THE TURKISH GET UP

UNDERSTAND AND EXECUTE

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REFERENCE VIDEO

. . . . . comsfitness.com/turkish-get-up

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INTRODUCTION

The origins of the Turkish Get Up (TGU) are lost in time but there is archaeological evidence of the practice in ancient Greece. We also know that it was used by Turkish Janissary soldiers and wrestlers as part of their strength regimen.

In modern times kettlebell training has two classes of movement: “Ballistic” for developing explosive power and “Grind” for developing strength.

The TGU is the ultimate grind movement. With full body integration, the TGU gifts the practitioner with strength, durability and longevity. The list of benefits is truly mind blowing.

- Full body strength.
- Shoulder health (especially rotator cuff stabilization).
- Balance.
- Coordination.
- Mobility.
- Stability.
- Strengthens the nervous system.
- Improved kinaesthetic intelligence through the chaining of primal movement patterns.
- Improved reactive strength.
- Strengthens the immune system.

Lymphatic fluid play a major role in supporting a strong immune system but circulation of lymphatic fluid can only happen through movement. The incorporation of so many primal movements while getting up and down off the ground is a great way to achieve this.
The list goes on...

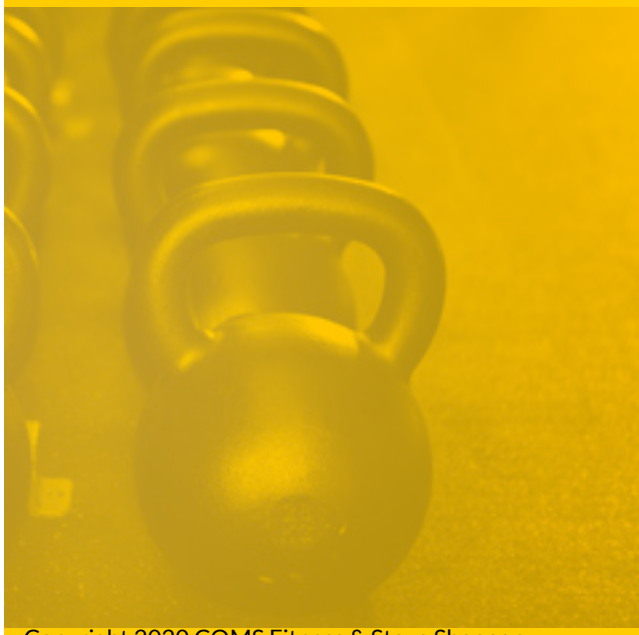
If practiced correctly this is a skill that can be practiced into old age with real world applications. Getting up is arguably the most functional and important movement we perform.

Humans have seven primal movement patterns:

1. Squat
2. Hinge
3. Lunge
4. Gait
5. Push
6. Pull
7. Twist

These primal movement patterns are preceded by five developmental foundations:

1. Diaphragmatic breathing
2. Head control
3. Rolling
4. Rocking
5. Crawling



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INTRODUCTION

We are all born with an innate, preprogrammed template of these movements which are designed to strengthen our nervous system. We use and depend on these movement patterns daily; from mundane tasks like taking out the trash or hanging out the washing to more fun activities like playing a game of touch rugby or a round of golf.

If you're a competitive bodybuilder then an isolated movement like the preacher curl is a valuable exercise, but in terms of moving pain free on a daily basis or performing at a high level on the field, the court, on the mats or in the ring, then training movement patterns should be a high priority.

The TGU contains all of the developmental foundations (if you practice diaphragmatic breathing) and at least five of the primal movement patterns. Additionally the TGU trains the linking of these movements.

Through these movement patterns we stimulate the vestibular system, the first sensory system we develop while still in the womb and the one that tells us where we are in space and which way we are moving. We also strengthen our nervous system, which (as it doesn't have eyes or ears) learns through movement and feel.

Human skin has roughly 1000 nerve endings per square inch, with 144 square inches per square foot and the average adult having about 21 square feet of skin, that's roughly 3,024,000 nerve endings available to send nutrient rich information to our nervous system.

Sounds like a lot right? Well that's nothing compared to the estimated 100 million nerve endings within our connective tissue, specifically the fascia, which again is stimulated through movement. Consider how the TGU begins, progresses and ends. From laying on your side, rolling to your back and then pressing, rolling, rocking, hinging, lunging and stepping your way to a full standing position with an overhead press and then repeating the steps in reverse order all the way back down.

Are you starting to get a better understanding as to why this movement is so beneficial yet?

