

ULTIMATE STRENGTH: Russia's former spy trainer believes the Kettlebell is what you need to get fit. COURTESY OF DRAGONDOOR PUBLICATIONS

Pavel Tsatsouline's Kettlebell Workout

By DAVID SNAPE

Russian kettlebell workouts may be the answer to maintaining a home gym or having an expensive club membership. With Russian kettlebells, you may be able to experience strength and performance gains greater than what is derived from traditional free weights.

The man who introduced Russian kettlebell training to the United States is Pavel Tsatsouline. He is a former Spetsnaz trainer. For those who may not know, Spetsnaz is the Russian equivalent of the CIA or Special Forces. As every high-risk agent would wish for, applying some of Pavel's techniques may help one develop instant explosive power, ready at all times.

Not everyone is a spy; in fact very few of us are. So what benefits does kettlebell training have for the average woman or man? Kettlebell training can be a great way to lose weight, tone up the body, and stay in shape, while helping you develop explosive power, agility and coordination.

There has been much written about the Russian kettlebells on the DragonDoor.com website. You will find claims that the kettlebell will improve the performance of football players by causing them to become more resilient to the explosive shock that their bodies endure on the field. You'll find colorful descriptions of other benefits as well. For example, "hacks your fat off without the dishonor of dieting and aerobics." [dragonDoor.com]

They state that the Russian military does not know what rotator cuff injuries are because, instead of doing pushups, they use kettlebells. The site attributes Pavel with training not only Russian Special Forces but also elite American military groups.

Kettlebell workouts may be bet-

ter for you than traditional weights. In one of his books, 'Power to the People' Pavel mentions some of the fitness tests that were used to compare kettlebell training to traditional workouts. He explains that the kettlebell trainers seemed to be in much better shape and performed better on an obstacle course when compared with those who trained exclusively on the course, without the benefit of kettlebell training.

For someone who avoids traditional weight training like the plague, Pavel is well muscled and toned. Could he be onto something?

Pavel's sense of humor is extremely amusing in light of his Soviet background. 'Power to the People' suggests that liberation is in order. Perhaps that is exactly what Pavel brings, liberation to those locked in the mindset of traditional weight training. Pavel wants to show us a better way to fitness and free us from our need to spend an inordinate amount of time in the gym and spend it more wisely and effectively, so that we can have great physical fitness and time to enjoy it as well.

Many will undoubtedly prefer the convenience of working out at home without the need to go to the gym. Although Russian kettlebells and the training on how to use them can be quite costly, when weighed against the costs of a lifetime of gym memberships, the kettlebells might just come out on top.

As always, consult a primary care physician before embarking on any fitness regimen or changing your level of exercise or before changing your normal diet.

David Snape is a freelance writer with an interest in health, fitness and wellness topics. He is the author of 'What You Should Know about Gum Disease. You can read more of his articles at www.tobeinformed.com

Selfless Service: Positive Simple Acts

Omega Institute's 2008 'Being Yoga' Conference

How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world

By CHRISTINE BEAL

Like the old adage goes, "It's better to give than to receive." But can those simple words result in better health and well-being?

The economic crisis is affecting every stratum of society, and financial woes frequently lead to stress and anxiety—which medical science links to a range of diseases and unhealthy states. We may not be able to personally solve society's economic hardships, though we can choose to change ourselves, the way we view our current situation, and choose to better serve the world.

This concept of "selfless service" was the central theme at The Omega Institute for Holistic Studies' 2008 "Being Yoga" conference Oct. 10-13 in New York. The event drew more than 35 nationally renowned yoga instructors and 500+ attendees to explore how a yoga practice can go beyond exercise to become a way of being—a lifestyle of awareness, peace, and public service. Omega's slogan, "Awakening the Best of the Human Spirit," conveys a timeless mission that our nation needs more than ever to gracefully cope with trying times.

