The 5 Deadliest Kettlebell Training Sins

Bulletproof your back, your shoulders and your hips by using kettlebells the RIGHT WAY

By: Chris Lopez, CSCS, SFGII
www.KettlebellWorkouts.com
Introduction

Let me shoot straight from the hip here because I know you’re time is very valuable.

If you’re like me, you probably started using kettlebells because they’re supposed to help you get in shape faster than any other tool on the market. They’re supposed to work easier than the other stuff. Right?

But what do we mean by “work” and what do we mean by “get in shape?”

Most people care only about one of two things when using kettlebells - getting better at their sport and looking good nekkid.

WHAT??!!

Can I say that?

Nekkid.

Now that you’re done chuckling or giggling or being appalled and/or offended – at least I have your attention.

And we can both agree that ultimately, when it’s all said and done, most of us, myself included, want to “look good naked.”

Is it vanity?

Perhaps. Perhaps not. Does it really matter? I think not...

But what does “look good naked” really mean?

I think for most of us it’s not having too much fat in the wrong places - we don’t have to be “ripped,” “shredded,” or look like a supermodel, but somewhere relatively close would be nice, wouldn’t it?

It would.

Here’s the reality - Most guys that I know want to feel confident enough to take their shirt off at the beach or in the locker room, or bedroom. They want to get rid of the lovehandles and manboobs and just lean out - getting back to what they looked like their senior year of high school when they were on a sports team is usually the measuring stick. And let’s face it, you feel more confident -
more powerful, more in control the better you think you look, right?

And most women I know would like to feel comfortable wearing a bikini - not that they would do so, but at least they could if they chose that option. When you do feel that comfortable about your body, you feel more beautiful both inside and out - more desirable, right?

Of course.

We all associate how we look with how we feel. If that weren’t the case, women would buy nice clothes, use make up, get their nails done, and smell nice. And guys wouldn’t use hair gel or whatever, shave or “groom” and do all the stuff we do to feel powerful and in control.

Right?

Of course.

And that gets us back to our beloved kettlebells.

You see, that’s one of the promises of using the kettlebell - that it will help us look and feel a certain way - that way we want to feel and look (good nekkid...) faster with less perceived effort and more convenience than any other tool on the market.

You may not agree with my logic, but on a gut level, you know that’s why you bought your first kettlebell. Most of us did, including me. (For the record, I was “sold” on the “gorilla shoulders and tree-swinging traps”...)

And for the most part, it was true - our kettlebells did help us achieve some of our desired results faster.

But then it stopped.

And that’s why you’re reading this Special Report. Because you want to know why and what you can do to fix it.

And I’m going to show you.

I’ve used kettlebells since January 2002. And they’ve been awesome. They have been everything I ever hoped they would be. I use them myself in various cycles through the years and almost exclusively with my clients.

I’ve got my ear to the ground and routinely read the forums and of course teach three to five seminars a year. And because of that, I can say with certainty that there are many reasons kettlebell users aren’t successful.
I’ve narrowed them down to the top five.

When you address these critical mistakes (that you may not know you’re even doing), and your make the changes I suggest, it’s very possible, even probable, that you will jump start your progress again - even dropping two to three pounds by this time next week.

So here they are...

1. Random Acts of Variety
2. Not fixing poor movement patterns
3. Focusing on quantity not quality
4. Trying to out-snatch a donut
5. Using the wrong set and rep ranges

Let’s take a closer look…
**Problem #1: Random Acts Of Variety.**

The “Workout of the Day” exercise format has become very popular over the last 5 or so years. There’s nothing wrong with them in theory.

Unfortunately, practice is a very different story. Many of the WODs are nothing more but a series of events, with no continuity between them. Continuity, along with consistency, is how we make progress.

For example, if I want to improve my squat, I have to at least squat on a routine basis, whether it be once per week, twice per week, or even four days per week. There must be consistency.

The same is true for kettlebell workouts that are designed to help your body burn off unwanted and stored body fat.

400 Swings followed by a 3 mile run one day, 77 Get Ups the next, and VO2max Snatch workout the third day is just poor “planning,” if it can even be called that.

Notice how I used the word “designed.”