Through purposeful practice and mindful movement we can awaken dormant neural pathways, strengthen existing ones and create new ones. The result of this is better reactive strength (our ability to react to movement before and as it happens) and greater kinaesthetic intelligence (the bridge between our intentions and physical action). In this way we raise our level of general physical preparedness (GPP) allowing us to perform at a higher level athletically and live a longer more functionally comfortable life.

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PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLES

STACK AND PACK

Stacking and packing relates to the joints and optional alignment. It begins with the weighted arm in the vertical overhead position. The wrist is directly above the elbow which is directly above the shoulder. By stacking the joints we pack the shoulder giving us the stability and the structural integrity required to support
the weight.

CREATE SPACE

A common mistake people make with their grounded arm is letting their shoulder shrug up towards their ear while their hand or elbow is in contact with the ground. This is lazy and weakens the structure. Create space by packing the shoulder of your supporting arm down away from your ear.

PILLARS OF STRENGTH

Pillars of strength are your points of contact with the ground; purposely placed to evenly spread the load.

EYE POSITION

Eyes on the kettlebell while your supporting hand is on the floor. This helps with balance. Eyes on the horizon once your supporting hand is no longer in contact with the floor and your body is vertical. This is to maintain a neutral spine and reduce the risk of injury.

HIT THE LANDMARKS

The landmarks did not happen by chance and should not be rushed or ignored. They have been developed and refined to create the optimal structure, strength and stability needed to move safely under load. As mentioned earlier the TGU is a grind movement and the benefits come from owning every part of the exercise. Stability in each position (aka landmark) before you transition to the next is a good rule to follow.

UTILISE THE IRRADIATION EFFECT

At certain points during the TGU and especially when I'm performing heavy TGU's I make a tight fist with my empty hand. Here's why...

The irradiation effect is a tension principle where by contracting multiple muscles together we can generate greater overall tension and thereby greater strength, essentially sealing energy leaks.

An easy way to demonstrate this principle is to take someone's hand and squeeze it as tightly as you can. It's likely that you engaged your bicep and tricep too even though your hand and forearm were the primary drivers for this task. Now take the hand again but this time tightly clench your empty hand in a fist while squeezing the other person's hand - the crushing pressure you're able to generate will increase.

Dr. Roger Enoka a professor in exercise science and physiology defines it as a spread of muscle activation that "augments postural stability and enables the transfer of power across joints by two-joint muscles."

INCREASING THE LOAD

Small increases in weight will yield big benefits and avoid injury. A 4kg increase in kettlebell feels more like 10kgs when it comes to the TGU so increase slowly over time. Don't let your ego get you injured.

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EXECUTION

1 STARTING POSITION

From the fetal position on your right side, grip the handle of the kettlebell with your right hand. Place your left hand over top of your gripping hand for extra control.

Pull the kettlebell to your chest while rolling to your back then press upwards with both hands.

Once your right arm is locked out in the vertical position, keep your right leg bent with the foot planted. Extend your left arm (palm down on the ground) and left leg on a 45 degree angle.

Keep your eyes locked on the kettlebell from this point until your left hand is no longer in contact with the ground.

Your right arm will also remain vertical stacked with your palm side facing inwards for the remainder of the exercise until it is placed back down on the ground.

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EXECUTION

2 TO THE ELBOW

The roll to the elbow is typically where things get messy with the extended leg lifting off the ground and people grunting their way through an awkward abdominal crunch. Optimal tension, extension and direction will eliminate the disorder.

Drive your right foot into the ground while rolling to your left side (not towards your feet). Drive your left elbow downwards and pull your chest through until you are propped up on your left elbow.

To help stop your extended leg from lifting off and losing contact with the ground during the shift to your elbow, drive the heel of your foot on the extended leg away from your body.

Avoid letting your left shoulder shrug upwards, but rather pull it down creating space between your shoulder and ear. This will pack the shoulder and improve stability.

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EXECUTION

3 TO THE HAND

For this step we want to move off our elbow, straighten our left arm and place the palm of our left hand on the ground for support. To do so we rotate our hand back for better placement before driving down through our palm and extending the arm.

4 THE HIGH HIP BRIDGE

The high hip bridge was introduced to the TGU by Dr Mark Cheng and is often a topic of debate. I was taught and teach the high hip bridge method for a number of reasons:

- Posterior chain development
- Extra time under tension
- Added challenge
- Hip extension is great for the hips

Keeping your right foot planted flat, drive down while thrusting your hips upwards into the high hip bridge position. Your left leg should remain extended.

