

best single kettlebell workouts

The best single kettlebell workouts offer a potent and versatile approach to strength training, cardiovascular conditioning, and mobility enhancement, all with a single piece of equipment. Mastering a few fundamental movements with a single kettlebell can unlock a full-body workout that burns calories, builds lean muscle, and improves functional strength. This article will guide you through the most effective single kettlebell exercises, explaining proper form, detailing how to structure your training, and highlighting the numerous benefits of incorporating them into your fitness regimen. We'll cover everything from foundational movements like the swing and goblet squat to more dynamic exercises, ensuring you can maximize your results with just one kettlebell.

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Understanding the Power of a Single Kettlebell

The beauty of a single kettlebell lies in its simplicity and versatility. Unlike dumbbells or barbells that often require a range of weights for a comprehensive workout, a single kettlebell, when chosen correctly, can serve as the cornerstone of an incredibly effective fitness program. This iconic piece of cast iron, with its offset center of gravity, challenges your body in unique ways, engaging stabilizing muscles that are often neglected in traditional training. This makes it an unparalleled tool for building functional strength, improving coordination, and enhancing overall athleticism.

A single kettlebell workout taps into compound movements that mimic real-life activities, such as lifting, carrying, and swinging. This functional aspect translates directly into improved performance in everyday tasks and athletic endeavors. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of many kettlebell exercises, particularly the ballistic movements like the swing, elevates your heart rate, providing a significant cardiovascular stimulus alongside the strength gains. This dual benefit makes kettlebell training exceptionally time-efficient and effective for those looking to optimize their fitness without spending hours in the gym.

Foundational Single Kettlebell Exercises for Maximum Impact

Every effective single kettlebell workout program begins with mastering a few core movements. These foundational exercises are the building blocks upon which more complex variations and routines are built. They engage multiple

muscle groups simultaneously, promoting efficient strength development and calorie expenditure. Prioritizing proper form in these movements is paramount to prevent injury and ensure you reap the full benefits.

The Kettlebell Swing

The kettlebell swing is arguably the most iconic kettlebell exercise and the cornerstone of most single kettlebell workouts. It's a powerful, hip-hinge dominant movement that targets the posterior chain—glutes, hamstrings, and lower back—while also engaging the core and shoulders. The explosive nature of the swing builds power and cardiovascular endurance.

- **Execution:** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, kettlebell on the floor slightly in front of you. Hinge at your hips, keeping your back straight, and grip the kettlebell with both hands. Hike the kettlebell back between your legs like a football snap. Then, powerfully drive your hips forward, squeezing your glutes, to swing the kettlebell up to chest or eye level. Let gravity bring the kettlebell back down, allowing it to pass between your legs as you hinge again to prepare for the next rep.
- **Common Mistakes:** Relying on arm strength instead of hip drive, squatting instead of hinging, and rounding the back.

The Goblet Squat

The goblet squat is an excellent exercise for building lower body strength and improving squat mechanics. Holding the kettlebell at chest level forces an upright torso, encouraging proper depth and engaging the core for stability. It's a fantastic precursor to barbell squats and a staple for leg development in any single kettlebell routine.

- **Execution:** Hold one kettlebell by the horns (the sides of the handle) close to your chest. Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly out. Keeping your chest up and back straight, descend into a squat as if sitting back into a chair. Aim to get your elbows to the inside of your knees and your thighs parallel to the floor or lower, if mobility allows. Drive through your heels to return to the starting position, squeezing your glutes at the top.
- **Benefits:** Enhances core strength, improves posture, and builds quads, glutes, and hamstrings.

The Kettlebell Clean

The clean is a more technical movement that brings the kettlebell from the floor to the rack position (resting on the front of your shoulder). It's a powerful, full-body exercise that develops explosive strength and coordination, preparing you for overhead movements and advanced kettlebell

exercises.

- **Execution:** Begin in a hinged position with the kettlebell on the floor. Initiate by driving off the floor with your hips and legs, similar to the swing. As the kettlebell ascends, guide it towards your shoulder, rotating your wrist and forearm under the bell to catch it in the rack position. Ensure your elbow is tucked and the bell is resting comfortably. This is a one-rep movement, often followed by a press or used to transition to other exercises.
- **Focus:** Developing a strong hip drive and a clean rack position is crucial for safety and effectiveness.

