

GET UP!

Volume II, Issue 5

11 October 2003

New Authors for Get UP!

It amazes the Editorial Board when people actually want to write for this newsletter.

This month, we introduce our readership to Shawn Hanrahan, a very enthusiastic strength trainer, who promises a multiple series of articles on kettlebells and clubbells.

Wes is back, too. Wes's monthly challenge to our readers reminds us of the old adage "If wishes and butts were candy and nuts, we all could have a party." Plenty of nuts in the editorial boardroom this morning, by the way.

Finally, give a warm welcome to Mike Schuck, a Canadian lifter who has braved the worries of competing in his first Olympic Lifting Meet...great reading!

Our mission? To teach everyone:

1. The Body is One Piece
2. There are three kinds of strength training:
 - Putting weight overhead
 - Picking it off the ground
 - Carrying it for time or distance
3. All training is *complementary*.

INCREASING STRENGTH AND POWER WITH KETTLEBELLS

Shawn Hanrahan

Shawn Hanrahan is the Assistant Director/Co-Owner of Advanced Athletic Performance. A sports conditioning company dedicated to developing the complete athlete.

Kettlebells can be purchased from our website at www.aaptraining.net. Please feel free to contact Shawn at 480-206-4434 or at aaptraining@lycos.com with any questions. Stay tuned for additional article with advanced kettlebell training and the introduction of clubbells.

A lot of us know how important Olympic lifting is to the everyday athlete. Olympic lifts can help improve many components of an athletes' performance. It can help athletes jump higher (further), come out of their stance faster, improve physical prowess, and help one throw a weight further (higher). The results are endless. Kettlebells are another tool similar to Olympic lifting, but posses some unique benefits. Results of using kettlebells include:

- Overcoming fear-reactivity
- Improving hip drive
- Increasing strength-endurance
- Increasing athletic power
- Improve core strength

What are kettlebells you ask?

Kettlebells have Russian roots and are a cast iron ball with a thick handle. They have been widely used by early Russian Olympic lifters and by Russian Special Forces for strength and endurance development. They have similar uses as our modern day dumbbells and are much cheaper than most of the equipment that litter gyms today. Today kettlebells are not very common in the US, but they are being used by military personnel, law enforcement, and martial artists. A few colleges have begun using kettlebells with great success but overall seem to be not a great asset in the eyes of a lot of strength coaches. These instruments of strength and power development can make a huge difference, even for the elite athlete, in your current strength program

A big factor athletes are unable to perform Olympic lifts is fear-reactivity. Fear-reactivity is the body's unwillingness to perform a movement because of the possible results of either injury or the body's lack of proprioception (bodies awareness of its position in space). It is very difficult for someone to take a barbell over their head and squat it, especially one who has never done that before. If one has never been in that position before, their body's

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instinct is to get out of that position resulting in poor technique. It takes a lot to overcome the fear-reactivity of pulling weight directly over your head and dropping straight to the floor and support the weight above your head. Kettlebells are a perfect tool to help athletes overcome their fear-reactivity just as dumbbells have been used.

By performing one arm lifts, the body is more capable to overcoming fear-reactivity. The body is more comfortable having one arm free to help with balance and the sub-conscience comfort for support if one falls or the option to lean on something. These same comforts are not available to the body when using two arms in a snatch. The body must rely on good technique and confidence. Therefore it is vital for an athlete to perform one arm lifts to overcome their fear-reactivity and introduce the body to such technical lifts. There are limitations with dumbbells while performing one arm lifts, so the use of kettlebells is much more advantageous. They are designed to be much more flexible in responding to the body's joint limitations, especially at the wrist. It is tough to do clean and jerks with a dumbbell. Kettlebells allow you to perform one-arm clean and jerks and as you become more proficient, two one-arm clean and jerks.

Athletes can take their performance to a new level with the implementation of Olympic lifting. True "functional strength" and "core strength" is accomplished with the use of Olympic

lifting and overhead lifts. There is no other exercise that can introduce the body to quick movements with the weight and the quick recovery to hold the weight. This results in an overall body power development and ultimately the development of "core strength". My training has greatly changed since incorporating Olympic lifts into my workouts. Previously, I trained with Mike Maynard at the University of Arizona for track and field, who introduced me to Olympic lifting over 10 years ago. I stopped for a long time after college and kept with power lifting. Powerlifting helped me gain strength, but it did not help with my power and speed. It was until I started incorporating Olympic lifting back into my program did I see tremendous changes both in the weight room and on the field.

