

Turn your kettlebell overhead pressing upside down

By Ken Black, RKC

Is your heaviest kettlebell not challenging your overhead pressing anymore?

Are you failing on your attempts to press a heavier weight overhead?

Want a great challenge for your grip?

There could be a million and one answers to these questions. Seated pressing is more challenging for sure. Learning to press with your lat is easier said than done. Soaping up the handle and doing some swings will challenge the grip. Yes the list could go on and on but what if you could do all these with just one exercise!

Bottoms up pressing will do just that! It will challenge you with a lighter weights, teach you to activate the lats, and strengthen your grip as well. Not only will it do that but one of the major benefits will be an increase your pressing strength when you go back to the regular military press.

First let's look at what the bottoms up presses are. Normally the body of the kettlebell will be resting on your forearm and you press from this position. The bottom up press will be done with the body of the bell above your fist so that you have to support the weight through rather than against it against the wrist. This is a lot easier said than done.

One of the things I like most about this exercise is that it is impossible to cheat. It simply cannot be done.

All the principles for the regular presses apply here: gripping the bell tightly, focusing on the bell, etc.... That being said here are a few ideas that will help you.

Before you clean the bell, position the handle so it is sitting about the middle of the fingers. I prefer to the fingers to be in the center of the handle but I have also seen it done close to the ends. This will set you up for the position of the handle once it is cleaned. You won't be able to grab it here but more or less just hook it.





Once you have cleaned the bell it should be in line with the wrist.

When you do a regular clean you can have some variance in the height you clean it to. Not so with the BU clean. You will have to lock it in with the lat. You may want to help balance it with your free hand till you get it down.

You will learn how to wedge your body between the weight and the ground. I am sure that with a bit of practice you will find the most suitable groove for you. Mine was very different to my regular style of overhead pressing.

If you are in-between weights on your regular pressing another way of helping the transition is bottom up cleaning a bell heavier than you can press. Learn to perfect the clean and really fire those lats up. This will have a very similar effect to an isometric contraction so don't hold it too long. Approximately 3 – 5 seconds should be about right.

If you have been doing the bottom up press and want an even greater challenge try double bottom up presses. This will be a very humbling experience.

I have been using the bottom up press as my main source of overhead pressing for some time now. I know that my pressing is stronger than ever because of this. Good luck with bottoms up pressing, enjoy the journey and enjoy the learning.



About the Author



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