

# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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# A SOLDIER'S TALE

In an exclusive interview, Maj. Lisa Jaster talks about her fight to become the third woman to graduate from U.S. Army Ranger School.

BY HILARY ACHAUER



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paul Sale. The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

Ranger School tests soldiers mentally and physically, and less than half the candidates graduate.

In April, 381 men and 19 women entered Army Ranger School, “the most physically and mentally demanding leadership school the Army has to offer,” according to [Goarmy.com](#).

It was the first time women were allowed to attend the school.

[Armytimes.com](#) stated only eight women made it through the Ranger Assessment Phase. All eight failed the Darby Phase (also called the “Benning Phase”), which is the first of three stages in Ranger School proper. They were “recycled” along with 101 men, which is standard practice if students struggle in some areas of the course but show potential, according to [Armytimes.com](#). After all the women failed a second time, only three females—and two males—were allowed to “recycle,” though the males declined to do so.

The three women stayed in the school all spring and summer, through the mountains and swamps, through the sleep deprivation and grueling hikes. Then, in August 2015, after three attempts at the first stage and a single attempt at each of the others, two women made history: 26-year-old Capt. Kristen Griest and 25-year-old Lt. Shaye Haver became the first females to graduate Ranger School.

That left one woman still in training.

She was Maj. Lisa Jaster, a graduate of West Point, an Army reservist, an engineer at Shell, a 37-year-old mother of two young children and a CrossFit athlete. Jaster recycled the Mountain Phase once, and she was also sent back to the swamp along with 20 other men to repeat the third and final phase.

In October 2015, Jaster graduated after spending six months away from her family—six months without seeing her 3-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son.

“I knew that someday ... this will be important to my children, for them to know that I stood up for something,” Jaster said a week after graduating.

Jaster earned her Ranger tab and is now reunited with her family, but she’s faced criticism from those who oppose women in the formerly male-only institution. An Oklahoma congressman, Rep. Steve Russell (R), has questioned whether the women were given special treatment and asked for records from classes that included the women.

Here, in an exclusive interview with the CrossFit Journal, Jaster talks about that criticism, how CrossFit helped her prepare for Ranger School and what kept her motivated to finish.

## Part of the Solution

The seed for Jaster's six-month ordeal in Ranger School was planted when she was part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Jaster was an active-duty soldier from 2000 to 2007, and she also served in Iraq.

Jaster commanded male and female engineers but said she was not allowed to treat them equally.

"I had both male and female soldiers, but I had to send forward only male soldiers because of the rule and standards and the roles of women in combat going to certain environments," Jaster said.

As she progressed in the military, she saw her male counterparts entering programs such as Ranger School, which made them eligible for positions and promotions that weren't available to her.

"These are the men I'm competing against for promotions moving forward," Jaster explained.

Jaster said she thinks Ranger School should be open to everyone who is a leader, and it bothered her that it was an option only for her fellow male engineer officers. Then, when Ranger School opened to women this year as part of a gender-integrated assessment of the course, she felt she had no choice but to enter.

"If I had an issue with something in the military, then I feel strongly that I should do something about it. So when the opportunity came up I couldn't sit there and say, 'Well I don't like this,' and then not raise my hand to be part of the solution," she said.

The logistics of attending Ranger School were more complicated for Jaster than for most of the other soldiers.

**"So when the opportunity came up I couldn't sit there and ... not raise my hand to be part of the solution."**

**—Lisa Jaster**

First, Jaster had to take a leave from her job as an engineer at Shell. She shaved her long red hair. Then, her husband, a Marine, had to take over solo parenting duties for as long as it took her to finish. Jaster thought she'd be gone for nine weeks. She underestimated the difficulty of the course, but she never quit. In all, she was gone for 26 weeks.

The hardest part of the experience, she said, was being away from her family. But it was her family who inspired her to keep trying—even when it seemed hopeless.

"I kept a picture of my kids in my pocket, and I think my son was wearing a Batman T-shirt and my daughter was wearing a Wonder Woman T-shirt. I wrote on the picture before I laminated it, saying, 'I need to be their super hero,'" Jaster said.

"I did everything I could to follow up and actually follow through with my beliefs," she said.

Jaster wants her children to learn you can't just wish for change.

"You have to do something about it," she said.

There was one more thing that helped Jaster survive the ordeal: CrossFit. She said the mental aspect of enduring CrossFit workouts helped her immensely during Ranger School.