The Kettlebell Press

The overhead press is a fundamental strength exercise that targets the shoulders, triceps, and upper chest. When performed with a kettlebell in the rack position, it requires significant core engagement to maintain stability and prevent arching of the lower back.

- **Execution:** Start with the kettlebell in the rack position on one side. Brace your core tightly. Press the kettlebell straight overhead, extending your arm fully but without locking out the elbow forcefully. Lower the kettlebell back to the rack position under control. Alternate sides for a balanced workout.
- **Variations:** Can be performed standing or seated, and can also be done from the clean.

Building Strength and Power with Dynamic Kettlebell Movements

Once the foundational movements are solid, you can progress to more dynamic exercises that leverage the kettlebell's unique properties to build explosive power and overall strength. These movements often involve more coordination and skill, but they offer significant rewards in terms of athletic development and calorie burn.

The Kettlebell Snatch

The kettlebell snatch is a highly demanding, full-body exercise that combines the clean and the press into a single, explosive movement. It's a fantastic way to build power, improve coordination, and dramatically increase your heart rate. Mastering the snatch requires practice and attention to detail.

- **Execution:** Start with the kettlebell on the floor. Perform a powerful hip hinge and drive, pulling the kettlebell up and explosively pulling

yourself under the bell, catching it overhead in a locked-out arm position. Control the descent by letting the bell drop back to the floor or transitioning into a swing.

- **Progression:** It is recommended to master the swing and clean before attempting the snatch.

The Kettlebell Clean and Press

This classic two-part movement is a staple for building upper body strength and power. By combining the clean with the press, you create a compound exercise that taxes the entire body and is highly functional.

- **Execution:** Perform a kettlebell clean to bring the bell to the rack position. From the rack position, press the kettlebell overhead as described previously. Lower the kettlebell back to the rack and then control its descent to the floor or prepare for another clean.
- **Focus:** Smooth transitions between the clean and the press are key.

Kettlebell Lunges

Lunges are excellent for unilateral leg strength, balance, and core stability. Holding a kettlebell adds resistance and challenges your stabilizing muscles even further.

- **Execution:** Hold one kettlebell in the goblet position or in one hand. Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at approximately 90-degree angles. Ensure your front knee is over your ankle and your back knee hovers just above the ground. Push off your front foot to return to the starting position. Alternate legs.
- **Variations:** Forward lunges, reverse lunges, and walking lunges can all be performed with a kettlebell.

Kettlebell Turkish Get-Up

The Turkish Get-Up (TGU) is a comprehensive, low-impact exercise that builds strength, stability, and mobility through a complex series of movements. It's performed slowly and deliberately, making it excellent for developing body awareness and core strength.

- **Execution:** Lie on your back with a kettlebell held overhead in one hand. Roll onto your side, then push up onto your elbow, then your hand, all while keeping the kettlebell stable overhead. Extend your legs and sweep one leg under to get into a low bridge position. Pull the extended leg through to a kneeling position. Stand up with the kettlebell still

overhead. Reverse the process to return to the starting position.

- **Benefits:** Improves shoulder stability, core strength, hip mobility, and overall coordination.

Incorporating Kettlebells for Cardio and Endurance

The dynamic nature of many single kettlebell workouts makes them exceptionally effective for cardiovascular conditioning. By performing exercises like swings and snatches for repetitions or in timed intervals, you can elevate your heart rate significantly, leading to improved stamina and endurance.

Kettlebell Swings for Conditioning

The kettlebell swing, when performed with a focus on volume or intensity, is one of the best single kettlebell exercises for cardiovascular improvement. It engages large muscle groups, demanding a high metabolic response.

- **Workout Structure:** Perform swings for a set number of repetitions (e.g., 10-20) with short rest periods, or perform them for a set duration (e.g., 30-60 seconds) in a circuit.
- **Benefits:** Develops explosive power and cardiovascular fitness simultaneously.

Kettlebell Complexes and Circuits

Kettlebell complexes involve performing a series of exercises back-to-back with the same kettlebell without putting it down. This creates a demanding cardiovascular challenge and builds muscular endurance.

