

# **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

by Forest Vance, MS  
Certified Corrective Exercise Specialist  
Certified Russian Kettlebell Instructor

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### ***Disclaimer***

Strenuous physical exercise can be a dangerous activity. There are inherent risks in any physical activity, intense fitness training is no exception. The use of professional instruction is recommended before entering into any type of sport or physical exercise. You should become knowledgeable about the risks involved and assume personal responsibility for your actions. The information contained within this manual may or may not be accurate and is open to interpretation.

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **About Forest Vance**

Forest Vance, Master of Science in Human Movement and Certified Russian Kettlebell Instructor is a personal trainer, gym owner, blogger, author and fitness entrepreneur based out of Sacramento, CA.

*From the author:*

Chances are, if you have pain issues of any kind, the type of fast, ballistic movement you've seen folks do with kettlebells probably looks like the LAST thing you'd want to do ...

But, quite to the contrary, KB's are a great tool for corrective exercise training. They can be used to treat individuals with pain in the low back, shoulder, knee, ankle, and much more.

In this program, I'm going to show you how to use kettlebells as a tool for corrective exercise applications.

I hope this can be the start of an on-going relationship and that I can help you reach all of your ultimate kettlebell training goals.

Good luck and train hard -

**-Forest Vance, MS, CES, RKC II**



## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Introduction (my story)

I've been involved in sports since a very young age. It's funny, it was never my "dream" to play pro sports, like it was for a lot of my friends ... but it just worked out that I was a pretty good football player ... and I ended up getting the chance to play pro football for a couple of years.

Anyway, after playing offensive line at the high school (for four years) college (for five) and NFL (for two) levels, my body ended up pretty beat up. A few years after my career was over was when it really started to catch up with me.

I started getting pain in my knees. And my lower back. And my shoulder. And my neck. And the list goes on ...

I still have chronic pain in pretty much all of these areas ... but **kettlebells have been an instrumental tool in helping reduce current and prevent future pain.**

I also use the exercises and techniques in this manual with training clients at my Sacramento, CA fitness center almost every day to help them reduce pain, get strong and get in great shape.

So my intention with this program is to show you how kettlebells are a great tool for corrective exercise applications – and to show you the basic movements you need to master to get started.

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **Corrective Exercise – Defined**

Just so we're all starting at the same place, the most basic definition of corrective exercise, according to Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 8th edition, is:

“Performance of physical exertion for improvement of health or correction of physical deformity.

Among the types (of corrective exercise) are those that (1) increase or maintain mobility of the joints and surrounding soft tissues, (2) develop coordination through control of individual muscles, (3) increase muscular strength and endurance, and (4) promote relaxation and relief of tension.”

Kettlebell training can help you address *all* of these things (and more).

Here's why -

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **3 Benefits of the Kettlebell for Corrective Exercise**

Here are three great reasons why the kettlebell is a great tool for corrective exercise applications:

#### **#1) KB's teach good lifting mechanics**

The odd shape of the kettlebell – essentially a fat-grip handle with a ball-shaped weight attached to it – makes it (among other things) unwieldy. But – objects in the real world are odd-shaped as well – so this is a GOOD thing if we're trying to teach proper lifting mechanics – which is key in proper movement.

As an example, the KB sumo deadlift trains an individual to pick up a weight correctly from the ground. This movement can then be progressed to a swing when the individual is ready.

#### **#2) KB's require dynamic movement – which is present in real life**

Pain many times is not present when a subject lays still – but presents itself in various ways during dynamic movement.

For example, shoulder pain may not be present when the subject is in a seated position, but when attempting to get up off the floor, the pain may be aggravated.

Training with kettlebells is a great way to integrate dynamic movement into the pain relief progression. Going back to the kettlebell swing example, this is a movement that requires dynamic – and actually ballistic – motion under a load, which happens frequently in real life.

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **#3) KB training demands perfect muscle activation – which in turn protects and stabilizes the body**

Proper execution of all foundational kettlebell movements demand muscle activation (especially scapular stabilization) of those muscle groups that protect the spine, lower back and pelvis – and this is key for taking a preventive approach to pain management.

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **How to Use This Program**

Now – the intention of this manual is not to diagnose injury, or tell you specifically what to do and how to rehab/correct/etc. specific injury or movement dysfunction conditions. The intention is to show you how kettlebells can be used as a *tool* for corrective exercise, and to show you the basic exercises you would use to do that and how to perform them with perfect form.

HardStyle kettlebell training movements are so multi-joint and multi-movement in nature that it's frankly impossible to break them up into specific isolation movements that could be applied to specific areas.

Also – I would suggest really spending the time to learn the deadlift, the swing, and the Turkish get up perfectly. Do this and you'll have the tools in your toolbox to help with most common movement problems. Learn each movement in and out. Learn the best way to progress and regress each exercise. Then you can progress on to the more “advanced” moves outlined in this program.

