RAMON SODANO: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Kettlebells 201. Ramon Sodano here, coordinator for Fitness Services and Education at the REC Center. And also coordinator of Wellbeing Online Services for you Global Campus Cougars. So today we're here for a Kettlebells 201, seminar, webinar, whatever you want to call it.

And just to foreshadow on some things in the commercial and all that, I talked about that we were going to go over the clean and the snatch. Today we're actually only going to go over the clean. I am dealing with some injuries to where I can't even snatch on either side. I did not get the injuries from kettlebell so don't think that kettlebells are going to hurt you. I got them from jujitsu and that's your own decision. If you want to go that route, I highly suggest to roll sometime if you can get into that.

But before we get into everything with the clean itself, I would like to kind of revisit some of the topics that we talked about last time, more so with the kettlebell swing. We're not going to talk about the deadlift but the swing, which was in our Kettlebells 101 video.

So there were some things that I had you guys think about overemphasizing, that if you've gotten that down we don't need to overemphasize anymore. And I would like you to start in a better position to be able to hike the kettlebell back. So I'm going to take this off real quick honestly. So when we're talking about the swing, the swing was where we're here and we hiked the kettle back, and we swing it up.

So some things I would like to revisit with that is when I first taught you all it, I taught you to set the kettlebell really far out to hike it back between your legs. So I did that just to really emphasize that we were going to have this hike back between the legs. What I want you to realize is when you actually do set up this position, it's only going to be slightly farther out in front of you. And then you grab that kettlebell and you tilt it back.

As you grab and tilt back, what's happening is we're engaging our lats. And we want our lats tight the whole time when we're doing the kettlebell swing, or the kettlebell clean, or those kinds of things. I will need that probably, in time. So with that again, tilt that kettlebell back. Don't have it super far out in front of you. We're just kind of tilting it back and pushing it back through the legs.

So what I want to revisit with the swing is this really, this hinge hip dominant exercise, this explosive motion that we're doing it. Because when we get to the clean, we really need to emphasize that to have a proper clean, to create proper flow of the bell, and those kinds of things.

So as I am doing this kettlebell swing, my arms are going to be up. And I let my arms fall as far as possible before I hinge backwards. And I shoot that kettlebell back behind my legs. You want
to let that fall all the way down. You don't want to start falling, and then shoot the hips back, and then come down. The kettlebell is going to come all the way down and then you shoot the hips back and come through.

So with that, on the way up, the kettlebell does not move until you pop the hips. So when popping the hips, that is what's going to generate the force for the kettlebell to go upward. So you don't want your arms being the motion bringing the kettlebell up. It all comes from the hips. And again, this is review, so if you want to get in the intricacies of these things, go back to Kettlebells 101. But this translates to the clean, so it's important for us to do.

So when doing the swing, we're going to come down. Keep our eyes neutral with our back. Lean that kettlebell back, nice tight lats. And then we're going to hike that kettlebell back and then pop the hips. So you notice that my hips pop and then the kettlebell comes. And I shoot this kettlebell back behind me and I'm making contact with the inside of my groin with my arms.

So the goal is to have that arm nice straight and it's almost like you're hitting yourself in the butt with the kettlebell. You want it to shoot back behind you. Let the arms hit the inside of the thighs. And that kettlebell is not going to come upward until you literally pop the hips. It's not with your arms. The hips are what's doing the motion.

There is no need to go above shoulder height. If you're going all the way up here, you can get a heavier bell. That's completely fine. So that's just kind of revisiting the swing. We want to talk about that what's propelling the bell upwards is that harsh hip motion. We really need that to propel the bell.

So now we're going to get into what's called a kettlebell clean. A kettlebell clean is going to be a foundational movement for lots of different kettlebell exercises. So to get to this rack position, that's going to be the very first thing that we do. It's going to be a transitory kind of position for all kinds of different kettlebell exercises. So it's important to learn the kettlebell clean first.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to demonstrate a couple of kettlebell cleans first, from a front view and from a side view. And then we're going to break it down. We're going to break it down into four parts. And we're going to go with what's called a top down progression.

So I'll first, I'll do a few kettlebell cleans from the front. Now I'll do some from the side. So while it looks like there's not a lot going on there, there really is a lot going on. Our kettlebells aren't the greatest so I'm getting a bunch of stuff on my hands from them.

So what we're going to do is we're going to talk about the first position-- well, the last positions that you end in. And then work our way down. So we're going talk about this rack position first.

So when you're first practicing to get to the rack position, we want you to do what's called a cheat clean to get the kettlebell up. So what you'll do is you'll turn the kettlebell away from you, so the handle is essentially parallel or actually perpendicular to my body. From there, I'm
going to grab it with both hands. And I'm going to do just like I do with a swing. Snatch it back and bring it up.

