
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

VIRTUOSITY

Virtuosity 7: One Spirit

Robin Blackburn discovers the magic of the CrossFit community in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

By Robin Blackburn

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"This movement is the direct result of a marvelous little gym in Santa Cruz, California. And that wonderful little gym has been replicated 1,000 times over and for the most part with extraordinary fidelity." —CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman

A fat girl walks into a box . . .

Yeah, I bet you want to hear all about her life-changing transformation. The pounds lost. The self-confidence gained. The things all good CrossFit transformation stories are made of. And yes, I love those stories.

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This isn't that story. You see, I'm still a fat girl. I came to the box with a lot of self-confidence. And while you'd think the overweight woman would be looking to lose a few pounds, that wasn't the case. But I was looking for something: I was looking for friends.

In the past, a gym has always provided me with a circle of friends as we moved around the United States. Some of my closest friends in the U.S. are the people I spent time with at various gyms in which we traded sweat and smartass comments throughout our workouts. I needed those people.

A little over a year ago, I moved from North Liberty, Iowa, to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. When I arrived, I was searching for a "gym"—a place I could go work out, get my sweat on, and, as had been the case in the past, meet some friends. But I'll be honest: Driving here in Kuala Lumpur can be a little daunting, and the nearest globo gym is about a 10-minute drive away. I didn't want to have to drive to the gym in traffic. (OK, OK: I did lack a little self-confidence in my big-city driving skills.)

I began searching for alternatives. Across the street from my house is a shopping center, and in that shopping center is a boxing gym and CrossFit Vidatha. You know which I chose—and I never looked back.

I'll admit I walked into the box a little skeptical of the whole we're-a-community, peace-love-harmony stuff, even though that was what I had always heard about CrossFit and that's what I was truly looking for.

CrossFit Vidatha has done the CrossFit brand proud. It has lived up to all the hype about "community," and then there's the fabulous coaching—can't forget about Coach Madhusudhan Aravindhakshan.

My dearest friends are at this box. There's Jo, with whom I often share a bar as we encourage one another during squats and presses. There's Susan, who has quickly become a fantastic friend and takes me golfing when we're not doing burpees. How about Mabel, who traveled with me to Seoul, South Korea, last spring so we could go to the CrossFit Games Asia Regional? Can't forget the awesome morning crew, who meet for coffee and solve all the world's problems with a little caffeine. And I can't forget Damian, who took me and my family for Korean barbecue because he knows we've never tried it and he was sure we'd love it.

I've only scratched the surface, but just know that the CrossFit community spirit is well represented here in Kuala Lumpur at CrossFit Vidatha.



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.