

MED KETTLEBELL CHAINS

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“THE WISDOM OF LIFE CONSISTS IN THE ELIMINATION OF NON-ESSENTIALS.” LIN YUTANG

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As a strength coach and kettlebell practitioner for over 20 years, I have seen exercise trends come and go. One thing that I can say for certain is that the kettlebell is not a fad, but a staple piece of exercise equipment for the everyday fitness enthusiast. The kettlebell is a results driven tool that displays its sophistication in radical simplicity.

When John asked me to write the forward for his book, I was honored for several reasons. One, John is a good friend and a trusted colleague in the realm of strength and power training. Two, John is one of the most creative and experienced kettlebell coaches in the country. I was fortunate enough to have taught John some kettlebell training over a decade ago and it's been a pleasure to watch him become an elite level coach. Three, John practices what he preaches with precision and ferocity.

My respect for John is based on his integrity as a person and fitness professional. He is dedicated and committed to his craft, always taking the opportunity to advance his education. He has designed MED Kettlebell Chains based on his passion for human performance, strength, and power. As a coach, he has mastered each exercise and its teaching

progressions, all while experimenting with ideal intensities and volume for beginner to advanced athletes.

The blending of these components has produced a timeless, all-in-one, minimalist training program that can be the base of any trainee's fitness. MED Kettlebell Chains is the essence of what training as a minimalist should be. The reader will learn how to perform high-return, full-body movements that lay a foundation of power, strength, and overall robustness. John shows that minimalistic training does not mean doing less for the sake of doing less. Rather, it's about maximizing one's time, energy, and available resources. With just two kettlebells, John helps the trainee to operate at their highest level of performance.

By following John's outline, you will progress your strength, power and resilience over a 90 day period. He has given motivated trainees the opportunity to “bell up” when they get stronger, or simply keep their kettlebell load consistent during the duration of the program. MED Kettlebell Chains is designed to challenge you, not break you. This book is a must read for any intelligent strength and fitness enthusiast who wants to learn how to make their body look and feel the best it's ever been. The goal is to train, not drain.

You will never meet another human who walks the walk like John. If you are going to learn, you want to learn from someone who is 100% committed to his craft. That coach is John Parker.

**FRANZ SNIDEMAN
DECEMBER, 2021**

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INTRODUCTION.

In my 15 years as a strength coach, I have been amazed at the efficacy of yielding double kettlebells for building strength, power, and outright athleticism. Two kettlebells can replace an entire home gym, trading complex routines for simple and effective strength and conditioning

Double kettlebells amplify results. Because of their shape, two unwieldy, off-center weights require total-body engagement during sequences of kettlebell chains. What results is fast, efficient, and functional gains in a minimum amount of time.

This program is designed with the ultimate simplicity in mind. Simplicity honors adherence, and consistency produces lifelong results. This program teaches the user two simple kettlebell chains on a twice weekly training schedule that can be repeated in multiple cycles throughout the year.

Drawing inspiration from minimalist philosophies, each training session mixes volume through targeted rep schemes to keep the workouts fun, engaging, and effective. This exemplifies the philosophy of “an inch deep, a mile wide.” One must own the movements, then do them extremely well.

In this program, progress is measured through skill acquisition, volume accumulation, and when the trainee is ready, higher intensity (heavier kettlebells). With these goals in mind, I encourage athletes to make the program their own - adding or subtracting when necessary.

Why two training sessions per week? It’s simple: by training enough, but not more than necessary, we promote robust fitness and longevity. In a way,

this program is the scaffolding of a larger training picture. The athlete must base their training on the time they have available, the resources they have, and what they can do sustainably.

And why two kettlebell chains that look remarkably similar? As a coach, I’ve realized that variety is overrated and trainees need practice over stimulation. I believe in hitting the biggest bang-for-your-buck movements, then spending extra time where time is best spent.

The methodology of Minimum Effective Dose Kettlebell Chains is to produce maximal strength gains through a targeted grind-based chain, and alternatively, maximal power gains through a targeted ballistic-based chain. The athlete can expect improved muscle mass, bone density, and targeted fat loss during this program.

Since the primary movements athletes train require hinging, squatting, pushing, and pulling, I have designed double kettlebell chains that honor these foundational movements. Targeted kettlebell chains allow the athlete to achieve these patterns within a single sequence of movements.

JOHN PARKER

MED KETTLEBELL CHAINS

MED PHILOSOPHY.

Double Kettlebell Clean + Press + Front squat
Double Kettlebell Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat

Chain A: is our “grind” focused day.

Chain B: is our “ballistic” focused day.

A “grind” signifies a strength based movement where the user might need to “grind” to complete the repetition. Examples of grinds are presses, get ups, and front and goblet squats.

A “ballistic” movement signifies a power and speed based movement. The user applies momentum to the kettlebell to complete the repetition. Examples of ballistics are swings, cleans, and snatches.

BALANCE: PUSH AND PULL

Chain A:

1. Double Clean = Lower Dominant Pull + Upper Body Dominant Pull
2. Double Military Press = Upper Body Dominant Push
3. Double Front Squat = Lower Body Dominant Push

Pull x 2
Push x 2
1:1 Ratio of Push/Pull

Chain B:

1. Double Clean = Lower Body Dominant Pull + Upper Body Dominant Pull
2. Double Push Press = Upper Body Dominant Ballistic Push
3. Double Overspeed Front Squat = Lower Body Dominant Ballistic Push

Pull x 2
Push x 2
1:1 Ratio of Push/Pull

Goal:

Enhance the athlete’s performance in their strength, power, and athleticism, all with short and intentional training sessions.

Why Minimum Effective Dose (MED)?

In 2018, I burned out. After 20 years of pushing my body to its limits, pulling a triple bodyweight deadlift (500lbs) broke me.

During that period of my life, I attempted to exemplify my coaching through unwavering discipline. I would train twice daily: rotating between kettlebells, barbells, bouldering, trail running, hiking, and whatever else was on the day’s agenda.

I couldn’t beat the chronic soreness and fatigue that amounted from my training. No amount of sleep or food seemed to quell the need for deeper and more sustained rest. They say that when you search for your limit, you will eventually find it. That’s when I realized I was broken.

The thought of losing my passion, my profession, and my reason for being on this earth was heartbreaking. How could I effectively train others when my training had amounted to this debilitating burnout?

After running a DUTCH test on my hormones, I realized my cortisol levels were at rock bottom. This is colloquially known as “adrenal fatigue,” but is actually a product of the hypothalamus, pituitary, and adrenal axis in dysfunction. I was overtrained and at an all time low.

At the time, functional medicine practitioner friends recommended only light exercise: yoga, pilates, walking. Unfortunately, those activities wouldn’t work for me. Strength and Conditioning was my passion, my job, and my life. So instead, I tested the philosophies of minimalism.

Could less be more?

I dropped my exercise volume by 80% - only performing double kettlebell chains and complexes with double 24kg kettlebells (standard sizes for StrongFirst SFG I and II graduates). I trained 3 days per week and hiked for cardiovascular health on the weekends.

I performed a mix of double kettlebell chains and complexes and sometimes added bodyweight movements. I loved the results I was getting: I was not fatigued after training, I had more energy at work, I slept better, and my training sessions only lasted 30-45 minutes.

TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS: MED KETTLEBELL CHAINS.

But here's the weird part: I started to build muscle mass. I was not expecting this with having dropped my volume so much and using two relatively light kettlebells. In hindsight, I realized that I was providing an adequate stimulus for growth without excessive breakdown. I was anabolic, not catabolic.

My minimal approach worked because I chose balanced kettlebell movements and ended my training sessions with ½ tank of gas left in the tank. Minimalism is an incredible philosophy, but only when one is careful to minimize excess, and instead find the desired equilibrium.

Three years later and I am still enjoying experimenting with different double kettlebell chains and complexes. I continue to train with MED tenets in mind. Now being healthier and paying close attention to my recovery, my body is receptive to lifting heavier, engaging in regular climbing, scrambling, trail running, and archery.

I want for my clients what I want for myself: high power production, high amounts of strength, low body fat percentage, and overall feelings of robust health. For these reasons, I created MED Kettlebell Chains.

