
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

VIRTUOSITY

Virtuosity 4: Reclamation

After years of hip dysfunction, an athlete uses CrossFit to recover athleticism she thought was lost forever.

By Michael Clift

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Three years ago, my wife Sarah had surgery to repair a severe labral tear in her left hip. The surgery came after seven years of pain, four visits to family doctors who failed to diagnose this uncommon injury, and one secret admission to herself: She would never again be able to enjoy an active lifestyle.

But life has a way of giving back to those who refuse to accept defeat, and after an accurate diagnosis and a successful surgery, my wife found CrossFit brought her out of the desolation to which she had once resigned herself.

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Rebuilding With CrossFit

In 2004, Sarah injured her hip during an accidental fall. The rarity of her particular injury rendered its diagnosis challenging, and for the next seven years she suffered. As the injury worsened, she lost the ability run and jump, and after years of compensation, she could no longer even walk without a limp. She was forced to give up many of the activities that she had grown to love, including many we had enjoyed together throughout our marriage.

After successful surgery, Sarah began a long and grueling recovery process. After almost a year of rehabilitation and physical therapy, she joined a CrossFit gym for the first time. Though she could barely do an air squat, Sarah refused to quit. Just a few weeks later, she set her first post-surgery PR in the back squat. While she racked only 75 lb. after that rep, she removed far more weight from her shoulders than one could see on the barbell. For the first time, she realized full recovery was attainable and CrossFit could deliver her to that end.

That was two years ago. In the time that has passed, I have watched Sarah build not only her physical strength but also confidence in her ability to succeed in all aspects of life. Her progress and attitude have been inspiring and infectious as we train in our basement gym.

CrossFit has given us so much more than just a few numbers on the whiteboard. It has enabled our return to an active lifestyle that had been so elusive for seven years. We can once again run, hike, bike and ski together. Perhaps more importantly, CrossFit has shown us how to approach challenges in our personal and professional lives. We never give up, no matter how long the odds or difficult the circumstances. PRs can happen in and out of the gym.

Success, no matter how light the dose, is powerful, addictive and contagious. Every day, in boxes and garages around the world, CrossFit athletes watch a person accomplish something that was once considered impossible. Whether it's a 75-lb. back squat or a 300-lb. snatch, achieving at the highest limit of one's potential may well be the only thing in CrossFit that remains constant and invariable.



Submission Guidelines

To be considered for publication, authors must satisfy the following:

1. Articles must be original, unpublished works. Authors of selected submissions will be supplied with legal documents to be filled out prior to publication.
2. Articles must be submitted in Word documents attached to an email. Documents should not contain bolding, italics or other formatting. Please submit in Arial font.
3. Articles can be 500 words maximum.
4. Each article must be accompanied by at least one high-resolution photograph to illustrate the story. The photo can feature the coach, the affiliate, the community—anything that illustrates the article. Photo guidelines are as follows:

- A. Photos must be original and owned by the person submitting. Photos taken by others may be submitted provided the owner has given permission.
- B. Photos must be in focus, well lit and free of watermarks. Minimum file size is 1 MB. Please review your camera's settings to ensure you are shooting high-resolution images. Cell-phone photos and thumbnails are not accepted.
- C. Photos must be attached to the email as JPEG files. Do not embed files in Word documents. Photo file names should list both the name of the subject and the name of the photographer in this format: SubjectName-PhotographerName.jpg. Examples: JohnSmith-JaneDoe.jpg or CrossFitAnyTown-JimJohnson.jpg.

Virtuosity@crossfit.com is open for submissions. Tell us why you train where you train, and do it uncommonly well.