Ranger School was designed to develop both combat and leadership skills in tactical environments that mimic actual combat. Soldiers walk for hours in their gear, function on very little sleep and food, and experience mental and physical stress. They learn about airborne operations, air-assault operations, and how to survive and conduct small-unit operations in mountain, jungle and swamp terrain.

"It's that no-quit mindset," Jaster said about CrossFit. "Workouts are made to take you to that limit of wanting to quit, wanting to lose your lunch, and still drive through it. That mentality is exactly what you need to be successful at Ranger School."

To prepare specifically for Ranger School, Jaster added extra elements to her CrossFit workouts. In the months leading up to the school, Jaster did high-rep squats followed by hour-long road marches with a weighted backpack, or she'd follow up a 5-mile run with a CrossFit workout.

"It's the same mental game," Jaster said about CrossFit and Ranger School. "Somebody who enjoys CrossFit is also going to be more successful in any physical training event, I believe."



When challenged during training, Jaster tried to be a "super hero" for her young children.



Another trailblazer: U.S. Army 1st Lt. Elyse Ping Medvigy was the first female company fire-support officer to serve in an infantry brigade combat team supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.



“Somebody who enjoys CrossFit is also going to be more successful in any physical training event.” —Lisa Jaster

## Special Treatment

When [Ruth Bader Ginsberg](#) entered Harvard Law School in 1956 as one of nine women in a class of 500, the dean told her she was taking the place of a man. Ginsberg went on to make the Harvard Law Review while caring for her young daughter and her cancer-stricken husband. She is now associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Almost 60 years after Bader was mistreated at Harvard, Jaster, Haver and Griest experienced a similar reaction to the idea of women entering and graduating from Ranger School.

Upon hearing about the first female graduates of Ranger School, Congressman Russell, himself a Ranger, asked for performance records from the school to prove the women didn't receive special treatment. The military has refused to release records but insisted the women received no special treatment.

Maj. Jimmy Hathaway, the executive officer for the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade, took to [social media](#), disputing all allegations that the women were not held to the same standards as men.

“If you honestly think an RI (Ranger Instructor) was going to take it easy on this class you are mistaken,” Hathaway wrote as part of a nine-point statement.

Angered by the congressman's allegations, a group of female West Point graduates turned the tables and asked for [Russell's Ranger records](#).

When Jaster is questioned about special treatment and differing standards, she directs people to her male classmates.

“Nobody is ever going to believe me, and of course no matter what I'm going to say it was just as hard if not harder on me than everyone else. The only people that can really speak to that would be my male classmates,” Jaster said.

Lt. Seth Clickner went through each phase of Ranger School twice. He was in Haver and Jaster's squad and Griest's company for two go-throughs. In a [media roundtable](#) held after they completed Ranger School, Clickner answered the question about special treatment.

“I saw no special treatment of females,” Clickner said in the video, “and if there was I guess I must have missed out on that. I mean I spent six months here and I saw nothing of the sort.”

Jaster said she never felt resentment or anger from her fellow soldiers.

“I saw no special treatment of females.”

—Lt. Seth Clickner

“Whether or not you can carry your own load and do what everyone else can is what's important. There's tall Rangers, small Rangers. Some Rangers are stronger than the others, some are smarter than the others, and that's what matters. The gender didn't matter at all with my peers,” she told the CrossFit Journal.

In addition to being only one of three women in the program—and the only woman after Haver and Griest graduated—Jaster was also quite a bit older than most of her fellow Ranger School soldiers. The only older soldier was a 40-year-old chaplain.

Other than sometimes preventing her from understanding jokes and cultural references, age was never an issue, Jaster said.

“The average age was 23, so they grew up with different cartoons than I did. So there's movies they would quote, and I had never heard of the movie, and there's definitely a lot of movies or songs I would quote, or songs I would get stuck in my head, and they had never heard of,” she said.

“Making gender jokes was a little bit difficult, but they had no problem making age jokes,” Jaster said. She said the other soldiers, aware this was the first gender integration in the school, teased her about her age but never her gender.

## Fail Better

The women were criticized for the length of time it took them to complete Ranger School, and repeated recycling was especially hard on Jaster because each go-through meant more time away from her family.

Jaster would call home in tears at times when she had to repeat yet another phase of Ranger School.

“Hey, honey, I didn't do it. I failed,” she said she'd tell her husband, Marine Lt. Col. Allan Jaster.

Her husband would assure her she hadn't failed.

