CrossFitJournal STYLE

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STYLISTS HELP FEMALE CROSSFIT ATHLETES CONQUER THEIR FEAR OF DENIM AND FIND THE PERFECT PAIR OF JEANS.

ring up the subject of jeans around a group of CrossFit athletes—male and female—and you will get an earful.

"They are tight in the thighs and butt but loose in the waist."

"I can't find anything that looks good, so I just wear workout clothes."

"I have no idea what size I am."

Spandex is great, but sometimes a lady wants to rock a pair of jeans. The squatting in CrossFit is known for developing a well-shaped rear—it seems a shame to subject that booty to a pair of ill-fitting jeans.

As with any problem, the best thing to do is go to the experts for advice. In the quest for quality denim that fits the CrossFit body, the CrossFit Journal gathered three powerhouse female CrossFit athletes: six-time Games athlete

Becca Voigt, rising star and former USC basketball player Jamie Hagiya, and two-time SoCal Regional competitor Pam Eamranond.

The women gathered at The Blues Jean Bar in Santa Monica, Calif. The store, which has 11 locations throughout the United States, specializes in fitting denim. Instead of wandering confused through the racks, you belly up to the bar and tell the "jeanstenders" what style you like—skinny, straight, boot cut—then the type of wash you like and the size you typically wear.

The stylists look at the wall of denim behind them and pick some options. They don't stop until they find a pair of jeans perfect for you.

But were they up for the challenge of fitting the CrossFit body?

A GUIDE TO **DENIM TERMINOLOGY**

BOOT CUT: When the leg opening is wider than the knee in order to accommodate a boot. The size of the leg opening in boot-cut jeans varies, usually from 17 to 20 inches.

STRAIGHT LEG: In straight-leg jeans the leg opening is the same width as the knee.

SKINNY JEANS: In this style, the jeans taper in from the knee, narrowing at the ankle. This style is ideal for tucking into boots.

RISE: The rise is where the jeans sit on your waist and hips. Low-rise jeans usually sit at or below the hips, and high-rise jeans sit close to the belly button.



WASH: This refers to the shade of denim. The more the manufacturer "washes" the denim, the lighter it gets. Washing can also introduce distressed features, such as whiskering, or faded lines formed by creases.

BECCA VOIGTVS. "MOM BUTT"

First up to the bar was Voigt. She told her stylist, Julia Choi, that her favorite brands are Guess and Silver, but she has a terrible time finding jeans that fit.

"Last time I went shopping for jeans, I tried on 50 pairs. I couldn't find anything," Voigt said. "The butt never fits right. I can never get pants on all the way."

Voigt is 5 foot 9 and said she doesn't have a lot of curves. For her, the ideal pair of jeans would fit in both the thighs and waist and give her some curves. Voigt doesn't like high-waisted jeans, and she said she'd prefer a boot cut as opposed to straight-leg or skinny jeans.

DL1961, NICKY, MID-RISE CIGARETTE CUT, APPROX. \$177

The first pair Voigt tried on illustrated the classic problem of fitting the athletic figure. The jeans seemed to fit fine in her thighs, hips and rear but were huge in the waist. Choi pointed out that the pants were baggy in the knees—another sign of a poor fit.

Thinking perhaps Voigt just hadn't found her size, Choi brought out progressively smaller sizes. Still, the waist was too big. Eventually, Voigt went down five sizes, and although the jeans were tighter in the leg, they still gaped at the waist. Not a good look.



DOES ANYONE MAKE JEANS THAT FIT THE CROSSFIT BODY?

JAMES JEANS, HUNTER HIGH CLASS, APPROX. \$194

The stylist's next approach was to bring out jeans with a higher waist, much to Voigt's dismay. She is not a fan of high-rise jeans.

"They give me 'mom butt,'" she said.

Not only did Voigt dislike the waist, but the jeans also did not fit in her crotch.

"There's too much space there. I feel like Justin Bieber!" Voigt said. Away with those jeans.

Voigt went back to the dressing room. Choi brought out pair after pair of jeans, and none of them were even close. The dressing room was filling up with discards, begging the question: Does anyone make jeans that fit the CrossFit body?

Sensing a challenge, store manager Sarah Crane joined the search. Crane started pulling jeans from behind the counter and handing them over. Each time, Voigt would go into the dressing room full of hope and come out wearing another pair of ill-fitting jeans, a look of despair in her eyes.