So ... without further ado ... kettlebells for corrective exercise!!



## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Kettlebell Deadlift Progressions

*These KB deadlift progression exercises are intended to serve as tools to help you learn and perfect proper swing technique. You need to have the deadlift motion down before you attempt the full swing, and this sequence of moves will help you get into and "feel" proper body position for the exercise.*

### Face-the-Wall KB Sumo Deadlift



To perform the face-wall deadlift, start with your feet between hip and shoulder width apart. The feet are going to be slightly narrower than a

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

squat position here. The best way to learn this exercise is to do it facing a wall.

Just like a Squat, the shins stay vertical, the chest stays up, and the shoulders stay back, only now we start the movement by pulling our hips back behind us.

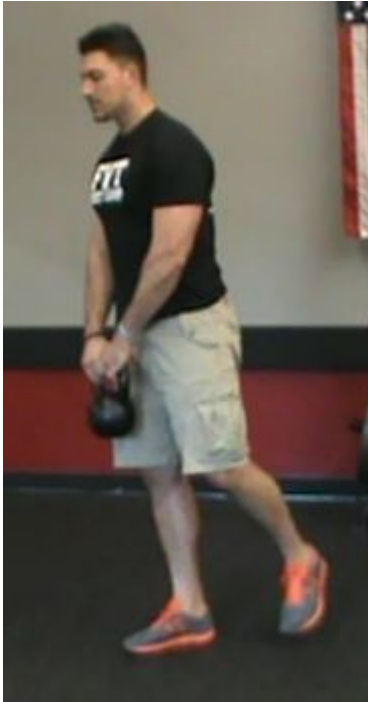
## **The Standard KB Sumo Deadlift**



This is just a simple sumo deadlift with the kettlebell between the feet. This is the movement you need to get down before you move on to a full blown swing.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### SLDL (Single Leg Deadlift)

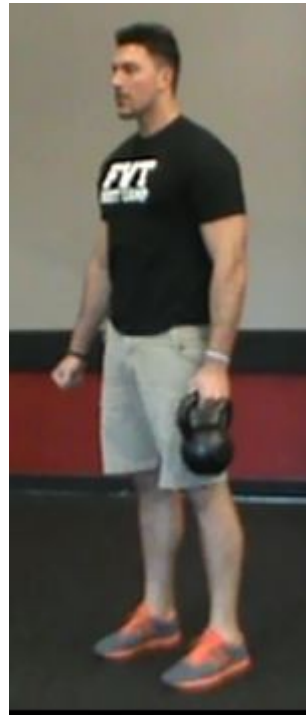


The mechanics of a SLDL are just like a regular deadlift – the exercise is simply performed on one leg.

Begin the exercise by balancing on one leg. Keeping the back flat, the shoulders locked back and the abs braced, descend into a deadlift position. Think about leading with the back leg. Pause for a moment at the bottom of the move and then squeeze the glute of the down leg to return to the starting position of the exercise.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### The Suitcase Deadlift



This is a similar movement to the deadlift – now we are simply doing it with the kettlebell on one side of the body only.

*With your clients that are beginners, just coming off an injury, etc. - this may be where you stay for a long while. The deadlift (and the ½ TGU, which is coming in a bit) are the two basic movements that you should focus on as your basic interventions with these type of clients. But when you are ready to progress, you can move to -*

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Kettlebell Swing Progressions

*The kettlebell swing is a complex, often misunderstood, and highly technical kettlebell move. It forms the foundation of much future kettlebell work, so it's an absolutely essential exercise to learn properly and continue to refine as you progress with your kettlebell training. The easiest way to learn the swing is to break it down into simple steps, as follows:*

#### The ½ Kettlebell Swing



Two things to think about: make sure you're 'hike passing' the weight back between the legs on the downswing; again, this movement is like a



## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

deadlift, not a squat. Try to get the bottom of the kettlebell to face the wall behind you as you hike pass it back. Then, snap the hips and swing the weight up. If you're doing it right, the arms are loose and the legs are doing the job of lifting the weight. It's not a squat and front raise, it's a hip snap. The knees lock out and the hips come all the way through – the force is then efficiently transferred to the upper body.

### **The Standard Two Hand Swing**

When you feel comfortable with the ½ swing, you can progress to the full swing. The mechanics of this movement are the same as the half swing, the hip snap is just more powerful and the 'bell should swing up to about shoulder height.



### **The One Hand Swing**

Now, there are several variations of the basic swing. The one we'll cover here and that best for corrective exercise applications is the single-hand swing. The form here should be identical to the basic swing, with one exception: turn the hand slightly in on the bottom of the movement. You should feel like you're pouring a pitcher of water.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

This is to pre-stretch the external rotators and allow for a more comfortable bottom position of the swing.



