

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

From Obese to Athletic A CrossFit Success Story

Sue Lozinski

Just over a year ago, as I approached the age of 39, I was already looking ahead to the fact that in a year and a few short months I would be 40. I looked at myself in the mirror every morning on the way into the shower and hated what I saw. The scale, on some mornings, would reduce me to tears. Climbing up the thirteen stairs to my bedroom left me out of breath. This was no way to live. Something had to give. I decided that for a year I was going to try to lose weight “one more time.” Once again, I would give it my all in an attempt to lose more than five pounds before I gave up and found my way back to the couch. I had done it before. In my early twenties, I lost fifty pounds on a steady diet of coffee, cigarettes and step aerobics, but I doubted that I could really do it the right way—with a proper diet and exercise. Even as I started to try, the voice in my head told me that wasn’t *really* possible.

Nonetheless, I joined Weight Watchers and a gym and I walked on the treadmill and used the elliptical trainer three times a week. The weight began to come off slowly. While I walked I would watch the trainer at the gym working with her clients. This woman was very interesting to me. She had an intense gaze focused on her clients. She worked them hard. She laughed with them. Her energy was infectious. I was amazed when, one day, she had a woman in her fifties doing handstand push-ups. Deep down, I knew that if I was really going to lose weight and get fit, I needed to do more than walk on a treadmill, and I somehow felt that she was the person who could teach me how to really work out hard. After working up the courage to approach her,



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I was hugely disappointed to find out that she was leaving the gym to strike out on her own. She said, "Shoot me an e-mail and we'll figure something out." I took her card and we parted ways.

That was the moment when everything changed.

When I started working out with Lis Darsh, everything was hard. Even though I had lost the first twenty pounds by then, I was still so overweight and so out of shape that even the simplest workout was almost impossible. It was embarrassing. I was this huge woman exerting every bit of effort to do the most basic exercises. I'm not a shy person, but I would walk into the gym with my head down because I was so intimidated by it all. I kept going though, because I felt like for the first time ever someone else really understood—and really cared about—what I was trying to do. The discussions we had about nutrition, dedication, and effort were as valuable as the workouts. Every day, Lis would make me feel like she was glad that I was there. Every day, she would design a workout just for me that was really tough but would allow me some small measure of success. Every day she would say, "You can do this. You can do anything."

Slowly, I started to believe her.

By September I hit the 50-pound weight-loss mark. At the same time Lis announced, "I'm opening a CrossFit affiliate. We're going to start working out in groups." By then I had met some of her other clients and I had made some amazing gains in my fitness level, but these people were way more in shape than I was. It didn't matter, though. We all did essentially the same workouts, but they were always scaled to match our individual strengths and weaknesses. To me, this was the moment when I started to feel less and less like that awkward and embarrassed fat woman and more and more like someone who could hold her own with the rest of the group. For the first time in my life I was accepted and encouraged as a member of a group of "in shape" people. That was a big turning point for me.

By my fortieth birthday, I hit the 70-pound weight-loss mark. Significantly, I celebrated the day not by going out to dinner and eating cake but by working out with "the gang." My gang. The workout of the day was "The Big 40," and it was brutal. Forty of everything: tire flips, snatches, kettlebell swings, wall ball, slam ball, pull-ups, push-ups,

sit-ups, plus some running. I completed it in 23 minutes. Everyone there that day was a part of my success. It was a great moment. That day was amazing—I recognized where I had come from and what I had achieved. It was not, however, a goal achieved and done with. It was not an end point. Since then, I have run a 5k and participated in a CrossFit [fundraiser](#) workout that involved more push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and squats than I care to remember. I was just another competitor in the room. It was fantastic.



I continue to set new goals for myself in terms of weight loss and fitness gains. I owe so much of what I have been able to accomplish in the past year to Lis, to CrossFit, and to the people I work out with. There are times when I'm in the middle of a ridiculously hard workout and I'll cry or laugh when I realize that I can complete 150 sit-ups or do 65-pound thrusters or deadlift more than I could have ever imagined. I look at my body and for the first time in my life I see muscles. It all blows my mind.

I love CrossFit. I never get bored. I am always challenged, but ultimately I am always rewarded. For the first time in my life, I feel in control of what I eat and of what my body can do. I know I still have a long way to go, but I feel like the luckiest woman in the world. I feel like I won the Lotto the day I met Lis. She gives me instruction and

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guidance, she gives me support, and she gives me endless encouragement and the knowledge to take control of my health. I've never worked out so hard—and had so much fun. The other people at the gym are incredible too. They get what I'm trying to do...what we're all trying to do. We are all each other's fans. I have no doubt that I will reach my next set of goals and continue to set my sights on other accomplishments along the way because I know, for the first time in my life, that I can do this. I can do anything.

Sue speaks out about CrossFit

See video of Sue's answer to the question "What would you say to someone thinking about starting CrossFit"?



Sue Lozinski is a high school English teacher who lives in Watertown, Connecticut. In addition to CrossFit, Sue is passionate about family, live music, and getting kids to think for themselves. She trains with owner and head trainer Lisbeth Darsh, and the whole crew, at [CrossFit Watertown](http://www.crossfitwatertown.com).

Online Video

Sue speaks out about CrossFit

<http://www.crossfitwatertown.com/2008/06/23/what-would-you-say-sue/>

