

Kemme Fitness

A complete user guide to
KemmeFitness.com

By Pete Kemme

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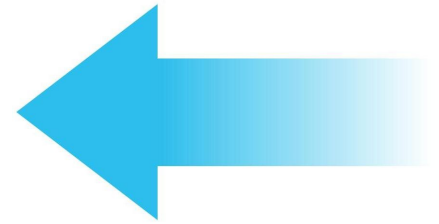
INTRODUCTION

Kemme Fitness is a free, content-rich website loaded full of all the tools you need to participate in your own Functional Fitness program, whether at home or at your local gym. We have hundreds of workouts, utilizing hundreds of exercises. You can choose from the workout archives, or try one of the many 12 week programs available. This guide will give you directions on how to use the website, as well as tips and advice to get you started in your new Functional Fitness program. All the resources you need are located at kemmefitness.com, and it is all free for you to use.

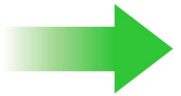
The first part of this user guide will teach you how to use the website efficiently, while part two will provide advice on how to begin. This short user guide was designed as a quick read to get you started, so you can spend your time actually exercising.



PART I



Using the website





CHAPTER 1

Finding the workouts for you



I do update the website and move things around when I figure out ways to improve the flow of the site for users, but I will maintain three basic pages full of workouts. There is some overlap, but workouts are essentially divided into three categories. I have workouts designed for equipment you will typically find in a gym, workouts designed for little equipment or equipment you can easily and cheaply make at home, and I have a beginner page to help you get started. I will cover each page, starting with beginners.

For those who are in less than great shape

The *Beginner* workout page can still be overwhelming for those first on the website. Some workouts are better for your first few weeks, while others may be a bit more challenging. In the text on the top of the page, I will have some suggestions for the workouts you might want to try first. You can always click on any of them and see what you think. I have also added *K-Fit*, a twelve week introductory program to assist you in the initial start-up. The only equipment required is a medicine ball, pull-up bar, physioball, and a kettlebell. If you haven't worked out in a while and/or have no core stability at all, you may choose to start with *K-Basic*, another twelve week program. This program only requires you purchase a physioball, which you should easily be able to pick up for under \$10.

Older workouts—those posted before the summer of 2011—do not have all the exercises linked to videos, so you will have to go to the *Exercise* page and find the exercise link there. For ease, all new posted workouts have links to the less common exercises built right into the workout post to provide reminders of how to do that particular exercise.

You will notice as you open up the various workouts that the format varies, sometimes greatly. This is also on purpose in order to help us fight the mental game inherent in a workout program. Variety is our friend. However, if you find yourself struggling to decide where to begin because there are too many exercises you are unfamiliar with, I would suggest you pick a format you like and simply do it over and over, maybe with a new exercise or two each time.

For example, you can start with *The 120* workout, which uses a list format. Each time you do the workout, just shake up the exercise order or substitute a couple new exercises. That will add

some variety, but will keep things manageable. When you eventually get bored, you can move onto some of the other workouts. At that point you will have a staple of exercises that you are comfortable with, so the new workouts will not have such a steep learning curve.

Runners

I had discovered the first year Kemme Fitness was up and running on the internet that runners were the largest body of followers. In response to this I created *K-Crosstrain*, a free eight week cross-training program designed to help runners get to a level of overall body fitness in order to utilize all of our workouts. The program is a PDF file that can be easily downloaded. In the introduction I explain the benefits of a cross-training program for runners and ultra runners. After the introduction, I provide several workouts divided up into two week periods. *K-Fit* is also a perfect place for runners to start.

The goal is to assist runners, who most likely are not members of gyms, to get into the habit of adding total body Functional Fitness to their overall fitness program. I realize that running is an addiction for many and so I resolved to merely encourage runners to round out their program instead of preaching at them to become full converts to Functional Fitness.

Folks in good shape with gym memberships

If you are already in a condition to where you are not concerned about getting injured doing any of the exercises we use in Kemme Fitness, then go ahead and click on the *At-The-Gym* workout page and scroll through our workouts. You will notice immediately that there are well over a hundred to choose from, and yes, we are still adding more.

You can also download *K-Challenge*, another twelve week program, this one containing more intense workouts. As with *K-Fit*, you only need a kettlebell, medicine ball, pull-up bar, and a physioball. Just make sure you listen to your body, learn proper form for any exercise or movement you are unfamiliar with, and do not work through any pain.

I will be surprised if you don't find some workouts that leave you a little sore in places you are not used to using. If the soreness interferes with you being able to do a workout later in that week, make sure you keep your ego in check and scale down those movements. You may need to utilize the *Beginner* workout page, but there are plenty of intense workouts there as well. In either case, I will have more on working out at a gym in the next chapter.

What if you are fit, but let your gym membership expire?

That is where the *At-Home* workout page comes into play. As with the *At-The-Gym* page, this page has links to a multitude of workouts, although these particular ones were created so you can exercise at your home, nearby park, or local track. *At-Home* workouts were designed for people who can't or don't want to pay for gym memberships. The goal is to achieve Functional Fitness without barbells, dumbbells, cables, and other fancy machines.