There must be intelligence behind the workout sequencing.

Going into the basement and doing “some swings” isn’t going to cut it. Now, if you did “some swings” every day, you might be onto something.

**Fix #1: Plan Your Workouts.**

This really seems simple, but you’d be surprised how many forum posts I’ve read on various kettlebell forums that have lead me to conclude otherwise.

Most of us are busy. We don’t have a lot of time to workout, which is why most of us use kettlebells in some way, shape, or form. Work, kids, life all keep us from being world champion something-or-others, that and the lack of desire to do so, if we are really brutally honest with ourselves.
My recommendation, based on my experience, is that you should plan on working out no more than three hours a week. Anything extra is a bonus.

The best format is the old tried and true “one hour, three days per week” program. Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday - you get the idea.

But for some of us, even a one hour block can be hard to find or even make time for. If that’s you, aim for four (4) forty minute sessions. That’s only 160 minutes - twenty minutes less than the full three hours per week.

Keep your plan simple - one “grind” kettlebell exercise and one “ballistic” kettlebell exercise. Take half your planned workout time and perform your grind, say, the Get Up, and the half of your workout time and do your ballistics - 2 Hand Swings for example.

So, how does lack of planning affect your fat loss?

Poor planning, affects you in two different ways.

**Poor Way #1: Working Out Too Much.**

Whether we want to admit it or not, we are only human. Yes, we are capable of great and mighty things, but we also need to rest and recover from those things. Sleep is our main means of recovery. If you’re not getting eight hours or more a night, then you are slowing your fat loss efforts by sabotaging your body’s ability to fight stress.

And make no mistake about it, working out hard with your kettlebells to promote fat loss is a form of stress.

The change you’re seeking doesn’t come while you’re working out, but as a result of that workout. Your body adapts through the vehicle of recovery. If you don’t sleep or are over stressed, then you won’t adapt by becoming leaner.

(Food - getting the proper nutrients in to your body, also aids in recovery.)

Unfortunately, it’s that simple.

And worse yet, you can really screw up your hormonal balance by working out too much. Working out too much, too hard, too frequently, can increase your cortisol
levels, which will help promote body fat creation and storage. Weird, I know.

Cortisol is a hormone that is necessary for life. Under stress, it breaks down protein (that’s right, your body’s muscle tissue) and mobilizes your body’s sugar stores. This triggers the release of insulin, a powerful hormone used in building muscle and also storing fat.

But if cortisol levels are too high, then your body is chronically releasing insulin and breaking down protein. That’s a very bad combination for fat loss. Very bad.

I had a client who refused to acknowledge this. She was addicted to working out, six, sometimes seven days per week. She never got eight hours of sleep a night and didn’t eat enough calories to support her fat loss and recovery attempts.

She had surgery which forced her to take time off from her workouts. I suggested that she focus on her nutrition, actually eating more food than normal.

Her results?

Two weeks later she was leaner and her clothes - especially her pants, were looser. All as a result of recovery. Unfortunately for her, she quickly fell back into her old habits and started storing body fat again.

**Poor Way #2: Infrequent Workouts.**

I get it - life is hectic. Hectic. Hectic! Hectic! There is never enough time to get the things done on your “to do list” let alone add something else to it, like working out three hours a week.

But the reality is, you have to find a way to get your body to burn its stored fat - to use it as a fuel source so its no longer on your body. The only way to do that is to work out. Intelligently.

Let me explain.

You’re feeling stressed out because you don’t have enough time to get everything done. The good news is that exercise itself can be a form of stress relief.

Modern science has shown us that exercise has been shown to do the following:

- Provide a sense of well-being
- Decrease the effects of depression
- Reverse heart disease
- Reverse diabetes
- Improve sexual function
- Increases self-esteem
· Provides you with more energy
· Increases mental focus
· Reduce incidences of osteoporosis in women
· Decreases stress levels
· Improves digestion

And the list goes on and on and on...

If you suffer from any of the above conditions, get rid of them by adding small doses of exercise into your schedule.

