

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

How Fit Are You?

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We've long desired to offer a fitness competition consistent with our fitness model (See *CrossFit Journal* October 2002, "What is Fitness?") and have found the task fraught with difficulties.

Early we realized that the logistics of running an on-site fitness competition like STREND are both complicated and ultimately limit the number of participants. The fitness test, or competition, that we offer this month is conducted at a facility and time of the athlete's choosing.

Our initial hope was to design a competition that would not only reflect CrossFit's broad fitness concept but would also accommodate men and women, large and small athletes, the young and seniors, and individuals of all fitness levels. Additionally, we wanted a competition that would motivate and reward fitness improvements among our fittest. Specifically, we set out to motivate an improvement in the absolute strength, relative strength, and gymnastics foundations of all CrossFit participants. Unfortunately this last consideration rendered the design troublesome for many who are other than already very fit and male. So, what we ended up with was a competition where the ability even to complete the test suggests a fairly advanced level of fitness.

Looking at the ten general physical adaptations to exercise (cardiorespiratory endurance, strength, stamina, power, speed, flexibility, agility, accuracy, coordination, and balance) we saw that advanced calisthenic and weightlifting movements present an excellent opportunity to advance neurological skills like agility, accuracy, coordination, and balance. We realized early that any test that pushed the envelope for gymnastics movements was going to eliminate a large

segment of the exercising public and indeed some of our dedicated athletes.

In the end we decided that improving these neurological skills and thereby encouraging a greater level of fitness in our participants was more important than offering a test that was universally inclusive. We are, ultimately, a program of elite fitness, and any test of elite fitness will contain elements that cannot be performed by everyone. We also felt that many of our best athletes, while among the fittest people on earth, needed additional motivation for improvements in absolute strength, relative strength, and gymnastic foundations.

While we make no apologies for offering a fitness test that best serves the already very fit, we have developed several strategies whereby others can participate and, more importantly, benefit from practicing for and working toward completion of the test. For every phase of our test we have suggested adaptations for women, juniors, seniors, or anyone else who may not yet be able to complete all of this competition.

Similarly vexing was the difficulty of testing for various capacities simultaneously rather than separately. The origins of this concern arise, you may have guessed, from our oft-repeated contention that the blending and mixing of demands most clearly replicates the demands of nature.

One aspect of athlete testing that remains tricky is balancing elements favorable to larger and smaller athletes. We referee debates between our bigger and smaller athletes almost daily. The big guys want to deadlift, bench press, and throw. The smaller guys want to run, jump, and do pull-ups.

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How Fit Are You? (continued...)

Our design requirements included but were not limited to the following: quantifiable results; consistency with the CrossFit fitness concept; raising our commitment to improving absolute strength, relative strength, and gymnastic foundations; balancing intrinsic abilities of smaller and larger athletes; emphasizing exercises critical to and foundational to advanced training; mixing training demands within each test and, of course, over the total competition; a design that would identify an athlete's weaknesses and possibly stand as a workout plan for improving overall fitness; and, finally, we wanted to design a competition that would be "hard as hell."

The competition that we've designed comprises five tests. One test is performed for each of five days in the order given.

We've listed within each test description a possible workout that would test for and consequently improve the performance of that test. While designing each test we asked ourselves what kind of fitness might develop from turning the tests into workouts that were repeated to the exclusion of other work and with the sole purpose of improving the tests. The answer in the case of this final product is "elite fitness."

Test 1: Bench Press 1 rep followed by max set of Pull-ups

Performance: Ramp up to a one-rep max and within 30 seconds of racking the lift begin the pull-ups. Any grip is allowed on the pull-ups as long as the range of motion is complete - all the way up and down.

Scoring: Multiply the bench press load in pounds by the number of pull-ups completed.

Modifications: Where needed use an assisted pull-up device such as a "Gravitrone."

Character: This tests the upper body for both absolute and relative strength and stamina.

Workout: This test can be practiced as a workout of three to five repetitions of the test, resting between efforts as needed.

Test 2: Clean and Jerk 15 Reps

Performance: There is no time limit, but the weight cannot be rested on the ground. Resting at the hang, rack, or overhead is O.K. At the ground, the athlete must touch and go. Technique is otherwise not critical.

Scoring: The score is exactly the load lifted.

Modifications: There are no modifications needed for this test.

Character: This classic movement is traditionally an excellent test of overall strength, but when performed at 15 reps becomes an extraordinary metabolic challenge as evidenced by max heart and respiratory rate.

Workout: This test can be practiced as a workout by completing the test and then repeating at twelve and nine reps with the same load, resting between efforts as needed.