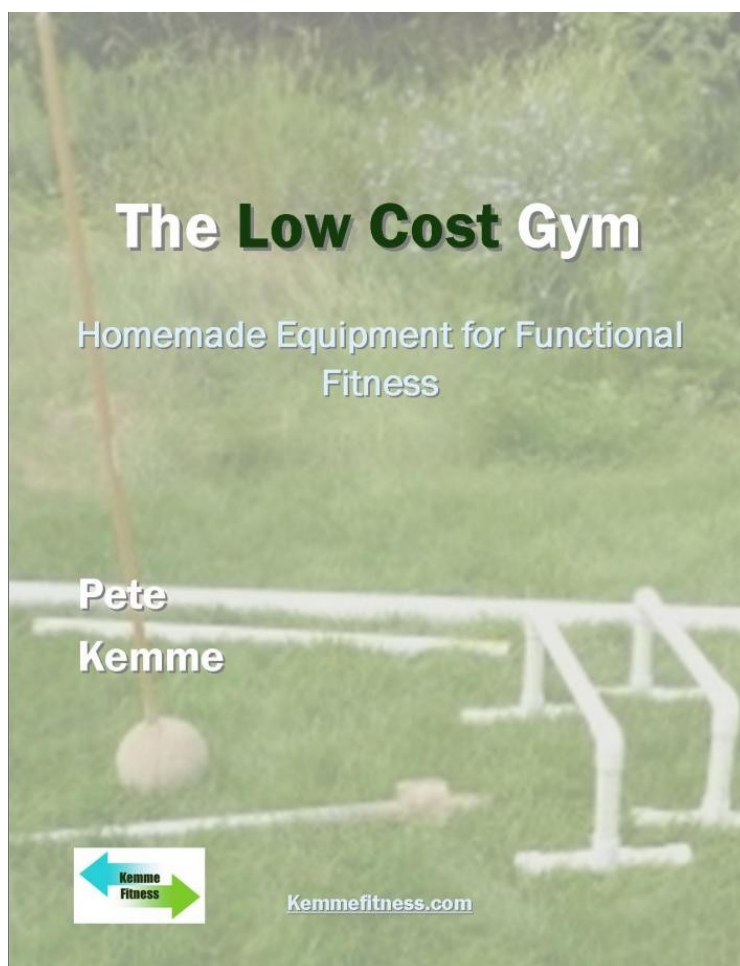
To accomplish this, we have some workouts with no equipment at all, some with only one or two pieces of equipment, such as a medicine ball or physioball, and still others that bring into play

some less common pieces of equipment. What, you don't own a macebell? How about a slosh tube? No? Well, we can help here as well. On our *Homemade Equipment* page under Resources, we have links to articles and videos to make your own equipment.

For ease, I also created a free ebook called *The Low Cost Gym*, which is a PDF available for downloading at no cost. In that ebook you will get explanations and directions for creating homemade medicine balls, clubbells, macebells, mini slosh tubes, and more. Each piece of equipment costs less than \$15 to make, hence the creative name of *The Low Cost Gym*.

Seriously though, this ebook is very popular because people around the world are taking matters into their own hands and are refusing to cough up the cost for highly paid trainers and gym memberships. Further, I have been told over and over how surreal the experience is to turn your child's plastic baseball bat into one of the ultimate pieces of core building equipment.

K-Element is another twelve week program I created that you can download free off the website. The difference with this program is in the required equipment. *K-Element* requires you have a slosh tube, medicine ball, pull-up bar, and a clubbell. Once you decide where you are going to work out, move onto the next chapters to get additional tips. Chapter Two will prepare you for working out at a gym, while Chapter Three covers the various challenges and opportunities for exercising at home.





CHAPTER 2

Working out in a gym



If you don't plan on utilizing a gym to exercise feel free to skip this chapter. For those of you who have tons of money to spend on gym memberships, or who have a free gym provided by your employer, this chapter will help you to navigate away from the traditional gym activity and engage in a Functional Fitness program.

What does Functional Fitness look like in a traditional gym setting? It will look different than what folks normally see. The benefit with this, however, is that you will most likely not have to wait in line to utilize equipment since there is a high probability nobody will be doing similar exercises.

Although the workouts that we provide on the website take advantage of the standard equipment such as cable machines and barbells, there is a heavier reliance upon medicine balls and physioballs. Dumbbells are also a staple in our gym workouts, but usually there are plenty to go around in a gym, especially because our workouts typically call for the lighter weights that bodybuilders and weight lifters aren't using anyway. However, there are three challenges that you will face within the fitness gym atmosphere. They are the use of space, the attitudes of fellow members, and the inquisitiveness of others.

Limited space

As I mentioned above, you will most likely not have to worry about vying over equipment such as the benches or stationary bicycles, but you still may be presented with available space issues. Some examples of more extreme exercises that require a great deal of space are performing *Turkish get-ups* or *one arm snatches* with the barbell. Finding space to use the medicine balls and physioballs or to do animal walks may even prove to be difficult.

