

the
CrossFit
JOURNAL ARTICLES

Training in Austere Locations

James Decker



As much as we CrossFitters enjoy being able to get online to CrossFit.com to see what new challenge Coach has for us in the Workout of the Day (WOD), we don't have that luxury every day. Work, deployments, and life all disrupt even the most carefully planned schedule, and sometimes we find ourselves far removed from even basic exercise facilities. If you too find yourself in this situation, rather than putting your fitness on hold (and letting it decline) until you get back to civilization, consider the following suggestions to maintain or even improve your GPP (general physical preparedness) while you are enjoying the great outdoors.

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Do yourself a favor now and copy down a few months' worth of WODs from the archives. Keep them on disk or in a small notebook, and don't leave home without it. If you are able, make up a small portable workout kit. I always try to bring at least one set of rings, a small pair of parallettes, a 55-pound dumbbell, and a stopwatch. With my notebook (filled with past completed WODs, times, scores, and, more importantly, techniques I have used in the past to substitute equipment or exercises in order to participate in the WOD), my travel kit is complete. Now when I hit the ground, I need only time, a small space, and a positive attitude to get a good workout—if not always “as prescribed.”

For trips of a week or less, simple bodyweight exercises mixed with some traditional cardio, performed at proper intensity, can be adequate to maintain GPP. About half of the “girls” (<http://www.crossfit.com/cf-info/faq.html#WOD0>) are bodyweight-only; the Tabata protocol (<http://www.crossfit.com/cf-info/faq.html#Exercises0>) has many applications (<http://www.crossfit.com/cf-info/faq.html#WOD2>); and “Michael,” “J.T.,” and “Murph” can all be performed with minimal equipment. All you really need is something to pull up on, and an observant CrossFitter can find that practically anywhere.

For a longer or more remote trip (or if you are a particularly imaginative athlete), you can get really creative with your surroundings. Take a walk around, root through scrap piles, barns, and tool sheds, and start collecting apparatus for your primitive gym. Here are just a few suggestions to get the ball rolling:

- Trees: do pull-ups on branches, use as a handstand push-up support station, use for Koala-fying (Ask a Ranger about that



- one.)• Rocks: substitute for kettlebells in swings, use for shot-put practice and for heavy lifts and carries

- Logs: do caveman Olympic lifts, caber toss, use as balance beams

- Sandbags: substitute for kettlebells/dumbbells, use for farmer's walk, employ as ballast for other apparatus (for example, in wheelbarrows, or on improvised pulling sleds)

- Buckets (with weight): use for sumo deadlift high pulls, thrusters, Turkish getups, one-arm “dumbbell” snatches, weighted box steps

I am certain a soccer ball can be quickly found nearly anywhere on six of the seven continents (conveniently,



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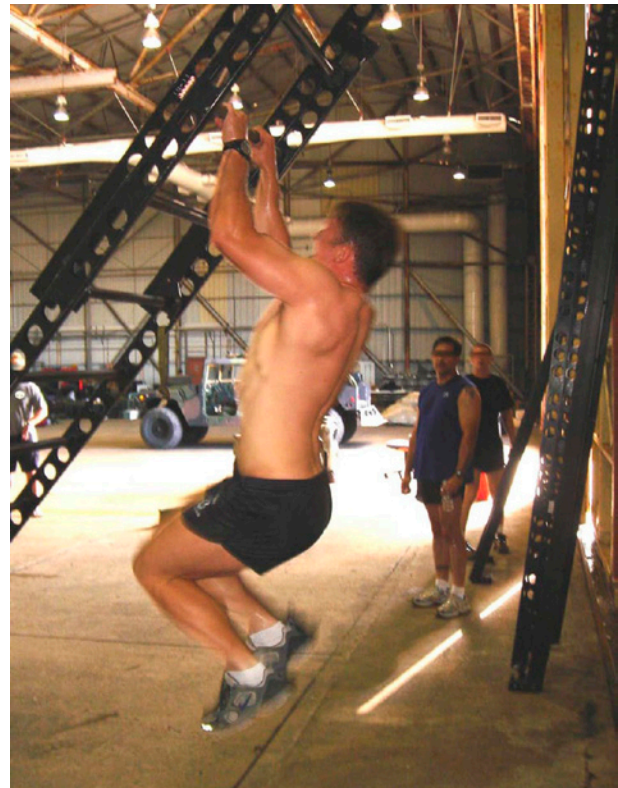
You can find some sort of stick in just about any location. Let's see a show of hands: How many flat-bellied, barrel-chested, steely-eyed defenders of freedom out there wish they had something even resembling the Olympic lifting technique displayed by a young lady named Sage? Grab that broom/shovel/pitchfork/sapling and start working on it! We have years of practice to catch up on.