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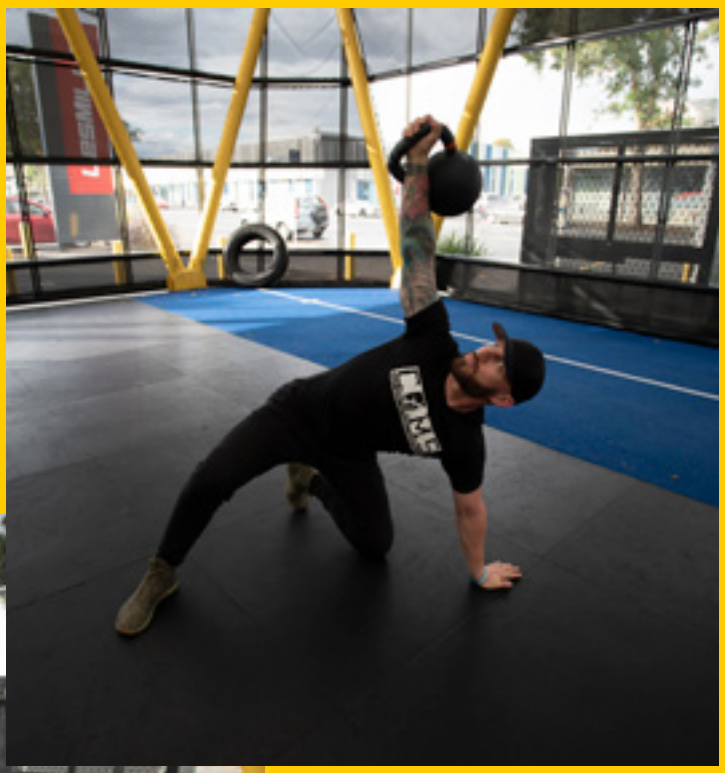
EXECUTION

5 TO THE KNEE

Sweep your left leg back and under, forming a straight line from your left hand, left knee and foot.

Hinge back onto your left foot before taking your left hand off the ground and rising up under the weight into a half kneeling position. Your right and left leg will be at a 90 degree angle.

Your eyes are now looking forward.



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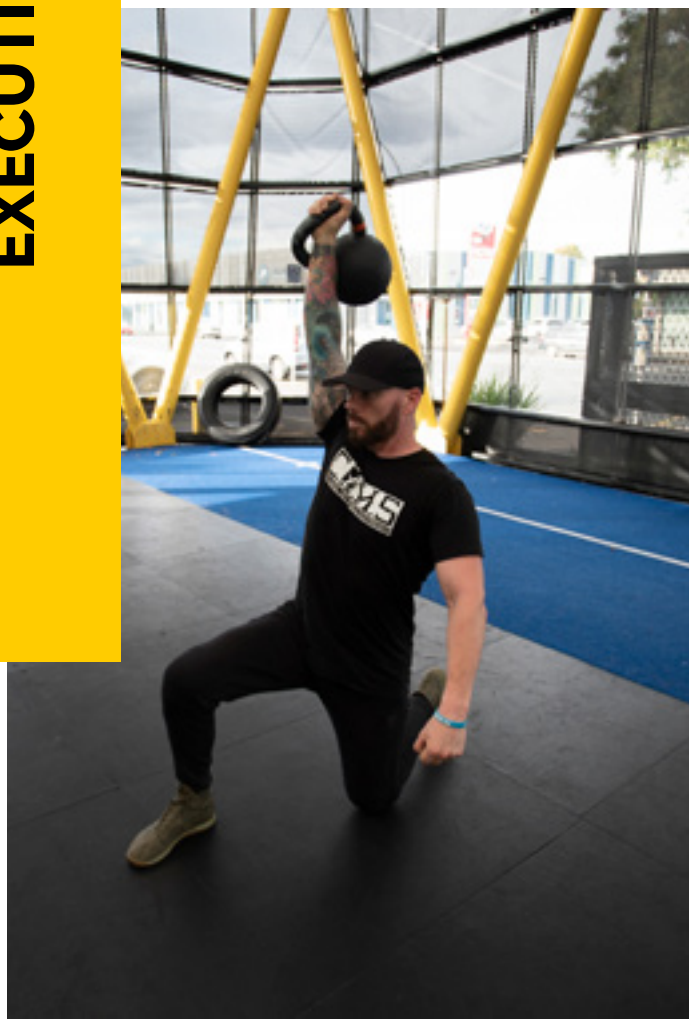
EXECUTION