Space issues can also arise out of the fact that you are doing fast paced circuits that cause you to move around quickly. Typically you have people on the cardio machines or standing around the benches. The folks around the benches are lying on them, standing around spotting others, or waiting for their muscles to recover. You may need to move around them quickly to get from one station to the other, which can create a feeling of cramped quarters.

Attitudes

This brings me to the second challenge. If you were to stand quietly for a moment at many fitness clubs, you would pick up on a sort of order of things. The cardio machines such as the treadmills and elliptical machines whirl, creating a rhythm. The clacking of weights and grunts being shouted out by the free weights are only interrupted by the encouraging words of spotters. "One more! You can do it!"

Everything seems to have its place and everyone follows some general rules of courtesy. Now I expect anybody and everybody to be courteous all the time while sharing the equipment and space in a gym, but even if you are attempting to be courteous, you may not be perceived that way. This is because that above described order of things will be interrupted with you slamming medicine balls, running from station to station, taking up space for your bodyweight exercises, and running around on your hands as you do animal walks of various kinds.

The result, at times, is leering looks and not so subtle comments about you taking up too much space, or interfering with what somebody else is doing simply because you are moving around too quickly near them while they are in deep concentration. I have actually felt like a golfer causing distractions while somebody is trying to sink an all too important putt.

I found two ways to address this challenge. The first is to obviously be as courteous and respectful as possible. Specifically, I mean that you alter your circuits whenever there is a conflict with another person or group. If you were just about to do your *pull-ups* when somebody approaches the bar, then simply switch up the order of your exercises so as not to be always jumping in front of people. This humbleness will be noticed and appreciated.

The other, sometimes even more important, tip is to simply be positive. Your happy, positive attitude, as in almost any social situation, will trickle into and influence the attitude of others. Kill 'em with kindness and you will be better received.

Inquisitiveness

Not everybody will leer at you, nor will everyone make disgruntled comments. You may be surprised at the number of people who ask you what you are doing with a sincere sense of interest. Many people are doing their best to be healthy, and watching you perform intense, interesting, fast-paced, workouts will have them wanting to join the program.

Maybe they recently finished a 90 day program like P90X or Core Performance and see that you are doing something similar and want to know what program you are using. I am not demanding that you send them to KemmeFitness.com, but you might want to be prepared with how you are going to respond. I remember when I was first approached about what I was doing. The next thing I knew, I had nine people working out with me each day!

Having a positive attitude, preparing yourself for inquiries, and planning out how you will use the floor space are the best ways to address the challenges that face you while doing Kemme Fitness in your local fitness club. As you can imagine, you would avoid these particular challenges if you were to work out at your home. However, you will see in the next chapter that there are also challenges with an at-home program.



CHAPTER 3

Working out at home



Working out at your home has some serious advantages, whether you are trying to save money, or simply don't have time to prioritize making it to a gym. As you would expect, however, there are a few challenges that go along with a home fitness program. I will address those challenges so you can join the millions around the world who are taking fitness into their own hands. However, I'll first discuss the advantages.

The obvious advantages associated with working out at your own house are cost, convenience, and privacy. The last one of the list, privacy, can be an issue for people beginning a workout program who may be a bit self-conscious about their body shape or ability to perform exercises correctly. Although I am convinced that nobody at a fitness club would go out of their way to make somebody feel out of place, I do understand those feelings and they can be nonetheless real. Working out in the comfort of your own house may be necessary for some people in order to build up their confidence.

The convenience of not having to find the right fitness facility and making time to drive to and from it is another reason why many people are trying out a fitness program at home. With the success of programs such as P90X, people have also been given tools and motivation to stay at home. Let's be honest, it is hard enough to find time to work out, let alone to get up off our butts, drive to a gym, work out, and then either use a public shower—to which many people would rather die—or drive home in our nasty sweat!

The final advantage, cost savings, may not seem apparent at first. You may wonder how buying equipment to stock your home to be able to engage in a long-term workout program will provide cost savings compared to a gym membership which includes all the fancy expensive equipment; equipment that you don't have to maintain or replace. This appears at first glance to be a disadvantage.

It is a challenge for sure, as I will discuss below, but the result is an advantage because gyms using homemade equipment are substantially cheaper than paying annual gym membership fees. Before we talk about the other two challenges, let's finish discussing the issue of homemade equipment.

Equipment for the at-home gym

My answer to the first challenge is to challenge you to look outside of the norm and realize that equipment for the home gym does not need to be bought off Amazon or at your local sporting goods store. To put this in perspective, I have a well rounded complete tool box of equipment at my home and the total cost was under \$100!

How can that be? Here is where you need to think outside of the box. I don't have dumbbells, barbells, benches, racks, or expensive machines. My at-home tool box instead contains homemade equipment and a physioball. I had to buy the physioball since I have yet to find a way to build one. As far as the other equipment, there are homemade versions of a macebell, clubbells, slosh tubes, a mini slosh tube, a heavy jump rope, parallettes, a heavy bar, a heavy weight or sandbag, gymnastic rings, and medicine balls. Each piece of equipment cost less than \$15 to make. Go to the website and download—for free—the *Low Cost Gym* ebook, which will describe how to make each piece of equipment step by step.