- **Example Complex:** 5 swings, 5 cleans (each side), 5 presses (each side), 5 squats. Repeat for several rounds.
- **Circuit Training:** Move between different kettlebell exercises with minimal rest, completing a full circuit before taking a longer break. This approach maximizes calorie burn and cardiovascular stress.

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) with Kettlebells

Kettlebell HIIT workouts are incredibly effective for improving fitness in a short amount of time. They involve short bursts of intense exercise followed by brief recovery periods.

- **HIIT Protocol:** Perform a kettlebell exercise (like swings or snatches) for 20-30 seconds at maximal effort, followed by 10-20 seconds of rest. Repeat for 8-10 rounds.
- **Benefits:** Significant calorie burn in a short period, improved VO2 max, and enhanced metabolic rate.

Programming Your Best Single Kettlebell Workouts

To achieve the best results from your single kettlebell training, a well-structured program is essential. The program should consider your goals, current fitness level, and available equipment.

Full-Body Workouts

Given the compound nature of kettlebell exercises, full-body workouts are highly efficient and effective. You can hit all major muscle groups in a single session, making it ideal for those with limited time.

- **Sample Workout:**
 - Kettlebell Swings: 3 sets of 10-15 reps
 - Goblet Squats: 3 sets of 8-12 reps
 - Kettlebell Rows (single arm): 3 sets of 8-12 reps per side
 - Kettlebell Presses (single arm): 3 sets of 6-10 reps per side
 - Plank with Kettlebell Pass-Through: 3 sets of 30-60 seconds
- **Frequency:** Aim for 2-4 full-body sessions per week, with rest days in between.

Upper/Lower Body Splits

While full-body is often ideal, you can also implement an upper/lower body split if you prefer or if your recovery allows for more frequent training. This allows for a greater focus on specific muscle groups within each session.

- **Upper Body Day:** Focus on presses, rows, snatches, and carries.
- **Lower Body Day:** Emphasize goblet squats, lunges, and swings.
- **Core Work:** Integrate core exercises into both days or dedicate specific time to them.

Strength vs. Conditioning Focus

Your program should align with your primary fitness goals. If your focus is strength, use heavier weights (if possible) and lower repetitions with adequate rest. For conditioning, prioritize higher repetitions, shorter rest, and timed intervals.

- **Strength Focus:** Lower rep ranges (3-6) for exercises like presses and squats, with longer rest periods (90-120 seconds).
- **Conditioning Focus:** Higher rep ranges (15-20+) or timed sets (30-60 seconds) for swings, snatches, and complexes, with shorter rest (30-60 seconds).

Tips for Maximizing Your Kettlebell Training

To get the most out of your single kettlebell workouts, consider these practical tips. They address form, progression, safety, and overall effectiveness, ensuring you build a sustainable and rewarding fitness practice.

- **Start with a Lighter Weight:** Prioritize perfect form over lifting heavy. It's better to perform 10 perfect swings than 20 sloppy ones that can lead to injury.
- **Invest in a Quality Kettlebell:** A well-made kettlebell with a comfortable handle will enhance your training experience and durability.
- **Warm-Up Thoroughly:** Dynamic movements like arm circles, leg swings, and torso twists are crucial before starting your workout.
- **Cool Down and Stretch:** Static stretching after your workout can help improve flexibility and reduce muscle soreness.
- **Listen to Your Body:** Rest and recovery are as important as the workouts themselves. Don't push through sharp pain.
- **Progress Gradually:** As you get stronger, you can increase the weight, repetitions, sets, or decrease rest times.
- **Seek Professional Guidance:** If you are new to kettlebells, consider working with a certified kettlebell instructor to ensure proper

technique.

FAQ

Q: What is the best single kettlebell weight to start with?

A: The best starting weight depends on your current fitness level, gender, and the specific exercises you plan to perform. For men, a common starting weight for swings and goblet squats is 16kg (35 lbs), while for women, 8kg (18 lbs) or 12kg (26 lbs) is often recommended. Always prioritize form over weight.

Q: How often should I do single kettlebell workouts?

A: For general fitness and muscle building, 2-4 sessions per week are typically sufficient, allowing for adequate recovery between workouts. If your focus is purely on cardiovascular conditioning, you might engage in kettlebell circuits or HIIT more frequently, perhaps 3-5 times a week, but always listen to your body.