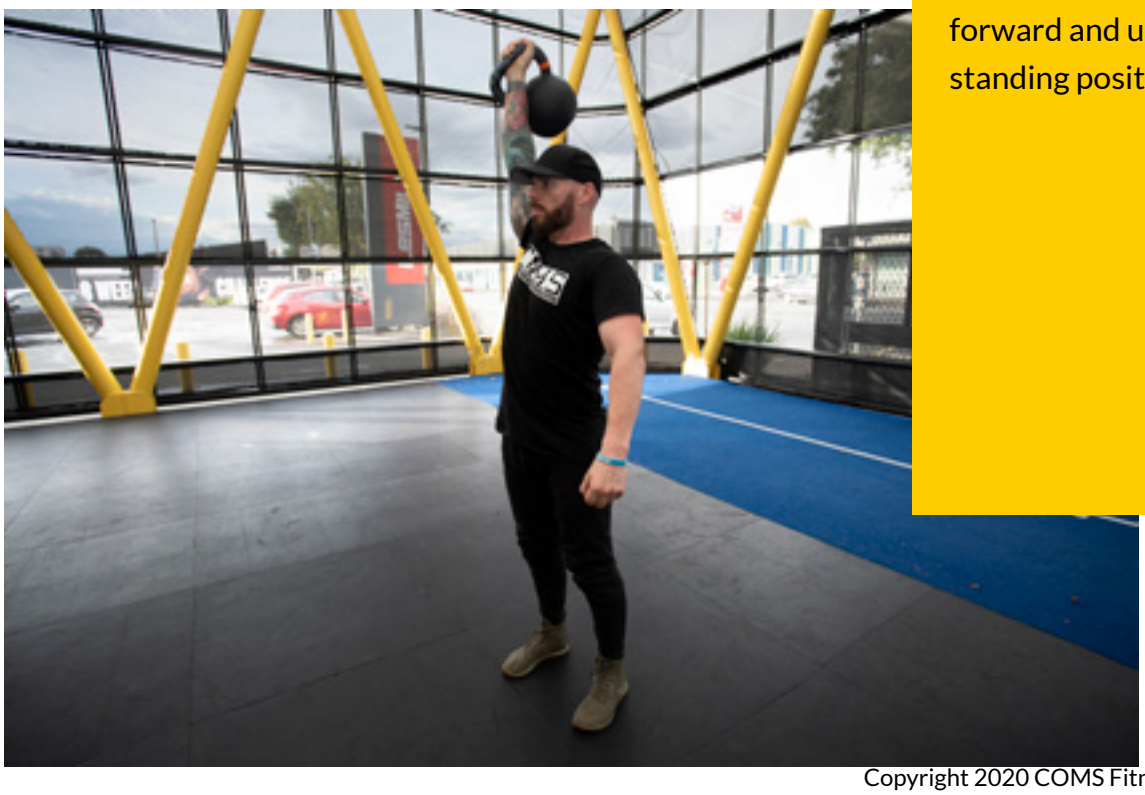


6 LUNGE TO STAND

To align your legs for the forward lunge to stand you have two options.

1. The back windshield wiper. Simply rotate and position your left foot behind you with the toes in dorsiflexion. Drive forward and up into a standing position.

2. The front windshield wiper. Step your right foot across to your left, lining up in a lunge position. Place your left foot into dorsiflexion before driving forward and up into a standing position.