The beauty here is that you don't need to have all of the above listed items to start working out at home. As I have mentioned before, there are many workouts that utilize nothing other than your bodyweight, and still others with only one or two pieces of equipment. What if you like a workout and have all the equipment but say one, such as the slosh tube or a heavy bar? This only takes a little creativity to solve. You can either cut out those exercises and add additional repetitions to the other exercises, or go to the *Exercise* page on the website and replace them.

For example, if you love everything about a workout, but are missing a slosh tube which is required for a few of the exercises, then look under the heavy bar or heavy weight section on the *Exercise* page and choose similar exercises, while keeping the repetitions and format intact. With a little effort, this problem can easily be overcome. The next two challenges may be a touch more difficult to overcome.



Space

As with working out in a fitness club or gym, the issue of having enough space to perform an entire dynamic, high intensity workout at your home may be a challenge. Not everybody has a large recreation room in their basement. However, most people can make some room in their storage area or garage.

Garages are great because you can easily store your equipment out of the way and when it is time to exercise, you just need to pull your car out, giving you plenty of space. In fact, unfinished storage areas and garages are great for hanging pull-up bars and gymnastic rings.

For others, the answer may be to do your workouts in the yard. You will have plenty of space and all you need is a small area to store your equipment out of the elements. In fact, many of the at-home workouts involve a short run around the house or down the street, so I usually perform them

outside anyway. Of course I'm sure you can predict the next challenge when thinking about exercising outside.

Weather

If you live in Texas or South Carolina, engaging in a year round fitness program in your yard may be a great way to save money, to avoid crowding up your house or garage, and to enjoy the outdoors. But what about us poor saps up here in Michigan? Or worse, what if you live in Minnesota, Sweden, or Canada? Getting motivation to drive to your local fitness club will be a lot easier than convincing yourself to head outdoors with six feet of snow.

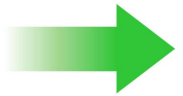
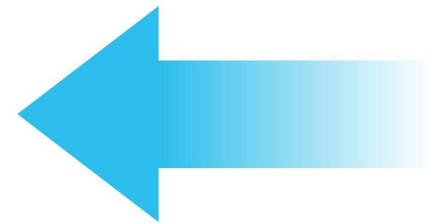
Inclement weather is the greatest challenge facing people who choose to workout at home. The easiest solution would be to work extra hard to make the necessary space in your basement, pole barn, or garage. If that is impossible, you are left with only a few options. Other than bundling up and doing Lunges and trail runs in the deep snow, you may consider looking for fitness clubs and gyms that let you pay by the month. That way you can use their facilities in the more difficult months and save the time and money when you are able to workout at home.

Before spending the money though, I would suggest that you consider partnering up with a friend. When I say a friend, I mean a friend with space at their house or garage for you to use in the nasty months. In order to make sure you are not taking advantage of them, you can provide the equipment and offer to host the workouts the rest of the year. Besides, working out with a friend or in a group can be extremely rewarding.

Some of the best times I have had were trying out new workouts at my friend, Seth Crook's basement or backyard. Fitness partners and small groups provide fun and accountability. Accountability is important to keep you ahead of the mental game since it is a lot more difficult to skip a workout when you have others planning on it.

As with working out in a fitness facility, there are a few challenges for maintaining a home gym. Most of these can be overcome with little cost and a touch of creativity. Whether you go for it, or decide that your gym membership is worth it, the next part of the book will give you advice on how to begin your very own total body, Functional Fitness workout program.

PART 2



How to begin Kemme Fitness



CHAPTER 4

The mental game



Change at times comes with apprehension. What if I get hurt doing these exercises? How will I know what I can and can't do? These are good questions and I'll address your concerns. This chapter, along with the next chapter on common weak body parts, will get you prepared to safely begin Kemme Fitness. For ease in addressing how to safely begin Kemme Fitness, I decided to divide people into a few groups. The groups include those with serious medical conditions, normal active adults, and out of shape adults.

Folks with serious medical conditions

This is the most complicated group of the three. If you have severe insulin issues or other health concerns that could factor in with exercise, especially an intense Functional Fitness program, than you have to consult with your physician before starting. Bring in a couple of our workouts from the *Beginner* workout page or one of the twelve week programs on the website and show your doctor to see what he or she feels about the format and types of exercises.

On the same note, if you have moderate to severe injuries such as a strained shoulder or a messed up back, you need to consult with your physician or physical therapist during the beginning stages. They should already have a tool box full of exercises they would love to see you do and I will bet you anything that those exercises will be very similar, if not the same, as many that we do here at Kemme Fitness.

The key is knowing when to let things heal (taking it easy) and when to strengthen. That is where a qualified and trusted physical therapist comes into play. Basically, injuries need time to heal. However, there then comes a time to rehab and strengthen. And believe me, we will strengthen your body.

