



PREVENTION & REHABILITATION: EDITORIAL

The Kettlebell Lunge Clean exercise

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A B S T R A C T

Functional movements are designed to look at how our body functions in different environments. Power is often performed in the vertical plane and very stable positions of the body. Both life and sport require a great deal more complexity of movement with direction and deceleration playing key roles. The Kettlebell Lunge Clean (KLC) exercise is a safe and powerful exercise to teach these qualities and progress the power development and force absorption capabilities of the individual.

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1. Introduction

Olympic style weightlifting is an advanced exercise system that focuses on speed, acceleration, and power. Even though the time spent in learning these skills is an obstacle to their utility, the investment pays rich rewards for an individual. Traditional learning of the moves often focuses on the motions that are used in Olympic lifting such as clean, jerk, and snatch; however, there are variations in training such as the Kettlebell Lunge Clean exercise.

The Kettlebell Lunge Clean (KLC) is a powerful lifting drill used to achieve an advanced combination of stability, reactive strength, acceleration, deceleration, and tri-planar control in the lower body and core. Unlike the Olympic clean, which can strain the lower back, this variation in training reactively forces subjects to commence movement from their hips and posterior chain; in particular their gluteal muscles.

The KLC training helps individuals learn that during the lift the interaction of the feet with the ground creates a chain reaction up the lower extremities, to the pelvis/core, until the final expression of force through the upper body. These same attributes are fundamental to any locomotive types of activities that are key to human performance. The fact the KLC has directional movement in the horizontal plane as well as the vertical plane, makes it an excellent exercise in developing true functional fitness qualities. The deceleration of the body and load at the end of the motion makes the KLC a highly effective injury resiliency drill as well as a power movement. The three phases of KLC training can be seen below.

2. Phase 1

- Start with two kettlebells in the suitcase position. This will help maintain stability in the movement.

- Actively squeeze the handles of the kettlebells to engage the latissimus dorsi and core connection that will help create a plank-like action in the core and upper body.
- Lunge backwards, keeping the center of mass over the base of support to make the drill more accessible. See Fig. 1
- Attain a good lunge position with a vertical shin in the front leg and vertical thigh in the back leg.
- Pause briefly to help remove elastic energy and key on the tension the lifter must create prior to powering back up to the start.

3. Phase 2

- Continue creating tension into the handles of the kettlebells and drive into the ground with both feet, explosively drive the body back upwards while cleaning the kettlebells to the rack position simultaneously (see Fig. 2a and b).
- Pause at the top position to ensure proper force absorption and body alignment.
- At the top position, the feet should still be “grabbing” the ground while the elbows should be driving into the side of the trunk. A tall “plank” position should be maintained whilst preparing the body to decelerate back into the lunge.

4. Phase 3

- While keeping the head straight, step back into the lunge while reversing the clean motion of the kettlebells.

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Fig. 1. Reverse lunge.

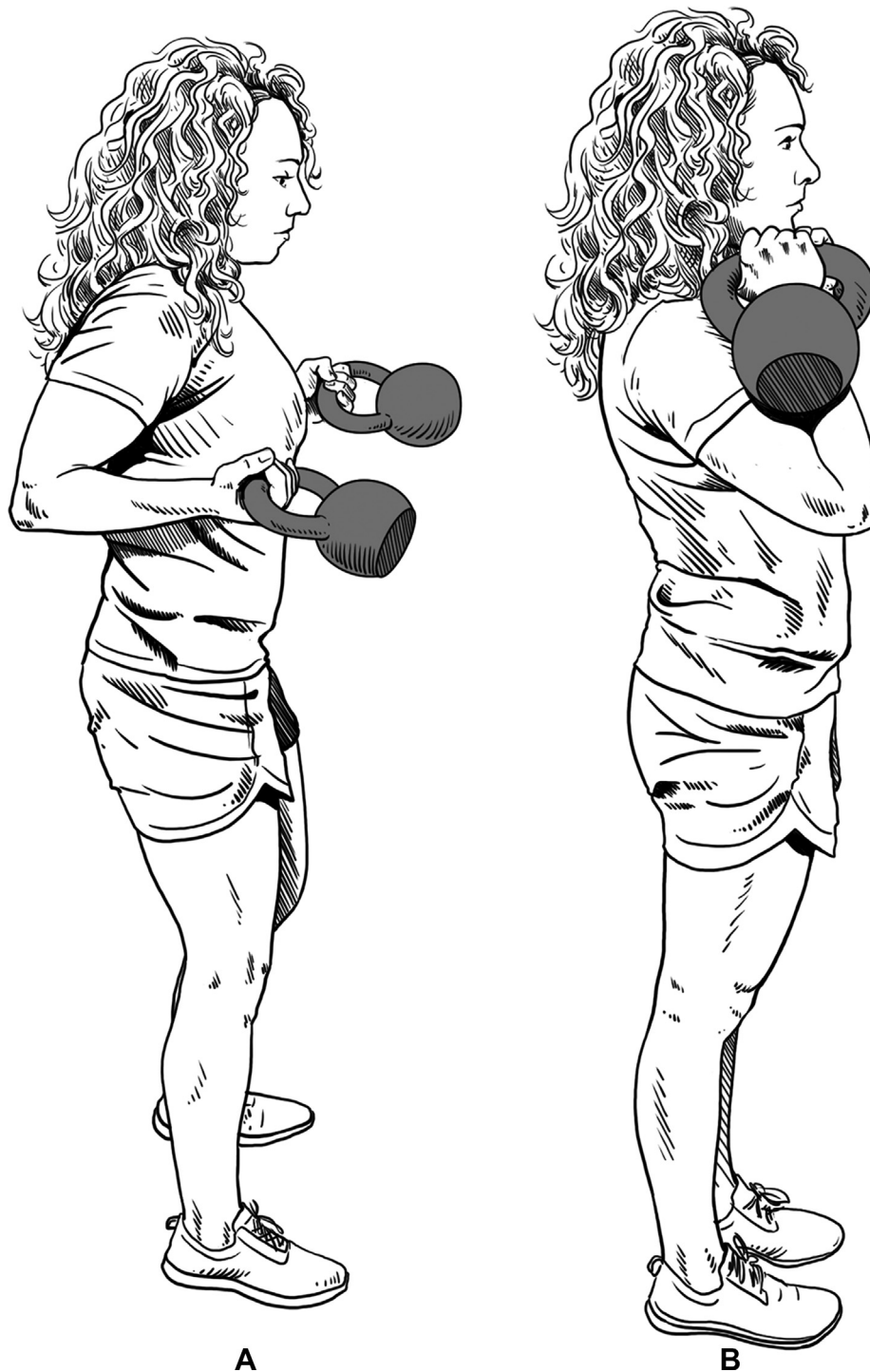


Fig. 2. a, b. Drive up to Clean Position.

- In one rapid motion, drive both feet into the ground to create a strong foundation while catching the kettlebells at the suitcase position with a tight grip.
- The KLC requires a great balance of relaxation and tension at the right moments of the movement. Creating excessive tension will impact the fluidity and power of the movement. Instead, allow relaxation during times of great strength to increase stability and performance.

5. Summary:

Functional movements are designed to look at how our body functions in different environments. Power is often performed in the vertical plane and very stable positions of the body. Both life and sport require a great deal more complexity of movement with direction and deceleration playing key roles. The KLC is a safe and powerful exercise to teach these qualities and progress the power development and force absorption capabilities of the individual.