So this is my kettlebell rack position. So notice the first things that we are doing is we have the kettlebell on our elbow. So this little triangle that I have going on here, that's where you want the kettlebell to sit. Also notice that my wrist is straight. I'm not breaking at the wrist like this. We have a nice straight wrist and it's in line with the elbow. We want this forearm as vertical as possible.

Additionally, this elbow is glued to our ribs. We're not going to chicken-wing out. We're not going to flare our elbow up. A lot of people you'll see come here like this to have a nice rest position. You are going for what's called postural integrity. That's going to be derived from the straight wrist down to the elbow, resting on here, and boom, nice and tight to the side. You should be able to hold that position for a good amount of time.

So again we're here. Elbow tucked into the side. Wrist is nice and straight. We're not breaking. It's also important to understand that the kettlebell is going to sit in the heel of the hand. We don't want it super far up here, bending our wrists back. You should be feeling pressure at the heel of your hand. That's where it's going to rest.

What's going to happen when you first start out doing kettlebell stuff? It's going to be hard to find the position. You're going to tear your hands up a little bit and all that kind of stuff. But over time, the better you get at it, the better it's going to be.

So when we are doing this clean, unlike with the swing where we're generating force outward, with the clean we're absorbing force, we're getting force, and we're redirecting it downwards. So we're absorbing the force and redirecting it downward.

So now we have all this stuff going on with our arm. Equally important in this position is how tight the body is going to be. Any time that we have the kettlebell in this rack position, we're not just loosey-goosey or anything like that. We need to be abs tight, glutes tight, kneecaps pulled up. So if my glutes are tight, I'm doing a posterior pelvic tilt. So it's like a dog pooping. So they're trying to curve their hips underneath.

So you have glutes tight, abs tight, and your legs are tight, which is pulling your quads up. So when I'm in this position, if I brought my other arm up and I was on the ground? It's like I'm doing a plank. So the kettlebell rack position is like a plank when you're standing up.

So you'll need to practice that for a little while. And again you'll practice it first with the cheat clean, where you have both hands on the kettlebell. Hike it back, bring it up. Remember, you want to get that nice, good triangle position. Elbow in at the side. Everything's nice and tight, and you essentially are here. Taut, not loose. You're tight. Breath is important.
OK. Make sure I'm not forgetting anything. We've got bell to the elbow, wrist form straight, elbow straight to rib. Good.

The last thing that we need to remember is with our shoulders. You don't want to be all scrunched up. Your shoulders are down. So when you tuck this elbow in, you're engaging your lat this way. And when you're engaging your lat, you're going to be able to pack your shoulder. We always want our shoulder to be packed, so we don't want it coming up.

The only time that you should really be doing shrugs is when you're saying, I don't know. I don't know. That's the only time that we need to do shrugs. Anything that we're doing lifting wise, we don't need to shrug up a bunch.

Cool. Actually, in a-- Well, we don't need to talk about jujitsu strategies with the, I don't know. But cool.

So after we established that rack position, now. That's-- so again we're going top down. So we have our rack position. Essential to remember that. Practice it for a while with that cheat clean. Until you can get up to that position and you feel comfortable and sturdy with it, just keep practicing that for a while.

Now the second part is we need to learn how to drop. So what's kind of important with the drop of a kettlebell clean is you need a very small arc. Like with our kettlebell swing, we have this big arc. With our kettlebell clean, it's actually a very, very small arc. All right?

And what I want you to think about is when you are dropping the kettlebell, that elbow stays against your side the whole time. You're not going to hike it out. This is what they call casting the kettlebell out. We don't want to cast it out. We want that elbow to stay here. And, essentially, what's going to happen is you're going to hike it off with the shoulder.

I'm actually really bad at this portion of the kettlebell swing so you'll see my elbow come off a little bit. And it's not perfect. It's not terrible. But your goal is to keep that elbow on your side the whole time. And if you just think about that in your head, if you do get a little bit of elbow movement, that's all right.

So how we're going to do it is you're going to practice by just dropping the kettlebell and then bringing it to the ground. So again, we'll start by getting that nice cheat clean. Boom, bring it up, find our rack position, nice and sturdy. Now remember, what we're going to do is we're not going to cast the kettlebell out. We're just going to hike it off the shoulder and bring it to the ground.

Then you're going to try again. Cheat clean it up. That was really bad, honestly. And again, just set it down. Keep that elbow to your side. One more time. Hike it up. Everything's nice and tight. And just bring it down. You need to master the drop before we can start going back up.
And if you want to just practice the drop over and over again? As you drop, you can grab with two hands again and do that cheat clean back up. And practice it over and over again.