My advice? Trust the process. Working "smart" is better than working "hard." I encourage my clients to perform "beautiful movements." Ugly reps are not passing reps. Keep your reps tight, your attention tuned, and your motivation high. Now let's get into the training!

JOHN PARKER
NOVEMBER, 2021

StrengthAxis Dynamics MED Kettlebell Chains can be applied to a motivated beginner athlete or to an advanced athlete. The major caveat in training experience is how heavy one will be able to lift consistently.

We can achieve a high training effect when the athlete can consistently train at a 7/10 RPE (rate of perceived exertion). This varies from person to person, but I encourage you to aim for 7/10 intensity and provide adequate rest between training sessions.

The athlete should measure their RPE after each training session. If the RPE is above 7, they might consider training with lighter bells until they can effectively train at 7 or below. If the RPE is below 5, the athlete should consider training with heavier bells.

TRAINING WITH DOUBLE KETTLEBELLS

- Double Kettlebells provide a greater stimulus of work.
- Double Kettlebells potentiate growth in power, strength, and speed.
- Double Kettlebell training can cut training time in half: double the load can mean half the time required to stimulate a high training effect.

Since training with double kettlebells requires more skill than training with a single kettlebell, the athlete should make skill acquisition their primary motive. Once an adequate level of skills is reached, the athlete will make leaps and bounds in their power production, total-body strength, and feelings of robustness.

SELF-TRAINING

The motivated athlete should treat their training as "practice" rather than "working out." Practice infers building skill, efficiency, and focus.

To ensure the best results during training, the athlete should film multiple sets on each training session. By filming from the side, the front, and at oblique angles, the athlete will be able to study where form can be improved on each movement.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

DOUBLE KETTLEBELLS*

Note: The size of your selected kettlebells is a determinant of your body weight. For ease of calculation, I have given rough estimates based on experience.

	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
	Training Age 1-2 Years	Training Age 2-3 Years	Training Age 3+ Years
MEN	16-20kg	24-28kg	32-36kg
WOMEN	8-10kg	12-14kg	16-20kg

O.A

Ideally, serious athletes will own double kettlebells in a variety of sizes. Although not necessary, advancing in MED programming is most effective if the user can jump 2-4kg bells (female/male) between training cycles. Typically, I recommend my athletes to advance to heavier bells after the completion of each 4 week cycle in this program.

TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Safety is always first when training with double kettlebells.

1. Get a medical clearance from your primary physician before beginning MED Kettlebell Chains.
2. Ensure you have a safe floor space, clear of excess fitness equipment.
Durable gym flooring is advised when training with kettlebells.
3. Train barefoot or in barefoot style shoes for improved proprioception in the feet.
4. Focus on quality movements, not maximum quantity of reps. Once form goes, the set is over.
Live to train another day.
5. If a set has passed the 7/10 RPE, either take a longer break between sets, or discontinue training for that day.
6. Ensure you have full concentration before beginning your warmup and exercise routine.
It is suggested to be in tune with one's breath and be free of distraction while training.

WHAT TO EXPECT

TRAINING SESSIONS

1. Training sessions always begin with a warmup that stresses mobility of the hips, shoulders, spine, and ankles.
2. The trainee should keep a detailed training journal containing their volume, loads used, and rate of perceived exertion (RPE) of each set.
3. Each training session can be completed in 30-45 minutes.
This includes warmup and post workout stretching.
4. It is recommended that trainees train a minimum of 2 times per week, using their off days for skill acquisition, hobbies, and time spent outdoors.
5. Expect to enjoy the results of short, but intense MED Kettlebell Chains (MEDKC)

TRAINING ARCHITECTURE

1. **Warmup - 5 minutes**
2. **Training - 25-35 minutes**
3. **Cool Down Stretch - 5 minutes**

Total: 35-45 minutes

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

MED Kettlebell Chains are not "workouts," they are training sessions. Just like an athlete training for their sport, we aim to practice and refine our skills at each training session.

Skill accumulation is earned over time. Diligent and intentional practice is the recipe for long term success in training, longevity of the body, and modus operandi for success.

MED KETTLEBELL CHAINS CREED:

- My practice is my art.
- My intention is my resolve.
- I am the product of my effort.

MED KETTLEBELL CHAINS -HOW TO.

In the following section, we will dissect the five fundamental movements of the MED Kettlebell Chains. There is recommended drilling and practice for each movement.

Pro Tip: On each training session, film yourself on each set from the front, sides, and at oblique angles to refine your technique.

MOVEMENTS:

- **Double Kettlebell Clean**
- **Double Kettlebell Military Press**
- **Double Kettlebell Push Press**
- **Double Kettlebell Front Squat**
- **Double Kettlebell Overspeed Front Squat**

Practice: Each movement subsection provides drills that should be practiced prior to beginning the prescribed programming in MED Kettlebell Chains. Refer to each movement's standards as a means of grading your form.

Goal:

Learn and apply MED Kettlebell Chains through targeted movement instruction.

POWER BREATHING

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of the program, we must begin with proper breathing technique. In hardstyle kettlebell training, each repetition is performed with maximal power: full tension in the body akin to a sprinter coming out of the blocks in the 100m dash.

If you're reading this program, you should be familiar with the hardstyle kettlebell swing and the nuance behind breathing. But for review, power breathing is performed through biomechanical matching of the breath. To begin, practice these steps:

1. Take a diaphragmatic inhalation (the belly should expand) and the lungs should be filled to approximately 75% of their total capacity.
2. Next, contract the muscles of the inner unit of the core musculature (the pelvic floor) as if stopping yourself from urinating.
3. With your tongue pressed behind your teeth, exhale with a "tssss" or "shhhh" sound for five repetitions. Do not fully exhale. Perform short, but powerful exhales.
4. With tension remaining behind your abdominals, you should feel a strong contraction in your midsection that reinforces a strong spine. These are the basics of Power Breathing as taught by StrongFirst.

During the double kettlebell clean we have two basic actions: the "downswing" and the "upswing." During the initial "hike" through the legs, the athlete should inhale sharply through their nose to gather air and abdominal tension.

During the upswing, or positive portion of the double kettlebell clean, the athlete will power breathe as the bells swing out of the deep hinge. This movement should be accompanied by the powerful hiss and "tssss" or "shhhh" sound.

The hiss happens milliseconds before the kettlebells land in the rack, not upon catching them in the

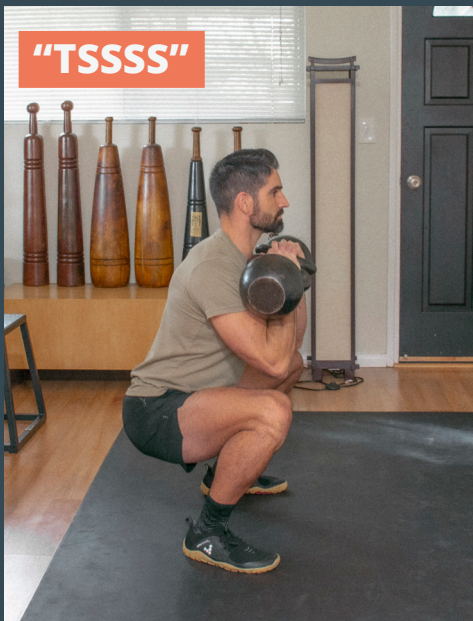
rack. Similarly, the athlete will hiss on subsequent movements in the sequence: during the positive portion of the military press, push press, and on the positive portion of the front squat and overspeed front squat.

To note, the kettlebells are only hiked out of the downswing once per each chain. Power breathing must happen on subsequent reps of each chain each time the bells move out of the downswing, on the presses, and on the squats.

Proper power breathing technique must be practiced to gain its full benefits. Athletes should never hold their breath, but perform small hisses to ensure they maintain tension, but not fully exhale. This is colloquially known in StrongFirst as "breathing behind the shield" and is a common technique in grind exercises.

If the athlete holds their breath through the movements, they may pass out and injure themselves. If the athlete fully exhales their air, they will lose tension. Athletes with high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease should check with their primary physician before engaging in power breathing.





THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL CLEAN

Standards:

1. The Double Kettlebell Clean is performed with intention: relying on technique, total-body tension, and with beautiful and crisp form.
2. The athlete demonstrates power breathing as the hips extend out of the downswing.
3. The athlete successfully cleans two kettlebells into the rack while displaying full-body irradiation: tensed quadriceps, glutes, abdominals, lats, and grip.
4. The athlete cleans two kettlebells to the rack without impact on the forearms.
5. The hips drive the clean and the arms guide the landing into the rack.

The Double Kettlebell Clean serves two purposes:

1. A potent builder of strong hips, back, core, shoulders and arms.
2. A means of putting two heavy kettlebells into the rack for military presses, push presses, squats, and overspeed front squats.

Since each MED Kettlebell Chain requires a powerful and intentional clean, we will begin our instruction here.



SETUP

With two kettlebell set in front of you, use a two foot measurement to find the ideal distance for the initial hike of the kettlebells:

Next, we need to find a stance that accommodates the size of two heavy kettlebells. Your setup stance should be about shoulder width with the heels angled inward toward the body's midline. Depending on your height and limb lengths, this might be narrower or wider.





Before cleaning double kettlebells, experiment with each grip style to find your preference:

V Shape

a. Advantages of V Shape: allows a pre-stretch of the shoulder external rotators while minimizing handle space for the backswing.

Inverted V Shape

b. Advantages of Inverted V Shape: allows the athlete to effectively pack their shoulders while minimizing handle space for the backswing.

Note: Each style of bell setup will be based on personal preference.



Goal:

Harness the momentum of two kettlebells in the backswing and return to the starting position.



DRILL 1:

HIKE

The power behind the hike is essential for bringing two heavy kettlebells into the rack. To properly hike the kettlebells, the athlete must first tilt the bells backward toward the knees:

Note* Hike is similar to hiking a football

Having found the setup position, dynamically pull the two kettlebells into the upper triangle of the legs (above the knees and below the crotch).

Feel the momentum of the kettlebells in the backswing and the tension created in the hamstrings, glutes, and lower back.

As the bells swing forward, return them to the starting position with minimal impact on the ground.

Perform 3 sets of 5 repetitions.

Pro Tip: To maximize tension of the body during the double kettlebell clean, the setup to hike is crucial. After tilting the kettlebells back toward your body, push the handles toward the floor, then return them to an angled tilt. As the bell handles return to the initial tilt position, you should feel your both wrist flexors and extensors get tight. This locks in the grip.

DRILL 2:

**DOUBLE KETTLEBELL
ROW TO DOUBLE
KETTLEBELL CLEAN**

Standing over the top of the kettlebells, perform two double kettlebell rows.

After performing two kettlebell rows, perform a third where the hips fully extend at the apex of the row and catch the bells in the rack position.

**Perform 3 sets of 2 rows
+ 1 clean.**



Goal:

Perform two double kettlebell rows into a full double kettlebell clean.

DRILL 3:

DEAD STOP CLEAN

Next, you will be practicing the dead stop clean by performing two double kettlebell hikes, then stand dynamically into a clean. Similar to the previous drill, double kettlebell row to double kettlebell clean, now use the elbows to dynamically pull the bells backward (instead of upward), then shoot the elbows forward to safely catch the bells in the rack. Return the kettlebells to the ground safely.

**Perform 3 sets of 2 hikes
+ 1 clean.**



Goal:

Clean two kettlebells to the rack and return them safely to the starting position on each rep.

DRILL 4:

DROPPING THE KETTLEBELLS FROM RACK

On the next drill, you will be practicing releasing the bells from the rack and into the backswing. The athlete should drop the kettlebells from the rack while still maintaining the kettlebells' momentum. The athlete should avoid casting the bells forward.

Pro Tip: When dropping the bells to the backswing, simply pull the elbows backward so that the kettlebells “waterfall” from the rack into the backswing.

When viewed from the side, the kettlebells should travel on the same path during the upswing to the rack and during the drop from the rack into the backswing.

Perform 3 sets of 5 drops into the backswing.

Goal:

Maintain vertical orientation of kettlebells from the rack to downswing.





DRILL 5:

FULL CLEAN

Having performed the drills above, the athlete will perform 5 double kettlebell cleans that meet the movement standards.

Perform 3 sets of 5 double kettlebell clean repetitions.



TROUBLESHOOTING THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL CLEAN

Banging the Wrists

First things first: the double kettlebell clean is not a double kettlebell swing. In the latter, the bells are projected horizontally. In the former, the bells are projected vertically.

To rectify this issue, ensure to revisit the double kettlebell row to double kettlebell clean. After the bells have been hiked to the upper triangle of the hips, the athlete should immediately row their elbows back and then push them forward to catch the kettlebells. If viewed from the front, the arms should be pulled in tight toward the ribcage.

If this row happens immediately as the hips extend, the bell path will remain vertical and the catch will be smooth. If the row does not happen immediately, the bells

will escape their vertical path, be projected forward, and the catch will bang the wrists.

The athlete should envision using their hands as a "spear." The hands should "spear" through the kettlebell handles during the brief moment of weightlessness from the dynamic row to catch.

Goal:

Clean two kettlebells into the rack.

THE DOUBLE KETTLE- DOUBLE KETTLEBELL MILITARY PRESS

Standards:

1. The Double Kettlebell Military Press is performed with intention: relying on technique, total-body tension, and with beautiful and crisp form.
2. The athlete demonstrates power breathing as the hips extend out of the downswing, then as the bells are locked overhead.
3. The athlete cleans two kettlebells to the rack and then presses them overhead while displaying full-body irradiation: tensed quadriceps, glutes, abdominals, lats, and grip.
4. The athlete's body stays vertical during the duration of the press - no hyperextending of the low

DOUBLE KETTLEBELL MILITARY PRESS:

1. A potent builder of the chest, shoulders, and arms.
2. A dominant upper body pushing exercises with functional application.



Since Chain A in MED Kettlebell Chains requires a large volume of double kettlebell military presses, we can build on our base off of the double kettlebell clean.

Hand Setup:

Proper leverage points based on grip are essential for strong grinds. As a broad recommendation, I recommend cleaning the bells with the hands wrapped around the center of the kettlebell handle. The kettlebell handle should lie nearly flat across the palm of the hand.

It is essential that the athlete maintains a neutral (straight) wrist when the bells are in the rack position before pressing. Failure to do so will cause an "energy leakage" and less total irradiation (tensing) of the body.

If the bells are caught in a slightly overextended position, the athlete can simply "curl" the bell inward to ensure the wrists are neutral. However, the athlete should aim to always catch the

back or flaring of the rib angle is allowed.

bells into the rack with their wrists neutral.

DRILL 1:

ACTIVE NEGATIVES

By properly utilizing the antagonist muscles during pressing, namely the latissimus dorsi muscles and those around the shoulder girdle, the athlete will have a stronger and more stable press on the positive portion of the press.

To find the lats and rear deltoids we will begin our double military press training with active negatives.

Clean a pair of kettlebells and press them overhead with a push press. With the bells overhead, engage in full-body irradiation and begin to slowly bring the bells down into the rack.

You should imagine that you are descending a "spiral staircase" from the top down. This means that your arms will be unwinding in the scapular plane back to the rack.

By using the "spiral staircase" analogy, the athlete is using the entirety of the shoulder girdle to harness the momentum downward of the bells into a strong and stable rack.

The athlete should also envision their arms as a spring. During the active negative, they are compressing the spring.

Perform 3 sets of 5 Active

Goal:

From the top down, pull the kettlebells into the rack slowly engage the antagonist muscles: the latissimus dorsi and rear muscles of the shoulder girdle.



**DRILL 2:
TOP DOWN PRESS**

In drill 1, we practiced the “negative” of the military press. Now we can use the gathered tension (remember the spring analogy) to move the bells into a positive, upward press.

When practicing the top down press, continue refining the “spiral staircase” groove. The positive portion of the double kettlebell military press will look very similar to the downward phase of the lift.