Start small and focus on becoming successful. Four (4) 15-minute workouts a week with your kettlebells is a great place to start. It’s only an hour per week. Do it first thing in the morning and get it out of the way. See how good you feel in 30 days or less.
**Problem #2: Not Fixing Poor Movement Patterns And Nagging Aches And Pains**

I’m going to level with you - I like doing the exercises I like to do, and not much else. You may feel that way too. But the downside is that life gets in my way. Here’s what I mean - most of us sit all day long. All day. Longgggg.

All the muscles in the front of your body tend to shorten- abs, hip flexors, quads, pecs, biceps, neck. And then some of the muscles on the backside of your body get short and tight too - calves, hamstrings. (Interestingly enough, your butt gets flat...) This screws up your ability to move the way your were designed.

So the downside is that if you don’t take care of this “adaptive shortening,” you can really screw yourself up. This is where injuries begin. Your body isn’t moving the way it’s supposed to be and we load it with weights (like I did) or by running.

Imagine driving your car with the front end out of alignment and your tires unevenly inflated. You’ll rapidly increase not only tire wear, but also the wear and tear on the shocks/struts and axles. The same thing is happening to your body.

You know what I mean, don’t you?

You may have an “Advil addiction” or something like that because of a bum shoulder or trick knee. Or maybe it’s that “bad back” - that dull ache you get from sitting too long at your computer. But you know what I mean – you pop Advil like it’s Pez either before or after your workout, or worse yet – both.

But like me, you still work out on it. (Ok, I don’t do that sort of thing anymore - I almost permanently broke - so I HAD to fix my bad movement patterns.) And like me it’s for one or maybe two major reasons - you’re too stubborn to change anything or you just don’t know what to change.

That’s fine. But do yourself a favor and learn what you need to do.
So, how does poor movement affect your fat loss?

Again, there are two ways.

**#1 - Reduced Muscular Function**

When you have compensated movement, your muscles don’t work in the sequence they were designed to. They’re recruitment pattern is altered. This decreases your body’s efficiency (the ability to move the right muscles at the right time in the right patterns with the appropriate amount of force).

And so what - maybe you can’t put your arm straight over your head with your elbow locked. You can still put it up there and you can do it with weight. Until you can’t.

If you’ve ever had a shoulder injury, you know what I mean.

When you’re injured, your body automatically alters the energy it sends from one set of muscles - the muscles around the site of the injury, to other sets of muscles. The only problem is that that second set of muscles is now doing two jobs - the one it’s supposed to be doing, and the job of the injured muscles.

I think you might see where this is going.

That’s right - you can no longer use as much energy as you once used to which means you are no longer going to burn the calories you could be burning if you weren’t injured or didn’t have some sort of movement dysfunction.

And, on top of that, you are risking injuring yourself even more because of the excess strain on the muscles doing two or more jobs.

And if that weren’t bad enough, movement dysfunction and injury will actually cause you to lose muscle, not only through the inflammation process, but also due to lack of use.

And, what’s more, because of the inflammation cycle and the lack of use, you can no longer burn the calories you once burned and now you are prone to storing excess fat.

This happened to me in 2005. I hurt my right hip so badly that even walking became a problem. All the exercises I liked to do that burned a ton of calories like squats, deadlifts, cleans, and snatches, I could no longer do.

I dropped about 20 pounds of muscle and put on about 15 pounds of fat.

Sounds like exactly the opposite of what you want to do, right?
#2 - Evil Inflammation

When you have injuries, you will have compensated movement. Injuries result in inflammation in your body. (One could argue that compensated movement also causes inflammation as the stress along ligaments and tendons are unnatural and thereby increasing friction, resulting in inflammation.) As mentioned earlier, cortisol, that powerful hormone, is released to reduce the inflammation. But, chronic injuries lead to chronic inflammation.

And chronic inflammation leads to chronic cortisol release, which messes up the balance between cortisol and insulin in your body. You release too much insulin which sends a signal to your brain to store fat.

Not only that, but constantly elevated cortisol levels can lead to adrenal fatigue - which is where your adrenal glands fail to function properly due to excessive use. (Your adrenal glands make cortisol.)

And obviously, excessive fatigue - adrenal or otherwise, will cause you to exercise less because you just won’t have the necessary energy to do so. Then fat loss comes to a grinding or screeching (you pick) halt.