"Hundreds of guys fail the same way," he'd tell her. "They get recycled every year and no one would ever call them a failure."

Hathaway addressed this point in his open letter.

"Upon a second failure (the women) were offered a Day 1 recycle. This means they started day 1 and had to complete RAP (Ranger Assessment Phase) week a second time. There is no advantage to this, would any of you volunteered (sic) to go through RAP week twice and take a Day 1 recycle? Most people would not as evident by the several men who were also offered a Day 1, but declined," Hathaway wrote.

An average of 37 percent of candidates recycle one or more phases at Ranger School, and an average of 45 percent of soldiers who enter graduate, according to [Armytimes.com](http://Armytimes.com). Most of the failures—about 60 percent of them—occur during the four-day assessment phase.

## The Next Step

Now at home in Houston, Texas, Jaster said her husband did such a good job while she was gone she didn't feel like she was coming back to a barely managed disaster.

"The house is clean, kept together. Everything is working. The kids are healthy, happy, thriving and getting good grades in school," Jaster said.

And perhaps Jaster's intrepid spirit runs in the family.

"When I got home, (my kids) didn't come running and screaming to me because they needed me. They came because they miss and love me," she said.

She's back to work at Shell, but she's not ready to announce what she'll do next.

Cut off from newspapers, radio and the Internet for six months, part of Jester's reintegration into regular life is catching up on what has happened in economics since April. Crude oil prices have declined significantly over the last six months, and she needs to understand stock prices for her work at Shell.

Unlike male graduates, female Ranger School graduates can't apply to join the 75th Ranger Regiment, the special-operations unit that carries out raids and other difficult missions. This may not be the case for long. If the 75th Ranger Regiment, the Navy SEALs, the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command or any other military branch wants to remain closed to women, it must obtain an exception from the Pentagon [before Jan. 1, 2016](#).

However, the Pentagon may make a final decision about exactly what combat roles women may be allowed to fill later in the year.

"I have lots and lots of goals of what I want to do next in the military, as well as my professional career ... but I think before I start publicizing those goals I need to reintegrate and become normal again. And let my hair grow back in a little bit," Jaster said with a laugh.

Jaster is also getting used to doing CrossFit again. After a week of being back at CrossFit Memorial in Houston and going to her jiu-jitsu classes, she's noticed a loss of strength and mobility from her time away.

"Six months of not stretching was not a good idea," she said.

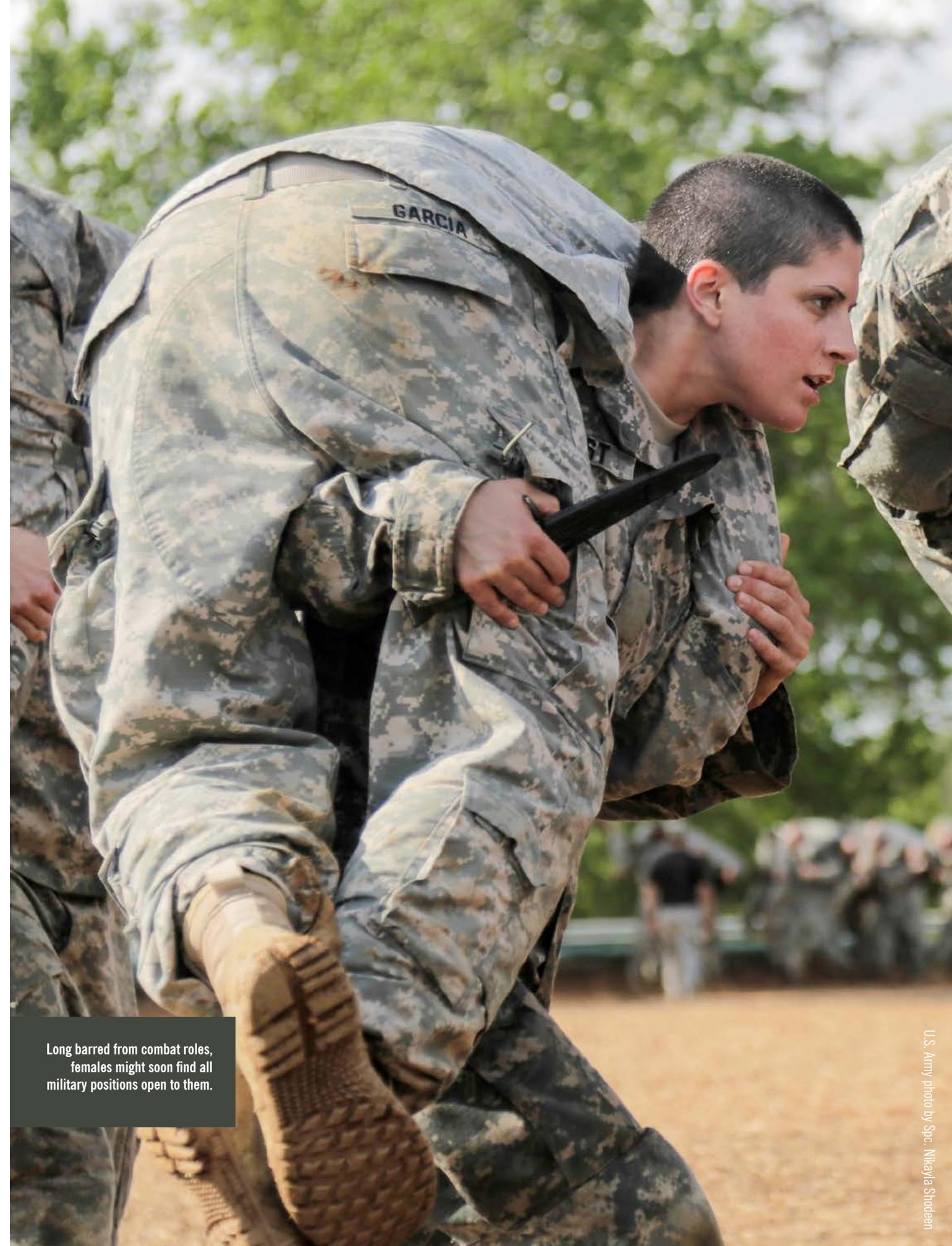
It's been a time of change in the military since the Pentagon lifted the ban on women serving in ground-combat roles in 2013, and not all women are driven to take on roles they were previously denied. But some, like Jaster, are seizing the opportunity and standing up for their beliefs.