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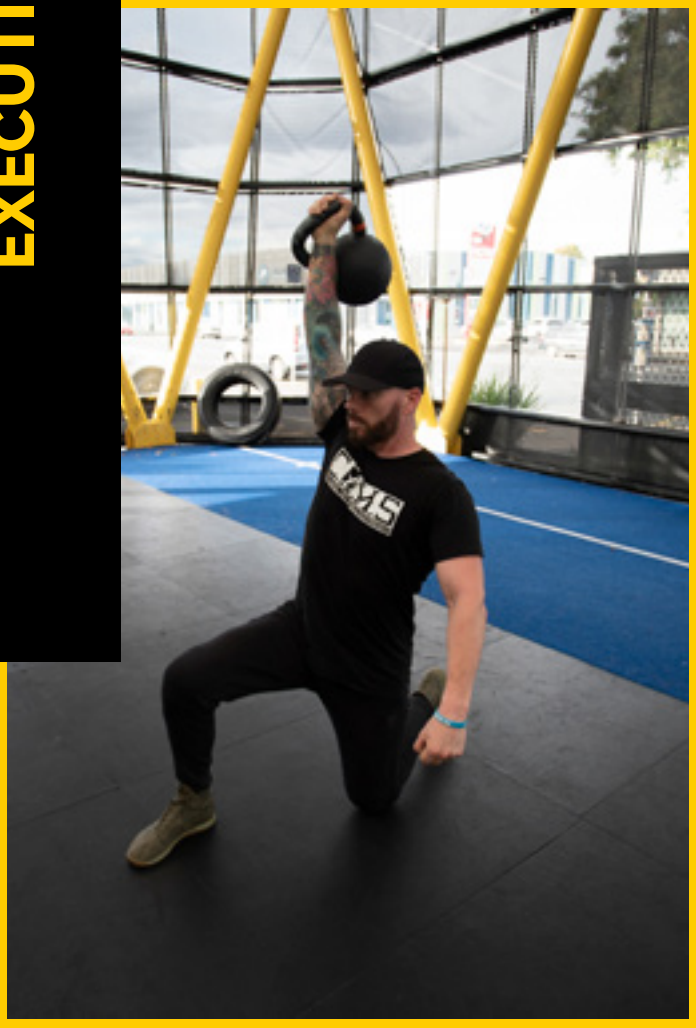

7 REVERSE LUNGE TO HAND PLACEMENT

Keeping your arm locked out and the joints stacked, step backwards into a half kneeling position.

Windscreen wiper your back foot (or step the front foot across as discussed in step 6) 90° degrees before hinging back with your hips while tracking your left hand down your thigh. Shift the weight off your back foot and place your left hand on the ground in line with your left foot and knee, distributing the weight evenly.

Your eyes are now on the kettlebell.

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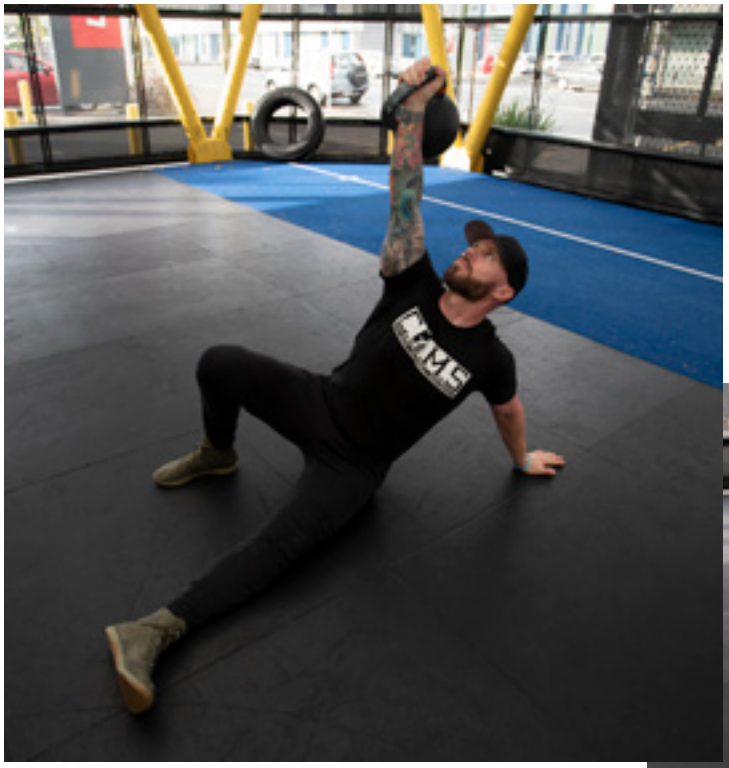
EXECUTION