So, what can you do about faulty movement patterns and injuries?

**Fix #2: Incorporate Movements That Fortify Your Body**

There are a lot of cool movements that will really help fortify, or “bulletproof” your body. These are movements that strengthen your hips, your legs – especially your hamstrings, your midsection or “core” and your shoulders.

Some of the top exercises include:

- The Get Up
- The Swing and its variations
- The Windmill
- The Press
- The Clean
- The Snatch
- The Single Leg Deadlift
This of course is just an abbreviated list, but it's a good place to start.

These movements pry open all the tight spots, creating flexibility (increased muscle length) and restoring lost mobility (joint range of motion), as well as creating that much needed “in-between strength” or that strength that keeps you from getting hurt doing simple things like throwing a football or bending over to tie your shoe.

This is the strength that really matters. It’s the strength that allows you to do your daily things with vigor and vitality.

We could take a closer look, but it’s really beyond the scope of this report. You'll just have to trust me on this. Take your time and learn how to perform the above exercises correctly. Your body will thank you. Really.

You’ll feel like this...
Problem #3: Focusing On Quantity Not Quality

This is a biggie, or rather, a BIGGIE.

Many people who use kettlebells are what's been called “stimulus addicts.” They are addicted to their kettlebell workouts. They try to literally do as much work as physically possible. Combine this mentality with the WoD mentality we mentioned earlier, and you have a recipe for disaster.

Focusing on how much you can do in each workout means that your form or technique will suffer. And when your form breaks down, that’s when your movement patterns change for the worse. And speaking of “for the worse,” worst-case scenario is that you get injured.

Feeling exhausted at the end of a workout and correlating that to a “good workout” makes zero sense. The correlation is “how are my results?” not “how do I feel?”

I’ve not only experienced this personally, but have seen it happen to many a kettlebell student.

I’m amazed at the people who use my programs who ask me, “What can I do on my off days – can I do the VO2max workout?”

My response is usually, “Why do you think I put ‘off’ days in the program?” Think about it. You can only do so much work before you have to rest.

Focusing on the quantity approach raises two issues that interfere with your body’s ability to lose fat.

Issue #1: Injuries decrease your work capacity

It goes without saying that if you get injured, you can no longer work out the way you’d like. But very few people ever stop to consider this. One injury can not only set you back in the short term, but also in the long term through altered / compensated movement mechanics that you have to later go back and fix.

If you injure your hip or back for instance, you can no longer train your legs appropriately. It’s been said the “the legs feed the wolf” meaning, without your legs,
you’ll go nowhere fast. And if you can no longer train your legs appropriately, then you can no longer burn the calories necessary to keep fat loss going.

Not only that, but your legs make up 40-60% of your body’s mass. If you can no longer use them to burn stored energy (fat) then you can no longer train them to grow muscle either, which means your metabolic rate (the rate at which your body uses energy on a daily basis) will slow down as well.

So, not only will you not be burning the necessary calories to burn stored body fat, but you will be slowing the pace at which your body normally uses energy (burns calories) and start storing body fat!

Bad news indeed!

**Issue #2: Recovery, Recovery, recovery!**

We already touched briefly on the recovery issue earlier. But honestly, I cannot beat this horse to death enough!

I already alluded to the “stimulus junkies” in Issue #1, but that addiction will sabotage your fat loss in such a big way. Again, *you have to be able to recover from your workouts*. If you’re not getting eight hours of sleep a night, then you’re not fully recovering. And if you’re not fully recovering, then your cortisol levels are going to become chronically elevated and you’ll start storing fat.

“But I can’t get eight hours of sleep a night!” I hear you say. I get it, really I do.

If you can’t get those eight hours, then when are you going to recover? You honestly have no business working out hard more than three hours per week, preferably, three non-consecutive days per week.

How then do you overcome these two major issues?

**Fix #3: Focus Internally, Not Externally.**

This is seemingly a strange “fix” so let me explain.

Instead of focusing on how much you can do, focus on how much you can do well. Cut all your reps in half and then give yourself a time limit to get each piece of your workout done.

