



THURSDAY

SATURDAY, FEB 15

OGAR

14 MIN AMRAP

3 SNATCHES (95/135)

1 MUSCLE UP

12 WALLSAHS (14/20)

6 KUD-3 PULLUPS/3 PUSHUPS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP & SUPPORT!

PPCF - CF 719

JANICE 7+5

MATE 9

SHAWN 8+3

CLAIRE 7+1

OSBY 8+4 &

BRANDON 8+4

ARIEL 8+12

CHES 7+6

MIK 8+10

PAH 8+13

J 10+3 &

LUCAS 9 &

LIAM 6+3

SCOT 8+2

CHAD 8+4

CAYTON 8+8 &

KIRSTY 6+3

KASH 9+3

CORY 7+14

LIZ 7+4

THADDEUS 6+1

THEO 8+1

DAWN 8+3

DUSTIN 9+15 &

JOSH 12+8 &

STEPHEN 7 &

JESSICA 8+7

ALEX 8+4 &

CHAD 11 &

MIKE 8+9

ABBY 8+2

LIZ 8

JUSTIN 11+1 &

LES 6

MARILEE 5+

MARILEE 8

MANDY

ASHLEY

RACHEL

MEL

TIE

COACH'S ORDERS

BY ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL

Affiliate owners and trainers weigh in on how and when they have their athletes do workouts as prescribed.

There's the guy who went out on his third 800-m run never to return, another who insisted on doing 135-lb. push presses only to walk out forever, and, of course, the one who considered himself an elite-level athlete but took an hour to finish a workout on which his peers spent less than 15 minutes.

The three athletes were at different affiliates, but they all ignored coaching advice, determined to do the workout as prescribed even though their skills were not up to par.

"I don't really feel like going Rx should be encouraged regardless of how long it's going to take the athlete," said James McDermott, head coach at Albany CrossFit in New York.

The 8-year-old affiliate often imposes a time cap on workouts.

"We're looking to preserve the stimulus of the workout."

Take Fran, for example, McDermott said. If an athlete is "fully capable" of performing the CrossFit benchmark workout's 21, 15 and 9 thrusters unbroken but the same number of pull-ups in sets of only 2 or 3, he or she won't experience the same intensity as those who finish in 5 minutes or less.

"We don't really encourage it at all," he said. "We don't like the get-it-done approach."

Instead, McDermott advises athletes to "work to achieve the intended stimulus of the workout. Don't do the work just for the sake of doing work."

The focus on Rx is sometimes distorted, said Josh Corley, owner of CrossFit 719 in Colorado.

"I pride myself more on movement than Rx capabilities. ... There's no use in moving a 135-lb. overhead squat if you're going to move it in a way that you're going to injure yourself, eventually."

Rx, said affiliate owners and coaches, is a starting point from which to modify for the individual. The road to reach it—and beyond—has no shortcuts.



At U Turn CrossFit in Texas, owner JB McDougall and his coaches emphasize mechanics and consistency before intensity.



Wesley Sun Chee Fore (in black), owner of CrossFit Lafayette in Louisiana, will ask an athlete to perform multiple reps with good technique before the workout begins.

The Rx Conversation

At some affiliates, coaches begin the as-prescribed conversation at the whiteboard.

Inspired by the [CrossFit Training Department's Instagram profile](#), which publishes “Beginner” and “Intermediate” scaling options for [CrossFit.com](#) workouts, Albany CrossFit followed suit. It offers its members the workout of the day as Rx, as well as “Scale 1” and “Scale 2.”

“It’s been very positive. We find that our athletes want that direction,” McDermott said.

Meanwhile, at CrossFit Lafayette in Louisiana, coaches communicate non-Rx options via differently colored markers: Red is Rx, blue is scaled down, and black is scaled up.

“We don’t always have the black option,” noted owner Wesley Sun Chee Fore.

At both affiliates, the dialogue between coach and athlete continues during the warm-up. As members set up their equipment for the

workout, trainers must observe multiple reps with good technique to give athletes the green light for a weight or movement.

“I will meet with every athlete,” McDermott said.

Technique must be spot on for CrossFit Lafayette members to go Rx, Sun Chee Fore said.

“If they can’t do it comfortably, it’s not fun,” he explained.

“If we really want to help people develop into better CrossFitters, we can’t be pushing for this prescription all the time.”

—Andrew McDonald

The same goes at other affiliates.

“We really focus on making sure that you have the confidence in the movement,” Corley said. “Show me that you can do that, and then we’ll add that weight and intensity.”

And it’s rare for members to argue.

“Part of that is having a relationship with the athlete,” he said. “I think we’ve done a really good job of showing them ... respect.”

Corley continued: “We don’t want to be confrontational in any way, so we do that through positive reinforcement.”

Shane Venezia takes a similar approach, explaining to athletes why he is scaling their weight or movement.

“They’re pretty receptive,” said the owner of CrossFit No Surrender in Louisiana. “Ultimately it’s the coach’s decision because it’s a safety issue, and at the end of the workout they’re (usually) like, ‘You were right. That workout still kicked my tail.’”

Venezia added: “If they’re safe, I let them do it.”

Still, he has his limits.

“I don’t believe Elizabeth should take 25 to 30 minutes to do,” he said of the CrossFit benchmark workout.

Elizabeth calls for 21-15-9 reps of 135-lb. cleans and ring dips. Elite athletes have finished the workout in less than 5 minutes.

“I’m not a firm believer of ‘Rx or die.’ I don’t believe that just because you can lift the weight, you should,” Venezia said.

Neither does JB McDougall. He, however, prefers skiing analogies.

“Just because you got to the bottom of the slope doesn’t mean you were skiing,” he said with a hearty laugh.

U Turn CrossFit members wanting to go Rx on workouts became such an issue that the Texas affiliate added an edict at its entrance: “Leave Your Ego at the Door.”

These days, athletes are more willing to follow the coach’s advice.

“They’re all pretty good because we spend so much time working with them,” McDougall said. “By the time we tell them, it’s not a surprise.”

But for Andrew McDonald, a CrossFit 719 coach who programs all the affiliate’s workouts, there is a time and place to let athletes go Rx no matter how long it takes: benchmark workouts and CrossFit Games Open workouts.

The reason: Athletes will repeat those workouts.

“We want them to be able to come back to that,” McDonald explained. “Now they can see the progress that they’ve made.”

Those are his only exceptions, though.

“If we really want to help people develop into better CrossFitters, we can’t be pushing for this prescription all the time. When you prescribe workouts, you prescribe them to the best of the best. ... On a regular training day, who cares who has the fastest time? We want to change people, not test people all the time.” ■

About the Author

Andréa Maria Cecil is assistant managing editor and head writer of the CrossFit Journal.