Although she's not sure what she wants to do next, Jaster, along with Griest and Haver, has already accomplished something important. And she's using her Ranger School experience in daily life.

"Yesterday (my son) got popped in the mouth really hard (in jiu-jitsu), and I told him you have to go back on the mat," she said. "You can't just walk away." ■

## About the Author

Hilary Achauer is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing articles, online content, blogs and newsletters, Hilary writes for the CrossFit Journal. To contact her, visit [hilaryachauer.com](http://hilaryachauer.com).



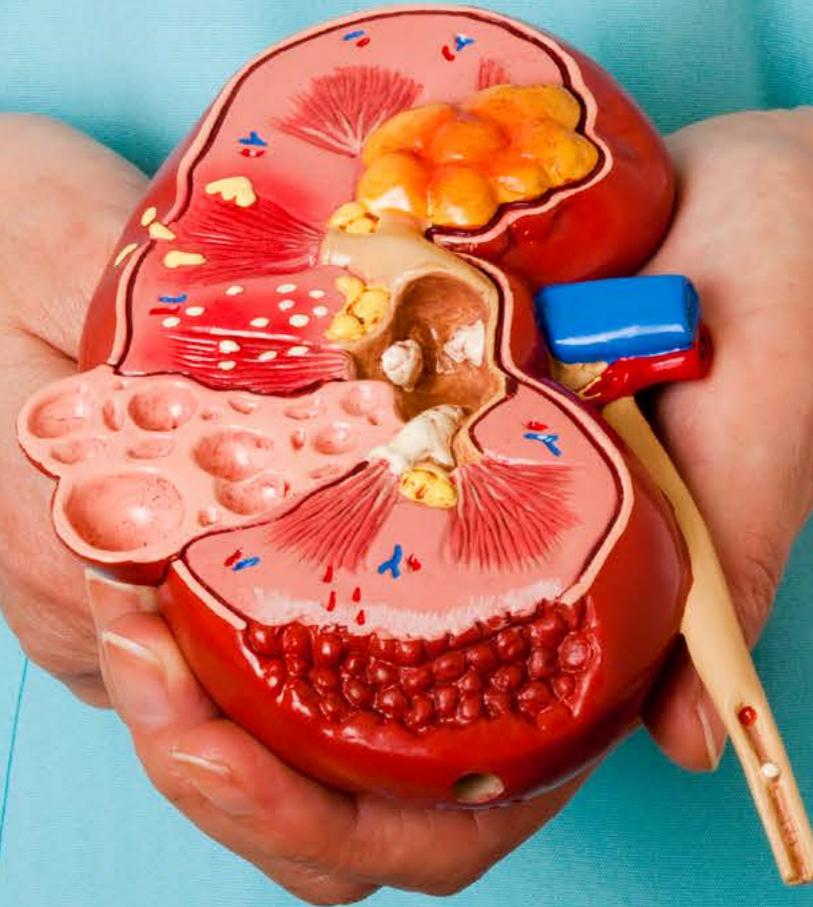
Long barred from combat roles, females might soon find all military positions open to them.