During the conference, Omega put words into action in two ways. First, they issued a call for a "seva" pledge. Selfless service is known as "seva" in Sanskrit, the classical yogi language. The pledge was to promise to be of service when attendees returned home from the conference. The responses were moving, and stretched the globe from Manhattan to Africa—some will be posted on eOmega.org. Karma Krew offered to match each pledge with a free yoga class for at risk youth living in transitional housing. Secondly, participants donated left-over toiletries, to be made into hygiene kits and donated to Project Renewal in NYC. The results speak for themselves:

- 350 "seva" pledge cards/

classes donated to shelters - which will serve approximately 2,400 kids who have suffered the trauma of abuse

- 400 toiletries donated, making 75 complete hygiene kits available to New York's homeless, through Project Renewal

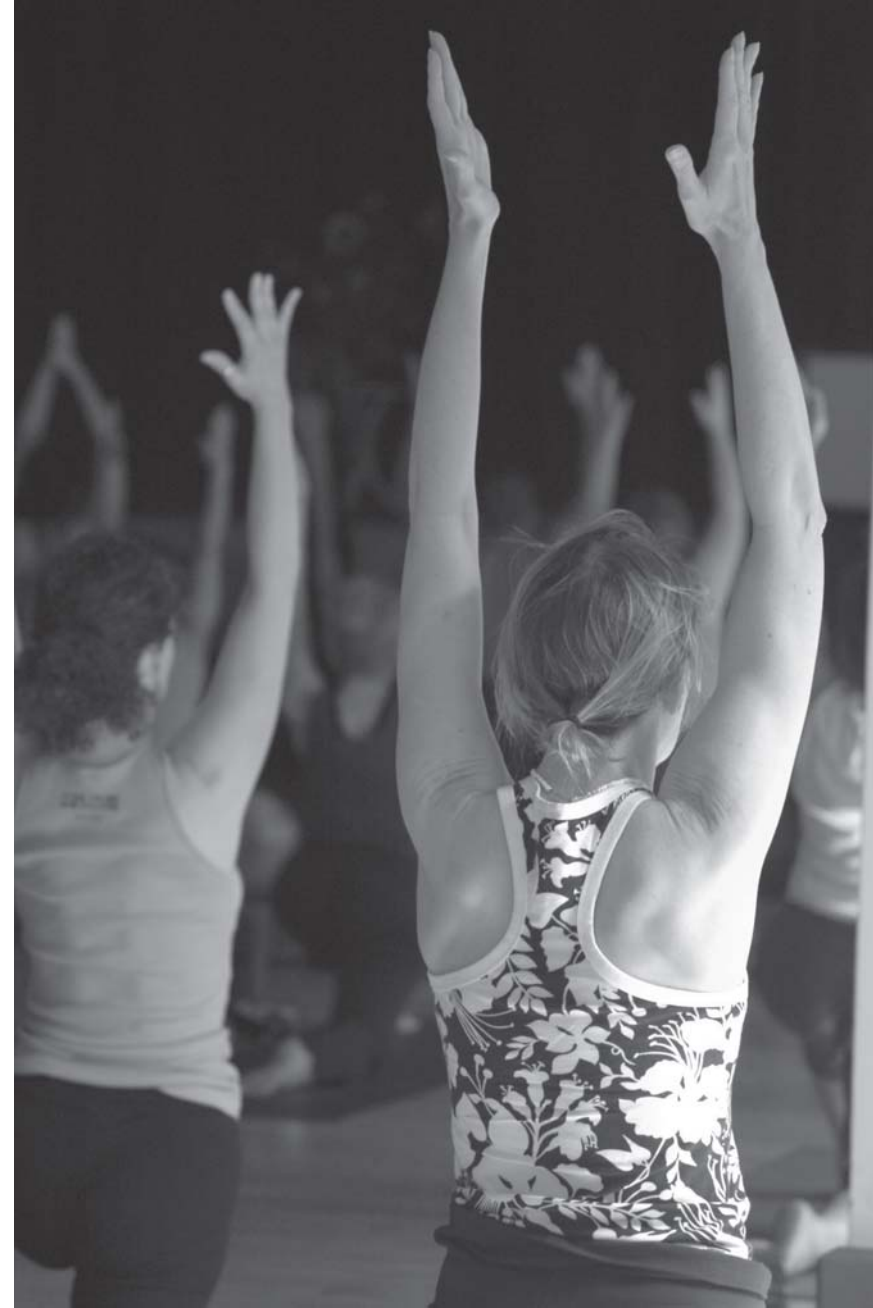
Keynote speaker Russell Simmons discussed integrating yoga and social action. Often described as the "The CEO of Hip Hop," he credits his yoga practice and belief in the laws of karma (cause and effect) for his success. He explained that to receive success from the world, you must give something of lasting value to the world. As a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations, a philanthropist, and author, Russell Simmons urges to move one's yoga practice off the exercise mat and into the community for true empowerment and attainment in every aspect of life. "Use your resources and gifts and you'll be inspired" he said.