Perform 3 sets of 5 Top Down Presses

**DRILL 3:
FULL MILITARY PRESS**

Perform 3 sets of 5 double military press repetitions.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Goal:

After harnessing the power of the active negative, the athlete will gain tension on the eccentric (downward) portion of press, then use that tension to press the bells concentrically (upward).

Goal:

Clean two kettlebells into the rack and perform 5 double kettlebell military press repetitions that meet the movement standards.

THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL PUSH PRESS

Double Kettlebell Push Press Standards:

1. The Double Kettlebell Push Press is performed with intention: relying on technique, total-body tension, and with beautiful and crisp form.
2. The athlete demonstrates power breathing as the hips extend out of the downswing, then as the hips lockout from the dip. The power breathing happens momentarily before the bells are locked overhead.
3. The athlete cleans two kettlebells to the rack and then performs a dip of the knees and simultaneous push press until the bells are locked overhead. The athlete should display full-body irradiation: tensed quadriceps, glutes, abdominals, lats, and grip.
4. The athlete allows the bells to freefall from the top position into the rack with a knee dip to stop the bells momentum.
5. The athlete's body stays vertical during the duration of the push press - no hyperextending of the low back or flaring of the rib angle is allowed.

in performing push presses with a crush grip similar to the double military press.

If the bells are caught in a slightly overextended position, the athlete can simply "curl" the bell inward to ensure the wrists are neutral.

It is essential that the athlete maintains a neutral (straight) wrist when the bells are in the rack position before pressing. Failure to do so will cause an "energy leakage" and less total irradiation (tensing) of the body.



THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL PUSH PRESS:

1. A potent builder of the quads, hips, chest, shoulders, and arms.
2. The double kettlebell push press requires coordination of the lower and upper body.
3. A power-based upper body ballistic pushing exercises that improves vertical jump and enhances total-body conditioning.
4. The double kettlebell push press can be used for strength, strength endurance, power, power endurance, and conditioning.

Hand Setup:

Just like the double kettlebell military press, the hand setup during double push presses is crucial. Although the push press blurs the lines between a "grind" and a "ballistic," my clients have had more success





The double kettlebell push press places effort on the lower body to propel the bells upward. The athlete can expect to use their lower body as the primary driver, with the upper body as the secondary driver of the movement.

RACK SETUP

The rack setup for double push presses is similar to that of the double military press. However, to ensure that vector angles are correct, I recommend a few cues:

The athlete's wrists are neutral and their forearms are completely vertical: pull the elbows into the ribcage ensuring that the triceps touch the ribs.

Imagine a proud chest in between the kettlebells. The athlete should envision a long collarbone in between the bells.

Having the triceps resting on the ribcage will keep the athlete connected when dipping to gain momentum for the positive phase of the lift.



DRILL 1:

THRUSTER AKA "LONG PRESS."

The thruster is an incredible teaching skill for the double kettlebell push press. The athlete should practice a full integration of a double kettlebell front squat straight into a double kettlebell military press.

After the athlete has descended into the "hole" of the front squat, they should accelerate into the positive portion of the squat with enough drive to accelerate the bells out of the rack as they reach lockout.

Once the bells reach a point of weightlessness from the leg drive, the athlete should continue pressing the bells overhead into a powerful lockout.

Although not necessary, the athlete can choose to come up onto the toes for further drive into the push press. This heel lift tends to happen automatically on heavier attempts.

Practice: 3 sets of 5 repetitions double kettlebell thruster.

Goal:

Perform a double kettlebell front squat and propel the bells into a double kettlebell military using the momentum from the positive portion of the squat.



Pro Tip: Bell Path

Double Kettlebell Military Press vs Double Kettlebell Push Press

Did you notice a difference between your double kettlebell military press vs double kettlebell push press?

The answer depends...

If you successfully were able to drive powerfully out of the hole, your bell path upward might have been straighter than the “spiral staircase” analogy of double kettlebell military pressing.

What is the correct bell path?

On lighter attempts, the bells should travel a straighter path because the legs have generated the power. However, I have found that on heavier attempts that require more of a grind to lockout, the bells might need to travel in more of the spiral pattern. This program does not judge either pathway.



DRILL 2:

PUSH PRESS

Learning the thruster technique should have given you a thorough understanding of how the momentum from the legs accelerates the bells upward. I have found that push presses are quite intuitive to learn.

When push pressing, the athlete need only dip their knees to a level that allows them full force to accelerate the kettlebells overhead into lockout. With that said, the athlete should focus on performing a ¼ squat with rapid acceleration upward.

Like the Top Down Press from the Double Kettlebell Military Press section, the legs share the same analogy. If the legs are a spring, descending into a quarter squat compresses the spring. At the terminus of the ¼ squat, the athlete should uncoil the spring into a powerful upward phase.

After cleaning two kettlebells, practice the ¼ squat dip and fast acceleration upward so that the bells momentarily float. As the bells begin the float, ensure a braced body (quads, hips, abs, lats) and continue pushing the bells overhead into lockout.

After a brief pause at lockout, allow the bells to free fall from the top position. As the bells reach the rack, but not before, catch the bells into the rack and allow the same ¼ squat to happen. This allows you to absorb the impact of two heavy kettlebells and teaches the later skill of the double kettlebell overspeed front squat.

Practice: Clean two kettlebells into the rack and perform 5 double kettlebell push presses that meet the movement standards.

Goal:

After cleaning two kettlebells, dip the knees into a quarter squat to generate tension from the lower body. Allow the bells to bounce out of the rack and continue pushing the bells into lockout.



TROUBLESHOOTING THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL PUSH PRESS

THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL FRONT SQUAT

Pressing Early

It's a common tendency when learning the double kettlebell push press to begin pressing before the hips have locked out of their drive phase. This disallows the powerful quadriceps from doing their job and limits the amount of weight the athlete can press over.

To rectify this common issue, practice only the "drive phase" of the push press before starting the day's training.

To perform the drive phase, rack two kettlebells and initiate a knee dip. The knee dip and subsequent lockout should produce enough force to drive the kettlebells out of the rack into a float. This float usually has its apex around head level. After the bells reach their terminus, they will fall back into the rack where the athlete can absorb their load with another quarter/knee dip squat.

Standards:

1. The Double Kettlebell Front Squat is performed with intention: relying on technique, total-body tension, and with beautiful and crisp form.
2. The athlete demonstrates power breathing as the hips extend out of the bottom position out of the squat.
3. The athlete cleans two kettlebells to the rack and then front squats them with a momentary pause in the bottom position of the squat.
4. The athlete maintains gluteal, quadriceps, and abdominal bracing during the duration of the front squat.
5. The athlete's torso stays vertical, or close to vertical, during the duration of the squat - no rounding of the upper back is allowed during the squat.

THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL FRONT SQUAT

1. A potent builder of the hips, quads, and abdominals.
2. A dominant lower body pushing exercise with real world application.

Since Chain A in MED Kettlebell Chains require a large volume of double kettlebell front squats, we must relay the particulars of the double kettlebell front squat through choice drills.

DRILL 1:

THE GOBLET SQUAT

The goblet squat is typically the method I use for teaching clients to squat as it is very accessible to most athletes.

To perform the goblet squat, set up with a shoulder width stance, feet slightly pointed out. The athlete will then grab a single kettlebell by the horns (sides of handles) at chest level.

With the intention of pulling the torso into the hole, drop into a deep squat while maintaining a neutral spine. Think of maintaining a vertical torso and "proud chest." The athlete's elbows should be inside the knees.

Pause at the bottom of the squat for a brief count, then explode with a forceful exhale to the starting position.

As you descend into the squat, cue yourself to push your hips pockets out. I find this cue works better than cueing the athlete to push the knees out. The weight of the body should be balanced between the ball of the foot and heel during the descent and ascent of the goblet squat.

Practice: 3 sets of 5 repetitions single kettlebell goblet squat.



Goal:

Perform a goblet squat with ideal mechanics: a neutral spine, squatting below hip level, and ideal abdominal bracing.



DRILL 2:

APPLY DOUBLE KETTLEBELLS

The techniques listed for the goblet squat apply directly to the double kettlebell front squat with exception of the rack. After cleaning two kettlebells into the rack, the athlete should use a connected rack (triceps on ribcage) during the descent and ascent of the front squat.