My workout time began to decline and my joints were no longer sore. I incorporated clean and snatch variations as my main lifts and used squat variations as a secondary lift. I used squat as a complimentary lift all the time, but I didn't have to go heavy every time I got under the squat rack. Olympic lifting has brought me to new levels and I actually competed for the first time in Olympic lifting this year and took first place. It was actually nice using bumper plates for once at the competition. Now the question was, where do I go from here in my training? Technique is something you will always be working on in Olympic lifting, but what more can I incorporate into my workouts to keep it

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new and add to my power? The answer.....Kettlebells.

Using kettlebells teaches athletes that their abdomen is the most important part of their body to generate power. Not having a six-pack and looking good for the opposite sex, but having the ability to centralize their body around their "core". Kettlebells can bring power to your game. My 56 lb weight for height jumped 2 feet with the use of kettlebells. All of our athletes at Advanced Athletic Performance have taken their games to new levels with the use of kettlebells. Kettlebells have helped our athletes increase their long jump by as much as 35% and helped transition them to Olympic lifts.

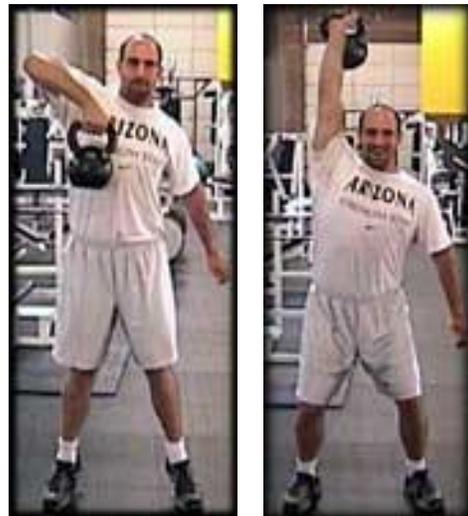
Here are some examples of how to use the kettlebell.



This is the clean kettlebell clean. Just like the initial pull with the dumbbell, the kettlebell will be pulled from either a hang or from the floor. The kettlebell will rotate over and around the hand to the back portion of the forearm. Make sure your arm is kept close to your body and you squeeze your arm to your body

so the weight won't pull away from the body.

This is the snatch. Very similar to the dumbbell snatch, but the kettlebell will rotate around the wrist. Make sure the kettlebell rotates before the apex of the hand so you can punch through the ceiling and absorb the weight swinging



over the wrist.

Here is the overhead squat. Again it can be done with dumbbells, but it is much easier with the kettlebells. Make sure you stay on your heels and keep the weight centered over your shoulder.

These lifts greatly help the athlete with their hip drive, which ultimately is the key to performing technical Olympic lifts. They teach the athlete to make the weight weightless during the pull. And in order to make it weightless, hip drive is needed. By having the athlete pull the weight and leave the ground



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with their feet will teach them to generate power with the body, rather than with their arms. An important feat that carries into all sports. Football players generate contact with their body, not with their arms or legs alone. By involving the body as a whole, with quick power, will a football overcome their opposition on immediate contact. A hammer thrower does not throw with their arms or generate speed with their legs alone. The “core” ultimately generates the rotational speed and prevents the thrower from falling over.

There are many ways these lifts can be incorporated into your workout. They are great exercises for both off and on days. They can be used on off days as density training to help increase your strength endurance. Here is an example for an off day density training routine:

Clean and Press **5**

Pull Ups **4**

Snatch **6**

Dips **6**

Overhead Squat **4**

Jump Rope **3 min**

Each grouping will be performed as a superset for 30 minutes. Try to accomplish as many as you can in the 30-minute time frame (only one grouping per off day). The next time you do the superset you can either try to accomplish more in the 30 minute time period or accomplish the amount you did last time in 25 minutes or less time. The idea is volume is high and loading is low to develop strength-endurance. Unlike the traditional bodybuilding routine of

high volume with high repetitions, density training incorporates strength and power exercises with lower repetitions but more sets and volume. The muscle will burn out on reps of 10 to 15 and recover faster on reps of 3 to 6, which has better applications to sports unless you are an endurance runner. Most sports are of short bursts and little recovery time. Endurance is important such as running and sprinting. But a lot of sports have contact and getting up and down involved. Density training will increase the needed strength endurance to allow an athlete perform as good at the start of competition as at the end.

You can also incorporate these exercises on your on days as either a warm up or between your core lifts. Rather than standing around for 5 minutes between squat sets, you can rip off a set of snatches or cleans. Again this will help with your strength-endurance and build your “functional strength” without becoming very sore and greatly reduce joint strain.

Sacrifice

Wes Kersey (WesII)

Wes is a 42 year old reborn thrower from

Memphis, Tennessee.

