

The RKC

As a Stand Alone System

By Mark Reifkind, Senior RKC

Just the other day a client asked me if he had to do other forms of weightlifting or cardio training if he trained with kettlebells. He is a typical client; deconditioned, middle aged, married with children, and seriously pressed for time. But equally as serious about getting back into shape in the most efficient way possible. He didn't want to have to join a gym and go back to doing biceps curls and leg extensions or spending hours on a treadmill or a bike and end up looking like a collection of body parts stuck together willy nilly. He wanted what the RKC System of training will give him: a lean, functional athlete's body able to be strong, mobile and have real world stamina and resilience. Without spending his life in a 30,000 square foot warehouse gym to achieve it.

Of course, kettlebells and the RKC principles can be utilized and incorporated into a diverse array of exercise and sports training. Of that there is no doubt. Using the KB to increase power, general physical preparation, and link the body into a functional whole and will help create a synergy with any training system that it touches. But to me, one of the most beautiful things about the RKC system (not merely the kettlebell, that is just the tool) is how complete it is as a stand-alone training method. No other system of training that I know of will increase your strength, coordination, endurance, flexibility and power as quickly or as

efficiently as Pavel's system of movements and techniques will.

The RKC system is comprised of ballistic movements for speed, power endurance, intermuscular coordination, and athleticism. Ballistic moves such as swings, snatches and cleans are done rhythmically and fluidly and mimic athletic movements with their alternation of tension and relaxation.

"Grinds" or high tension movements done slowly for raw strength create the ability to generate, increase, and maintain max levels of tension (which is a synonym for strength), total body linkage and coordination, an internal focus (which is a prerequisite for generating tension), and a solid whole body foundation of functional strength.

The practice of both these skills also develop full body ranges of motion in all the joints and a flexible strength that is also strong in the full range. Anyone can get flexible with enough stretching. Being strong in these new ranges of motion is vital for maintaining joint stability and function.

The RKC is also infinitely scaleable to any level of ability your client brings to the table. The swing can be done with the smallest range of motion and still provide excellent cardiovascular training, hip, back, leg and core work and lots of stimulation for the arms and shoulders. JUST from a very small, low swing done for low reps. This makes it applicable to virtually everyone who walks in the door. Progressing the range of motion of the swing, as well as the total reps done and the weight used will provide the deconditioned client more work than they have probably done in years. All in the safest manner possible.

Add in the Turkish get-up (the RKC Program Minimum), done progressively of course, and you have a workout that is as simple, complete and challenging as any could need. Not to mention as efficient as you could ask for. What isn't worked by those two exercises?

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Think about growing that workout from a very simple 16 kg swing for 100 total reps and five minutes of get-ups to ten minutes of one arm swings with the two-pood and getups with the same. How strong would you be to complete that twenty-minute session?

Of course, most clients will never do that much or have the need to be that strong but that is beside the point. Even the Program Minimum is a solid workout that will get most as fit as they choose to be and develop the entire body without ever thinking about separate core, lower back or rotator cuff exercises or how long they have to stay on the step machine.

One of the real surprises is how much arm and shoulder development one gets from swinging kettlebells with no "direct" arm and shoulder work. For many women having arms that look firm and lean but NOT bulky is right up there with lean hips and buns. Kettlebell training will deliver that in spades without ever doing a bicep curl or a side raise. As they melt the fat off their butt! Literally.

"Six basic exercises: swings, get-ups, cleans, presses, snatches, squats. What could be simpler? And what could be harder when done with the optimal form, loads and intensities?"

Men will be amazed at how quickly their waist shrinks and their torso develops without doing shoulder destroying bench presses or testosterone reducing aerobics. And at how athletic they feel. Perhaps for the first time in years. Or ever.

And every rep of every kettlebell movement DEMANDS your entire concentration. There is no reading the paper while you do your KB workout. In this way RKC training teaches the mind as well as the body. You MUST concentrate or you will suffer the (immediate) consequences. Having that "out of time" experience is one of the nice side benefits of kettlebell training; much as you get when you are in an athletic "zone". Time slows down or stops and you are "in the moment". Without having to try.

Training kettlebells as a stand-alone method is very much like any other practice such as karate or yoga. An internal focus is a

"I never have to set foot in a gym again."

vital component of the RKC system and "Deep Skill" is the method of advancement, not just using heavier bells. Perfecting each motion and the intention and concentration behind it is a large part of the training. This is going backward to go forward.

Six basic exercises: swings, get-ups, cleans, presses, snatches, squats. What could be simpler? And what could be harder when done with the optimal form, loads and intensities? The combinations are endless as are the loading possibilities. For those looking for a true mind body challenge as well as the fastest way to get in the best possible shape I can't think of a better system to use.

And the best part? As my wife says: "I never have to set foot in a gym again." From now on, wherever you go you have your gym, and your fitness with you.



Mark Reifkind, Sr. RKC has been a competitive athlete, coach and student of physical culture for the last 35 years. A former national level gymnast, Mark spent 15 years training, competing in powerlifting, achieving a Masters Rating and a Top 100 ranked bench press. Mark was also Head Coach for Team USA at the IPF World Championship in 1995 as well as the 2000 IPF Pan Am Championships. A writer for *Milo*, *Ironman*, *Muscle Mag International*, as well as a published book author, Mark now owns *Girya Kettlebell Training* in Palo Alto, Ca. *Girya* was one of the first studios in the country devoted solely to kettlebell training. Mark works one on one with clients at *Girya* as well as online; offering instruction for powerlifters, mixed martial artists, and kettlebell enthusiasts of all ages. Visit www.GiryaStrength.com



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