Q: Can I build significant muscle with just one kettlebell?

A: Yes, you can build muscle with a single kettlebell, especially by focusing on compound movements, higher repetitions, and progressive overload. While you might not achieve the same hypertrophy as with a full gym, kettlebells excel at building lean muscle and muscular endurance, particularly in the posterior chain and core.

Q: What are the most common mistakes beginners make with kettlebell workouts?

A: Common mistakes include using the arms instead of the hips for power (especially in swings), rounding the back, squatting instead of hinging, and not controlling the descent of the kettlebell. Improper form can lead to injuries and reduce the effectiveness of the exercise.

Q: How can I make my single kettlebell workout more challenging without buying more weights?

A: You can increase the challenge by increasing the volume (more reps or sets), decreasing rest times, performing exercises for longer durations, using more complex exercise variations (like snatches or Turkish get-ups), or implementing tempo training (slowing down the eccentric or concentric phases of a movement).

Q: Is a single kettlebell good for weight loss?

A: Absolutely. The best single kettlebell workouts, particularly those involving ballistic movements like swings and snatches, are excellent for calorie burning and boosting metabolism. Combining these workouts with a balanced diet is highly effective for weight loss.

Q: What is a kettlebell complex, and why is it beneficial?

A: A kettlebell complex is a series of exercises performed consecutively with the same kettlebell without putting it down. They are beneficial because they increase workout density, enhance cardiovascular fitness, improve muscular endurance, and promote better coordination and flow between movements, all in a time-efficient manner.

Q: How important is breathing during kettlebell exercises?

A: Breathing is crucial for stability, power, and endurance. Generally, you exhale forcefully during the exertion phase of an exercise (e.g., the upswing of a swing, the press overhead) and inhale during the easier or recovery phase. Proper breathing helps brace the core and manage fatigue.

Q: Can I perform a full body workout with just one kettlebell if it's too light for some exercises?

A: Yes. Even if a kettlebell feels light for certain exercises like squats or presses, you can still create a challenging full-body workout by increasing repetitions, performing exercises for time, or utilizing more demanding variations like single-leg exercises or complexes that incorporate lighter movements. The focus should always be on engaging the muscles effectively.

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results for people at home with one or more kettlebells from beginner to advanced and always scalable. The book contains kettlebell strength workouts, AMRAP workouts, FOR TIME workouts, high-intensity interval workouts, flexibility and mobility workouts, endurance workouts, and so much more. The book contains many under 20 and 30-minute workouts for people who are limited on time. Just grab your kettlebell, pick a 12-minute workout, and get your calorie burn in for the day. You will also get strategies and plans to incorporate these workouts into a long-term progression for certain goals. For those who are not yet familiar with all kettlebell techniques, the book also includes tips on form and technique plus common mistakes. It's very rare that a double kettlebell workout from this book can't be performed with a single kettlebell and just performing the work on one side and then the other. Therefore, even if you have just one kettlebell, you can still complete the double kettlebell workouts and as you progress with your technique and strength, you can work your way up to double kettlebell work. Each of these workouts has been designed and completed by myself, they have been completed by other Cavemantrainers, and many of our private members. In other words, they have been tested before they got to you. When it comes to kettlebell challenges, usually, I include quite a few challenges in the book, this time, the book is full of workouts and I picked the best so that there was no need to include more than two challenges. There is so much info on one of the challenges that you really could spend the rest of your training days following the challenge and obtain some of the best results you've ever seen with your training. When I completed this challenge, I was in the best shape of my life. FORM AND TECHNIQUE FIRST WEIGHT AND REPS SECOND