This is his first year back in throwing and he competed in two highland games



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If you remember, in my last article we discussed goal setting and the difference between a goal and a wish. After I had sent the article to our dear editor I noticed a friend of mine's daughter had started a letter to Santa Claus (on October 1st!) Now I do not have children but if a celibate Pope can tell Catholics something about birth control I feel at least I can address a problem with raising kids.



Children at a young age are told that if they are good boys and girls, Santa will bring them what they want for Christmas. Now as I observe the little yard monkeys in my neighborhood Santa has a break because these children can be urchins. So what usually happens is the kid is a demon most of the year and Mom and Dad say "Aw well, they were pretty good" meaning their picture is not posted at the Post Office, and they get what they want. Yes, I know you love them, etc etc, but are we teaching the wrong thing at an early age? What if you blew off your workouts that you need to reach your goals of squatting 700 pounds. You get to your meet and lift 625. Do you think the official is going to say "Aw, he is a good guy, put him down for 700" I seriously doubt it. I look back now and wish my Dad had ask

me when I said I wanted something "How bad do you want it?" "What exactly are you willing to sacrifice and give to get it?"

Discipline is probably the one thing I don't need to write about and I could probably learn a lot from a bunch of you. Discipline is doing the right thing whether you want to or not. The right thing maybe, workout, watch your calorie intake, go to bed early, whatever. Discipline is necessary to accomplish your goals. It's that sacrifice I talked about in the last article. It is what is developed when you have the white hot desire to reach your goal and nothing is going to stand in your way of reaching it.

Discipline is not easy. To be disciplined you basically have to think and that is a chore for a lot of us. You have to have a steadfast will and mission and not be steered around but what's going on around you. If you are thinking constantly about reaching a goal, and that goal is something you really deep down desire, discipline becomes a little easier. Why? Because you are thinking! Think of the kids you see in the store:" Mom can I have it PLEEEASSE please can I have, Mom please can I have it" Mom says " Will your clean your room when we get home?" Mom knows that it would take an act of God to get this kid to clean their room so she test the waters. "Oh, yes Mom, as soon as I get home" is the kids reply. Now whether or not Mom set another bad example by following up on the promise is another story all together, but we found out how

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bad the kid wanted the item. Bad enough to promise to do a job they hated to get what they wanted. How bad do you want to add 20kg to your snatch? How bad do you want to throw the Scottish heavy hammer over 80 feet? What are you willing to sacrifice in order to do it? Do your goals have desire and emotion attached to them or are they just wishes on a list to Santa?



In his rebuttal, Santa showed an impressive Front Double Biceps Pose that took him to third place in the Masters Division of the Mr. Murray Institute of Lifelong Fitness. He noted that Wes has been "good boy."

A New Journey!

Mike Schuck

I'm writing this article in hopes that it may help a few people out there who are trying to learn OL on their own.

I'll start off with a little background on myself. I'm 31 years old with a beautiful wife, a 3 year old daughter and another little one on the way. My job is very demanding, requiring a lot of late nights and early mornings. Needless to say, like most people, I only have a few hours a week to crunch in some quality training in my basement gym.

My journey with strength training began 14 years ago with the classic bodybuilding routine: 6 days a week, two workouts a day. After about 4 years of getting nowhere I was introduced to abbreviated training focusing on the basic movements. I have never looked back. A few years back I meet a great group of guys who

compete in strongman and began event training with them (which I love). Since then I have tried to compete at least once a year in strongman.

Introduction to OL

I was introduced to OL through one of my Strongman training partners and good friend, Yuri Dubowik. Yuri is an excellent strongman competitor and fantastic Olympic Lifter and OL coach.

One day I was toying with the notion that I might want to try an OL meet some time. I went to the basement and decided to try the lifts. First was the Snatch. I grabbed an empty 20kg bar and went to warm up by performing the official lift. I pulled, went to drop, and I fell back on my butt. My arms felt as if they had been torn out of their sockets! I then decided to slow things down and do some OH squats for warm-up. Well, my inflexible shoulders couldn't handle the strain from the empty bar, and combined with a very inflexible overall body, the overhead squat was not happening. What a slap in the face! But right there and then I decided I had to conquer these lifts.



Months of stalled progress

I started with a 10 lb. exercise bar and worked at the OH squat. Training twice a week, over an 8-month period, I managed to muster 135lbs on the OH squat for a rep or two. I had also begun training various pulls and assistance exercises. I tried pulls from every starting position imaginable and tried all sorts of drills to train my body into pulling correctly or dropping under

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the bar (however, I never really drilled them). My problem was that I was trying to add too much weight on the bar with too many different exercises, never getting good at any one of them. In the back of my head during every training session a voice kept screaming "why are you jumping from assistance exercise to assistance exercise when you can't even pull and drop under an empty bar properly in either lift?"