So main things there. Do not cast out. Same thing if we're overhead. We don't cast out. We actually flick the wrist and keep it in close quarters. A really good cue I heard, thinking about not casting out. I want you to imagine that you're in close quarters. So when you're holding that kettlebell here, imagine there's a wall right in front of you. So you're going to just drop without hitting the wall. Think about cutting through your stomach. And you're literally going to push that back through your legs.

So it's a lot of hinging. We're doing everything's going to be in a hip hinge. Let's make sure I'm not forgetting anything here. Arc is tight. Yeah. And the main thing too is just, if there's anything you can remember with the kettlebell swing-- I mean the kettlebell clean-- everything that you're doing, the elbows always on the rib. If you can get that one main key point down and you're not going to get a bunch of cleans coming out from your body, and you hold it to the ribs the whole time, a lot of the other motions in the clean are going to be easier for you.

So cool. We've talked about the rack position. We've gotten that first. Elbow against the ribs, as vertical a forearm as possible. We're not breaking. We're feeling pressure in the heel of the hand. Our shoulder is down. We're not shrugged up. Glutes tight, abs tight, legs tight.

The drop we're not casting out. We're just kind of throwing it off that shoulder, just kind of [?] it off that shoulder, keeping that elbow into ourselves.

Cool. Now we need to learn how to come back up. So again, these things can be broken down in different stages. Or you can just try to jump right at it. But on the way coming back up, one of the main important things that you need to do is, again, elbows tucked to the rib the whole time. You're going to hear it over and over again.

But it's going to be like a swing, except for the fact that we're not coming away from the body. It's a swing in the hips. It's a swing in the hips, but it's not a swing in the arms or in the hand. You're going to keep that elbow tucked.

But what you need to learn how to do is how to make that kettlebell float, because when that kettlebell floats, that's going to be your opportunity to loosen your hand up and spear the handle and kind of come around the kettlebell. So it doesn't come over and smack you on the arm. If you have what's called a death grip on the kettlebell, that's what's going to make it come over on top of you and smack you.

So that's like the main problem lots of people have, when they're doing their cleans or their snatches, is that the kettlebell comes over and hits them in the arm. You need to learn, at the last possible moment when we extend those hips, you're going to loosen the grip a little bit. And then you're going to spear your arm through. And we're going to talk about some things with that.
So when we're going to come around into the rack position, this is where it kind of gets a little confusing, because you're going to keep that elbow pinned to the side. But what happens is there's going to be a real subtle movement with the elbow. You're going to see that my elbow kind of comes back and then shoots forward and catches it. And that's-- so I come to this motion and I have this little bit of a pull and then I come around the kettlebell and I catch it. So you'll see that my elbow actually has a little bit of a movement. It pulls back, my hand's nice and loose, and I spear through the handle and I catch it.

So let me make sure I'm not missing anything there. Oh, what I'll show you first though is kind of a way to make the kettlebell float. So we're going to do what's called a gunslinger swing. And this is the way that we want-- because we need to have that float of the kettlebell-- to be able to make this happen. So let's just cover the gunslinger swing first.

So we'll just do the gunslinger swing right from position. So again, you're going to setup just like how you would for a kettlebell clean and all those kinds of things. Front forward, bring the kettlebell back and, again, as I bring it back, my lats engaging. So for my gunslinger swing, I'm going to keep my elbow pinned to my side, to my rib, and I'm going to continue doing like a swing.

So here. So notice that as I get to the top, that kettlebell floats a little bit. That is your timing to spear the handle. That's when that motion of the elbow is going to pull back. I come around, spear the handle, and I get it. And remember, right at that last moment is when you're going to loosen the hand up a little bit. I know it sounds counterintuitive. Don't throw the kettlebell. You still need to hold it. But just don't have a death grip.

So now what you're going to see is I'm gonna hike that kettle-- or I'm going to make that kettlebell float. And then really watch my elbow. Watch what my elbow does.

OK. Do we see how that elbow's moving back and forth? It's a very important motion for us to have. That's what's going to allow us to go around the kettlebell without it coming over and smashing on our arm. It's going to be one of the harder things to do with the kettlebell swing-- or the kettlebell clean. That, and not casting out when you come down from it.

So you shouldn't be getting any blisters on your hands. You shouldn't be ripping up calluses and all that. And you shouldn't be getting bruises on your forearms the better and better you get at it.

So now we've talked about three stages. So we've talked about the rack position. We've talked about the drop. We've talked about the drop. And now we've talked about the clean itself, or the way up.

So that gunslinger swing, I would practice that over and over and over again until you could really get that flow. So, again, your elbow's tucked to your side. You dip back, boom. And you
just have a short lever swing. It's a short lever. Once you get comfortable with that, when you feel that weightless motion, that's the time to pull the elbow back and then spear through.

And you can see a lot of times when I catch it, I will even catch it with an open hand. So we're here. My hands open now. Hands open again, because I'm able to loosen my grip up at the perfect moment.