Since the center of gravity of the kettlebells must be maintained for optimal mechanics, sometimes the athlete's elbows might drift forward slightly as they descend into the hole of the squat.

Note* the elbows come inside the knees at the bottom of the squat.

However, the athletes who have developed proper mobility in their hips and ankles should be able to keep their triceps connected to their rib cage through the duration of the squat. In MED

Kettlebell Chains, the connected rack is preferred.

To perform the double kettlebell front squat, clean a pair of kettlebells and find an optimal stance for squatting hamstrings to calves. Most athletes will find that a shoulder width stance with heels slightly pointed in toward the midline will be ideal.

Before descending into the squat, inhale through the nose and brace the abdominals. Descend into the squat with the breath held and pause momentarily at the bottom position.

With the chest vertical, begin a powerful exhale as you ascend back to the starting position.

Practice: 3 sets of 5 double kettlebell front squat repetitions.

Goal:

Perform a double kettlebell front squat with ideal mechanics: a neutral spine, squatting below hip level, all while maintaining ideal abdominal bracing.

TROUBLESHOOTING THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL FRONT SQUAT

The "Butt Wink"

There is a plethora of information online about why athletes butt wink. A butt wink happens when the athlete either lacks coordination or has tight hip flexors that tuck their tailbone under at the bottom of the squat (think of a scared dog with its tail between its legs).

Although it's absolutely true that pelvis shape determines squat mechanics, the beauty of double kettlebell front squats is that it helps the athlete maintain a vertical torso and improves the squatting groove overall.

To rectify this problem, my athletes have vastly improved their bottom range of motion by performing proper hip flexor stretching. Because we encourage dynamic warmups prior to MED

Kettlebell Chains, this simple hip mobility sequence is recommended prior to training.

HIP MOBILITY SEQUENCE

Deep In Line Split Squat x 20 Bounces/side

Deep In Line Split Squat - Knee Circles x 10/side

Deep In Line Split Squat - Half Pigeon x 10/side + 10-15 Static Hold

Half Kneeling Hamstring Rocks x 10/side

Hip Flexor Scouring x 10/side

Zipper Drill - Hip Capsule Stretch x 10/side

Frog Stretch x 10

Hip Rocker x 10/side

Perform the Hip Mobility Sequence 1-2 times as needed to eliminate the butt wink.



THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL OVER-SPEED FRONT SQUAT

Standards:

1. The Double Kettlebell Overspeed Front Squat is performed with intention: relying on technique, total-body tension, and with beautiful and crisp form.
2. The athlete demonstrates power breathing as the hips extend out of the bottom position out of the squat.
3. The athlete cleans two kettlebells to the rack, presses or push presses the bells overhead, then allows them to freefall into an overspeed front squat.

4. The athlete maintains gluteal, quadriceps, and abdominal bracing during the duration of the front squat.

THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL OVER-SPEED FRONT SQUAT

1. A potent builder of the hips, quads, and abdominals.
2. A dominant lower body ballistic pushing exercise with real world application.

Since Chain B in MED Kettlebell Chains require a large volume of double kettlebell overspeed front squats, we must relay the particulars of the double kettlebell overspeed front squat through choice drills.

The double kettlebell overspeed front squat is nearly identical to the double kettlebell front squat

but with different intentions. The Overspeed Front Squat increases eccentric forces to the athlete's lower body necessitating total-body coordination and strong hips and thighs.

Since the kettlebells must be accelerated downward to achieve this overspeed effect, the double overspeed front squat starts with the bells overhead in the lockout position. By using the stretch reflex of the muscles of the lower body, we eliminate a pause at the bottom, and instead apply our spring analogy:

As the bells land in the rack, the athlete absorbs the force into a deep squat and springs out of the bottom position until standing. The athlete should use their quadriceps, hamstrings, and glutes, and abdominals for a powerful lockout.

DRILL 1:

CATCH FROM OVER-HEAD

Just like in the push press, the overspeed front squat requires the athlete to catch the kettlebells' momentum. Instead of stopping at a ¼ squat position like in the push press, the athlete should harness the momentum of the bells overhead and slow down their force as they reach the bottom of a squat.

Just like in the double kettlebell front squat, the athlete should maintain a powerful brace by holding their breath momentarily during the descent of the squat. Upon slowing down the energy of the falling bells, they should be holding their breath and maintaining an abdominal brace. They will exhale forcefully through the ascent.

In keeping with our standards, the repetitions should rely on technique, total-body tension, and with beautiful and crisp form. Upon catching the bells in the rack, the athlete should not squat early, but wait for the bells to reach the rack before absorbing their force.

To perform the double kettlebell overspeed front squat, clean a pair of bells to the rack. Ensure that you have found your optimal stance at shoulder width with toes slightly pointed out.

Next, you will push press the kettlebells overhead. After a

second at lockout, allow the bells to free fall into the rack. As soon as the bells enter the rack position, harness their momentum into a deep squat.

During the catch, the athlete should have inhaled and braced their abdominals. Upon reaching the bottom of the squat, the athlete will explosively exhale and ascend back to the starting position.

Practice: 3 sets of 5 double kettlebell overspeed front squat repetitions.

Goal:

From the overhead position, allow the kettlebells to drop into the rack while simultaneously absorbing the impact into a deep squat.



TROUBLESHOOTING THE DOUBLE KETTLEBELL PUSH PRESS

Squatting Early.

Just like the push press, athletes tend to jump the gun when performing the overspeed front squat. In anticipation of catching two heavy kettlebells, they prematurely enter the descent of their squat. This is problematic as it can cause the bells to bang into the wrists and chest as they approach the rack, or produce too much speed on the descent of the squat.

To properly harness the momentum of the kettlebells, we can practice the “drive phase” into a squat. This drill is similar to what we practiced during the push press, but with a full squat instead of a quarter squat on catching the bells.

To perform the drive phase, rack two kettlebells and initiate a knee dip. The knee dip and subsequent lockout should produce enough force to drive the kettlebells out of the rack into a float. This float usually has its apex around head level. After the bells reach their terminus, they will fall back into the rack where the athlete can absorb their load with a full squat.

Ensure that you do not squat until the bells are caught into the rack. It's a timing game.

MOBILITY, WARMUPS, STRETCHING.

Due to the dynamic nature of MED Kettlebell Chains, following the mobility requirements, dynamic warmups, and post workout stretching are advised for longevity in training.

MOBILITY

In keeping with minimum effective dose programming, joint mobility should share the same approach: mobilize the major joints of the body prior to training, do not do more than necessary, but reap the benefits of adequate range of motion for the task at hand.

Although some athletes might need more extensive joint mobility, a majority of athletes can get by with the prescribed movements for the hips, shoulders, and spine.

If you require more joint mobility than the prescribed amount, work on the prescribed mobility exercises listed here, along with the Dowel Rod Routine and Hip Mobility Sequence during your off days from training.

MED KETTLEBELL CHAINS
MOBILITY:

Three MED Mobility Exercises

Prying Goblet Squat

The prying goblet squat helps the athlete to create space in their hips and ankles while simultaneously “priming” the muscles of the back. Being so similar to the double kettlebell front squat, the prying goblet squat directly improves range of motion and feel for MED Kettlebell Chains.

PRYING GOBLET SQUAT:

Assume a squat stance while holding a single kettlebell by the horns. Begin the prying goblet squat by descending to the bottom portion of the squats. Ideally, your hamstrings will be sitting on your calves while the spine is long.

In this position, use your elbows to push the insides of your knee at the VMO (vastus medialis) outward. You should begin to feel a stretch in the groin.

Continue using your elbows to create space in the hips. You can even “floss” your hips and create figure eights for more range of motion.

Once the groin area is thoroughly stretched, apply multiple arm curls while still in the bottom position of the prying goblet squat. You should notice that with each consecutive curl that your bottom sinks



deeper into the stretch.

Remember to continue lifting the chest and activating the muscles that run along your spine. This will help prepare your body for the demanding nature of MED Kettlebell Chains' double kettlebell front squat and double kettlebell overhead front squat.