Good things coming from stalled progress

I was getting a little more comfortable with the pulls, but I came to this realization: what's the point of getting a 300lb clean pull, when you can't drop under 45 lbs.?

It was time for help. I went to Dan John. (*Editor's note: what a mistake!*)

When I e-mailed him during the first week of July 2003, this is what my program looked like:

Day A:

- 1. Warm up**
- 2. Power Snatch - lots of singles. Top weight for around 3-5 singles**
- 3. Snatch pull (full extension) + snatch high pull - 3 or 4 doubles**
- 4. OH Squat - 2 or 3 sets of 5-7 reps**
- 5. OH Snatch support. I power clean around 185, press it behind my neck then I jerk it up and hold in the snatch position for as long as possible. This helps strengthen my wrists and gets me accustomed to heavier weight.**
- 6. Gut work**

Anywhere from 1 to 3 days rest between workouts - depends on life, recovery, etc.

Day B:

- 1. Warm up**
- 2. Power Clean - lots of singles. Top weight for around 3-5 singles**
- 3. Clean pull (full extension) + clean high pull - 3 or 4 doubles**
- 4. Push Press - 3 or 4 sets of doubles**
- 5. Front Squats - 2 or 3 sets of 5-7 reps**
- 6. Gut work**

Discussions with Dan John

Dan's advice was simple: for three weeks, drop everything you are doing and just drill the snatch for 8 doubles, 3 times a day, with a light weight (95lbs). Nothing else!

So for the next 21 days all I did was drill the snatch everyday. With the demands of life I couldn't always get in 3 workouts: some days it was two sessions some days it was four sessions of 5 sets of 2. The important point was to get in as many quality reps as possible in order to get comfortable in the snatch.

I couldn't snatch the weight properly, so

I began with a power snatch then I would overhead squat it. Also there was no warm up as the weight was light. Just get the reps in! The shoulders, wrists and hips really hurt (I'm very inflexible) for the first two sets, but amazingly, once I came to set number three, everything loosened up. Also after about the fourth day, I was catching the bar with bent legs. At the end of the 21 days, I was catching the bar in about a half squat. During this period I was also to practice pulling on the heels and with

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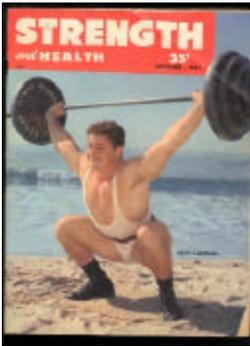
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a 2"x4" under my toes (this was discussed in detail Matt Spiller in Volume II Issue 1 of GET UP). I haven't yet nailed down this type of pulling yet but I'll keep practicing.

Insights

What did I gain from this drilling period? My shoulders loosened up and I gained much needed flexibility. I also gained tremendous flexibility in the bottom position of the OH squat. My form in the front and back squat also improved dramatically. Bottom line was that I was gaining confidence and developing "muscle memory" in the snatch.



Dan's next suggestion was to do the same for a couple of weeks with the clean and jerk. I was to drill the snatch for 5-8 doubles and then the clean and jerk for 5-8 doubles with a light weight – every day!

I do not have a coach for feedback on form and technique, so I went and had a training session with Yuri. He said I had fantastic progress from the last time we trained together. My only problem was I still couldn't catch the bar in the full OH squat position. Yuri then recommended I practice dropping into the snatch from full extension. I had tried these a few

times after reading a post from Gary Valentine on them on the Old School forum, but I never drilled them.

So, I decided to take what I learned from Dan and apply it to this drill. Training went like this:

AM - Snatch:

45lb bar x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

65lbs x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

PM - Clean and Jerk:

45lb bar x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

95lbs x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

I did this for a week and was getting very comfortable, so the second week I added the full lifts from the floor. I was amazed at the results from the drilling. I could snatch and clean and jerk! Finally!! If only I had just DRILLED the lifts (and from the extension) eight months ago!

It was now the end of August and one month until my first meet.

I had now decided not to power anything anymore. I would check my ego at the door and just drill, drill, drill.