Cavemantraining, creating workouts since 2009. We have made it our mission to do things differently from the start and go against the grain. We're not stuck on one style or one way of doing things. We experiment, we analyze, we progress, and we create some of the best hybrid workouts out there. Cavemantraining is a pioneer in the kettlebell world. We've designed over one thousand unique and original kettlebell workouts. Each one has been carefully designed with a goal in mind, so there's something for everyone looking to improve their strength through kettlebells. Since 2009, Cavemantraining has served over 18,000 online students, sold over 15,000 books, created videos with over 12 million views, and built online communities reaching over 150 thousand people. We hope you'll allow us to be a part of your journey as you discover and learn everything there is about the kettlebell. Who Will Benefit From Buying This Book? Literally, anyone who has at least one kettlebell and is interested in some of the world's best kettlebell workouts will benefit from buying this book. There are basic workouts, beginner workouts, complex, double kettlebell, and advanced exercises in this book, but it's for everyone. I provide clear instructions on how to perform two-kettlebell workouts if you only have one bell, and I explain alternatives and progressions so that you can complete the workout and work your way up to the more advanced exercise when they are used. This book is for those who are tired of performing boring workouts that just contain swings, presses, squats, and presses. This book is for those who want to venture further and expand their knowledge to see what's truly available in the kettlebell world. It's for people who want to benefit from endurance, cardio, strength, power, flexibility, mobility, hybrid workouts, and so much more exciting training.

best single kettlebell workouts: The Ultimate Body Weight Workout: Top 10 Essential Body Weight Strength Training Equipments You Must Have Now The Blokehead, 2015-06-19 This book contains 10 of the ideal workout equipment for bodyweight strength training. You'll see information about workout equipment such as • Barbells • Dumbbells • Exercise bench • Pull-up bars • Kettlebells ...and many more. Aside from the basic information, you'll also see the benefits of getting the said equipment. It'll also tell you which parts of the body it'll help you improve. Grab the book now!

best single kettlebell workouts: *Kettlebell Workouts and Challenges V1.0* Taco Fleur, 2018-03-16 This book is targetted to at-home kettlebell enthusiasts, MMA and BJJ fighters, and crossfitters that use their open box time for kettlebell WODs. This book is even for budding trainers that want to know more about the Cavemantraining programs, and learn the basics on how to run them. programs, on how to run them. 40+ serious kettlebell workouts, 4 kettlebell challenges, many

are paired with very detailed videos. - Beginners to advanced workouts. - How to score AMRAP workouts. - Finer details on many of the exercises. - Quality emphasis on warming-up and mobility. - Full details of the popular Thorax Workout included in this book. - Additional ideas on how to make your WODs even more popular and exciting. - Additional little tips and information for personal trainers. Each workout is 100% kettlebells, mixed with bodyweight, or mixed with other equipment. Some workouts will have alternatives, or progressions. These are not shoddy quick workouts put together for a book, I've performed each and every workout listed in this book, and so have hundreds of others. -Taco Fleur This book is called Kettlebell Workouts and Challenges 1.0, obviously this book is then about the workouts and challenges, hence, I will be linking to a lot of external information rather than turning this into a book about kettlebell exercises, and / or technique, I I already have several books on those. This is not to say that this book does not contain technique or exercise information, but it is kept to a minimum, illustrated with many photos, while linking to more online info. The title is prefixed with 1.0 as we will be putting out plenty of more books with new workouts. BONUS: 1. Information for trainers on how to run your own Caveman Circuit, and Boot Camp. 2. Downloadable workout PDF that can be downloaded, printed and taken to the gym. 3. Downloadable kettlebell grip PDF that will improve your kettlebell training instantly. 4. Downloadable PDF that will improve your racking for resting and endurance. 5. Free kettlebell workouts mobile app for the Android.

best single kettlebell workouts: *The Complete Guide to Kettlebell Training* Allan Collins, 2015-12-08 The perfect introduction to kettlebell training, a hugely popular piece of equipment with tried and tested results. A kettlebell is a weight that looks like a cannonball with a handle. Originating from Russia, kettlebell training is now a global phenomenon with clubs, gyms and individuals investing in equipment and training. Weights range from 4kg to 48kg. They differ from dumbbells and barbells in that the centre of mass is offset from the handle, so the weight constantly pulls against your hand, improving coordination and anaerobic fitness and strengthening your core muscles. Kettlebells can be used for a variety of purposes - from weight loss to strength training - by people with a range of fitness levels. Popular with celebrities such as Penelope Cruz and Sylvester Stallone, they are also used for training players at Chelsea and Liverpool football clubs, and in 2010 the British Army got on board when their PTI corp (responsible for the Army's physical training) signed up to a 30-day course designed and implemented by the author. The book includes information on the benefits of kettlebell training and how to use the equipment safely, and provides warm-ups, drills and training programmes for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. From buying a kettlebell to training for weight loss, it's a comprehensive guide to a popular new fitness tool.