If you absolutely can't think of anything to do, if you are not inspired by any of your surroundings, give this workout randomizer a try. I call it "Pay Your Dues." (see chart on next page) Take any set of random numbers, plug them into the columns, and—voila!—instant workout, not likely to be repeated anytime soon. You can use any bill of currency, or your airline ticket

they're even cheaper if they already have holes in them!); get one, find yourself some glue and duct tape, and make a medicine ball. Think of an abandoned auto and the trove of exercises you can concoct with the equipment lying there: axle thrusters, leaf-spring Olympic lifts, bumper dips, tire flips/carries/draggs. Where one person may see just exhaust pipes, I see useful (if ugly) parallettes.

Remember the part in Rocky when the hero traveled to a remote farm in the snowy Soviet Union to train for his fight? Seem far-fetched? Now look at Kelly Moore's GPP and ask yourself if living on a farm ever hindered her training. On the contrary. You could spend thousands at Gold's/World/Bally and not get close to those results (even if you had Kelly's inspiring discipline and athleticism).

How fast can you unload, move 25 feet, and stack fifty hay bales? How long will it take to hit a tractor tire with a 12-pound sledgehammer 100 times plus do 200 squats? In many places in the world you can buy 50-kilo sacks of rice: what is your best time for the Rutman mile? How about Tabata woodcutting? If you have strong rope, you just increased your list of possible exercises by an order of magnitude. And any type of ladder can make a great pull-up device.



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tracking number, or the bar code numbers off anything lying around... you get the idea.

Sooner or later, most of us will find ourselves away from home looking for a place to work out. While we may miss the conveniences and camaraderie found at our local gym, we can't use that excuse to just give up on our hard-earned fitness. Prepare before you go, keep your eyes open when you arrive, and don't be restrained by conventional thinking. How productive and stimulating, not to mention fun, these workouts will be is limited only by our imagination and creativity.



“Pay Your Dues”

DIGIT	A	B-E	F	G		H
				(TIME)	(SETS)	
0	1	PISTOLS	FOR TIME	15 MIN	3	6
1	1	AIR SQUATS				
2	2	BOX JUMPS		20 MIN	5	7
3	2	GOOD MORNINGS				
4	2	HOLLOW ROCKS	FOR SETS	25 MIN	7	8
5	3	JANDA SITUPS				
6	3	DIPS		30 MIN	10	9
7	3	PUSH-UPS				
8	4	HANDSTAND PUSH-UPS	10	10	10	
9	4	PULL-UPS				

A	1st digit of number: How many exercises
B-E	2nd - 5th digit of number: Which exercises
F	6th digit of number: Mode (Duration or Work)
G	7th digit of number: Mode Modifier (Time or Sets)
H	8th digit of number: Repititions

Example: \$1 bill with serial # F67534265A

6 = 3 exercises • 753 = Push-ups / Janda Situps / Good Mornings

4 = For Time • 2 = 15 minutes • 6 = 9 reps

So, workout is: Push-ups, Janda Situps, Good Mornings 9/9/9

Perform as many sets as you can in 15 minutes, count complete and partial sets for score.