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# SODA WIDOWS

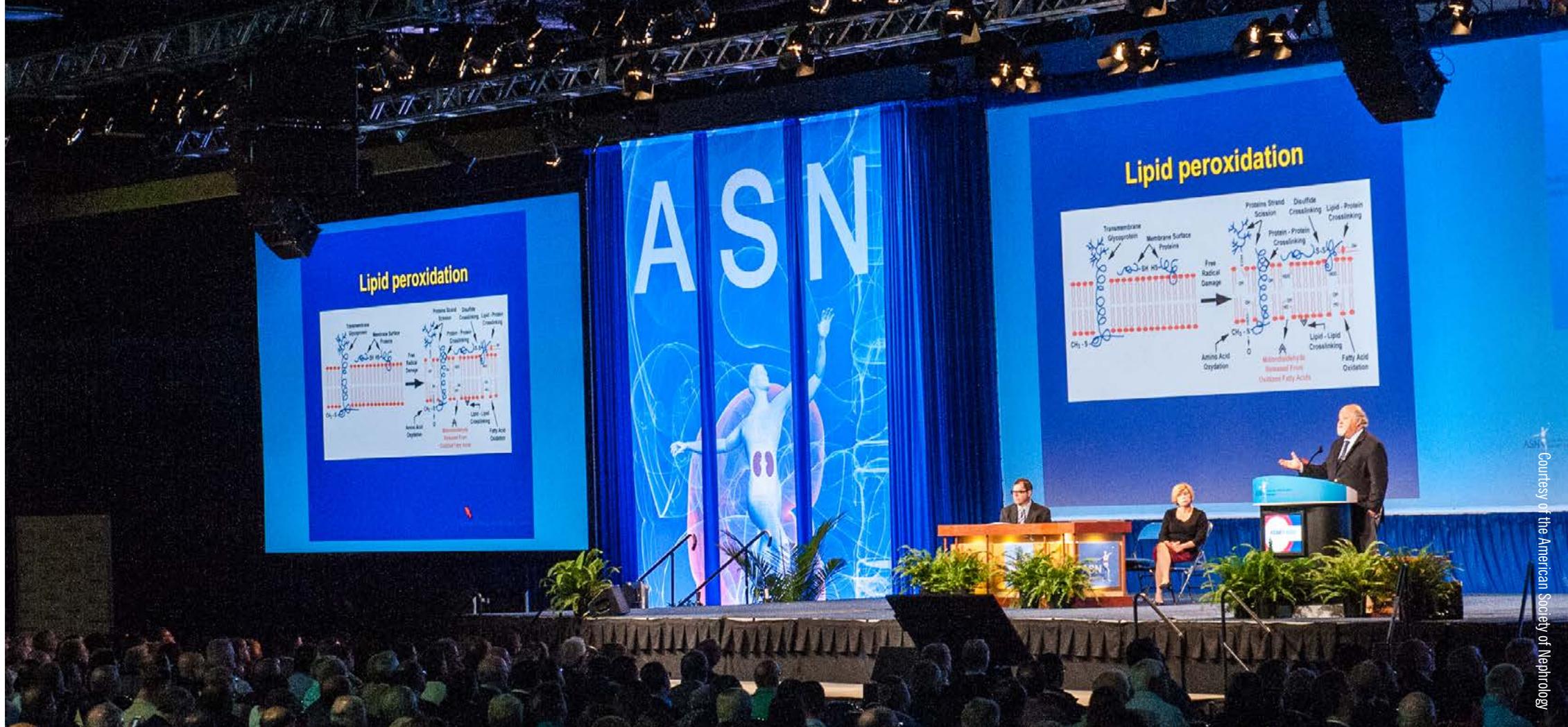
BY ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL

Scientists link repeated hydration with sugar-sweetened beverages to kidney disease and early death in Central America.





