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## International Exchange Mates

Globetrotting Pat Sherwood explains how trainers can explore the world via the CrossFit affiliate network.

By Pat Sherwood

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I remember being at a CrossFit seminar years ago. Coach Greg Glassman had just finished addressing the crowd and opened the floor to questions. A woman raised her hand and made a very strong case about the need for a CrossFit specialty course focused on the unique training/coaching needs of athletes who are senior citizens.

Coach Glassman listened to her every word. When she finished speaking, he said he completely agreed with her and asked if she would be willing to spearhead the effort. The answer to that question was, "No." She simply wanted to present the idea but hoped someone else would do the actual work.

This is an extremely common occurrence. Coach has said he's frequently approached by people with great ideas that "need to happen." However, when the challenge of actually doing the work is presented, people usually lose their enthusiasm quickly, and nothing comes of the great idea that once seemed so critical.

I've encountered something quite similar during our 100-plus-day journey through the Latin American CrossFit community. First, I heard murmurs and ideas in Mexico. Then I heard the same suggestions as we pushed south through Central America. As we made our way through country after country in South America, we heard the same idea presented over and over again.

The idea? There should be an exchange program, both nationally and internationally, for CrossFit trainers.



*Sherwood's trip has taken him to a host of affiliates, including CrossFit Unidos in Argentina (top) and CrossFit 72700 in Mexico (bottom).*

All photos: Staff/CrossFit Journal

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the community has a huge amount of interest in such a program. And why wouldn't it? Imagine how cool it could be to have the ability to spend a week, a month, six months, or a year or more in any city across the globe that has at least one CrossFit affiliate. You could meet tons of new people, experience a new culture, learn a new language, put some stamps in your passport, and get a different perspective on life, coaching and so on.

Maybe you currently coach at an affiliate in Chicago, Ill., and winter is wearing you down a bit. How wonderful would it be if you could easily investigate the opportunity to coach for a month in Hawaii? Or vice versa. Perhaps a Level 1 trainer from Hawaii has always wanted to spend the winter in Park City, Utah, learning to ski between coaching classes.

As I'm writing this article in a corner coffee shop in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I'm acutely aware of how much fun someone could have doing a trainer exchange in Latin America. Want to blow the dust off of that high-school Spanish? Pick your favorite Spanish-speaking country, pack your bags and go. Don't overthink it or make a pros/cons list. Just go. I guarantee you will not regret the decision.

The opportunities are limitless. Go to the [Affiliate Finder Map](#) on CrossFit.com and browse through the affiliates spread across the globe. But look at the map in a new way: see each city or town with an affiliate as a place you truly have the ability to experience.

Istanbul? Yeah, you can find boxes there.

Okinawa? Of course.

France, Ireland, Italy? Easy day.

India. Check.

China. Yup.

CrossFit is worldwide, and more affiliates are being added each day.

But here comes the cool part: you would show up in a foreign country, and instead of it being a potentially scary or intimidating experience because you don't know a soul, you would be greeted by family—your CrossFit Family. You would show up to a job and a work schedule you had agreed to. You would have a place to work out, and you would be in the company of local CrossFit athletes looking to help you enjoy their country to the fullest. You wouldn't have to stumble and learn things on your own, and you would have a support network in place. It would almost be cheating!



**Road warriors: Diego Ortiz (right) of Argentina is using CrossFit to recover from a motorcycle wreck.**

Pretty cool, right?

Do you want something like this to exist? Me too—and it pretty much does. The Affiliate Finder Map is already in place, so you have only to take some initiative. I'm going to do what Coach did and tell you to take your great idea and make it happen. Pull up the map, click on someplace sexy, reach out to an affiliate somewhere, and know before you hit send that the email is going to a friend, a member of the community. Start the process. Set something up. Make arrangements and plans and prepare for a great adventure in another country.

As Hunter S. Thompson used to say, "Buy the ticket, take the ride."

Good luck.



### About the Author

*Pat Sherwood works for CrossFit as a flowmaster and member of the Media Team. He's done just under 200 seminars all around the globe for CrossFit HQ and competed in the 2009 CrossFit Games. He hates HSPU and loves ice cream.*