Normal active adults

In contrast, this is the easiest group. Simply go to the website and either start on the *Beginner* workout page or download *K-Fit*. *K-Fit* is a twelve week introductory program designed to help you begin at Kemme Fitness.

However, at first, I do insist you listen to your body. You should know the difference between a "good sore" and a pulled muscle. A good sore is the feeling you get that makes you acknowledge you worked your muscles, but without interfering with your ability to use those muscles. Conversely, never work through the pain of a pulled or strained muscle or joint. Rest, recover, and start again slowly.

It is not uncommon, especially for runners, to be extremely sore the first few times, but this should go away after a few weeks. Runners, especially, need to be extra attentive to their bodies when trying out new movements. Use common sense here and start slowly.

Healthy, but out of shape adults

What to do if you are a healthy adult, but are just plain out of shape and the thought of doing one of the workouts in *K-Fit* or the *Beginner* workout page on the website is just too much. Maybe you are older, or maybe just have a nice sized spare tire. This is where your tight rope skills come into play as you balance out many factors. I find it is best to ask yourself the following questions and to answer them honestly:

Are you needing to lose weight, are you needing to get stronger, or both?

What parts of your body are the weakest? Your back? Your wrists? Your core? That last question is almost always a yes.

Do you need to clear anything with a physician or physical therapist first?

Do you have your goals set? It may be to lose weight or to be able to have more energy. It may be to run a 5K with your kids. It may be to do one good *pull-up*. It may simply be to avoid injury at work or at home while doing chores.

Have you learned proper form for the exercises you are going to do? If not, go to the *Exercise* page on the website and watch the video links for help.

The above questions are designed to get you thinking about your goals as well as for you to be honest with yourself about what shape you currently are in. Now that you have answered those questions, here are a few tips to help you out:

Consider starting out with K-Basic, which is a core-building twelve week program using a physioball for equipment.

Start out with bodyweight exercises to avoid moving weights improperly and causing injury. Master *push-ups, air squats, burpees, lunges, etc.*

Shoot for 30 minute workouts at first, but take as many breaks as you need.

In between breaks, try doing the exercises as quickly and intensely as you can while maintaining proper form. Take longer breaks if need be. You will be increasing your anaerobic capacity (the ability to recover from short bursts of energy) and this will build your confidence quickly.

Avoid movements/exercises that cause any pain.

When ready, try working in a few of the exercises that are harder for you such as *pull-ups* and *push-ups*. Remember starting out doing *push-ups* on your knees is not cheating. And doing one *jump pull-up* instead of ten regular *pull-ups* is not cheating. It is starting slow. Do your one *jump pull-up* often and you will improve quickly.

Work out with a friend(s). It will keep you motivated.

Think about your core and do not isolate muscles. Don't worry, it will be hard to isolate muscles if you do our workouts.

Get away from thinking of cardio versus lifting weights. They are not separated in a Functional Fitness workout program. You do it all together. It saves you time and burns more calories.

Remember, you are working all your muscles together and are getting benefits even while doing bodyweight exercises and not going very fast in the beginning.

At first...cheat. If you feel like you can't do the ten *burpees* listed on the workout, then do three. If you don't want to do the *bear walk* the whole distance required, then simply stand up and walk the rest of the way. It is smart to start slowly.

Finally, have fun. Enjoy the weird looks you will get from doing our exercises/movements. *Turkish get-ups* just look awesome!

It is important to have respect for exercises and your body in order to avoid hurting yourself. Again, start out with bodyweight exercises, and most importantly, learn proper form. But fear of working out is dangerous—couch potatoes are likely to have health problems, including heart disease or diabetes. If you follow common sense and some of the guidelines above, you can minimize any risk and will be able to try new things and improve the quality of your life. The next chapter will help you pay attention to specific areas of your body at high risk for pain or injury. Together with the tips in this chapter, you can start to visualize how to overcome that fear and then safely begin your journey.



CHAPTER 5

Common weak body parts



We would all like to think that we could just jump into an intense workout and kick butt, but it is time to get to the reality of things for many of us.

I have had the opportunity to orient dozens of adults over the years to our Kemme Fitness program. I have introduced runners, weight lifters, couch potatoes, and the injured.

During this process, I have noticed some common patterns that I would like to address here. I determined that there are four body parts that are of concern for beginners. They are the knees, backs, shoulders, and wrists. These joints and muscles are the ones that are more commonly affected for people not accustomed to a fitness program.

Backs

Let's start with the most important area on your body. The back is part of your core and a strong back will provide you with a wonderful quality of life. The back is also something that is sore for most people—80 percent of Americans claim to have had lower back pain in their life. This may be largely due to our sedentary lifestyle, raised heels in our shoes, and poor posture in general.

