
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

VIRTUOSITY

Virtuosity 10: For Life

Once “allergic” to exercise, Annie Kolatsis finds greatness through a CrossFit affiliate.

By Annie Kolatsis

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The crew at CrossFit Mother City in Cape Town, South Africa.

I'll never forget how much it hurt.

Rolling out of bed the morning after my first CrossFit class—I literally had to roll to achieve the momentum needed to get up—I thought to myself, “What have I done?” The funny thing is I knew exactly what I had done. I still remember it more than a year later: 5 pull-ups, 10 push-ups, 15 squats. Simple enough, right? That was the day I learned to never underestimate a WOD.

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As someone who came from a rather inactive family and had an acclaimed “allergy” to exercise, I shocked myself and most of the people who know me when I signed a year-long contract at CrossFit Mother City. A year: the longest I’ve committed to anything that wasn’t education.

I don’t know what it was that snapped, but I found myself at a place where treating my health and my body with arrogant indifference just didn’t cut it anymore. People around me were doing great things—running marathons, hiking mountains. When I realized the only “great” in my vocabulary was spelled G-R-A-T-E, I knew it was time for a revolution. It came in the form of CrossFit Mother City.

Walking into the box was like walking into a foreign country. The people spoke a different language, with words such as “AMRAP” and “EMOM” being thrown around amidst swear words directed at some woman called Fran. But I learned. Soon, the language became second nature and the words spilled out of my mouth as I earned my CrossFit citizenship. Reebok sneakers were soon to follow.

As my training wore on, I came face-to-face with my biggest obstacle: myself. Truth be told, I often find CrossFit harder on my mind than on my body. I can deal with the stiff muscles and power through the aches and pains, but there’s no warm-up or stretch to ready your mind for what lies ahead.

Describing my first few months as tough would be an understatement. There wasn’t a day when I didn’t want to faint, vomit or cry during a workout—sometimes all at once. I remember the looks of horror I got when I described the situation to my friends. I was always met with the same question: “Why are you still doing it?”

The answer was simple: Because it has changed me.

My arrogant indifference has been replaced by fierce loyalty toward my body and my box. Instead of “you can’t do this,” the voice in my head repeats words of encouragement from my coaches. My new friends—relationships forged quite literally out of blood, sweat and tears—inspire me to go on.

I am finally doing great things, and while I’m not yet running marathons, I have climbed many mountains both physically and mentally.

CrossFit Mother City has changed me. It’s where I go to achieve greatness, and when I sign my new contract, there’s only one membership option I’m interested in: life.



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.