Only count the reps that you perform as perfectly as you can. Believe me, if you want to feel “worked out,” you’ll still get that feeling.
This is harder than it seems. In order to be successful, you must focus internally. That means, you must seek to feel what’s going on with all the muscles in your body. You will have to pay attention to which muscle is doing what, when.

For example, learn to feel your hamstrings, gluts, and abs during each and every Swing. Can’t do that yet? That’s a problem.

Learn how to use your strong and powerful Lat muscle on your Presses, instead of just your shoulder. Can’t do that yet or don’t know where your lat is? That’s a problem.

Take the time to slow your workout down and focus internally. The quality of your workouts will be much higher. And now that you can feel your muscles actually working, you can be assured they are and that you are burning calories.
Problem #4: Trying To “Out-Snatch A Donut.”

Can I be frank with you? I mean, you’re reading this Special Report, so we already have a connection. I want to speak to you like you’re my very good friend. I want the best for you so that you can have all that you want in life.

So, since we’re now good friends...

Listen, no matter how hard you try, and no matter what you do, you will never – I repeat – NEVER be able to fly.

That’s right – fly.

Caught you off guard there, didn’t I?

Do you know why? Because there are certain physical laws that dictate that you, in and of yourself, weren’t created with the power to overcome inertia.

Oh, you thought I was talking about catching you off guard, right?

Well you thought I was going to talk about donuts and other such stuff.

Well I am.

Just like inertia is a physical law you cannot overcome without the external assistance of an airfoil (wing), there are physical laws that say you cannot exercise and eat whatever you want and still lose body fat. I’m sorry amigo, no matter how hard you try, cry, wish, want or plead, it cannot be done.

In order to lose body fat, you must put your body into a state of calorie restriction.

That’s right, you must change the way you eat. It’s an irrefutable Law of Nature. And there’s just no getting around it, behind it, or underneath it – but you can get on top of it. (More about that in a minute.)

Yes, I know, there are plenty of stories about how Joe Blow sat on the couch for 20 years, then started swinging his kettlebell, and in 30 days he lost 30 pounds. The bad news is that Joe is in the minority. A very small minority. What Joe may have forgotten to tell you is that when he started swinging his kettlebell, he stopped eating his nightly quart of Hagen Daas.

But listen to what I’m going to tell you – because I’m your friend, and I’ve been in the “fitness biz” for almost 20 years –
Joe is the exception, not the rule.

There – I said it.

You just cannot honestly expect to eat whatever you want whenever you want, use your kettlebells, and still burn off the body fat you want.

Sorry, Charlie – it’s just not going to happen. The sooner you come to grips with that, the sooner you can move on and really start blowtorching that body fat.

Now for the “fix.”

**Fix #4: Eat For Energy And The Fat Loss Will Be Automatic.**

Automatic?

Yup – that’s right – automatic.

Eating for energy is really simple. In fact, it’s so simple, you’re not going to believe me when I tell you. In fact, whole books are written on this subject, which of course means there are whole shelves in bookstores with all these books written about exactly the same thing.

So, how do you eat for energy?

First, let’s discuss what “eating for energy” really means.

“Eating for energy” means two things:

1. You are eating in such a way as to supply all your body’s needs – vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, amino acids, and a fuel source.
   - Eat fresh vegetables, fresh fruits, nuts and seeds, fish, poultry, eggs, and meat. Use herbs and spices when cooking.

2. You are eating in such a way that your body relies on an internal fuel source for energy more often than an external fuel source for energy.
   - Get rid of foods that contain simple sugars such as sodas, fruit juices, and candy bars.
   - Discard starches such as pasta, bread, rice, and cereals from your diet. Doing so encourages your body to use its fat stores for energy, thus causing you to lose fat.
Second, let’s discuss HOW to eat for energy.

Let’s keep this simple. When you go to the grocery store, only shop the perimeter – stay out of the aisles. The perimeter is where you find all your fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and eggs. (If you can’t find the nuts, ask a store clerk for help.)

The aisles are where you find all the junk that, although tasty*, literally clogs up your body and teaches your body how to store fat.

* A word on “tasty.” Most of the things we find “tasty” or “delicious” aren’t. Not really. They are filled with salt and sugar and they warp our taste buds. When was the last time broccoli tasted sweet to you instead of bitter?

