Strong"Woman" Training

We can do it and we should do it!

By Yoana Snideman, P.T. / R.K.C

Over the past 3 years I have noticed that Strongman Training, Odd object lifting and Kettlebell Training have become increasingly popular in the strength and conditioning field. As an avid athlete myself I have always been fascinated with training for sport and was naturally interested in what strongman training could do for women. After viewing the physiques of the some of the strongman competitors I must admit it really turned me off to any potential practice of these movements. The female clients I have all want to be small and lean, not big and muscular. Yeah, yeah, I know, women don’t have the testosterone to build big
bulging muscles but there is an emotional component about getting big that most women struggle with. I certainly did not want to resemble a 300 pound Norwegian strongman named Thor. But as I continued to study and look at the sheer awkwardness of the movement I decided to try them. Immediately I began to feel and see the benefits of this type of training. Not only did I get stronger, but also a lot of my common weaknesses began to disappear and my muscles got leaner and harder, but not bigger. Over time I began to teach the movements in my group classes in which I train predominantly women. The women loved the movements and loved the results they were seeing in their bodies. It brought to my attention that we as woman can do this stuff and should do it!

My purpose in writing this article is to educate and motivate women to discover the immense potential we have and the many benefits we can receive from “Strong Woman Training”.

The more I experience and learn about using implements such as tires, sandbags, kegs, kettlebells, sleds, sledge hammers and atlas stones, the more reasons I have for adding them to my clients exercise programs.

**The Era of the Strong Woman is here!**
As a Physical Therapist coming from a rehabilitative background one of my top priorities has always been to prevent injuries from occurring in the first place and I have found that Strong Woman Training done correctly strengthens those common weaknesses.

Below is a list of some of the weak areas in the female body and some strong woman exercises to improve them:

- **Weak Lower Abdominal and Low back**
  This exercise called the Renegade Row (John Davies Renegade Training for Football 2003) conditions the lower abdominals and low back unlike any other exercise I have tried.

- **Weak Hip Extensors**

  (Notice how the legs have to drive the tire upward - hello GLUTES!)

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Flipping tires, lifting atlas stones or performing deadlifts are a great way to strengthen the glutes, hamstrings and the spinal musculature.

- **Weak Grip**
  Kettlebell exercises work wonders for the grip. Try pressing a kettlebell with the bottom side up in the air or try gripping Kettlebells, dumbbells or barbells and walking for distance or time.

- **Weak Spinal Musculature and poor posture**
  Lifting kegs, performing push presses barbell or sandbag help to improve strengthen all spinal musculature.

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• **Weak Ankles**

Try holding two kettlebells and performing a Pistol. Your ankle gets tremendous conditioning
As do your hamstrings, quadriceps and glutes.

**NOTE:** These exercises are just a few of the many movements.

In conclusion, women will benefit tremendously from performing strongman type movements and lifting odd objects such as sandbags, tires, kegs and stones. If you are just beginning with this type of training remember to start slowly and intelligently. These exercises are challenging and most of them are self-
correcting in the sense that if you don’t use proper body mechanics you won’t execute the exercise. So in essence, the exercises teach people proper body mechanics without getting overly technical with words and explanations. “Flip the tire Jennifer” is usually as technical as you need to get. A woman is not going to flip a 300 pound tire with her arms, she will naturally figure out that she must use the larger and more powerful leg muscles. As a rehabilitation expert, this type of training is revolutionizing the way I train both healthy and injured clients. Not that all people will be capable of lifting 300-pound tires but applying the principle of “Self Correcting” exercises is the future of rehab and strength and conditioning. Why not let the nervous system figure out how to correct itself with awkward lifts and movements rather than spending weeks or months at a time using isolation exercises. Do isolation exercises have a place in conditioning and rehab? Of course they do, but they should never be the final stage of any conditioning program. Rather than judge what I am saying, please try some of these movements for yourself. Depending on which tools you have access to, you can substitute dumbbells, barbells and receive similar benefits.

My advice is to add some Strong Woman Training in your exercise programs!
In my next article, I will include some more in-depth fat loss routines for women. For those of you who are ready to get started with this type of training you could start by simply adding 1 to 2 of the exercises mentioned above.
Example: Mix these following exercises into your current exercise programs.

**MONDAY workout:**
Pistol with Kettlebells or Dumbbells 3 sets of 3-5 reps each leg
Sandbag (or Double Dumbbell) Clean and Press 3 sets of 5 reps
Rest 1 to 2 minutes between each set.

**WEDNESDAY workout:**
Flipping Tire (or perform the Deadlift) 3 sets of 5 reps
Farmers walk with dumbbells in both hands 3 sets of 1 minute
Rest 1 to 2 minutes between each set.

**FRIDAY workout:**
Push Press with Sandbag or Barbell 3 sets of 6 reps
Renegade Row with Kettlebells or Dumbbells 3 sets of 5 each
Rest 1 to 2 minutes between each set.

If you become fatigued and start losing your form, I would recommend stopping the exercise for that day.

Contact me today and I will help you become a Strong Woman too!
For more information:
 yoana@revolutionlajolla.com
 www.revolutionlajolla.com

**About the author:** Yoana Snideman (RKC & PT), a native Venezuelan, has inspired, trained, designed programs, given nutritional consulting and rehabilitated hundreds of people for more than 15 years. Her passion for helping
people is evident is her uptempo, dynamic, fun and Latin teaching style. She received a Physical Therapy Degree from the University of Caracas in Venezuela and is co-owner with her husband of Revolution Fitness Center, a high performance training studio in La Jolla, California. She won The National Tactical Strength Challenge 2005 Women's Division.

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