Further, the back is something you can easily injure when you start throwing around weight, or even doing bodyweight exercises in poor form. If you don't keep a straight line from your head to your tail bone, you will have problems. I put it this way: **rounded shoulders = rounded back = lower back working extra hard to keep straight = soreness and/or injury.**

The “Golden Rule” for the back is to keep it straight, but what does that actually look like? An excellent visualization is to picture a skeleton hanging in biology class. Keep your shoulders back and down. Maybe envision yourself lifting your naval up away from your belt buckle. Lifting your head up while squatting or leaning forward is a great trick to help keep your back in line. There are also a couple ways to monitor this.

The first way to monitor your posture is to use a mirror while you do exercises/movements. Keep an eye on yourself from side views. The more mirrors, the better. And if you work out with others, everybody should be paying attention to each other's backs. You know...you have to have your partner's back.

There are plenty of movements in our program that will have your back rounded, such as many of the animal walks. When I recommend a straight back, I am talking mostly about *squats*, *lunges*, *deadlifts*, and other similar exercises. In life, we have our spines out of the neutral position, so we must train that way. My words of caution are not meant to say you can never round your shoulders and back in general. I am talking about specific movements that require a straight back. My words of caution are to make sure that when you do these particular movements, especially with weights, you are doing them safely.

Knees

Oh how it seems our knees hurt more the older we get, doesn't it? You can strengthen muscles around the knee, but more importantly, I want to discuss how to protect your knees from pain and discomfort. The most basic strategy to protect your knees is to always keep your knees behind your toes. For example, if you do an *air squat*, make sure to stick your butt out behind you and do not let your knees stick out past an imaginary line rising up vertical from the tip of your toes.

This goes for *burpees*, *lunges*, and any other exercise where you have to lower your body using the knee joint. Just remember that if an exercise causes discomfort in your knee joints—the *one legged squat* or *pistol*—is a good example, then replace it with something else. Do not work past the pain. Listen to your body.

Shoulders

These guys are complicated. There are many ways to injure a shoulder, and we work shoulders often in our workouts by the nature of what we do. The reason our program works your shoulders is because life works your shoulders. We often use our shoulders in daily activity, so a Functional Fitness program should prepare your shoulders.

The key here is to simply pay close attention to any discomfort, especially if you are swinging around a piece of equipment like a kettlebell or clubbell. The beauty of a shoulder injury, however, is I have yet to find somebody who—with the guidance of a physical therapist—could not do our workouts just by changing up a few exercises. Usually a shoulder injury only affects one or two motions, but allows for some others. All you have to do is determine what movements to avoid and replace them with other movements that still work your shoulders, but are not causing pain or injury. And again, if needed, a physical therapist should guide you with this determination.

Wrists

This body part is an issue for some people. I have heard physical therapists who hate *push-ups* in general due to the stress it puts on wrists, and I can't argue with that. Wrist discomfort doesn't horribly affect a lot of us, but it is something I warn people about and suggest they pay close attention to, especially in the beginning of the program.

There are two ways to deal with your wrist discomfort or pain. One method is to simply cut back on the number of *push-ups* or other exercises that have your wrists bent at a ninety degree

angle. If you can tolerate the lower reps, you just might be able to increase the number as your muscles get stronger.

For some, however, the wrists are already too damaged. Fear not, there is help. Some really smart people invented these handy push-up handles. Or instead of buying those, you can simply hold onto small dumbbells in each hand. That way you can keep your wrist locked in the relaxed position while you hold your body up and there will not be that stress on your wrist joints.



No matter what condition you are starting in, you need to learn good form for all the exercises to avoid injury. Here is where I will caution you: Do not avoid working your total body. Follow the tips above to ensure that you are not neglecting certain muscles. It is amazing how when your muscles work with other muscles and work with neural connections, how strong you can be without increasing the size of your body. And it is amazing how strengthening muscles around a problem area, can go a long way at alleviating pain and discomfort.

Our whole bodies were meant to be strong—not just big in a few areas such as biceps. Always think total body and concentrate on your core. Not only will you enjoy the increased strength, but you will enjoy playing with your kids without pulling a muscle!



CHAPTER 6

A few extra tips on safety



I just wanted to throw in a few extra tips to help you stay safe as you start using Kemme Fitness.

A note to bodybuilders and weight lifters

First off, when I use the term “bodybuilder,” I am referring to the traditional way of isolating muscles. These are the people that have “back and chest day,” then “bicep and tricep day,” etc. Weight lifting typically refers more to those working on strength with power lifts. Power lifts are great Functional Fitness movements, as they work movements as opposed to isolating muscles. Although both bodybuilding and weight lifting are sports, I am concerned about the average Joe or Jane relying on these types of programs simply because that is the only way they were taught to exercise.

If sculpting your body or preparing for strongman competitions are your goal, good for you. If you are doing those workouts because that is how you are taught, but want to have a more generalized, overall, total body fitness program, then you should rethink how you are exercising. This chapter is addressing those folks, not the dedicated bodybuilders and strongmen.

This is going to be hard for those who had been weight lifting to get used to, but I do not suggest that you should max out on any type of power lift. I do not want to hear how much you can *deadlift*. If you want to max out on repetitions of *pull-ups*, go right ahead. However, it is a much safer way to exercise if you avoid trying to lift such and such or press such and such amount of weight for one repetition. That is a sure fire way to injure yourself.

