach for the kettlebell with your hands.

You are doing this without flexing at the spine. That means that only hips allow you to bend forward, not your back.¹

Most of us with less than ideal flexibility (notice how I said “us”...I’m part of that “less-than-ideal-flexibility” group) will have to bend our knees slightly to reach down for that handle. This is perfectly fine and in most cases necessary.

So now you should be in what’s called a “Silver Back” position.

Your knees are slightly bent, your hips are pushed back (waaaaay back) and your back is arched (not flexed) while you are holding onto your kettlebell with both hands.

Now we’re going to pull your shoulders away from your ears and “tilt” the kettlebell towards you. By pulling your shoulder blades down and away from your ears, we’ve actively engaged your lats.



You will now “hike pass” the kettlebell through your knees - think about American Football and getting the ball to the quarterback as you snap the ball back.

Doing this will load your hamstrings even more like elastics bands.

Once the kettlebell reaches its furthest point back, you are going to STAND UP by forcefully extending your hips. Your goal is to find your “root” position at the top of each swing.²

This creates float in the kettlebell and will drive it up.

¹ *Nine times out of 10, this is why people hurt their back kettlebell training. You don’t actively “use” your back when you train with kettlebells. It’s when your back becomes involved and your spine starts to move that people get hurt.*

² *Remember you are trying to stand up straight, NOT lean back. Finding the “root” means understanding that the kettlebell is a part of your body and NOT some form of external resistance. Rooting yourself means that you have perfect alignment when you finish each swing. Many people have a tendency to hyper-extend at their lumbar spine (lower back). This will lead to a back injury. Remember, your back isn’t involved. All movement occurs at your hips.*



The peak of the kettlebell should be guided such that it goes no higher than your chest. Therefore, you must imagine that if you were to let the bell go (please don't do that though), it would make a hole in the wall directly in front of you.

You are directing the energy of the kettlebell horizontally.

As the kettlebell starts to descend, you are again going to hinge at your hips (and NOT bend from your back) and “hike pass” it between your knees.

Repeat the movement for the required amount of repetitions.

Clean, Squat & Press

The “CSP” is another full body exercise that will have you really focusing on maximizing tension to get through the last few reps.

The important thing to remember when you do this exercise is that you want to make sure that there is a distinct “pause” between each element of the chain.

That means... 1) Clean the kettlebell, ROOT and pause; 2) Descend into a squat, push back up, ROOT and pause; 3) Press, pause, pull the kettlebell down, ROOT and pause, then repeat.



To perform the Clean, Squat & Press...

Set the kettlebell up in front of you as if you were about to perform a 1-arm swing.

Hike pass your Kettlebell between your knees...



...and clean the bell into the rack position



Brace your abs hard and ROOT yourself into the ground.



Descend into a squat by pushing your hips back and pushing your knees apart.

Push into the floor and go back to standing.

ROOT yourself and pause in the rack again.



Maintaining tension in your entire body, press the kettlebell by imagining that you are pushing your body away from the kettlebell.

Visualizing this will keep your joints aligned and will lock everything into place keeping your shoulder safe and healthy

The 1-Arm Staggered Row

Don't tell Pavel, but I always found it baffling as to why there was not a horizontal pulling movement/exercise incorporated in Hardstyle.

With posture being such a concern with Western Society and our obsession with keeping our heads down as we type on our keyboards and smart phones and play our video games, I think that rowing is very necessary to combat all that forward head & shoulder posture.

I like the staggered stance row for this because in addition to working your upper & mid-back postural muscles, you can also get a great anti-torsion/abdominal stability workout as well.



Holding the kettlebell with your left hand, step back with your left leg.

Brace your abs and lean forward from your hip so that your spine stays completely straight (or maintains a slight arch).

Rest your right forearm on your right thigh for support.



Start the movement by retracting your left shoulder blade keeping your shoulder as far away from your ear as possible.

Row the kettlebell up to your rib cage squeezing your shoulder blades together and pausing at the top of the exercise for 1-second.

DO NOT allow yourself to twist as you lower the kettlebell under control and

repeat for the required reps.

The Snatch

If I only could do ONE single exercise, it'd be the snatch.

There's a reason why we test it in the SFG - it is the single, most-perfect exercise known to man. <= *That may seem like a bit of an exaggeration, but I truly believe that and this is MY program, so I'm going with it :-)*



Start the snatch in your standard hike pass position with your snatching shoulder "packed" into its socket.



