RankTime

FREE PRINTABLE · 6 PAGES

TECHNIQUE · VARIATIONS · PLAN

Kettlebell Deadlift

The deadlift step by step with the wall drill, six variations, how heavy to go, the soldiers' one minute test, and a 6 week plan with a log.

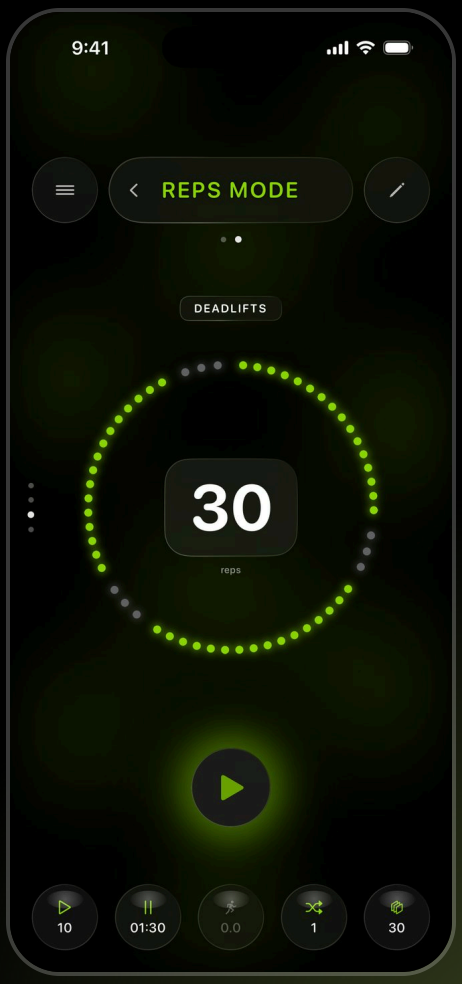
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From the free guide at ranktime.app/guides/kettlebell-deadlift/
Made by RankTime, the workout timer that counts your reps.

KETTLEBELL DEADLIFT

Deadlift it right

1. **Set up.** Feet about hip width apart, the bell on the floor between them, not in front of your toes.
2. **Hinge.** Hips back, as if to touch a wall behind you. Knees bend only enough to reach the handle. Back flat.
3. **Grip.** Both hands, arms straight, shoulders pulled down away from your ears.
4. **Brace.** Breathe in and tighten your stomach.
5. **Stand up.** Push the floor away. Hips forward, knees straight, the bell straight up between your legs.
6. **Finish tall.** Knees straight, glutes squeezed hard. No leaning back.
7. **Lower it.** Hips back first, then the knees. Set the bell down softly and flatten your back again.

The wall drill. Stand with your back to a wall, about 30 cm (12 inches) away. Push your hips back until your glutes touch it, then stand up tall and squeeze them. Do 5 good reps, move a few centimeters further away, and repeat until you can no longer reach the wall. Tap it, never lean on it. StrongFirst's coaches say it fixes a squatted, stiff legged or round backed deadlift 90% of the time.

Common mistakes

MISTAKE	FIX
Squatting it	Hips back, not down. The knees bend only enough to reach the bell.
Stiff legs	Bend your knees a little, or you will round your back to reach the bell.
A rounded back	Flat from start to finish. Raise the bell on a step until you can reach it flat.
Bell too far forward	Between your feet, never in front of your toes.
Yanking it up	Get tight first, then push the floor away.
Leaning back	Finish by standing tall and squeezing your glutes.

Muscles worked: glutes, hamstrings and thighs lift the bell, the back muscles along your spine hold your back flat, and your lats, upper back and grip hold the bell close. Sources: StrongFirst (Cenidoza 2020); NASM; Martín-Fuentes 2020. All sources are linked in the guide.

PICK YOUR BELL

Bell, variations and the test

Your bell: one you can lift at least 8 times with good form, but no more than 12, the American College of Sports Medicine's range for beginners. **Add reps, then weight:** when every set reaches 12 clean reps, take the next bell, 4 kg up, and start again at 8. **Heaviest bell too easy?** Use two, go single leg, stand on a step, or lower the bell over 3 seconds.