Tight Ankles?

As a last step, you may place the kettlebell on one knee while still in the deep squat. Once you have applied this resistance on top of the knee, use the shin muscles (tibialis anterior) to pull the knee forward. You should feel a stretch in the back of your calves. Repeat on the other side (this drill is especially important for those with limited ankle dorsiflexion).

If the ankles still feel stiff after resting the kettlebell on the knee in the prying goblet squat, I recommend fully stretching the calf muscles prior to training.

Practice: The Prying Goblet Squat for 30-45" or 5-10" Breaths.



KETTLEBELL ARM BAR

The Kettlebell Arm Bar is a favorite mobility exercise of athletes that want to enhance shoulder stability/packing and improve thoracic rotation. This drill is meant to be performed with a light kettlebell (men: 12-16kg, women: 8-10kg)

Kettlebell Arm Bar:

To begin the kettlebell arm bar, the athlete should lie on their back with a light kettlebell in their right arm. They should press that bell toward the ceiling for the duration of the movement. In this position, their right knee should be bent, also pointing toward the ceiling.

The non-working left arm should be brought directly overhead. The right foot should be pressed into the ground to push the torso into a roll toward the athlete's left side. This should bring the right knee to the ground into the side of the left knee.

In this position, the head will be lying on the non-working left arm overhead (the hand should be facing down). The body should have rolled onto the left hip and the shoulders should now be stacked with the right arm still holding the kettlebell toward the ceiling (this position might seem off-center from vertical, but a vertical orientation should be maintained).

With the bell over the right shoulder, begin to flex the right shoulder blade, using the lat to pull the shoulder blade down (pack the shoulder). The head and neck remain relaxed on the left bicep.

Once proprioception and balance of the bell over the right shoulder is reached, the athlete can begin to straighten their flexed right leg parallel to the left leg. They should imagine pulling their right hip to the floor.

The athlete should flex their right glute as they breathe through the

diaphragm - with enough tension to maintain shoulder packing. As they breathe, they should notice their right shoulder is coming closer to ground level.

After 10-15" or 3 diaphragmatic breaths, reverse the above motions and repeat on the other side.

Pro Tip: Keep eyes on the bell for the duration of the movement for balance. Once the legs are parallel, use peripheral vision to maintain the bell's balance.

Practice: The kettlebell Arm Bar for 30-45"/side or 5-10" Breaths.

ORIGINAL STRENGTH RESETS

I am a huge fan of Original Strength Resets for their ability to prime the body for loaded movements. Our goal in performing rocking resets is to send information to our brains that we are ready to move.

In turn, the body becomes receptive to high central nervous system activity for stronger lifts. During Original Strength Resets, we simultaneously provide mobility and strength from the fingertips to the toes.

Through rocking in the quadrupedal position, the muscles of the wrist and forearms, upper arms, those surrounding the shoulder girdle, core musculature, hips, and thighs, and lower legs are in sync.

When the body moves in unison, we know that we can achieve both strong static and dynamic movements. In preparation for

MED Kettlebell Chains, I have found resets to be the antidote to the dynamic nature of double kettlebell training. Resets restore posture preemptively, while helping us to achieve a better overhead position, stronger and deeper squats, and total body irradiation.

ORIGINAL STRENGTH RESETS:

To begin Original Strength Rocking Resets, the athlete should begin in a quadrupedal position (on all fours). For the purposes of MED Kettlebell Chains and its high demands on squatting, dorsiflex the toes (pull the toes toward the shins) in the quadrupedal position as if you are about to sit on your heels.

With the eyes' gaze at horizon level (slight extension like in the upswing of the kettlebell clean) and the tongue on the roof of the

mouth, begin to rock your butt toward your heels. Ensure that all breathing is performed through the diaphragm. This is meant to be a fluid movement not a high-tension movement.

You should feel the triceps and lats becoming active while the abdominals maintain their natural tone. As the glutes rock toward the heels, you will feel the hip flexors turning on as if dropping into the bottom of a squat. The lower back will feel stretched as the glutes approach the heels, and the bottoms of the feet will receive active dorsiflexion.

Practice: Original Strength Resets for 10-20 breath cycles.

Pro Tip: Rock your hips backward only to the point where the lower back can remain flat. We do not want to go into a flexed lumbar position at the bottom of our rock. Ensure that the hip flexors actively pull the glutes back toward the heels.

WARMUPS.

A physical warming or “priming” of the body is crucial prior to training. To prepare the body for the demands of MED Kettlebell Chains, the athlete should use the same movements they will be practicing in the training session. Doing so will enhance and refine the practiced technique as the body warms up for intense training.



1. Clean + Press + Squat
2. Clean + Press + Squat
3. Clean + Press + Squat
4. Clean + Press + Squat
5. Clean + Press + Squat



1. Clean + Press + Squat
2. Clean + Press + Squat
3. Clean + Press + Squat
4. Clean + Press + Squat
5. Clean + Press + Squat

CHAIN A:

DOUBLE KETTLEBELL CLEAN + PRESS + SQUAT

The athlete will warm up with their intended training kettlebell(s) load.

Warmup 1: Single Kettlebell

1. 5 repetitions per side: Single Kettlebell Clean + Press + Squat

Perform 2 sets: Clean + Press + Squat

Warmup 2: Double Kettlebell

2. 5 repetitions: Double Kettlebell Clean + Press + Squat

Perform 2 sets: Clean + Press + Squat



1. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
2. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
3. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
4. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
5. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat



1. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
2. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
3. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
4. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat
5. Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat

CHAIN B:

DOUBLE KETTLEBELL CLEAN + PUSH PRESS + OVERSPEED FRONT SQUAT

The athlete will warm up with their intended training kettlebell(s) load.

Warmup 1: Single Kettlebell

1. 5 repetitions per side: Single Kettlebell Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat

Perform 2 sets: Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat

Warmup 2: Double Kettlebell

2. 5 repetitions: Double Kettlebell Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat

Perform 2 sets: Clean + Push Press + Overspeed Front Squat



STRETCHING:

Most athletes skip their post-workout stretching after heavy training. However, post-workout stretching is highly-encouraged to maintain muscle range of motion for longevity in training.

MED Kettlebell Chains uses three simple stretches that can be completed in five minutes post training. We will focus on stretching the major tight areas that kettlebell training produces.

Tighter athletes may also choose to perform these stretches as a part of their morning or nighttime routine on off days.

MED Kettlebell Chains Stretches

1. **Bretzel**
2. **90/90 Hip Stretch**
3. **Prone Series**

BRETZEL

Named after Chief of Education at StrongFirst, Brett Jones, the Bretzel is MED Kettlebell Chains' go-to full body stretch post-workout. The Bretzel hits a bit of everything: stretching the hip flexors, muscles of the hip external rotators, and muscles around the thoracic spine.

To begin the Bretzel, the athlete should lie on their back with their right knee up. This position will be similar to the Kettlebell Arm Bar.

The athlete will then grab underneath the knee with the left hand, then pull the right knee toward their left hip.

As the right knee is being pulled toward the left hip, the athlete will flex their left knee under their right knee and grab the top of the foot with the right hand. This shape will resemble a "pretzel."

Now the fun begins: the athlete will begin by inhaling through

the diaphragm and upon exhale, begin to rotate deeper into the stretch. The goal is to maintain a flat position of the legs on stacked hips, while pulling the shoulder blades closer to the ground on successive exhales.

As the shoulder blades get closer to the floor on each exhale, try and hold the position for 2-3" seconds before cycling an inhale again. Repeat on the opposite side.

Practice: The Bretzel for a minimum of 5 breath cycles on each side.

90/90 HIP STRETCH

The 90/90 Hip Stretch is a classic stretch used in many training circles. The 90/90 Hip Stretch relieves tight hip external rotators and serves to free up tight tissues in the lumbar spine. As a special note, this stretch is often bastardized by the athlete rounding the lumbar spine similar to the pigeon pose in yoga. The lumbar spine must maintain its lumbar curve.

To begin the 90/90 hip stretch, sit on the floor with the right leg in front and left leg in back. The angle at the groin and both knees should be at 90 degrees.

