

FULL **KONTACT** KETTLEBELLS



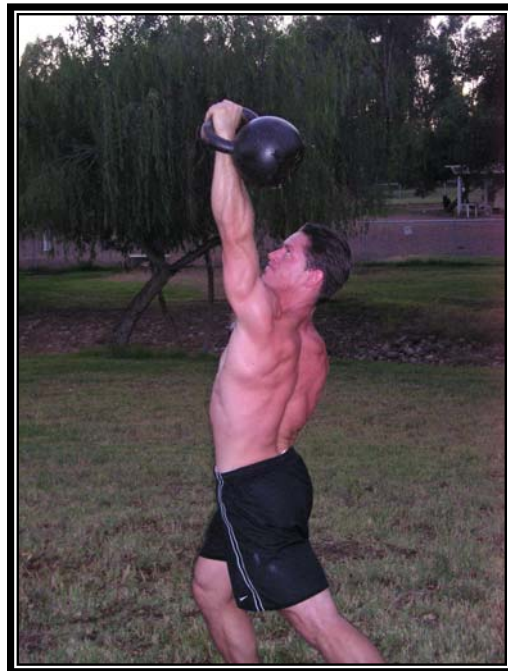
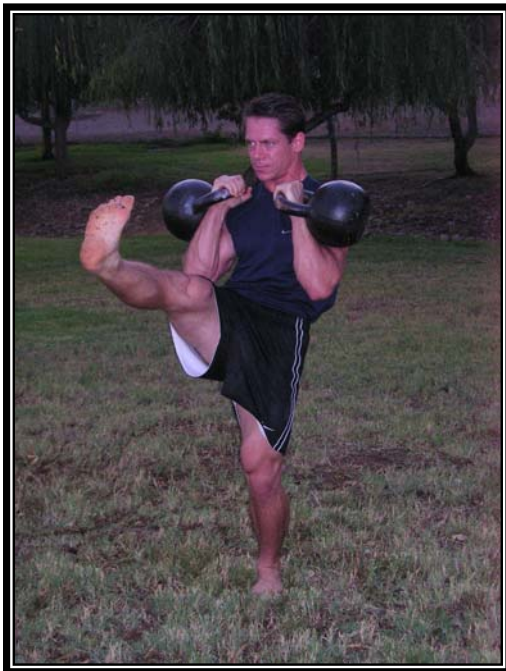
Q1

Can you give us a bio and background on your education, sports background, experiences, where are you located?

My formal training in physical development began when I was 12 years old with the Internal Chinese Martial Arts system called hsing-i ch'aun. The school was very fighting oriented, and emphasized a lot of explosive type training in the form of various calisthenics. I also studied Chinese medicine in the form of massage, bone-setting, and use of herbal liniments. I trained gong fu full time all through high school and into my mid-twenties. I never played any organized sports. My last competition in full contact fighting was in 1996 in Taiwan. I fought for the USA Full Contact Kuoshu team in the World Championships, after I won 2 USA titles in 1995 and 1996. I was a training junkie. After a change of course in early 1997, I went to college full-time and got my degree in Kinesiology.

In the past year I have begun competing in Girevoy Sport competitions, which is the traditional Russian sport of repetition kettlebell (handlebell) lifting. I was captain of the first-ever USA Team to compete in an international competition in Moscow, Russia.

I live in San Diego and I teach seminars throughout the US and increasingly overseas.



Q2

How did you get into the Strength & Conditioning?

I fell in love with the concept of gong fu when I was a boy. The literal translation of 'gong fu' is "hard work" so the idea of working hard was distilled into me years ago. My idea of what strength training means has evolved in several different directions over the years.

Q3

What do you see as the biggest misconception or fallacy you see being promoted today?

I would say that there is an ideal body type or an ideal system. Everything must be considered in context. Ideal for what? There is still a large emphasis of form over function, aesthetics over application. Also, there are too many getting into the fitness industry to be 'the expert' or 'the next big thing'. Credibility comes over time and it is earned through years of hard work. It is sad to see when people who aren't experts position themselves as such through savvy marketing or expensive promotions.

Q4

What is the state of commercial gyms / fitness trainers right now?

I wouldn't know--I haven't stepped foot into one in years, ha-ha. I view the majority of commercial gyms the same way I view hospitals---the further the way I stay from them, the healthier (or stronger) I am!

