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# MOP AND FAIL

BY EMILY BEERS

Nobody wants to do burpees in dog hair and someone else's sweat. Affiliate owners around the world share how they tackle the common and tedious task of keeping their floors clean.



Jessica Kates Chadwick dreaded mopping her gym.

“Mopping was work. Seriously, it was my active-recovery day and I put it off often because it sucked so bad. Lots of trips to empty and refill the bucket,” said the owner of CrossFit Confederation in Louisiana.

All told, it took Chadwick more than an hour to mop her floors.

And there was the one time she used a cotton mop on her rubber floors.

“It took forever to get the fuzz off the floor.”

Then Chadwick discovered microfiber mops. They last longer and are more sanitary, she explained.

Still, the microfiber mops weren't enough to rid Chadwick's floors of all the dirt, debris and chalk.

“Mopping was not solving the problem. It was just spreading around dirty water.”

Keeping floors clean can be the bane of an affiliate owner's existence. But industrious coaches from California to Australia have found timesaving, stress-less solutions for sparkling gym floors.

## Floor Zamboni

To solve her floor problem, Chadwick bought a [Viper Fang 18C](#), an electric floor scrubber, for her 2,500-square-foot affiliate. It cost her US\$1,440, including tax and delivery.

Such floor scrubbers—often referred to as Zambonis because of their resemblance to the popular brand of ice resurfacers—essentially act as a mop, a squeegee and a vacuum all in one device. The machine automatically dispenses cleaning solution, and its two water tanks—one for clean water and the other for dirty water—take care of the rest.

Chadwick said it takes her about 20 to 30 minutes to set up her Viper, clean her floors and empty the dirty water from the machine. It keeps her floors cleaner than mopping ever could, she added. At least twice a week, she uses her Viper for a thorough cleaning. Chadwick vacuums daily with a [Shark vacuum](#).

“I did the vacuum and mop like five times and said, ‘Heck no.’ (Then) I started my search and research for a floor scrubber.”

—Andrew King

“There is a lot of debris and chalk that I like to (pick up) between scrubs.”

To fit his budget, Garth Crooke of CrossFit North Okanagan in British Columbia opted to rent a floor scrubber. He came across a local company that rents old machines that used to belong to the school district. Crooke pays CA\$26.25 (about US\$20) per month and also receives a free carpet-cleaning machine.

“When there's money in the bank account, I'll look at purchasing something new and fancy,” he said.

While most owners tend to use walk-behind scrubbers, Andrew King of CrossFit Bel Air in Maryland decided to splurge on a more expensive riding machine for his 10,000-square-foot facility.

“I did the vacuum and mop like five times and said, ‘Heck no,’” King said. “(Then) I started my search and research for a floor scrubber.”

After trying some demo models through a couple of local cleaning companies, King said he stalked craigslist until he eventually found and purchased a [Tennant 7,100 riding scrubber](#) with 200 hours of use at \$4,500. A brand new version of the same model would have cost him as much as \$12,000, he said.

Since buying the used Tennant two years ago, King hasn't had any maintenance issues. And he's had more time to work on other aspects of his business. It takes King about 15 minutes to clean his gym.

“Another five minutes to empty the dirty water and refill for next time,” he wrote in a Facebook message. “Once a month, it requires a few parts to be rinsed. (It) takes about 10 minutes max.”



Jessica Kates Chadwick said she found microfiber mop heads to be an improvement over the cotton variety at CrossFit Confederation, but a floor-scrubbing machine beat mopping hands down.





Courtesy of Jessica Kates Chadwick

Many affiliate owners know this sight all too well: dirty water used to “clean” gym floors.

King continued: “Days like today, I’ve cleaned the workout floor three times in between classes as it is hot and gross and people truly appreciate the cleanliness. . . . Best money I’ve ever spent. Worth \$50K.”

Mopping used to take Sean Hardy an hour and a half at CrossFit Lumberton in Texas. With his Viper Fang 18C, which he bought for \$1,500, it takes him half the time to clean his 4,000-square-foot facility. He saves three hours each week.

