

# put the kettle on for your clients

## KETTLEBELL TRAINING IS AN ANCIENT CONCEPT THAT COULD SOON BE MAKING A RETURN INTO GROUP EXERCISE SCHEDULES IN HEALTH CLUBS ACROSS THE UK

Optimal Life Fitness has been holding kettlebell workouts in parts of London for the past year and they have been proving to be extremely popular. For people bored of the usual routine, kettlebell training will provide you with a fresh new workout. From strength to cardio workouts, the training can be easily adapted to meet your client's goals. I found this whole idea really appealing so I went to check out one of the strength and conditioning classes of Tommy Matthews, co-founder of Optimal Life Fitness, in Wandsworth Common, South London.

First I needed to find out exactly what a kettlebell is. It looks just like a small canon ball with a handle – it is cast iron and comes in weights ranging between 8kg and 40kg. “The kettlebell is such a versatile piece of equipment – you can literally do everything with one bell,” said BJ Rule, also a co-founder of Optimal Life Fitness. BJ was one of the first personal trainers to use kettlebells after training with Bikram, the resident strongman in the Moscow State Circus, and Pavel Tassoulina, a leading authority in kettlebells. BJ was so impressed with the versatility of the kettlebells that it inspired himself and Tommy to regularly use them in their classes.

REPORT: HELEN JONES



*“Everybody will be looking for gyms with kettlebells in them and personal trainers who have a kettlebell certification will be sought after and in demand from the general public.”*

*Tommy Matthews, co-founder of Optimal Life Fitness*



I was fairly stiff for a few days after the class – my glutes, adductors and hamstrings were a bit sore. The kettlebell class worked all my muscles over a full joint range of movement. Tommy said: “We often find that women are afraid to use heavy ‘weightlifting’ types of equipment for fear of developing huge muscles. In fact, the opposite is true – lifting weights, such as kettlebells, helps to strengthen and lengthen key muscles and can help create a long lean and toned body. Training the body to lift heavy weights correctly also works effectively as part of a weight-loss programme, because the muscles burn up a lot of energy as they work.”

Optimal Life Fitness is predicting that kettlebells will be the next big craze in the fitness industry. “Everybody will be looking for gyms with kettlebells in them and personal trainers who have a kettlebell certification will be sought after and in demand from the general public. In fact, we don’t just predict – we know,” exclaims Tommy.

Optimal Life Fitness currently holds boxing classes, as well as kettlebell, in parks across London, but they are now looking to expand their “Outdoor Extreme” training sessions nationally. This is where you come in! The search is on for instructors to start up their own classes in the UK and Ireland. Optimal Life Fitness is looking for trainers who stand out as being confident and of a high athletic ability to set up Outdoor Extreme training sessions in parks and outdoor spaces near them.

Trainers will be selected during the Extreme National Tour, when the REPs-accredited kettlebell instructor course will be running in venues across the UK and Ireland. It is a two-day course designed to introduce personal trainers to kettlebell training for their clients. Part of Optimal Life Fitness’s extreme education system, it is built to take trainers from a basic level of kettlebell instruction through to the highest level – an Extreme Kettlebell master trainer.

Optimal Life Fitness believes that trainers will benefit highly from their Extreme Kettlebell Instructor Training Courses. Tommy believes that the demand, and therefore hourly rate, for kettlebell instructors is soon to increase, especially when the classes take off in the health clubs. If you’re looking for a new training opportunity, this could be what you’re after. Could you put the kettle on for your clients? **fp**



Kettlebells can be used for an all-over body workout as they are beneficial for:

- improving posture
- increased athletic performance
- improved functional movement patterns
- increased dynamic flexibility
- working all areas of fitness; ie, strength, power, speed, endurance, flexibility.

As it was my first class, Tommy gave me the lightest of the kettlebells, the 8kg. The all-female class began with a warm-up of jogging around the common and then circuit-like exercises with the kettlebell. The group all had a fairly high level of fitness and it was clear they were all committed attendees. I spoke to one of the women who had just completed the Great North Run and she proceeded to tell me that the kettlebell classes are just part of her regular training.

We started by working the hip flexors with a series of front squats and jogging intermittently to shake out the muscle. I found the kettlebell easy enough to use – I just needed to spend a bit of time getting the techniques exactly right to ensure I got the most from the workout. Tommy was great in assisting me with this – as I mentioned previously, his other participants were all regulars and confident with all the techniques. There are several exercises that are unique to the kettlebell – such as the swing, which targets the glutes but gets your heart and lungs going at the same time. Other exercises we practised included the dead lift, shoulder press and one arm rows.

I did really enjoy the kettlebell training. It was different to anything I’ve done before and it was a very intense workout. The class was very enthusiastic, which must reflect Tommy’s instructing, and especially as the women are all there week in, week out. It was also nice to do a group session in the open space for a change – a great atmosphere and almost refreshing, even though we were sweating a fair bit!

For more information on the training courses or to purchase the new range of Extreme Kettlebells, call 08709 507 315, email [info@optimallifefitness.com](mailto:info@optimallifefitness.com) or visit [www.optimallifefitness.com](http://www.optimallifefitness.com)