On the plus side, there is a promising movement among some trainers to really explore value and real knowledge about training methods. There are good trainers out there that are open-minded and sincere about getting better, and are willing to pay the price to learn from the best possible teachers, and from each other. That is encouraging and helps to make up for the clip-board carriers that fill up most of the commercial gyms.

Q5

What was the funniest thing you've ever seen in a commercial gym?

Well, it goes back some time but it's gotta' be 'that guy'. You know the 24 hour fitness guy who is always there, and always looks the same, while his poundages keep going down. Look at me, look at me! What can I say, the permed gerry-curls and genie pants with the fake tan and oiled skin just doesn't look good on you dude! So, to me, the funniest thing is the when these types of egos emerge in the gym with people that really are deluded about how cool they are! Put up some some weight before you start prancing around, you know?

Q6

What is the state of University Strength programs right now?

I really think things are starting to turn for the better. If you go back 10 years, it was really only a few programs that emphasized 'posterior chain training' and the general idea that its the muscles that you can't see when looking in the mirror are the ones to train for better athletes. The University of Nebraska is one that was really at the forefront of dare I say 'functional training' for sports back in those days.

Now I think there are two schools emerging. You have your old timers who just won't change and the younger arrogant coaches who feel that they know all there is to know. I feel bad for those guys, because their reluctance to change and embrace new findings is to the detriment of their programs.

Then you have what I will call the 'new-school old-school' who are the ones that are humble enough to remember that coaches are still students and that there is much more awareness now of really powerful strength training methods, that when embraced, elevates the quality of their athletic programs.

For example, I am working now with the Head and Assistant Strength Coaches at San Diego State University. They have fully embraced Kettlebell training and also a great deal of OL and things like sandbag, grip, levers, etc. They have fully integrated this type of training now with their freshman teams and there is no doubt in my mind that in 1-2 years down the road, this will pay off in superior performances on the playing fields. They even have a group of about 15-20 administration staff that is doing on-site kettlebell classes each week in their S&C room! That's team spirit!

Q7

Who do you see making the most impact in the Strength industry right now? Who are the leaders right now / or who has been and continues to be a leader?

Wow, that's a great question. I'm sure this list won't be comprehensive, and I'll forget to list some worthy individuals, but here is my short list.

Pavel Tsatsouline deserves credit as the man who brought kettlebells into the public awareness outside of Eastern Europe.

You guys at the Diesel Crew continue to bring attention to the hard core, hard-work of lifting and moving heavy things, and the importance of hand strength.

Steve Maxwell is a masterful trainer and has done great work integrating joint mobility as an inclusion to overall strength training protocols.

I've definitely introduced some unique concepts and ways of teaching movement and am doing a lot to promote kettlebell training and things like integrated movement.

I think Zach Evan-esch is a real up-and-comer and I like what he is doing with his Underground Strength Coach website. He's all about learning and sharing and checks his ego at the door.

David Weck from bosufitness excels at coordination and balance-related education and training tools, and these aspects are important facets of an overall athletic enhancement program.

I think Shannon Hartnett is an awesome athlete and does a lot to show that women can also be very strong and athletic.

Of course you've got your strength legends like Brookfield and Sorin and the Gillinghams, Donnie Thompson and guys like that.

Louie Simmons of course has contributed so much.

A guy not a lot of people have heard of is Geoff Nuepert from North Carolina. He was a superb nationally ranked OL, who is a brilliant coach.

Mike Mahler does a great job getting kettlebell training out there into a more mainstream audience.

Like I said, there is a lot of good people out there. My respects to all of them and the ones I missed.

Q8

The latest meet, certification seminar, clinic, conference that you went to – what was the latest “innovation” you took away from that experience?

The World Championship Classics in Moscow, Russia. Just got back a few days ago. The elite lifters here are the strongest and most-well rounded lifters in the world, in my opinion. I'm sure OL elite will argue with that, and they of course make a strong case. But, you've got to see in person someone like Ivan Denisov do 175 consecutive jerks in only 10:00 with 142 lbs (2 x 70.6 lb kettlebells). Or a 170lb Anton Anesenko lift 155 continuous jerks in 10:00! We're not talking about doing high reps with light weights here. We're talking about a very respectable weight lifted over and over and over. And they only stop because there is a time limit. More people need to see these athletes in action. They are truly awe-inspiring. I learned more about focus and body mechanics from watching these best of the best than years of self-study or going to boot camps or weekend workshops. There is something to observing the masters at work.

Q9

Where is the future of the Strength industry going?

