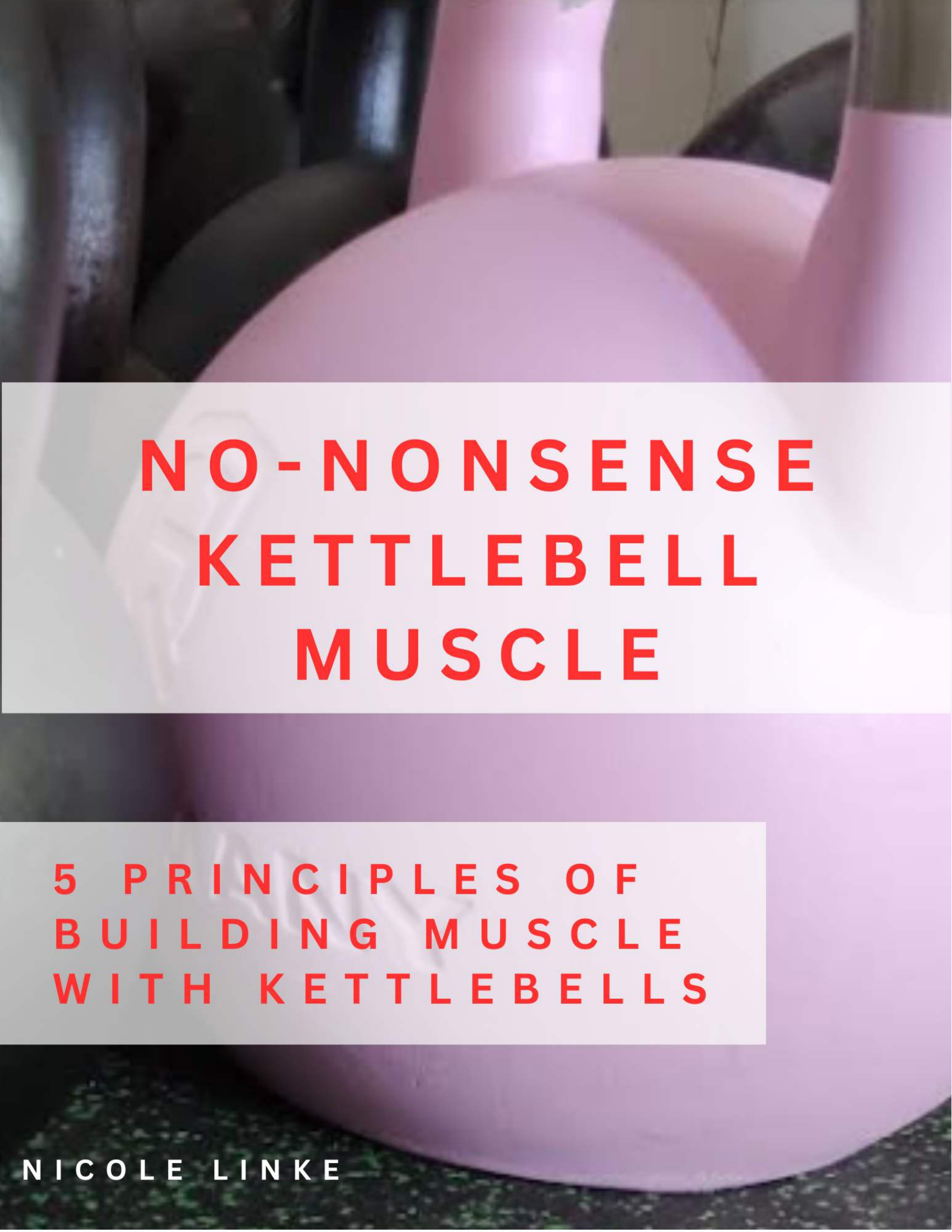




NO-NONSENSE KETTLEBELL MUSCLE

5 PRINCIPLES OF
BUILDING MUSCLE
WITH KETTLEBELLS

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Introduction

Thank you for downloading this guide!

I'm Nicole. I'm a kettlebell and mindset coach for women. I use proven science-based methods to help you get stronger - physically and mentally.

In a less “buzzwordy” way, one could say I help you gain muscle and strength with kettlebells and mental strength through mindset coaching using tools I have utilized throughout my own journey and with numerous clients I am coaching.

Kettlebell training has been instrumental in my own journey from a frail, insecure, and lonely wallflower who was too weak to pursue her favorite activities - running and hiking through nature - to the strong, self-confident, and ambitious woman I am today.

Through kettlebell training, I have built muscle, physical strength and developed grit.

And through studying psychology and stoic philosophy and applying what I have learned to my daily routines, I have become mentally strong and started taking control of my life instead of being swept away by life's currents.

I returned to running in 2021 (after a 9-year break) and have been happily running ultramarathons (injury-free) ever since. And I attribute my race successes to the power of kettlebell and mindset training.

I decided to devote my life's work to helping other women discover their strength because of the transformation I have experienced myself.