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This is how my days were spent:

AM - Snatch:

45lb bar x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

65lbs x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

95lbs x 2 reps x 3 sets from the FLOOR

PM - Clean and Jerk:

95lb bar x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

115lbs x 2 reps x 3 sets from the extension

135lbs x 2 reps x 3 sets from the FLOOR

I kept this drilling up from Tuesday to Saturday up until the week of the comp since it was a light weight and didn't require any recovery. On Sundays I would try to train both lifts, singling up to as heavy weight as possible in good form – either at home or training with Yuri.

During this last month, if I had to miss a day or session due to “life”, I didn't stress out. It was very important to remain positive. I reminded myself that I wasn't looking for a cure for cancer, I'm just doing what I love – training! I settled into simply enjoying it.

Two weeks before the comp I was snatching 61kgs and clean and jerking 90kgs in good form. Not big numbers, but considering I couldn't properly clean or snatch an empty bar 2.5 months ago I was very happy.

I still had another obstacle in my path, and that was trying to clean one more pound over 90kgs. Instead of dropping under the bar at the top of my

pull, I would either freeze or I would power clean the weight. During a training session with Yuri, he had me drop the weight down below 90kgs and he kept adding small plates to the bar making me clean it without telling me the weight (I've always trained in pounds so I'm a little slow on the conversion to kilos). I just saw small little discs on the bar and kept cleaning. When Yuri said that's enough I had cleaned **100kgs** properly! I was ecstatic! Thank you Yuri.

My next heavy session at home I did the same thing and ended up at 110kgs.

This same obstacle is occurring with anything over 60kgs in the snatch, and I'm still wrestling with that demon.

D-Day

It was now time for the first meet!

I was very nervous. Soooo many washroom breaks that I dropped from the 94kg class to the 85kg class. Just after the weigh in I thought, “What have you got yourself into?”

Yuri Dubowik made the trip and helped Keith Hartley, his boys and myself with warm-ups and setting up our attempts. I can't thank him enough.

Snatch warm-up went great. Dropping nicely into the snatch. Felt loose and very strong.

I went to do my first attempt, 60 kg. I was so nervous that when I pulled and dropped under the bar it swayed back and forth and I almost fell over. The weight is light for me, but I'm still learning the lift, as you know. Therefore, with the nerves and adrenaline I think I

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pulled 5 times faster than I'm used to, and dropped under a bar that wanted to be caught at the ceiling.

After this attempt my hands were shaking. I was scared the jitters were going to cause me to fall over backwards on the next lift so a bad thing happened – I power snatched the next two lifts. 70kg and 72.5kg – I know, BAD, BAD, BAD!!!! Yuri told me I didn't even unlock my knees after the pull. Happy thing was that it felt like 40kgs.

The nerves settled a bit after the snatch portion was done and it was on to the clean & jerk.

My warm-ups went well. I was pulling faster than I'm used to.

First attempt 90kgs – good. It went very well, it felt light, and it wasn't a power clean - just a good lift.

Next 100kgs – good. Another technically good lift.

My final attempt was 110kg. I had cleaned this in training twice so I was a little nervous about the jerk. Here's the mistake I made: instead of quietly walking up to the bar and doing my thing, I asked the crowd for help. I asked them for lots of noise (works great for strongman but not for OL), with the result being that I got way too excited. I cleaned the weight but Yuri said my butt rose up and back too fast. It looked like a stiff legged good morning rather than a clean. I caught the weight but lost my balance backwards. I was disappointed in myself. I promptly went back to the training room, loaded 110kgs on the bar, and properly cleaned it.

Lessons Learned and High Points

- Hearing my 3 year old daughter say “good luck daddy” when I was on the platform – one of life's greatest moments!
- Always be yourself
- Slow down when your name is called to lift – don't rush things.
- I had been training with only 1 to 2 minute intervals between attempts, so the long wait at times with other lifters going around me threw me off a bit. I must also learn to train with the odd 5-minute break between lifts and sometimes with a 45 minute rest between the Snatch and Clean and Jerk, to simulate competition conditions.
- Drill, drill, drill the snatch more. I never want to power snatch it again.
- I haven't trained any assistance exercises in over 2 months, just light drilling. Drilling paid off!!!!!!! I can't wait to start building my strength up for the lifts.

Next Steps

Hardest part of learning OL: drop the ego and drill, drill, drill with light weights. You must build that foundation first. When the lifts feel automatic, like brushing your teeth, then you can start to add on the weight.

I am by no means a good technical lifter yet, and I have many mental hurtles every training session. I feel like now after the comp I can clean the world, but a much lighter missed clean has recently brought me back to reality and I must still (and always) practice -- build that foundation!

I can't thank my Wife, Yuri Dubowik and Dan John enough for their help and support on this continuing journey!

Published by Daniel John

Daniel John, Editor

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