“It has been more than worth it,” Hardy wrote via Facebook message. “It’s so easy to use and it cleans floors way better than a mop ever did.”

## Hiring Professionals

While some affiliate owners are singing the praises of floor-scrubbing machines, others said they weren’t the right choice for their gym.

“I tried several (floor scrubbers) and none of them worked because we have 4-by-6 (foot) stall matt rubber on a not-perfectly-even cement floor. So if you start using a (floor scrubber), it leaves dirty water underneath,” Vadim Noskov of CrossFit Long Island City in New York wrote via Facebook message.

Instead, he pays \$880 a month for a professional cleaning crew to come in once a week. The crew mops the floors of his 7,500-square-foot facility using vinegar.

“We have used vinegar (as a cleaning solution) from Day 1,” Noskov said. “It cleans any amount of chalk like there is no tomorrow, and is a natural disinfectant.”

Noskov isn’t the only one who’s opted for a professional cleaning service.

“Cleaning was one of the first things I outsourced. I still do some (cleaning), but not nearly as much.”

—Brad Bristowe

Brad Bristowe of CrossFit 3000 in Australia pays AUD\$700 (about US\$500) a month to have a professional service clean his 5,300-square-foot affiliate twice a week. The service cleans the floors, benches, bathrooms and café area and takes care of garbage removal, he said via email.

“Cleaning was one of the first things I outsourced. I still do some (cleaning), but not nearly as much,” Bristowe wrote.

The price range for a professional cleaning service is wide. In a survey of 10 affiliates—from Australia, Canada and the United States—that use professional cleaners one to six days a week, owners pay anywhere from \$150 a month to clean a 2,000-square-foot box once a week to \$3,000-\$3,500 to clean a 16,000-square-foot affiliate six days a week.

It’s a small price to pay for time that can be spent on other tasks, John Planow of CrossFit Genesis in California wrote via Facebook message.

“In my books, it’s totally worth it to have a nice, clean gym without having to spend my time doing it. Clients notice,” he said.

Planow pays \$195 a month for a service to clean his 2,500-square-foot facility once a week. Part of the routine is to thoroughly vacuum and mop the floors.

To keep up with the daily mess, Planow has also convinced his members to take care of their sweaty spots on the floor after each workout by disinfecting and mopping their workout area with a [polyvinyl mop](#). Between his clients’ spot cleaning and his professional cleaners, Planow barely has to touch a mop himself.

“We only occasionally need additional vacuuming and sweeping.”

## Just Part of Doing Business

But for Duke Perino of CrossFit Cervus in New Jersey, neither a machine nor a professional cleaning service is in his budget.

His solution? A leaf blower and mop.

“In between classes, I break out my leaf blower and clear the floor of any debris by directing it out the bay doors,” said Perino



of his 3,000-square-foot space. “Following that, I sanitize our rubber floor by mopping with disinfectant. The next class is good to go in 15 minutes.”

The leaf blower, which Perino said does a better job than a vacuum, rids his gym of debris in just five minutes. Mopping takes another 10. Perino described it as a seamless process that takes little time and energy.

“Nearly all my equipment is up off the floor, so it’s easy to get around and under things. I usually turn my drum fans on so the floor dries in time for the next class to start.”

No matter the method, affiliate owners agreed keeping floors clean is part and parcel to daily operations.

“It has been one of my obsessions since the first day I was an athlete at an affiliate and was disgusted (by the filth), and it is now something I pride myself on as an owner,” King said.

Chadwick expressed similar sentiments.

“Burpees are bad enough. Who wants to do them on a dirty floor?” ■

## About the Author

Emily Beers is a CrossFit Journal contributor and coach at [CrossFit Vancouver](#). She finished 37th at the 2014 Reebok CrossFit Games.



Whether they use machine power or elbow grease, most affiliate owners agree that clean floors please clients.