Test 3: Tabata Squat followed by 4 minutes of Muscle-ups

Performance: After the eighth Tabata Squat interval the athlete gets ten more seconds of rest and then has 4 minutes to complete as many muscle-ups as possible. The muscle-ups need not be consecutive, i.e., without rest. All squats must be from below parallel to full extension of the hip and leg.

Scoring: The test score is the Tabata Squat score (weakest number of squats in each of eight intervals of twenty seconds of work followed by 10 seconds of rest) multiplied by the number of muscle-ups completed within four minutes. Total time for test: 8 minutes.

Modifications: With regard to the muscle-up, there are two possibilities for adaptation. One is to assist manually - someone pushing the athlete up. The other is to replace the muscle-up with four minutes of pull-ups and dips.

Character: The Tabata Squat is a CrossFit classic testing both athletic hip function as well as aerobic and anaerobic capacity. The muscle-up is arguably the single best upper body exercise. This combination alone is suggestive of an athlete's total fitness.

Workout: This test can be practiced as a workout by completing the test and then repeating after an extended rest.

Test 4: Deadlift 1 RM followed by a max set of Handstand Push-ups

Performance: Ramp up to a one-rep max and within 30 seconds of completing the deadlift begin the handstand push-ups. The handstand push-ups must bring the ears below the hands so they need to be done on parallel bars, parallettes, or some other raised platform like chairs or books. Using the wall for balance is O.K.

Scoring: Multiply the deadlift load in pounds by the number of handstand push-ups completed.

Modifications: There are two options for modification of this test. The first is to provide manual assistance to the handstand push-ups. Typically, this is done by lifting the athlete by the calves or ankles. Alternately, where even the handstand is a challenge, the substitute exercise is a shoulder press.

Character: This duo represents a reasonable estimate of an athlete's total strength - relative and absolute, upper and lower body.

Workout: This test can be practiced as a workout of three to five repetitions of the test, resting in between efforts as needed.

Test 5: Run 800 meters, Thrusters 75 lbs x 21 reps, “L” Pull-ups 21 reps

Performance: The thruster must originate from a full squat each rep. The “L” pull-ups are pull-ups with the legs extended straight out in front of the athlete. Any pull-up where the heels fall below the butt or the legs bend other than slightly is disallowed. The thruster and “L” pull-ups need not be performed consecutively, i.e. without breaking. Any grip is O.K. for the pull-up, but the range of motion must be complete.

Scoring: The entire effort is timed from the start of the run to the last pull-up. A time is returned in minutes and seconds.

Modifications: Where necessary, the load for the thrusters may be reduced and the “L” pull-ups can be assisted by gently lifting the heels or allowing a “sloppy L.” For those not able to perform a pull-up, an assisted pull-up device may be used.

Character: This test is classic CrossFit. The combination of a monostructural metabolic exercise (running) combined with a high demand weightlifting movement (Thruster: front squat/push press), and a super demanding bodyweight movement (“L” pull-up), all for time, is distinctly CrossFit and is directly indicative of an athlete’s total capacity.

Workout: This test can be practiced as a workout by performing the test and repeating after an extended rest.

Scoring the Tests

This table describes a system of awarding points for each test’s score. The total points for all five tests can range from 20 to 100 points. An individual getting 20 points is a reasonably good athlete. Anyone scoring 100 points has credible claim to being one of the fittest men on earth. Don’t despair if your score looks like what would be a D- on a sixth grade spelling test – the numbers are just that, numbers.

SCORING TABLE

Points	4 points each	8 points each	12 points each	16 points each	20 points each
Test 1 Bench/Pull-up	6,000-8,124 ex. 300x20 = 6,000	8,125-10,499 ex. 325x25 = 8,125	10,500-13,124 ex. 350x30 = 10,500	13,125-15,999 ex. 375x35 = 13,125	16,000+ ex. 400x40 = 16,000
Test 2 Clean & Jerk	115 - 135	135 - 159	160 - 189	190 - 224	225+
Test 3 Tabata Squat/ Muscle-up	180 - 284 ex. 18x10 = 180	285 - 399 ex. 19x15 = 285	400 - 524 ex. 20x20 = 400	525 - 659 ex. 21x25 = 525	660+ ex. 22x30 = 660
Test 4 Deadlift/ Handstand Push-up	3,500-4,799 ex. 350x10 = 3,500	4,800-6,749 ex. 400x12 = 4,800	6,750-9,999 ex. 450x15 = 6,750	10,000=14,999 ex. 500x20 = 10,000	15,000+ ex. 600x25 = 15,000
Test 5 Run/Thrusters/ “L” Pull-ups	6:00 - 5:31	5:30 - 5:01	5:00 - 4:31	4:30 - 4:01	< 4:00