

Benefits of Club Training

by Don Giafardino

Club Training is rapidly re-gaining popularity. If you are into fitness, you probably already know about them, but in case you don't, here is what you can expect by training with clubs or adding some club exercises to your current routine.

First off, let's discuss the club itself. The weight is displaced far from the athlete's hand making it a bit awkward for first timers to get the feel for it right away - this in and of itself requires a certain level of skill development, thus working muscles that you normally might not have in conventional training. When the club is swung, the weight of itself and the speed at which it is swung will develop a rotational force known as torque. Swinging a dumbbell or a kettlebell also produces torque but not to the effect that the clubs can, due to the club's handle length. To put it into perspective a 25lb club will generate over 700lbs of torque. That's more torque than most car engines have.



The big deal about the torque is the 'magic' that is produced while training with clubs. The torque will traction out or open up joints such as wrist, elbow, and let's not forget the shoulder - the #1 reason for people to begin club training. This tractioning allows the joints to decompress and let in fresh blood to these areas. This is very beneficial for people who've been training with weights for a while as their joints have compressed.



Clubs also have a fatastic history. Touted as the oldest fitness tool, one can't imagine a cave dwelling ancestor of ours using a tree branch as a weapon or hunting tool. The versions that we know have been around for over 2000 years. Warrior's have carried them in battle for centuries. Gladiators fought each other with them. As time went on and bronze and iron were utilized, clubs were use to train troops amongst themselves and to develop strength for swordsmen. Many of the club movements are derived from sword



and shield combatics as exercise. The British, Indian, Australian, and US militaries used club training for their soldiers until the beginning of World War II. They then fell into obscurity until the late 1990's.

Of course the typical clubs of today are predominantly made from metal although the wooden ones are still available. The metal clubs also fostered the use of heavy clubs which are typically 15lbs and upward. This opened the door to doing lower body exercises such as squats and front swings. Doing a squat with a heavy club held at arm's length won't compress the spine like a barbell would and does wonders for the entire body. Front swings performed much the way a kettlebell swing is done offer an alternative to deadlifting. An athlete who uses a red 32kg/70lb kettlebell may find it a challenge to use a 45lb club for the same exercise.



Clubs foster a higher level of athleticism. Weights are predominantly lifted in a straight line, with the Olympic lifts being the most technical. Competitive kettlebell lifts also follow the Olympic lift fashion. Clubs are a different animal altogether. Though there are basic exercises which are fairly simple, most club enthusiasts strive for the complex rotational exercises which incorporate swinging the club in 1 or more circles for each repetition. Add to that coordinating the less dominant hand, foot, or body side and the beginnings of bilateral development have begun.

Strength is also a product of club training. Many athletes train almost exclusively with clubs such as fighters, wrestlers, and boxers. Club training added into a strength or power program will also benefit the athlete by flushing the worked muscles with fresh blood after a heavy training session. Clubs are exceptional for the development of the injury plagued rotator cuff muscles and essential to their rehabilitation after injuries.

Any age athlete can benefit from club training, from as young as 4 years old to 100+. It is low impact, restorative, and getting us back to basic movement which our bodies crave and is so absent in our daily lives, not to mention that there is something satisfying about swinging a heavy war tool that speaks to our inner psyche.



Don Giafardino is the founder and developer of Adex Adjustable Exercise Clubs and Maces. He is the Senior Club Trainer for the Vintage Strength Games sport league. Adex Clubs and Maces are complete sets of clubs in one 25 pound unit and are adjustable safely and quickly by hand to accommodate any user. Clubs range from 3.5 - 25lbs and the Maces go from 6 - 30lbs. Both Clubs and Maces use the same weight system. Check them out at www.adexclub.com