When you start detoxifying your body from all the artificial foods you’ve been putting in there, your body resets its senses and the foods that are supposed to taste good suddenly do, like broccoli.

If you eat for energy, you will not only start to lose body fat without exercising, but using your kettlebells will speed up that process.

And finally, eating for energy is even cooler than you think – your body will learn how to reset its fat-burning to fat-storing hormone relationship so that your body can and will use fat as a regular fuel source instead of relying on sugars.
Problem #5: Using The Wrong Set And Rep Ranges.

Many kettlebell users perform an excessive amount of reps and sets, especially on their Swings and Snatches. By “excessive” I mean over 20 reps, especially on Swings. From my experimentation, I think the maximum number of Swings you can do with great form is 30. Maximum.

But here’s the thing, maximums are just that – maximums. They’re not meant to be attempted nor reached every single time you train. They drain your body of energy and inhibit recovery. Training like this is a guaranteed way to burn out and never want to work out again.

Getting back to the whole Workout of the Day issue, many of these WoDs disrespect the set and rep ranges for specific exercises and tools.

For example, I recently heard about a WoD that prescribed 30 reps straight on the Get Up using a “light” kettlebell.

That’s just the wrong application of the Get Up. There’s no possible way your shoulders can take that duration of loading without your body compensating in some way. And that leads us back into that injury cycle that we were talking about before.

I also recently heard of an individual, a very, very strong individual performing 1000 Swings with a 24kg non-stop. This is an extreme example that shouldn’t be tried by mere mortals. (To put this into context, this same individual has squatted 1000lbs, drug-free, wearing only a weightlifting belt.) But some “Average Joe” will see that number and decide he can do the same thing – first try.

Worse yet, is that some well-meaning but ill-informed trainer will get the bright idea to combine the two and add some 400m sprints to the mix and then do it for time.

It is just plain impossible for most of us mere mortals to concentrate on those types of sets and reps. We just don’t have the energy. Sure, workouts can be hard, but they don’t have seem like we’re conquering our own personal Mt. Everest every time we do them. Again, this mindset leads to mental burnout and physical exhaustion.
**Fix #5: Use A System – Follow A Well-Worn Path**

I have the good fortune of being a Master Kettlebell Instructor in the RKC – the *Russian Kettlebell Challenge* Instructor Certification. I have had the privilege of teaching hundreds of people from around the world not only how to use kettlebells, but how to teach others to do the same. And in the RKC we have a system that we use that has produced results for thousands upon thousands of individuals all around the globe.

The beautiful thing about the RKC System of Strength Training with kettlebells is that Strength and Conditioning are two distinct and separate qualities and nine times out of ten, should be trained as such. (The one exception is when a highly experienced instructor develops a very specific program for a very specific result.)

Strength is trained with slow, controlled movements (“Grinds”) like the Get Up, the Press, the Squat, the Deadlift. The rep ranges are kept purposefully low – 1 to 5 reps per set.

Conditioning is trained with fast, explosive movements (“Ballistics”) like the Swing, the Clean, the Snatch, and the Jerk. The reps are purposefully higher – 5 to 20+.

These “rules,” although not set in stone, when applied correctly, will result in high levels of both strength and conditioning. And fat loss.

However, those rules can be broken, within reason, to produce faster results.
And that’s exactly what I’ve done in a program I designed for you to burn off your unwanted fat with your kettlebells from the comfort of your own home.

But before I tell you any more about it, imagine for a minute or so how much easier your life would be when you have more energy to get all of your “to do list” done. You will feel super-productive, won’t you?

And imagine how much better you would feel about yourself when your pants are loose in the waist. You will feel healthier and more attractive to your spouse or significant other, won’t you?

And imagine how confident you will feel when you step out of the shower, look in the mirror, and see the definition in your body’s muscles. You will exude the confidence that’s been buried within you and other people will take notice.

Ready to make some changes?

Good. Get started today by acting on the “5 Fixes” in this Special Report.

And watch your email closely for more great information on how to fix your kettlebell fat loss workouts.

-Chris Lopez