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amazing results.

best single kettlebell workouts: Kettlebell: Master the Fat-burning Workout for Total Body Transformation (Best Kettlebell Routine Full Body Exercises for Core, Abs, Glutes, Legs, and Upper Body Training) James Standridge, 101-01-01 Kettlebell complexes are one of my favorite kettlebell exercises because they provide a full-body, intensive workout in a short period of time. A kettlebell complex consists mostly of a sequence of distinct movements that are tied together. You complete the whole string of movements before dropping the kettlebell. Kettlebell complexes are beneficial because they provide a high-intensity, full-body workout in a short period of time. These kettlebell workouts can also help you improve your muscular strength, boost weightless and increase power. Here is a preview of what you'll learn... • What is Kettlebell Training and Why Is It Good For You • How Heavy Should You Lift? • Amazing Upper Body Exercises • Amazing Lower Body Exercises • The Ultimate Combo Exercises • And much, much more! You will be able to challenge yourself and develop incredible strength and unmatched conditioning with this body of work. By simply varying the density, intensity and volume of the workouts included, each workout becomes four!

best single kettlebell workouts: Kettlebell Workouts and Challenge 5 Taco Fleur, This book is the 5th in the Kettlebell Workouts and Challenges series, of which the first one was written back in 2017. The format of this book has been drastically improved and includes information on the workout benefits, recommended weight selection, the weights that we used, the average time to complete the workout, how many kettlebells are used, the overall intensity of the workout, intensity for each task of a workout, the number of exercises, reviews on the workout from others, description, how to score the workout, the score that we achieved, but above all, information on how to adjust any more advanced workouts to suit beginners. A quick introduction to the person who designed the workouts, i.e., me: I have over 2 decades of kettlebell experience, training people across the world, owned three gyms, and obtained certification with StrongFirst SFG2, RGSI, IKFF, IKSFA, CrossFit, I have reached Kettlebell Sport Rank 1, and have a background in Martial Arts as a rusty BJJ Purple Belt. I mention this so that you can have confidence in the quality of this product and the training methodology. I will include some reviews for my coaching, our business, and our products taken from thousands of verifiable reviews at the end of this book. I aim to explain and present everything as simply as possible without complex terms or going into too much detail. The workouts will be presented in an easy-to-read tabular format but also a linear format so that all layout preferences are addressed. A separate easy-to-print document is also available for download to people who purchased the book; this will make it easy to take the workouts with you to the gym and also to make notes. A whole online platform and social network for kettlebell enthusiasts is also included so that you can easily record your scoring for a workout, or you can be more specific and record against a task. You can also record notes for a workout, and you will collect all your favorite workouts in one easy-to-access place if you review/rate the workouts. The social network that is dedicated to kettlebell enthusiasts allows you to interact with others, create your kettlebell profile, find workout buddies, and so much more. In short, you are not just buying a book with the world's best kettlebell workouts. Who is this book for? This book is for anyone who is looking for exciting and effective routines with one kettlebell, two kettlebells, or hybrid workouts where kettlebell and bodyweight exercises are mixed. This book is for people who want to explore workouts that utilize mobility work for active recovery between intense tasks. Buy this book if you want to: Learn several workouts to incorporate into your routine Have your kettlebell workouts designed and in an easy-to-read format Have access to kettlebell workouts that focus on all types of goals Spice up your kettlebell training and achieve results Have workouts that you can scale to your level Be able to challenge yourself when ready Experience unique kettlebell workouts In this book, you will find short workouts, long workouts, easy workouts, hard workouts, fun workouts, mentally tough workouts, mobility workouts, power workouts, strength workouts, cardio workouts, and so much more. All workouts have been completed by myself, Anna, and many of our IKU™ members. Hence, they are not just some shoddy and quickly put-together scribbles that haven't been put to the test.

As someone who is over half a century of age and what I consider trains tough, I am proud to say that I have never experienced any major injuries, no hip replacements or other surgeries, and pretty much never sick. I attribute this to training hard but training smart and becoming in tune with the body and mind. Of course, an important factor is also the right nutrition and mindset.

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