Dr. Richard Johnson



The American Society of Nephrology's Kidney Week conference was held Nov. 3-8 in San Diego, California.

It's called La Isla de Viudas: Widows' Island.

The name comes from the rural sugarcane-worker community of La Isla in Nicaragua, where thousands of men have died from the same epidemic over the last two decades, leaving behind women and children. All perished of chronic kidney disease, referred to as "CKD," and researchers estimate the overall death toll in Central America is at least 20,000. The condition targets working-age men, most of whom labor in the region's ubiquitous sugarcane fields.

These men do not have diabetes, hypertension or hereditary kidney disease, said Dr. Richard Johnson, professor of renal diseases and hypertension at the University of Colorado Denver's Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora.

"It's what we call 'chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology' ... so it's been a big mystery," Johnson said during a Nov. 7 presentation at the American Society of Nephrology's Kidney Week conference in San Diego, California.

Johnson—along with 13 other scientists—investigated the mystery, and the *American Journal of Kidney Diseases* published their findings on Oct. 5. All told, the group of researchers studied 189 sugarcane workers in El Salvador, taking samples of blood and urine from the men, measuring their blood pressure, and tracking other markers.

The workers' long hours spent doing backbreaking labor in extremely hot temperatures lead to chronic dehydration—dehydration on a daily basis, Johnson said.

"The primary thing we see is ... repeated dehydration," he explained. "These people are going out and working under very hot conditions."

And even though some of them were hydrating, they are working in heat and humidity that would exceed recommendations set by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).

Johnson, author of "The Fat Switch," added that climate change is also playing a role as CKD is increasingly being reported in

areas with extreme temperature swings: Egypt, India, Sri Lanka. Likewise, this form of CKD is being seen among construction workers, miners and high-performing athletes, too, he noted.

Further exacerbating the workers' condition is their hydration drink of choice: sugar-sweetened beverages, a class that includes soda, sports drinks, juices and other fluids to which sugar is added. More often than not, workers turn to soda in many Central American countries where clean drinking water is unavailable or soda is cheaper than bottled water.

"They don't trust water," explained Miguel Lanaspá, assistant professor of research at UC Denver's Anschutz campus. "They think water makes them sick."

Thus, the question arose: "Could sugar-containing rehydration solutions worsen dehydration-induced kidney disease?"

"There has been a marked increase in intake of sugary beverages throughout the world," the scientists wrote in the study. "Fructose, which is present in soft drinks, can induce tubular injury in laboratory animals. Sugary beverage intake

is also associated with increased risk for hyperuricemia and nephrolithiasis and may increase urine acidity due to fructose-dependent stimulation of the proximal tubule sodium/hydrogen exchanger."

To begin remedying the situation, working conditions must improve and hydration practices have to change, the scientists wrote in the study.

"If you drink a soda for hydration, you are killing your body," Johnson told the *CrossFit Journal*. "We know that soda drinking increases the risk of kidney disease." ■

## About the Author

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

THE **CrossFit** JOURNAL

# THE HIGH ROAD TO ACCREDITATION

BY NICOLE CARROLL, CROSSFIT INC. DIRECTOR OF CERTIFICATION

Nicole Carroll explains how ANSI accreditation reflects CrossFit Inc.'s dedication to the highest standards of excellence in the fitness industry.





Certification programs, such as the Certified CrossFit Trainer (CCFT/CF-L3) credential, are commonly used to evaluate and recognize the qualifications and competence of individuals. When a certification program is of high quality, it can be an effective way to distinguish those who are qualified from those who are not; however, not all certification programs are of high quality.

How does one determine the quality of a certification program? Accreditation of certification programs is one way. During accreditation, a certification program is evaluated to determine if it meets recognized industry standards in such areas as impartiality of program governance and the reliability and validity of assessment.

Currently, certification programs can seek accreditation through two primary organizations: the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Many certification bodies in the training industry have opted for accreditation by the NCCA; CrossFit Inc. has chosen ANSI. This article describes the two accreditation programs and highlights why CrossFit chose ANSI accreditation.

## ANSI and the NCCA

### ANSI

ANSI is a nonprofit federation of government agencies, organizations, companies, academic and international bodies, and individual members. In addition to its national activities, ANSI is the sole U.S. representative to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Through ANSI, the U.S. has direct access to the ISO standards-development processes.

### NCCA

The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE)—formerly the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA)—is a professional membership society that provides educational, networking and advocacy resources for organizations and individuals who work in and serve the certification industry. The NCCA is the accreditation arm of ICE.