PAM **EAMRANOND:** IN SEARCH OF **SKINNY JEANS**

Pam Eamranond has a very different body type than Voigt. Eamranond is 5 foot 2, and like most CrossFit athletes, she has a small waist and a muscular butt and thighs. Unlike Voigt, who prefers a boot-cut jean, Eamranond gravitates toward skinny jeans that fit tight at the ankle.

HENRY & BELLE, SUPER SKINNY ANKLE, APPROX. \$148

Initially, Eamranond had the same trouble as Voigt. Jeans that fit in the thigh were too big in the waist.







HUDSON, KRISTA SUPER SKINNY, APPROX. \$189

Then she found a pair that fit her waist.

"I don't feel like my thighs will explode," she said. "They have a good crotch height."

Looking at the jeans, Crane said the pocket placement was ideal (see sidebar), and there was no puckering in the back of the thighs, which can indicate that the jeans are too tight. However, Eamranond did not fall in love with the jeans, so she went back to the dressing room. Like Voigt, Eamranond knew exactly when she found the perfect pair.

"I have to wiggle into these, but they aren't sausage-y," she said. "I'm not spilling out, and I like where the waist is."

Like the DL1961 jeans Voigt found, the Hudson jeans favored by Eamranond are made with a 360-degree stretch fabric, which allows the jeans to move with the wearer, even at the bottom of a pistol.

Crane said jeans with stretch should never be put in the dryer—the heat will destroy the stretch fabric. Wash them in cold water and hang to dry and the jeans will retain their fit and stretch much longer.

FIT TIPS FROM SARAH CRANE

Always try on jeans with shoes, because your eye focuses on the feet. Shoes complete the outfit. Going barefoot is like doing your hair with no makeup.



Pay attention to pocket placement on the back of the jeans. You always want the pockets to sit on the butt (as opposed to down low) with no more than a hand width in between the two pockets.

How do you know if the jeans fit your waist? Don't judge by the back of your waist. Look at your hip. If you can fit two fingers between your hipbone and the waistband of the jeans, it's a good fit. If you love the jeans

> and they fit at the hip but there's a gap at the waist, a tailor can pinch the back so they

You want jeans that sit above the hip bone. If the jeans are too low, you will get a muffin top no matter how skinny you are.

<u>JAMIE</u> HAGIYA: **AVOIDING** THE FLAT

Jamie Hagiya, who is 5 foot 3, has the same issue as Voigt and Eamranond: most of the jeans she tries on fit in the quads and hamstrings but are too big in the waist. Like Eamranond, Hagiya likes the straight-leg, skinny look.

JOE'S SKINNY ANKLE, APPROX. \$158

The fitting process was easier for Hagiya, because Choi and Crane were quickly learning what type of jeans fit the CrossFit body. It wasn't long before Hagiya found a pair of jeans that seemed to fit well at first glance. It was only after Choi looked closely at the jeans that she discovered a terrible problem.

These jeans fit Hagiya in the waist and thighs, but the fabric did not have much stretch and managed the impossible: it made a CrossFit woman's butt look flat.

"There's no stretch. It traps your butt," Choi

"I can feel them making my butt flat," Hagiya confirmed.

On closer inspection, Hagiya found that the crotch of the jeans was too loose, and they were baggy at the knees, indicating a poor fit.

(THE FABRIC) MANAGED THE IMPOSSIBLE: IT MADE A CROSSFIT WOMAN'S BUTT LOOK FLAT.





"You want to have lines there," Crane said. "It will smooth out after you wear them for a week

or so."

FINDING YOUR PERFECT JEANS

It's a fine balance finding jeans that fit. They should be tight enough to show off your hardearned muscles but not so tight that they cut off circulation to your feet. The only way to find a pair that fits is to get in the dressing room.

Don't be discouraged if you have to try on 20 to 30 pairs before you find the perfect jeans. If you don't have access to a stylist, see the sidebar (Page 7) with some fitting tips from the Blues Jean Bar experts. Keep them in mind when shopping on your own.

Finally, a word about price: The jeans featured in this article range from about \$150 to \$190. That's a hefty chunk of change to spend on a single item of clothing, but there is nothing more versatile than a good pair of jeans. Premium denim lasts longer and holds its shape better than cheaper jeans. It's certainly possible to find a good-fitting pair of jeans for \$50, but if you've struggled to find jeans that fit, you might want to make an investment in quality denim.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hilary Achauer is an award-winning freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing articles, online content, blogs and newsletters, Hilary is an editor and writer for the CrossFit Journal and contributes to the CrossFit Games site. An amateur boxer-turned-CrossFit-athlete, Hilary lives in San Diego with her husband and two small children and trains at CrossFit Pacific Beach. To contact her, visit hilaryachauer.com.