Definitely - people are going to continue to want to develop a more well-rounded strength. There will always be a small group who will want to specialize, but overall, being very versatile and having good movement is becoming more and more important. People are seeking real things in life, so the superficiality of the 'fern and chrome' crowd will become less prevalent. Definitely we have a lot to learn from the Eastern methods in terms of mental integration as it relates to getting stronger. I think the gym of the future has a lot more open space and simpler tools. Some things don't need to be reinvented, you know.

Q10

Give me a quick list of your top 5 exercises for developing power/speed/foundation.

- 1 arm Kettlebell Snatch
- 1 Leg squat
- Clean and Jerk
- 2 hand Heavy Swings
- Double Snatch-Double OH Squat-Double Sots Press combo

Ask me again next month, and the list may change...

Q11

What 5 websites do you go to everyday?

Well, FullKontakt.com is my homepage, so I go there everyday, ha ha.

I go through phases and sometimes don't like to look at any of the pages, but these are the ones I visit most:

Dragondoor.com--it has a good community overall, and I like to be able to help out people with their questions; there are a handful of high level trainers that post there, so it is worth having to filter out some of the noise to get to the nuggets

Sportspecific.com is a great network for people who want to make their living as trainers, strength coaches or otherwise in the fitness industry. Ryan Lee is among the best of the best when it comes to marketing and getting the word out.

Undergroundstrengthcoach.com attracts a good group of people, mostly young and ambitious, and people with an open mind and desire to learn

Nakf.net is an emerging community, which is concerned with the progress of Girevoy Sport, something I am personally interested in.

I think Crossfit.com is interesting. They have some good ideas. Like most online communities, it is easy to fall into the 'big fish, small pond' mindset, which is why I don't like to spend too much time on any forum; aside from that there is value to be gleaned and I like to keep my mind open to new ideas

Q12

What was the latest book you read related to the industry?

Taoist Secrets of Love--wait, what industry were we talking about? No, seriously, the study of energy of all sorts is important for the strong man and students of physical culture.

I'm currently reading a Russian periodical with English translations . I don't know the English title but it discusses handlebell (kettlebell) lifting, history, preparation, discussion of technique and program design, as well as a section on 'power art' which consists of things like, bending bars, tearing chains asunder, tying nails, holding weight while lying on glass fragments and other such contests. Sounds like stuff the Diesel Crew can appreciate!

Q13

What was the latest DVD you watched related to the industry?

I just got Dan Johns' "Carried Away" I've haven't broke it open yet, but Dan is an incredible coach and speaker and anything he puts out is worth watching. I saw some of Marcello Garcia's Brazilian Jiu-jitsu tapes--the man is as fluid as they come.

Q14

Anything you are promoting right now?

I have a lot of things I am involved with now. For one thing, my new DVD is out, and I am really excited about that. It is the *Encyclopedia of Kettlebell Lifting*, and it's a 7 hour instructional series with 182 individual exercises and high-quality production. It includes over a dozen programs and an interactive menu. It is to date the most comprehensive work ever presented on the art and science of kettlebell lifting, by far. These are available through my website and through Shihan.com.

I also do a lot of kettlebell and physical performance workshops throughout the country.

Also, I am involved in putting together and hosting the 2007 World Championship Classic of Girevoy Sport in which 200 athletes from over 15 countries will compete in the US for the first time. It is a huge responsibility and I'll have some big news about the venue in a few months. This is a chance for American lifters to see what I consider to be the best strength-endurance athletes in the world.

Q15

How did you first hear about the Diesel Crew?

Well, when I first saw you and Jedd 2 years ago out at the Night of Strength at the Arnold Classic. In a room full of immensely strong guys, including Richard Sorin (Sorinex.com) and a bunch of others, you guys from the Diesel Crew had your hands on everything and were exhibiting all kinds of freaky hand strength and versatility.

Q16

How can people get a hold of you? What is your site, email, etc.?

STEVE COTTER

steve@fullkontakt.com

www.FullKontakt.com

I will be adding a ton of new information and exercise clips so that people can learn more about how I integrate martial arts, qigong and strength training into comprehensive programs.

Thanks for the chance to talk, Smitty!

Mr. Cotter's professional accreditations include:

- Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) — National Strength & Conditioning Assoc. (NSCA)
- Sr. Russian Kettlebell Challenge Instructor (RKC, Sr.)
- Creator of Full KOnTact Kettlebells™ System and best-selling DVD series
- Certified Health/Fitness Instructor — American Colleges of Sports Medicine