*CrossFit believes ANSI's international stature and focus are of significant value given our global reach. As an ANSI member and an accredited program, CrossFit has access to ANSI's worldwide network. ANSI accredits organizations such as the Department of Defense, the Food and Drug Administration, and more. Even ICE, the parent arm of NCCA, is accredited by ANSI.*

While many fitness companies choose NCCA accreditation, CrossFit Inc. was drawn to ANSI's more rigorous process.

## Standards

### ANSI

ANSI accreditation is based on the international standard ISO/IEC 17024 (general requirements for bodies operating certification systems of persons). The standard was published initially in 2003 and revised in 2012 by the international committee of the ISO. Certification and testing professionals from over 20 countries (representing six continents) came together to develop this global benchmark for personnel-certification agencies. The standard's development followed the ISO's rigorous process for developing a global precedence based upon four principles.

### ISO standards:

1. respond to a need in the market.
2. are based on global expert opinion.
3. are developed through a multi-stakeholder process.
4. are based on consensus.

In addition to its status as an International Standard published by the ISO, ISO/IEC 17024 was also formally adopted as an American National Standard.

### NCCA

The NCCA accreditation program uses NCCA Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs as its basis. The standard was initially developed by the NCCA in the 1970s, was updated in 2002 and is currently under revision. To develop the standards, the NCCA uses a peer-review process involving its members and NCCA-accredited organizations, with an opportunity for the public to participate through an open comment period.

*CrossFit finds value and trust in the fact that the ISO/IEC 17024 standard has been adopted as both an International Standard and American National Standard. Those stamps of approval mean it was developed through an open and rigorous process involving the critique and ultimate approval of experts and stakeholders, not only from the U.S. but also around the world. In contrast, the NCCA's standards-development process is self-governed. Its standard is self-published with no oversight or approval of its processes and final standard by any third party.*

## What Areas Do the Standards Cover?

### ANSI

The ISO/IEC 17024 standard covers the certifying body's organizational structure and management, the development and maintenance of the certification program, the assessment tools used initially and for recertification, and the policies and procedures related to documentation, confidentiality, security, and more. Emphasis is also placed on quality management that includes a strong customer focus and the motivation of top management toward continual program improvement.

### NCCA

The NCCA Standards cover the certifying body's organizational structure and management, responsibilities to stakeholders, assessment instruments, and recertification.

*CrossFit was drawn to the quality-improvement focus of the ISO/IEC standard. The NCCA and ISO/IEC 17024 standards both address having a sound governance structure and a valid and reliable exam, but the ISO/IEC standard also emphasizes quality throughout the entire certification process and requires organizations to employ such efforts as documenting a management system, conducting annual audits of its operations, implementing preventive and corrective action where needed, and controlling critical documents throughout their use. We believe a strong certification program goes beyond its governance and test, and the ISO/IEC 17024 standard has helped CrossFit strengthen its overall certification operations.*

## Accreditation Process

### ANSI

In the ANSI process for accreditation, the certifying body submits an application with documented evidence of how it meets each of the standard's requirements. This documentation is reviewed by two ANSI assessors, one a certification management specialist and the other a psychometrician (a testing and measurement specialist). Then a site visit is conducted, during which the assessors interview agency personnel, review records and see demonstrations of how processes work. The purpose of the site visit is to validate the information described in the application.

At the end of the two-day on-site visit, the assessors report their findings to the certifying body. These findings might include nonconformities (meaning a standard's requirement was not met), opportunities for improvement (a requirement was met, but there are potential concerns that it could turn into



ANSI's international stature benefits CrossFit, whose affiliates and trainer courses can now be found in countries all over the world.

a future nonconformity) or commendations (the requirements were exceeded). Any nonconformity that is identified must be corrected by the certifying body within a predefined timeframe for the organization to be accredited. The assessors continue to work with the certifying body in reviewing and approving plans of action for corrections.

Once the nonconformities have been corrected, the assessors meet with two or more representatives of ANSI's Accreditation Committee (called an Evaluation Task Group) to review the status of the certifying body. Then the full Accreditation Committee reviews the recommendations of the assessors and the Evaluation Task Group and makes the accreditation decision.

An accredited certifying body must submit an annual report for review, and in alternate years a one-day on-site visit is required. Every five years, the organization starts the accreditation process over.