Place the right hand on the ground next to the right hip. Place the left hand in front of the right shin. In this position, imagine a tall spine and begin to tilt the chest forward toward the right shin. The pelvis should be in a position that the lumbar is maintaining its natural curve (a flat back).

The athlete should begin feeling a stretch in their right hip's external rotators. The athlete should cue themselves to press their right ankle and knee into the ground to create an isometric stretch.

The athlete will press their ankle and knee into the ground on an inhale for 2-3." As they exhale, they should sink deeper into the stretch.

To enhance the stretch even more, the athlete can then move their torso so that it lines up outside of their front stretched leg. They will then begin to feel the stretch deeper in the hips and into the oblique and lumbar musculature.

Repeat on the other side.

Practice: The 90/90 Hip Stretch for a minimum of 5 breathe cycles on each side.



PRONE SERIES

The prone series is a fantastic method of stretching the often overly tight pectoralis muscles, deltoids, and biceps. With varying angles of the shoulder, the athlete can stretch the pecs, pec minors, and anterior deltoids/biceps.

PEC MAJOR:

To begin the prone series, lie prone on the floor with arms stretched to the sides. We will stretch the pec majors first.

The athlete should straighten their right arm, palm down, out to the side at shoulder level. With the non-working hand used as a leverage point, the athlete will begin to bring their left leg over the top of their hips like a scorpion.

Using the right shoulder as a pivot point, the athlete will simultaneously press their right

palm and elbow into the ground while pushing into their left hand.

The scorpioned left leg will either be floating or touching the floor outside the right leg if the athlete is more flexible.

Perform an inhalation while creating an isometric stretch in their right pec major. Upon a deep, diaphragmatic exhale the athlete should sink deeper into the stretch. The athlete should be able to get their left foot closer to the floor with each exhale. Repeat on the other side.

Practice: The Prone Pec Major Stretch for a minimum of 5 breathe cycles on each side.

PEC MINOR:

Lie prone on the floor with arms stretched to the sides. We will stretch the pec minors now.

The athlete should straighten their right arm, then bring the elbow to a 90 degree angle, palm

down, out to the side at shoulder level. With the non-working hand used as a leverage point, the athlete will begin to bring their left leg over the top of their hips like a scorpion.

Using the right shoulder and elbow as a pivot point, the athlete will simultaneously press their right palm and elbow into the ground while pushing into their left hand.

The scorpioned left leg will either be floating or touching the floor outside the right leg if the athlete is more flexible.

Perform an inhalation while creating an isometric stretch in their right pec minor. Upon a deep, diaphragmatic exhale the athlete should sink deeper into the stretch. The athlete should be able to get their left foot closer to the floor with each exhale. Repeat on the other side.

Practice: The Prone Pec Minor Stretch for a minimum of 5 breathe cycles on each side.

ANTERIOR DELTOID/ BICEP:

Lie prone on the floor with arms stretched to the sides. We will stretch the anterior deltoids and biceps.

The athlete should straighten their right arm, palm up, out to the side at shoulder level. With the non-working hand used as a leverage point, the athlete will begin to bring their left leg over the top of their hips like a scorpion.

Using the right shoulder as a pivot point, the athlete will simultaneously press the backside of their hand and elbow into the ground while pushing into their left hand.

The scorpioned left leg will either be floating or touching the floor outside the right leg if the athlete is more flexible.

Perform an inhalation while creating an isometric stretch in their right anterior deltoid and biceps. Upon a deep, diaphragmatic exhale the athlete should sink deeper into the stretch. The athlete should be able to get their left foot closer to the floor with each exhale. Repeat on the other side.

Practice: The Prone Anterior Deltoid/Biceps Stretch for a minimum of 5 breathe cycles on each.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Each week during a four week cycle will consist of two training sessions per week:
Chain A and Chain B.

Chain A is grind focused → Strength and Strength Endurance

Chain B is ballistic focused → Power and Power Endurance

Each chain hits the same movements, but with different intentions.

Each training session will alternate between a Pyramid rep scheme, and a Ladder rep scheme.

Here's how each program works.

PYRAMID:

A stepped approach to reps and sets. MEDKC starts at 1 rep on first set, 2 reps on second set, 3 reps on third set, 4 reps on fourth set, 5 reps on top set, 4 reps on sixth set, 3 reps on seventh set, 2 reps on eighth set, and 1 rep on the tenth set.

Examples:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

As the athlete progresses through the program, they might encounter multiple sets at the top rep count within the pyramid.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 (plateau: perform multiple sets of top reps)

LADDER:

A segmented approach based on one block of a chain (a ladder) and multiple sets in that ladder (rungs). Month 1 of MEDK uses a classic ladder scheme of 3 ladders and rungs of 2, 3, 5 written as 3 x 2, 3, 5.

Example:

3 x 2, 3, 5 = 3 ladders with 2 reps in rung 1, 3 reps in rung 2, and 5 reps in rung 3.

(→ 3 blocks with one set of 2, one set of 3, and one set of 5)

Here is how the programming would work:

FIRST LADDER

1. 2 reps

2. 3 reps

3. 5 reps

SECOND LADDER

4. 2 reps

5. 3 reps

6. 5 reps

THIRD LADDER

7. 2 reps

8. 3 reps

9. 5 reps

3 x 2, 3, 5 totals 9 sets = 30 total reps.

This programming encourages perfect form since the rep count is relatively low. Similarly, this allows an athlete to train at a heavier intensity.

If the programming in the designated chain's table shows a number inside a parenthesis ie; (5), you will perform one more rung of 5 reps to accommodate the increase in volume from week to week.

For Example:
3 x 2, 3, 5 (5)

FIRST LADDER

1. 2 reps
2. 3 reps
3. 5 reps

SECOND LADDER

4. 2 reps
5. 3 reps
6. 5 reps

THIRD LADDER

7. 2 reps
8. 3 reps
9. 5 reps

Plus one additional set:

10. 5 reps

3 x 2, 3, 5 (5) totals 10 sets = 35 total reps.

From week to week, we will add approximately ~ 15-20% volume (how many repetitions total we are performing). Intensity (kettlebell load being lifted) should stay consistent for the first 4 weeks of training.

MONTH 1

From week to week, we will add approximately ~ 15-20% volume (how many repetitions total we are performing). Intensity (kettlebell load being lifted) should stay consistent for the first 4 weeks of training.

	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
MEN	20kg	24kg	28kg
WOMEN	10kg	12kg	16kg

1.A

Training Schedule

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
A		A					
B					B		

1.B

CHAIN A: Double Clean + Double Press + Double Front Squat

WEEK	PYRAMID SETS/REPS	LADDER SETS/REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A
1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1		25 reps	9
2		3 x 2, 3, 5	30 reps	9
3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1		35 reps	11
4		4 x 2, 3, 5	40 reps	12

1.C

CHAIN B: Double Clean + Double Push Press + Double Overspeed Front Squat

WEEK	LADDER SETS/REPS	PYRAMID SETS/REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B
1	2 x 2, 3, 5 (2, 3)		25 reps	8
2		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	30 reps	10
3	3 x 2, 3, 5 (2, 3)		35 reps	8
4		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	40 reps	12

1.D

Program Schedule

WEEK	TRAINING SESSION A	TRAINING SESSION B
1	Pyramid	Ladder
2	Ladder	Pyramid
3	Pyramid	Ladder
4	Ladder	Pyramid

1.E

To clarify, the trainee should alternate between pyramid and ladder rep schemes every other training session.

Total Volume in Month 1

WEEK	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY SETS
1	25 reps	25 reps	50 reps	9 sets	8 sets	17 sets
2	30 reps	30 reps	60 reps	9 sets	10 sets	19 sets
3	35 reps	35 reps	70 reps	11 sets	11 sets	22 sets
4	40 reps	40 reps	80 reps	12 sets	12 sets	24 sets
TOTAL	130 reps	130 reps	260 reps	41 sets	41 sets	82 sets

1.F

MONTH 2

	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
MEN	20kg → 24kg	24kg → 28kg	28kg → 32kg+
WOMEN	10kg → 12kg	12kg → 14-16kg	16kg → 20kg+

2.A

Goal:

Increase intensity → “Bell Up” by 2k to 4kg each bell (respective of women/men)

When increasing intensity, we can expect temporary fatigue and soreness. With this expectation in mind, we must drop the overall weekly set volume in Month 2.

