

# Kettlebell Safety

(Ron Jones, MS, ACSM Health Fitness Specialist, Corporate Wellcoach)



**“Don’t be stupid!”**

--David “Iron Tamer” Whitley, Senior RKC Instructor

**Physical Ability:** When using Russian Kettlebells (KBs) for *fitness*, they provide a very high-intensity workout! Rehab applications are available, but my handout is focused on fitness—not rehab specifically. Make sure you are able to perform exercise at high intensity before beginning any KB “fitness workout.” Consult with a professional health-care provider as needed.

<b>Safety Actions</b>	<b>Technical Notes</b>
☞ Mental Focus	Never pick up a KB until you are <b>fully engaged</b> in the moment. Focus on the immediate task “in hand”—ONLY.
1. Attitude!	If you don’t mean business, don’t pick up the KB! Leave and return another day when you’re ready for full engagement!
2. Feet	For optimal force transfer, go barefoot or use hard-soled shoes like <i>Converse</i> .
3. <u>HARD</u> Lockout	Before you can even pick up the KB and begin, you must know how to apply muscle tension and lockout your core properly for optimal spinal stabilization. The lockout will “protect” your back.
4. Squat Mechanics	Use Face-The-Wall and Box Squats to assess and correct any compensations then move into deadlifts. Make sure to use HARD LOCKOUT technique to FINISH your squat and deadlift as well as other KB exercises so that you maintain spinal stability.
5. Grip	<b>HOLD ON!</b> Don’t lose your concentration, intensity—or your grip! Hold on tight enough to control the KB, but don’t overgrip to the point of causing unneeded lower extremity stress. For multiple rep sets like the <i>Secret Service Snatch Test</i> , consider using chalk to keep hands dry and grip from slipping. Using gloves can decrease your tactile sensory input, grip force, and impede your ability to “feel” the KB position and force lines; however, some use gloves for high-rep sets.

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6. Wrist	Keep wrist neutral—or straight. Don't hyperextend.
7. Shoulder	Keep shoulder "packed" by lowering back and down into its optimal position of control and strength.
8. Line of Fire	KBs used properly are VERY dynamic—they MOVE! Make sure the KB swing path is clear of equipment— <b>and people!</b> Secure KB exercise area making others aware to <b>stay clear</b> until you're are <b>completely finished</b> with set.
9. Control	Don't fight the KB for control of air space because the KB will win! If you can't control the KB in the proper position, drop it off and jump out of way as opposed to letting it dislocate your shoulder or worse! If you dump the KB, make sure to QUICKLY get your body out of the way!
10. Stay with Set	Stay focused on your set until AFTER you have locked out and stood away from the KB. <i>This is mental as much as physical.</i> Condition your mind to always follow the basic fundamentals for optimal safety and performance...then your body will follow!
11. Recovery	Don't collapse or be weak after your sets Comrades! Stay moving for optimal recovery. Stand up straight so lungs can expand and breathe deeply with diaphragm.
12. Progressions	Only lift what you can control and in sequential progressions. Remember to master the seven fundamental KB movements: Deadlift, Swing, Clean, Press, Turkish Get Up, High Pull, and Snatch. Never skip over or rush the basic fundamentals above!
13. Fundamentals	No matter how advanced you get with KBs, always return to the fundamentals, and focus on quality. This will guarantee you not only the best safety—but optimal performance as well.
<b>IRON TAMER RULE!</b>	<b>"Don't be stupid!"</b> by Senior RKC Instructor David Whitley is the best Kettlebell advice you can get, so use it Comrades!

\* Ron Jones (7.18.09)