This guide is one way for me to give back. Use it to familiarize yourself with the basic concepts of building muscle with kettlebells. That's all what this guide is about. One piece of the strength puzzle.

If you have questions, please email or message me on Instagram or Twitter.

I'm happy to have you among our tribe of women who want to get stronger in every area of their lives.

Let's get started.

1. The Kettlebell Is An Excellent Tool For Building Muscle

A kettlebell is a tool, just like the barbell, dumbbell, or those boring exercise machines. Building muscle is possible with all of these tools. You just have to know how to use those tools, follow muscle-building principles, and put in the work.

The kettlebell is a fantastic tool for building muscle because of its unique shape. When picking up a kettlebell, you will almost always perform multi-joint exercises, which are exercises that use more than only one muscle group.

By performing these so-called “compound movements,” you train more muscles during one exercise, making your training highly efficient. Moreover, this training style promotes muscle-building hormone release more effectively than training single muscle groups in isolation.

2. Choose “Grinds” Over “Ballistics” Most Of The Time

Kettlebell practitioners divide kettlebell exercises into two categories. Grinds and ballistics. Grinding movements are exercises where you stay tense and slowly move the weight. Those exercises are similar to your typical barbell or dumbbell exercises, such as the squat, the press, or the deadlift.

On the other hand, ballistic movements are quick lifts that teach you to switch between tension and relaxation quickly. The swing and the snatch are examples of ballistic movements.

If you are an endurance athlete like me, you might be drawn to high-repetition sets of ballistic movements. They are fun and can give you a similar post-workout feeling that a good run or bike ride gives you.

However, you need to focus on the grinding movements to build muscle. The double front squat and the double military press are the best kettlebell exercises for building muscle. Add double bent-over rows, and you have a simple yet great program for building muscle.

3. Lift In The Right Rep Range Using The Right Weight

Building muscle with kettlebells differs from building endurance or maximum strength. And while there is still some debate about the best rep range for building muscle, these are the general guidelines you should follow:

strength: 1-5

muscle building: 6-15

endurance: >15

You must choose an appropriate weight. What is “appropriate”? It should be heavy enough that you feel challenged in your chosen rep-range. For example, if you are using a common beginner’s rep and set scheme for muscle building of 2 sets of 8-12 repetitions per exercise, then you need to pick a weight you can lift for a minimum of 8 repetitions and a maximum of 12 repetitions per set. You picked a too-light weight if you could easily lift the weight for 20 reps.

If you only have lighter kettlebells, you would choose a higher rep range (for example, 15), ensure you lift close to failure, and keep your rest periods short (30-45 seconds). This ensures you maximize your volume and time under tension (the time period your muscles are under load) - both will help you build muscle using relatively lighter loads.

4. Apply The Principle Of Progressive Overload

Lifting the same weights for the same number of repetitions and sets week after week and month after month will yield very little muscle growth.

You need to be constantly challenging your muscles if you want them to grow. This principle of progressive overload applies to all training.

To run faster, you need to challenge yourself with speed training. To become stronger, you need to lift heavier weights. And to build muscle, you must continually challenge your body to grow.

You can do this by adding more reps, sets, and more weight. However, you can also make your next workout more challenging by shortening your rest time between reps or progressing to more difficult exercises.

If your workouts are starting to feel easier and easier over time, you are not progressing anymore and limit your muscle-building potential. Of course, you can not build infinite muscle naturally; otherwise, bodybuilders wouldn’t need to resort to drugs to pack on the pounds. But that is good news for every woman who wants to get strong because it also means the often-voiced fear of becoming “too bulky” is unfounded.

5. Make Sure You Recover Well

The best muscle-building protocol will fail to get you the results you're after if you are not taking care of your nutrition and recovery.

You will have difficulty building muscle if your diet consists of cereal with skim milk for breakfast, a pop-tart for lunch, and a vegan frozen pizza for dinner.

As a plant-based eater myself, I am not saying this to bash vegan diets but to raise awareness about the importance of protein. Make sure you get sufficient protein and micronutrients by choosing whole foods most of the time.

But your muscles need more than challenging weights and nutritious foods. They also need rest. After stressing your body, you must let it rest to recover and adapt.

When you rest, your body goes into repair mode, so enjoy a good night's sleep and don't be afraid to take rest days. View rest as an integral part of your training instead of as time away from your training.

**I hope this guide helped you kickstart your kettlebell muscle-building journey.
Whenever you are ready, there are two more ways I can help you:**

1. I offer 1:1 kettlebell mentorship. You learn the basics of kettlebell training via 1:1 Zoom sessions. You can book individual sessions and session packages. The frequency is up to you, and the progressions are tailored specifically to your skills. We will build gradually from one session to the next.
2. I offer a complete kettlebell kickstart program with a customized training plan tailored to your needs (fat loss, strength, or muscle building), nutritional guidance, and mindset coaching. The kickstart runs for 12 weeks. After that, you can opt to renew and progress to the next phase.

Send me a message via my contact form or DM me on Instagram to discuss the details.

Stay Strong

Nicole