Six variations

VARIATION	HOW	WORKS MOST
Romanian (RDL)	From standing, a slight knee bend that stays the same, bell to about mid shin and back up. It never touches the floor.	Hamstrings more than the back
Sumo	Feet wider than your shoulders, toes out, the bell between your feet.	Thighs more, calves less
Single leg	Stand on one leg, free leg straight back as your chest comes down. Start light.	Side glute, outer hamstring, balance
Suitcase	One bell at your side, in one hand. Stand up without leaning. Both sides.	The other side of your trunk
Double	A bell beside each foot, one in each hand.	Twice the load
Deficit or raised	On a low step for a longer lift, or the bell on a block for a shorter one.	From a step: glutes, hamstrings, back

The soldiers' test

RULE	SWEDISH SOLDIERS' KETTLEBELL DEADLIFT TEST
Bells	Two 40 kg kettlebells, one in each hand: 80 kg
Time	As many lifts as you can in 1 minute
A lift	From bent knees to legs fully straight, back straight, eyes forward. Only correct lifts count
Warm up	Two lifts with two 24 kg bells, then two with two 32 kg bells
Heels	A 2 cm board under them if tight calves stop you reaching the bells
Results	20 ranger soldiers: 21 lifts on average, 22 a week later. A change of 5 or more is real

With your own bell, the same minute is your benchmark. Sources: ACSM 2009; Martín-Fuentes 2020; Escamilla 2002; Diamant 2021; Coratella 2022; Larsson 2015. All sources are linked in the guide.

THE PLAN

6 week deadlift plan

Three days a week: 3 sets of 8 to 12 with 1:30 of rest. Add one rep to each set when every rep was clean. At 3 sets of 12, take the next bell and go back to 8. Test on day 1 and at the end of week 6.

My numbers

My bell _____ kg

Test, day 1 _____ reps in 1 minute

Next bell _____ kg

Test, end of week 6 _____ reps

IF	THEN
8 reps is too many	Take a lighter bell, or raise it on a step
All 3 sets reach 12	Next bell, back to 3 sets of 8
Your back rounds	End the set there, and do the wall drill

Tick off every session

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	**Test max:**	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	Rest
2	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	Rest
3	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	Rest
4	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	Rest
5	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	Rest
6	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	☐ 3 × 8 to 12	Rest	**Test max:**	Rest	Rest

Test day: warm up, then as many clean deadlifts as you can in 1 minute with your bell. Rest days matter: strength grows between sessions.

SESSION LOG

My deadlift log

One line a session: the bell, the reps in each set, and how it felt.

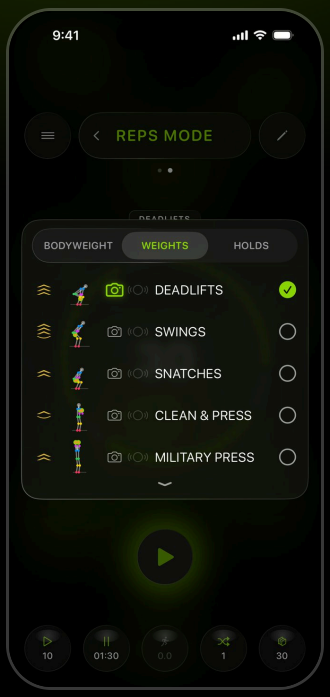
#	DATE	BELL	SET 1	SET 2	SET 3	NOTES
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
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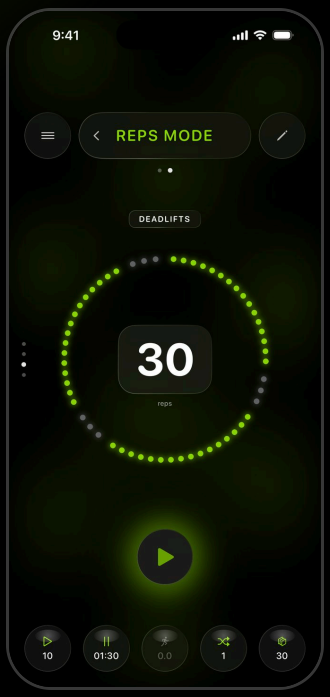
TRAIN IT WITH RANKTIME

Deadlift with RankTime

The camera counts every deadlift, and your sets and rest run by themselves.



On WEIGHTS, tick DEADLIFTS.



DEADLIFTS: 3 sets of 10, 1:30 of rest.



Trainer: where to put the phone, and a test.

1. Swipe to REPS, then to CENTURION. Tap the exercises circle, then the exercise under the ring. On WEIGHTS, tick DEADLIFTS, untick PUSHUPS.
2. Set the circles to 10 reps a set, 1:30 of rest and a target of 30. Tap the + under the tick and name it DEADLIFTS.
3. Stand the phone at an angle, about 2 meters (6 feet) away, with the bell and your feet in the frame.
4. Press play. The camera counts every rep, and the last rep of each set starts your rest.

- ✓ The camera counts your reps on the phone itself. Nothing is uploaded.
- ✓ Timers built in: AMRAP, EMOM, Tabata, ladders, and GPS runs before or after.
- ✓ A military rank for every exercise, from Private at rep one to General of the Armies.

Download on the App Store

Scan to get RankTime on your iPhone