Hike pass the kettlebell through your knees with force trying to keep your body hinged as the bell goes through to its furthest point.



Once the kettlebell reaches it's furthest point back, explosively extend your hips and knees by squeezing your glutes tight, locking out your knees and bracing your abs.

This will create "float" in the bell.

Your job now is to guide the bell up your body and high-pull the kettlebell to a height above your shoulder.



As the bell gets to your shoulder height, you are going to explosively “punch” the ceiling, spearing the kettlebell handle and beating the kettlebell to the finish.

Lock your elbow out and pause for 1 second before releasing the kettlebell.

The 1-Arm Swing

I don't think I need to explain the significance or importance of the 1-Arm Swing.

Much like the 2-Arm swing, mastering the 1-arm swing is essential especially if you plan on following up this program with The #28DayShred.

So here are the nuts and bolts of the 1-arm swing...

You're going to set up your kettlebell on the floor much like you would before doing a 2-arm swing.

You're also going to grab the kettlebell with both hands.

"Wait, I thought this was a 1-arm swing?", you may be asking.

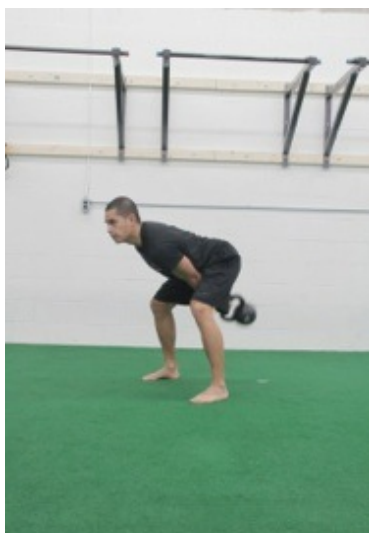
It is, but there's a reason why you grab with 2 hands.



We want to make sure that we're balanced and parallel and therefore NOT leaking energy. So starting off by grabbing the kettlebell with 2 hands ensures that our shoulder and spine do not rotate allowing us to stay compact.

Now, keeping your shoulders parallel, let your left arm go off of the kettlebell and bring it off and away to the side.

You should now be in your "silver back" position.



Hike pass the kettlebell through your knees.

Remember doing this will load up your hamstrings with potential energy like 2 slingshots.



Once the kettlebell reaches its furthest point back, you are going to STAND UP by forcefully extending your hips.

Your goal is to find your “root” position at the top of each swing.

The most important thing to remember when you’re doing a 1-arm swing is to make sure your shoulder stays in its socket.

That is, don’t let the kettlebell project your arm forward pulling your shoulder out of alignment.

Keep your lat engaged and fired.

About the Author

If you recall back to your grade school days...

Playing out in the school yard, there was that one fat kid, who, when the recess bell rang and everyone had to get back to class, always ended up last in line, out of breath, sweat pouring down his forehead from the 40 foot sprint from the sandbox to the classroom door.

That was Chris Lopez.

Now, fast forward almost 30 years and Chris is one of the most sought after experts in the field of kettlebell fat loss training.

Chris is a 13 year veteran in the fitness and strength & conditioning field getting certified as a personal trainer while completing his Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Kinetics from the University of Guelph back in 2000.

He is now an NSCA Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist, a Master Certified Turbulence Trainer and one of only two Level 2 StrongFirst Girya (SFG2) Kettlebell Instructors in all of Canada.

Chris, a former varsity volleyball player, is also an assistant coach with the Canadian National Beach Volleyball Team and a strength & conditioning consultant with Team Ontario Volleyball and the head strength & conditioning coach for the Volleyball Canada Centre of Excellence in Toronto.

These days, Chris can be found in various downtown espresso shops, listening to '90s hip hop in the park while training with kettlebells or with his wife carting their 5 kids around on his Opafiets (dutch for "Grandpa bike") through the streets of downtown Toronto.

You can also find Chris on the internet at KettlebellWorkouts.com and writing for his personal blog at FitAndBusyDad.com .

If it wasn't for the days when his mom would purposely "sauce up" the rice on his dinner plate with bacon fat to make him "healthier", Chris probably wouldn't have the drive today to want to get anyone in shape - let alone himself.



