

HEALTHY OBSESSION

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Age: 46

Occupation: Senior manager, software engineering firm

Town: San Francisco

Sport: Russian kettlebells. A kettlebell looks like a "cannon ball with a handle." The three basic exercises are swings, grinds and snatches.

Why: It offers a complete exercise regime. To do a swing, you grab the handle of your kettlebell with one or two hands then "snap" it forward using your legs and glutes. Grinds are similar to traditional weightlifting. Snatches are in one swift and fluid movement, swing and "snatch" the bell overhead with your arm extended. It doesn't take long before I'm drenched in sweat and sucking air!

Greatest accomplishment: Being able to "snatch" a 24k (53 lb) kettlebell.

Gear you can't live without: A 16k (36 lb) kettlebell, from Dragon Door. I can vary the "load" by increasing the reps or the speed with which each exercise is executed.

Where you train: Occasionally at the gym (which has kettlebells), but mostly at home.

Biggest misperception about your sport: People think you grunt and lift them up in the air, overhead. Men wearing olden-day tights and handlebar mustaches comes to mind. They never assume the foundation of the sport is actually "swinging" the bell.

Advice you'd give a rookie: Get a trainer to learn the basics. It looks simple, but the basic swings are subtle and deceptively complex.

Know someone hooked on a sport? E-mail healthyobsession@sfchronicle.com.

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