You don't have to be a yogi to practice selfless action. As Mahatma Gandhi so profoundly stated, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

The concept of selfless service transcends beyond any one religion and is something that each one of us has the ability to do. First you need to inspire that change within yourself, realizing that every one of us has something to offer. Secondly, set an intention to do something small each day for others. Finally, put it into action. For example:

- Smile for no reason to strangers—"Peace begins with a smile." Mother Teresa
- Be patient and extra kind to your children or spouse
- Let others talk and listen uninterrupted
- Volunteer

If you'd like to explore how selfless service could empower your



REACH FOR THE STARS: Put others before yourself and the sky is the limit. COURTESY OF OMEGA INSTITUTE FOR HOLISTIC STUDIES

life, start by simply doing actions consciously for one week and see what happens. Do you feel better? Have you noticed a shift in consciousness within yourself? With the pressures of this world, escaping our own tribulations and do-

ing something for others may be the "medicine" that all of us need.

Christine Beal, MPA in Health Policy and Management, works on improving quality in the health care system. She is also a yogi, dancer, and writer.

Fitness Q and A: Getting Great Abs?

By EMORY M. MOORE, JR

Q: Is it true that doing hundreds of sit ups a day, is all I need for getting great abs?

A: That's a very interesting question. First by "great" abs, I believe what you are referring to is the appearance. A six-pack for instance has become quite popular as a measuring stick for great abs.

There are several components to how muscles appear, as to whether they are great or not...we will see. First, the amount of body fat is a significant factor in being able to see the muscles clearly. Spot reduction is not really possible; doing an exercise to develop specific musculature will not necessarily decrease body fat in that area. Burning more calories than you take in is the formula to reducing overall

body fat. Unfortunately you don't get to choose wherefrom. If by doing a large volume of sit ups you burn off significantly more calories, you might get lucky and take some fat off your midsection, but it is not a good plan.

Human genetics, activity levels, age/metabolism, and dietary habits are large pieces of the puzzle in determining what our bodies look like. This is why some people appear to be able to eat anything and still have significant muscular development or low body fat to weight ratio. They may have higher metabolisms or a genetic predisposition to thicker vs. thinner and/or simply be more active thus burning more calories.

Now as for "great abs"... we all want to look good, but focusing on aesthetics as our primary goal for exercise is never a good idea. My

primary rule of thumb for exercise training is...

- Maintaining function
- Restoration of function
- Enhancing function

The rest may be gravy, but above is the finely roasted bird.

Over emphasizing musculature builds weakness by ignoring other important systems. The muscular skeletal system is like a big happy family trained properly they work together each sharing load and responsibility at the appropriate times. Would you want to ignore key members of your immediate family in favor of others? It sows disharmony and creates problems.

More important is to train the entire region front, back and sides to insure balance in strength, flexibility, and proper body mechanics. Modern people sit a great deal; muscles are subject to atrophy

(they break down) when not used for extended periods. Training should always be done in a holistic manner, taking the entire body into account, as opposed to selecting pieces to develop. Ignoring the health and well being of the whole is a recipe for weakness and "disease."

The body will change and adapt as it is supposed to with a balanced exercise regime incorporating

- Cardiovascular
- Muscular endurance
- Flexibility and relaxation

Put your focus on these things, when training and you will look like you are supposed to. And that will be good!

You are what you do. *Have a question? Ask Fitness Expert Emory M. Moore, Jr., Founder of Embora and the EM Technique at info@embora.com.*

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