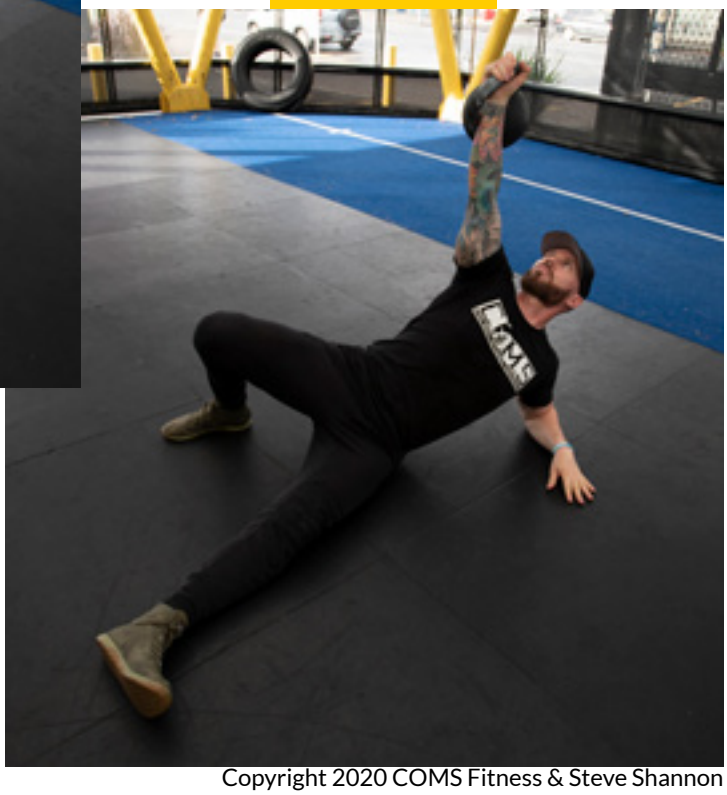
8 SWEEP THROUGH TO THE HIGH HINGE

Sweep your left foot under and extend your left leg. Raise your hips into the high hinge position.



9 TO THE ELBOW

Lower your hip into a seated position, then gently place your left elbow on the ground.



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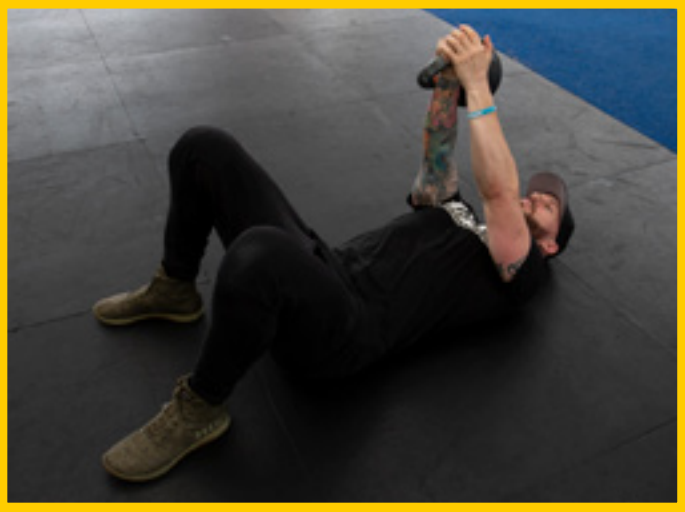
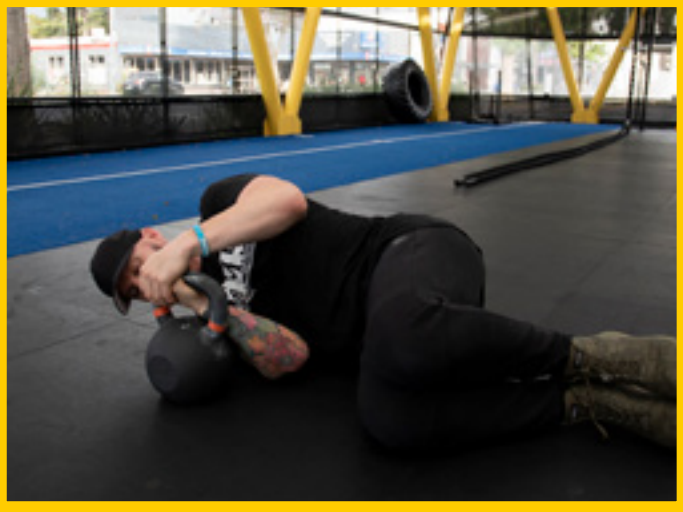
EXECUTION

10 RETURNING TO STARTING POSITION

Lower your body down to your left shoulder then to your back. Draw your left leg in while taking the kettlebell with both hands.

Lower the kettlebell to your chest then roll to your right side, returning the kettlebell back to the ground.





KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Don't rush any of the steps, stay focused and maintain control. Remember: stability in position before transition.

- Practice both sides in equal measure.

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FINAL WORDS

There's a saying in the kettlebell community "Strength is a skill". This could not be more true when we talk about the TGU. It takes concentration, consistency and commitment to master but the return on this investment yields massive returns. Make it a staple in your training, your future self will thank you for it.

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