Now the last stage. So we've gone from top to bottom. This is essentially how to do this from the ground. So we practiced the rack position, how to drop, how to bring it up. How do we do it from the ground? Essentially, all you do is you set up just like you do for a swing. The nice thing for a swing though, is I'm able to keep my shoulders really, really square because they're both on the ground.

Same thing when you have one single arm. You're going to try to square this arm up. You may have a little bit of a rotation. That's fine. But your goal is to square it up. And by the time we're swinging up, we have square shoulders. So all you're going to do is hinge back, load the hamstrings, reach for it, grab that bell, bring it back, engage the lat. And then all it is, is hike it back. Hike it back.

So you're all hearing this weird breathing that I'm doing. The breathing is actually a very essential component to the kettlebell technique because we're trying to create postural integrity through stiffness of breath and stiffness of muscle. We're not going to go into the super in-depth attributes about it, which the guys at StrongFirst will get really mad at me for not doing it. But this is my webinar, not theirs.

With that, honestly though, if you want the best kettlebell knowledge out there, just follow StrongFirst on Instagram, on Facebook. Look at their videos on YouTube and stuff. You can go StrongFirst kettlebell swing. And their stuff's going to be 10 times better than mine. And they're very, very detail oriented.

But all I want you to think about with the breath is when you are going to hike it behind you, is you're breathing in. You're going to breathe out on the way up. And literally, as you do it, you're contracting all your muscles.

So again, when pulling from the bottom, the very first motion that you do is that hip hinge. So it's you sticking your butt back. It's like you're carrying a bunch of groceries. And you can't shut the car door with your hands. You've got to push your butt back. It's exactly the same motion.

So we sit into our hinge. We keep our eyes neutral with our back. We're not arching our neck super high. Get the kettlebell. Bring it back. And tighten up that lat. And then you're going to hike it back between your legs. And then everything else counts.
So you're going to go to the gunslinger swing. When it floats, spear the handle, bring that elbow back, come around, spear the handle. Then we're back at the top. We're not going to cast out. We're just going to hike it off our shoulders, drop down, bring it back up.

So we'll go through a couple more reps from the front. We'll go through a couple more full reps from the side. And then we'll take some questions. So I've got people laughing at me in here. So I'm not sure what's so silly.

So again, hinge back, grab the bell, pull it back, engage the lat, hike it back. Coming from the side. And again, I'm not the greatest at getting it off my shoulder. You're going to see a little bit of elbow movement off my rib with me. The guys and girls that are really good, they don't get any elbow movement.

So we're here. Again, stick that butt back. Grab the kettlebell. That's the kettlebell clean.

In time, we will go over the kettlebell snatch and all those kinds of things. Why this is a transition kind of phase is I have to get to this rack position. Do presses. If I want to do windmills. If I want to do a squat. I have to learn how to get to that position. So with that, those are kind of the main parts of the kettlebell clean. And again, we did a top down progression. So we want to learn the ending position first. We want to have that good before we get into it.

So to kind of cover it again, that rack position. We're tight to the ribs, wrists straight to the elbow, trying to have as vertical of a form as possible. With the ribbed in, we're nice and tight with our lat, not chicken-winging out, not wanting to raise our elbow up, and shoulders are down. It's like a plank.

When we take the kettlebell down, we don't cast out. We try to stay as close to the body as possible. And again, it's like you're throwing the kettlebell through your stomach, back behind your legs. And you're going to wait till the very last moment that that arm is extended before you shoot back.

On the way up, you want to create that kettlebell, with that short lever swing, the gunslinger swing. To be able to make it weightless, elbow comes back, spears the handle through, and you catch it in that nice rack position.

And then finally, as when we're going to start cleaning from the ground. It's just setting up with that good hip hinge. Grab the kettlebell, lean it back, engage the lats, and clean.

All right. So do we have any questions? OK. Well, that's all I got for you guys today. I'm sorry I can't snatch. This is honestly killing my shoulder, as we speak. But that's OK. I'll blame that to my jujitsu instructor.

But what I think what we're going to start doing is I'm going to randomly create kettlebell videos and just post them on our Wellbeing Online Facebook page. So we'll have webinars for
kind of bigger topics. But we'll just keep updating different kind of kettlebell exercise. And we'll all build off of each other. So you guys will be able to learn them step-by-step.

But that foundational movement is the kettlebell swing. So make sure to go check out Kettlebells 101 and get all the intricacies about that. And remember in that video, I have you all start super far out to overemphasize that hike through. It doesn't need to be that far out. You can, once you get better at it, just bring it slightly out in front of you. So with that, I'm Ramon Sodano for Wellbeing Online. Thanks for joining me.

[MUSIC PLAYING]