This change in thought—and practice—is hard for a few reasons. First off, increasing one's max rep is a standard way to measure your success and to keep yourself motivated. Also, most of us work out in a gym around other people. We need to be honest and realize the competitive bone is in most of us, and stronger in some. Consequently, it is hard to avoid comparing yourself to the guy or gal next to you. “She deadlifted 185 pounds. I need to beat her.” Or just to compete with ourselves: “I did 85 pounds last month. I am going to try a 95 pound one arm snatch.”

Don't get me wrong. As you get stronger and have more power, you will naturally need to increase loads for the same exercises. I just want you to change the way you view lifting or pressing.

It is not about bragging about how much weight you can move around. It is about how physically fit you are. More importantly, it is about living life and having the ability to do things in life that you enjoy, or being able to do the chores you hate without killing yourself.

A comment on form

Doing two rounds of five *deadlifts* several times a week is a great way to build a strong back. Doing just one heavy Deadlift with poor form is a great way to pull a muscle so you can't work out for several weeks.

The difference is in the form. If you don't know how to keep your shoulders from *rounding*, or that the bar should be centered above your foot, then you need to do some research. Even if you can perform a *deadlift* in perfect form, you might not be able to keep your back straight when you do twenty *deadlifts* of 135 pounds. You will then have to swallow your pride, ignore your partners, and either lower your weight or lower your reps. If you can't keep good form, you are lifting or pressing too much weight. The answer is elementary—don't do that!

Don't be fooled by bodyweight exercises

Bodyweight exercises might seem less important because there are no heavy weights to harm you. Well first off, the word "weight" is still in that sentence. Depending on what movement I am doing, I can be moving around up to 160 pounds—gravity is a pain. Good form also starts with bodyweight exercises. A great example is the *squat*.

I can't tell you how often I see this done poorly. People are all excited about doing High Intensity Interval Training and they start whipping out the *air squats*. Again I'm not a physical therapist or a kinesiologist, but I personally do not like my knees going out past my toes. Therefore don't slack on form just because you don't have a kettlebell in your hands.

Safety is not the only reason for good form

Good form works the muscles a certain way. If you are not squatting down so your buttocks is lower than your knees, than you are not getting the full benefit of the *squat*. A *pull-up* where you chin does not get above the bar is missing out on the end movement, the part that engages your upper back muscles, and therefore you will be missing out on the increased strength you would have achieved. Don't miss out on all the benefits.

The final chapter will focus on three exercises which I feel are building blocks to the program. But first, I want to end this chapter with a few last tips.

Miscellaneous phrases to remember

If you are lifting something like a kettlebell in the air—don't drop it on your head.

If you are in pain—do not play through it.

If you have an actual injury—stop exercising and get it checked out if needed.

If you do not know the proper form of an exercise—learn it.



CHAPTER 7

Mastering the big three



I have three exercises I ask that you focus on as you begin Kemme Fitness. I am hesitant to write them down because they may cause cringing by many readers. However, I feel it is truly important to understand and appreciate the importance of *pull-ups*, *push-ups*, and *squat-type* movements.

Now you do not have to be able to do a full complete *pull-up* or even one full regular *push-up* to start utilizing our workouts. On the flip side, you can't avoid them; especially because they are the foundation for many of the movements that you will want to eventually do. They are great exercises that work your body in very functional ways and are necessary to master at some point if you want to be able to achieve Functional Fitness.

However, don't worry and anguish if you are either afraid of or loath these "big three" exercises. I will help you to address each one with tips in order to slowly build up your strength and perform them in perfect form.

Push-ups

We have a lot of *push-ups* here at Kemme Fitness. I believe we are up to around two dozen different variations, with many more to come. Further, as I mentioned above, they are the basis for other exercises; exercises such as *burpees* and the *inchworm*. *Push-up* variations are great for adding variety to the program and they are an excellent functional movement. In life, we at times need to get up off the ground, push off of things, or need to avoid injury when we fall.

Since *push-ups* are so important, we should take some time to make sure we can do one. We already talked about protecting your wrists if need be for *push-ups* back in Chapter Five. Using dumbbells or buying *push-up* handles usually solves any wrist pain issues. Now with that aside, you should begin by gauging whether or not you can do a proper *push-up*.

Start by lying flat on the floor on your stomach with your hands up on the ground under your shoulders. Push yourself up on your toes and hands. If you can't keep your hips in line with your feet and neck, thus avoiding a sagging back, then you know you have to progress in that area, meaning strengthen your core.

That brings us to tips about dealing with the lack of strength for a perfect form *push-up*. First tip is to get over it and forget any ego issues and start out on your knees. Men hate those because they are called "girl push-ups," but all you are doing is moving up the hinge that you are using from your toes to your knees. You are then performing the same movement, just with a little less weight. The benefit of this is that you can still do tons of *push-up* variations from your knees, adding to the variety in your workouts, while at the same time building the necessary strength to move that hinge eventually to your toes. Better yet, do them on an incline such as a chair or table. This way, you keep the proper alignment as you do the *push-up*.