Another thing to keep in mind is shoulder and lat engagement; the elbow should be straight, but be sure to pull the shoulder back 'into its socket'; don't let the arm separate from the body as you swing the weight up. Keep the lats (the muscles underneath your armpits) tight and flexed at all times.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Turkish Get Up Progressions

*In contrast to the swing, the get-up is a slow and controlled movement – it's considered a 'grind'. As a frame of reference, fast, explosive movements like the swing, clean, and snatch are considered 'balistics'.*

*We worked the back of the body with the swing – the hams, glutes, and back – now we're hitting most of the muscle groups in the front. This is a highly complex movement, so I'll break it down into steps for you:*

### The ½ Turkish Get Up



1. Start by lying on the ground with the kettlebell at your side. Grab the 'bell, pull it into your body, and roll to your back.
2. Press the single kettlebell straight up to the sky. Make sure your wrist is straight and you have a firm grip on the kettlebell handle.





## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

3. 'Punch' up towards the ceiling while rolling on to the elbow at the same time. Your shoulder blades are pinched together and the chest is 'high'.

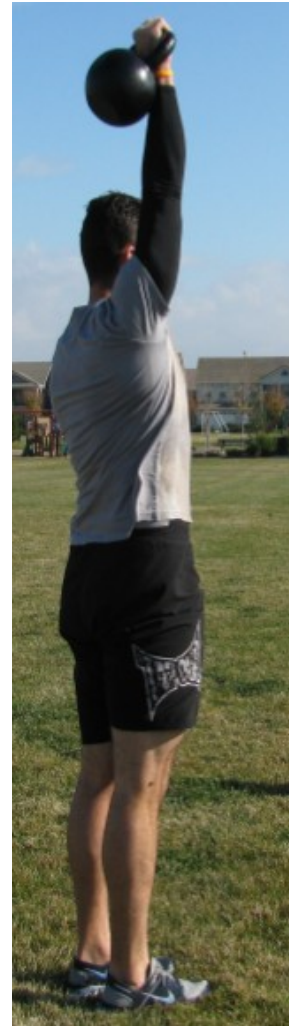


This is the first 'half' of the movement. You'll want to learn the movement by getting this part down first, with no weight to start, and then with weight added as you get better at it. This is not only something to practice but a viable exercise; I use the ½ get-up in personal training sessions and group classes all the time.

Once you have the ½ get-up down, it's time to progress to doing the complete movement, which involves standing all the way up.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### The Full Turkish Get Up



Next, bring the knee 'through' your hips and to about six inches away from the same hand. Squeeze the glute and come up to a lunge position; take a deep breath, hold it, and stand up.

Slowly reverse the motion and return to the ground.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Additional Kettlebell Exercises for Corrective Applications

*The swing and the Turkish Get Up should really be the two main movements for your corrective exercise applications. Spend the majority of your time learning and applying these. The exercises in this section should be thought of as "additions" to the two basics.*

#### The KB Box Squat



To perform the squat, start with your feet between hip and shoulder width apart, and your toes pointed straight ahead or slightly out. Weight is back through the heels, chest is tall, and shoulder blades are pushed down and back. Sit back as if you're sitting on a chair. The lower legs should stay completely vertical. Imagine that you are stuck in cement up to your knees.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### The KB Rack Squat



In the rack squat, the kettlebell is simply racked on one side; this adds a unique core and stabilization challenge to the exercise.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Windmill

The windmill is an awesome exercise for building core strength, shoulder stability and mobility, for “unlocking” the hips, and a whole lot more ... however, it's a bit tricky to master. Follow this progression to learn the exercise:

#### Weightless Windmill

Start with a kettlebell at the instep of your foot. Your feet should be pointed to the side at approximately 45 degrees.

Poke your hip out to the side. **The movement in this exercise is coming from the hip and not the torso.**

Let the hand slide down the leg; tap the 'bell and stand up.

(You're imagining you have a kettlebell in your top hand throughout the movement here.)





## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Bottom-Hand Windmill

Same exact movement; now you're simply picking up the 'bell with your bottom hand.



## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

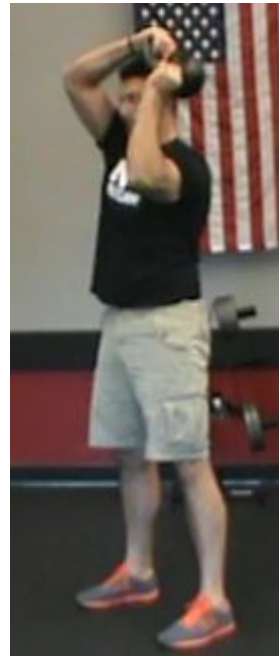
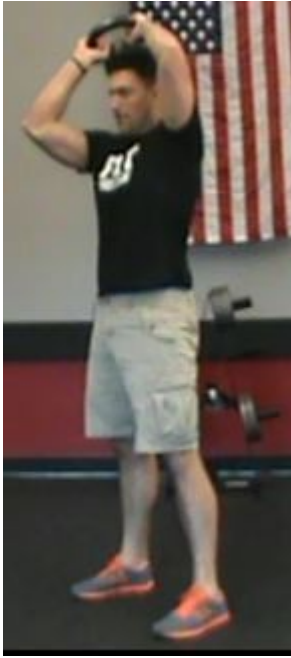
### Standard Windmill

Same movement – only now the KB is overhead. Arm is locked, shoulder is “packed” - same principles as the TGU. Make sure you tense the glute and engage the core to stand up.



## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### The Halo



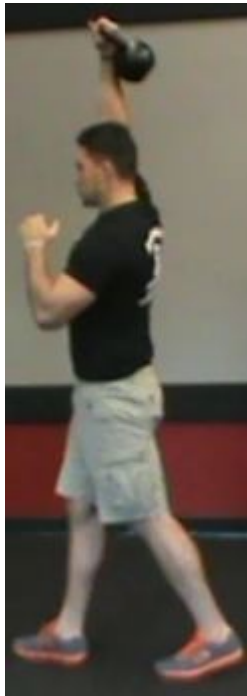
This is a great move for warming up, loosening up the shoulders, and a lot more. It is best done as an “accessory” movement once you've mastered the rest.

Pick the 'bell up off of the floor with great form. Bring it up to shoulder level. Make circles around your head, keeping your shoulders down and back. Make sure to 're-set' and pause for a moment with the 'bell underneath your chin between each rep.



## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### The Overhead Walk



This is a great one for both shoulder mobility and stability. You can use it as a warm up movement or as a stand-alone drill of its own in your programming.

Press a KB over your head. Keep the shoulder down and back and “packed” into the socket. Keep the elbow locked out. Walk around the room.

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **Conclusion**

At first glance, a kettlebell (KB) looks like a cast-iron wrecking ball.

And chances are, if you have pain issues of any kind, kettlebells movements you've seen probably looks like the LAST thing you'd want to do ...

But, quite to the contrary, KB's are a great tool for corrective exercise training. They can be used to treat individuals with pain in the low back, shoulder, knee, ankle, and much more.

The exercises outlined in this manual are a great starting point for utilizing the kettlebell in your corrective exercise programming.

Train hard, and I look forward to hearing your success story.

Forest Vance  
Master of Science, Human Movement  
Certified Russian Kettlebell Instructor  
Certified Corrective Exercise Specialist

## **Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise**

### **Additional Resources**

**<http://kettlebellbasics.net>** – Forest's KB blog with weekly updated workouts, videos, training tips, and much more.

**<http://30daykettlebellfatloss.com>** – Learn how to lose as much fat as humanly possible in 30 days – with kettlebells!

**<http://10x10kettlebells.com>** – 10 exercises, 10 workouts, and 10 weeks to transform your body.

**<http://kettlebell-circuits.com>** – Extreme cardio conditioning – with kettlebells

**<http://kettlebellswingsforfatloss.net/>** - Learn the basics of kettlebell training and become a HardStyle kettlebell swing master.

**<http://kettlebellswingsforfatloss.net/premiumworkouts/>** - The KettlebellBasics.net Premium Workouts mega-bundle.

**<http://fvtcoachingclub.com/>** - Get ALL of Forest's kettlebell workout programs, videos, body weight training resources, meal planning guides, and more for one low price.

## Kettlebells for Corrective Exercise

### Sources Referenced

"FMS vs SFMA." *Gray Cook Movement, Functional Movement Systems*. Web. 26 Jan. 2012. <<http://graycookmovement.com/?p=29>>.

"Kettlebell Training - What Is Kettlebell Training? Learn the Basics About Kettlebell Training, Techniques and Exercises." *Exercise - Get Weight Loss Advice, Cardio and Strength Training Workouts, Information on How to Get Started and More*. Web. 01 Jan. 2012. <<http://exercise.about.com/od/exerciseworkouts/a/kettlebelltraining.htm>>.

"Kettlebell." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. Web. 14 Jan. 2012. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kettlebell>>.

"Return of the Kettlebell - Explosive Kettlebell Training for Explosive Muscle Gains - By Pavel - Book | Dragon Door." *Homepage | Books | Dragon Door*. Web. 26 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.dragondoor.com/shop-by-department/books/b40/>>.

"Sore Knees Exercise | Turbulence Training Fat Loss." *Fat Loss Advice From Craig Ballantyne*. Web. 12 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.ttfatloss.com/sore-knees-exercise/>>.