Training Schedule

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
A		A					
B					B		

2.B

CHAIN A: Double Clean + Double Press + Double Front Squat

WEEK	PYRAMID SETS/REPS	LADDER SETS/REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A
1	1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 2, 1		20 reps	8
2		2 x 2, 3, 5 (2, 3)	25 reps	8
3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1		30 reps	10
4		3 x 2, 3, 5 (2, 3)	35 reps	12

2.C

CHAIN B: Double Clean + Double Push Press + Double Overspeed Front Squat

WEEK	PYRAMID SETS/REPS	LADDER SETS/REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B
1	2 x 2, 3, 5		20 reps	6
2		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	25 reps	9
3	3 x 2, 3, 5		30 reps	12
4		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	35 reps	11

2.D

Program Schedule

WEEK	CHAIN A	CHAIN B
1	Pyramid	Ladder
2	Ladder	Pyramid
3	Pyramid	Ladder
4	Ladder	Pyramid

2.E

Total Volume in Month 2

WEEK	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY SETS
1	20 reps	20 reps	40 reps	8 sets	6 sets	14 sets
2	25 reps	25 reps	50 reps	8 sets	9 sets	17 sets
3	30 reps	30 reps	60 reps	10 sets	12 sets	22 sets
4	35 reps	35 reps	70 reps	12 sets	11 sets	23 sets
TOTAL	110 reps	110 reps	220 reps	38 sets	38 sets	76 sets

2.F

MONTH 3

	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
MEN	24kg → 28kg	28kg → 32kg	32kg → 36kg+
WOMEN	12kg → 14kg	14kg → 16-18kg	16-18kg → 20-22kg+

3.A

Training Schedule

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
A		A					
B					B		

3.B

CHAIN A: Double Clean + Double Press + Double Front Squat

WEEK	PYRAMID SETS/REPS	LADDER SETS/REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A
1	1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2		15 reps	6
2		3 x 1, 2, 3 (2)	20 reps	7
3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1		25 reps	9
4		5 x 1, 2, 3	30 reps	15

3.C

Goal:

Increase intensity → “Bell Up” by 2k to 4kg each bell (respective of women/men)

When increasing intensity, we can expect temporary fatigue and soreness. With this expectation in mind, we must drop the overall weekly set volume in Month 2.

CHAIN B: Double Clean + Double Push Press + Double Overspeed Front Squat

WEEK	PYRAMID SETS/REPS	LADDER SETS/REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B
1	2 x 1, 2, 3 (3)		15 reps	7
2		1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 2, 1	20 reps	8
3	4 x 1, 2, 3 (1)		25 reps	13
4		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1	30 reps	10

3.D

Program Schedule

WEEK	CHAIN A	CHAIN B
1	Pyramid	Ladder
2	Ladder	Pyramid
3	Pyramid	Ladder
4	Ladder	Pyramid

3.E

Total Volume in Month 3

WEEK	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY SETS
1	15 reps	15 reps	30 reps	6 sets	7 sets	13 sets
2	20 reps	20 reps	40 reps	7 sets	8 sets	15 sets
3	25 reps	25 reps	50 reps	9 sets	13 sets	22 sets
4	30 reps	30 reps	60 reps	15 sets	10 sets	25 sets
TOTAL	90 reps	90 reps	180 reps	37 sets	38 sets	75 sets

3.F

Total Volume Over 90 Days

WEEK	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL REPS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY REPS	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN A	WEEKLY TOTAL SETS CHAIN B	TOTAL WEEKLY SETS
1	130 reps	130 reps	260 reps	41 sets	38 sets	79 sets
2	110 reps	110 reps	220 reps	38 sets	38 sets	76 sets
3	90 reps	90 reps	180 reps	37 sets	38 sets	75 sets
TOTAL	330 reps	330 reps	660 reps	116 sets	114 sets	230 sets

4.A

This concludes our section on program design. Although it might seem confusing and a foreign language to some, the above programming is effective in training the athlete to handle more load from month to month.

A total of 330 reps in both Chain A and 330 reps in Chain B provides ample opportunity to practice the nuance behind each movement.

330 reps in the double kettlebell clean + press + squat and 330 reps in the double kettlebell clean + push press + overspeed front squat equates to total load on the body that will enhance muscle mass, overall strength and strength endurance, power and power endurance, and will build the foundation for overall health and longevity.

Since each week only contains two scheduled training sessions, the athlete should focus on refining their skill on the off days, mobilizing and stretching tight areas of the body, and honing their lifestyle habits to encourage proper recovery.

The prescribed training days are Mondays and Thursdays. However, based on the athlete's schedule, they can choose their most available training days. It is recommended to have at least two days off between training sessions so that the body can assimilate new muscle mass and feel recovered before the following training day.

When the body is fresh, motivation is higher. When motivation is high, the athlete can put their all into training. This is more simple than most realize... But always remember, simple doesn't mean easy. Your results will come from the effort you put into training.

FINAL WORDS & NEXT STEPS

Minimum Effective Dose:

Having written this program to provide maximal return with minimal effort, I've realized that some might need to reflect on the nature of their goals.

In my 15 years experience, I have seen well-meaning athletes continually push their limits and end up with injury, fatigue, and burnout. MED Kettlebell Chains is meant to bridge the gap of owning skill development with kettlebells, maximizing power and strength, and enhancing one's musculature without burnout.

These individuals should choose to maximize their time training MED Kettlebell Chains and be satisfied with "working in" activities like walking, stretching, mobility work, and other hobbies in their off time.

If they are an athlete in another sport, they might make this program their own by deciding an "MED" load that they'll stick with through the duration of this program.

Conversely, I have also experienced trainees who need a push in their fitness but cannot dedicate more than two days a week to training. I believe that exercise should be healing in nature. Movements should not be destructive, but kill multiple birds with one stone: skill, strength, power, flexibility, and mobility.

These individuals will thrive on MED Kettlebell Chains since each training session pushes positive adaptation within a minimal timeframe. However, they might need to hone in their discipline and resolve to get the work done. This program works if you do.

Minimalism:

I believe in minimalism. In the age of digital distraction, excess, and unholy consumerism, minimalists have found more with less. This doesn't just apply to material goods, but our thoughts and beliefs, our nutrition, and in the case of this ebook, our exercise. We realize that growth takes place in a deeper understanding of the basics rather than the adoption of more. Two kettlebells unearth a plethora of options and varieties for training the body, but not enough to cause paralysis by analysis.

If you have had anxiety surrounding exercise, MED Kettlebell Chains is the answer. You have just two training sessions per week that are remarkably similar. If you follow the program, you will bring your strength to new heights. If you do not follow the program, you will remain stagnant. It's that simple.

Does the thought of following the same program for three months bore you? I don't have an answer for you, but I have an opinion: you need to reflect on what's important in your life. There are many things we don't like to do. Although indifferent to me, an example is brushing one's teeth. Do you need discipline to do it? Maybe. But the alternative is tooth decay and bad breath. So, we just do it.

Exercise is the same. It should be routine. Two training sessions per week is minimal. Your excuses only affect you. Let's instead live to our highest and most nature and accept the responsibility of taking care of ourselves.

Next Steps:

It is my hope that you remain consistent with MED Kettlebell Chains for the full 90 days. Having completed the program, you will bring your strength and resolve to new levels and be ready for more intense and challenging MED Kettlebell Chains.

This investment in time is often coupled with a deeper understanding of one's body and the fruitful nature of progress. Many of my clients take it on themselves to research the ins and outs of strength and conditioning in-person through a training session with me or with courses offered by my certifying body Strongfirst.

Upon completion of this program, please visit my instagram (@johnparker_) for more ideas on training with double kettlebells, health and longevity tips, and living a balanced lifestyle.

**IN STRENGTH,
JOHN PARKER
NOVEMBER 2021**