The second tip is to work your entire core, which is automatically addressed in our workouts. Core strengthening exercises are central to our program and you will eventually be able to do a *push-up* from the ground on your toes. Regardless of how long it takes you to obtain the required strength, it is essential you don't allow yourself to perform *push-ups* in poor form. Don't allow for a sagging back. Not only would you be missing out on the actual benefits of a *push-up* by performing it in bad form, but you run the risk of putting strain on your back and causing pain or discomfort.

Pull-ups

As with *push-ups*, there is more than one reason to perfect this exercise. Not only is this a life altering functional movement—how cool is to be able to lift yourself up—but it will assist you in completing some other great movements such as *knees to elbows*, *toes to bar*, and other *pull-up* variations. And as with *push-ups*, this can be a difficult exercise to do in perfect form. A regular, "perfect form" *pull-up* would have you lifting your entire bodyweight up from the hanging position until your chin is at a level higher than the bar you are holding onto.

Believe me, this is not easy for the majority of folks. Females tend to be weaker in this area and heavier people have a harder time because they are lifting more weight, therefore needing even more strength than a thin person.

The same rule that I had for *push-ups*, though, applies here: don't stress about doing one fully, as long as you maintain good form. I found that if the bar is not that high compared to your height that *jump pull-ups* work best. Grab the bar and jump up, using your strength to ease the lowering of your body. Think of this as a negative *pull-up*, which will build up strength in the necessary areas to move you towards doing a regular *pull-up*. If the bar is too high, try using a friend or a chair to support your feet and/or legs. This will also be akin to a negative *pull-up* and will accomplish the same as would a *jump pull-up*.

Now if you get to the point where you can easily perform a supported *pull-up* or a *jump pull-up*, try a *kiping pull-up*. You might have to click on the video link on our *Exercise* page for a



demonstration, but essentially you are swinging up your knees to create momentum to swing your body up for a *pull-up*. This is not cheating by swinging—it is a variation of the regular *pull-up*.

Squats and other Lunges

We rarely do the traditional power lift of racking a barbell on our shoulders and doing a *squat* with heavy weight. Some of our workouts might call for *Olympic squats*, but what I want you to focus on is a simple bodyweight squat or *air squat*—and yes we also have a video link for you for this on the website.

There are a few issues to mention here. The first issue goes back to the idea of protecting your knees as discussed in Chapter Five. Imagine a vertical line shooting from your toes straight up to the ceiling. Better yet, place your toes up against a wall. Then try to squat down as low as you can go without your knees hitting the wall, or crossing past that imaginary line. Keeping your knees back behind your toes is the best way to avoid knee discomfort, pain, and injury.

The other issue will be apparent as you attempt your *squat*, which is the inability to actually squat down low enough. A perfect squat will have your thighs parallel with the ground, but many, especially men, struggle with this at first. My first suggestion is to place a chair behind you and concentrate on sticking your buttocks out and placing it on the chair. This technique will steer you towards proper form.

A second suggestion is to hold onto something stable, such as a railing, while you lower yourself. Guide yourself down for a deep *squat* and then try not to use your grip on the stable object as you push yourself up. You are concentrating on the second half of the movement, but will be increasing the strength you need and slowly getting your mind to allow your muscles to lower you into the *squat*.

This mental ability is important, because our minds will fight the beginning part of the squat by firing off neural connections to tighten up our muscles in order to prevent us from dropping down too far. It is a way for our brains to keep us from getting injured. You may have to do many *assisted squats* that way to trick your mind into understanding that you can *squat* that deep without hurting yourself. This is my only exception to my “listen to your body” rule!

The final issue concerning *squats* is to pay attention to your back. I obviously strongly suggest that you keep that straight back. You might see videos on the internet showing people rounding their shoulders and backs while whipping out *air squats* at lightning speed. Are they going to get hurt? Probably not, since they are not using any additional weight, but why practice poor form? Eventually you will want to squat with weight in front of you such as in a *goblet squat* and a *Cossack squat*, so be consistent with proper form.

All of these tips and suggestions are transferable for all types of *lunges* as well. As we step forward into a *lunge*, I want you to keep your knees behind your toes just as you learned with the *air squat*. You will see that we do have bodyweight exercises on Kemme Fitness that have your knees out past your toes, such as *frog jumps*. Most people can do these with no problem, but if your knees become achy, you will know why. There is no way to change a *frog jump* to allow you to protect your knees, so you may have to replace the exercise with something more comfortable.

My hope is that you are able to work on all three of these movements from the very beginning of the program. If you struggle with one or more of them, spend time before every workout doing one or two to train your mind and strengthen your body. Give yourself time and know that there are plenty of exercises to keep you interested and to help you move forward as you master the Big Three.

In the meantime, I think you are ready to start working out. Therefore, go check out some archived workout pages or download the twelve week program that is right for you.



K-Fit

Your introduction to Kemme Fitness



12 week
Functional Fitness
program
for beginners