This process used by ANSI to accredit certification bodies is based on an international standard (ISO/IEC 17011). Adherence to an internationally recognized accreditation process ensures that the ANSI process conforms to the highest accreditation standard and represents the best practices in accreditation. ANSI is the only personnel-certification accreditation body in the United States to meet these globally accepted practices for accreditation bodies. It voluntarily undergoes audits from peer agencies across the globe to ensure its conformance to ISO/IEC 17011.

#### NCCA

In the NCCA process for accreditation, the certifying body submits an application with documented evidence of how it meets the standards. A commission reviews the application and makes accreditation decisions at its regular meetings. Two commissioners are designated to complete a standard-by-standard review, one focusing on compliance with program-administration standards and the other on compliance with psychometric standards. The written results of the two reviewers' feedback are shared with the full commission. At the commission meeting, the full commission discusses each application. After discussion and consideration, the commission makes a decision by majority vote. The decision may be to approve accreditation, deny accreditation or delay a decision pending receipt of further information.

Once accredited, the organization is required to submit an annual report form attesting to the status of the certification program at intervals throughout the accreditation period. Accreditation lasts for a period of five years, after which a new application must be submitted and the process starts again.



**ANSI and the NCCA are not staffed by fitness experts. Accreditation agencies merely ensure the legitimacy of credentialing systems.**



Many organizations issue certificates based on test results only. CrossFit leads the industry by insisting on practical application of learning.

CrossFit is impressed with ANSI's rigorous process. While the NCCA process begins and ends with a paper application, ANSI requires an on-site assessment during which organizations have to prove they are doing what their application says. In addition, ANSI conforms to an International Standard, ISO/IEC 17011, and even voluntarily undergoes review by third-party global accreditation organizations to ensure it is following best practices in its administration of the accreditation program. The NCCA does not comply with any such global standards, nor does it undergo third-party review.

## Isn't NCCA Accreditation Required or Preferred by the Fitness Industry?

This is the elephant-in-the-room question, and yet it is based on a widespread misconception. While most fitness certifying bodies have chosen accreditation by the NCCA, it was their

choice to do so. Both NCCA and ANSI accreditation focus on the certification process, not the content of the certification. In other words, neither have subject-matter experts to review the certification's content, be it fitness, accounting, medicine or anything else.

"It is imperative to understand here that accrediting organizations do not make judgments on the quality of the content tested. There are no fitness professionals within the NCCA making judgments about how good or bad a test is. The NCCA is simply there to ensure that the assessment and credentialing system meets a set of guidelines the NCCA created and applies to all professions it accredits ... . As with the NCCA, ANSI staff are not exercise experts; they are experts in ensuring organizations can carry out their business fairly, equitably and according to a set of general standards," as stated by Lon Kilgore in the CrossFit Journal article "[Certification and Licensure: Benefit or Liability?](#)" In reality, cost and rigor most often affect the choice of accreditor.

*The cost of NCCA accreditation is significantly less than ANSI accreditation, but CrossFit believes the value of ANSI accreditation is worth that extra cost. Most believe ANSI accreditation to be more rigorous for two primary reasons. First, its scope is broader. While ANSI accreditation includes governance and psychometric requirements just like the NCCA, it also has expanded requirements for a quality-management system, among other things. Secondly, ANSI accreditation requires on-site assessments (three every five years) during which certifying bodies are "put to the test" to prove to expert assessors that they are doing what their paper documentation states. The NCCA's accreditation is based on a paper review alone—no interviews of personnel, no record reviews and no demonstrations of systems. CrossFit believes the in-depth ANSI audit benefits our program in the long run by ensuring we are operating in the most efficient and effective way and continually improving with the ongoing feedback. We are so confident in our systems and procedures that we welcome scrutiny and review. Scrutiny and review elicit trust and ensure fairness and quality; we have nothing to hide.*

## CrossFit and ANSI: A Better Fit

CrossFit and ANSI share the same values with regard to rigor and integrity of processes. We believe the only route to developing and validating anything is through practical education and assessment. An organization that wants integrity must not only talk the talk but also walk the walk. The proof is in the verified execution. This is consistent with CrossFit's being the hallmark accredited certificate and certification organization that requires practical application to ensure trainers have comprehended, have internalized and can demonstrate what they have learned. Historically, fitness trainers have had to prove themselves only through book reading and regurgitation of information on a written exam. CrossFit wanted to distance itself from the National Strength and Conditioning Association and the American College of Sports Medicine, two groups that have taken advantage of this gap in quality assurance.

For CrossFit, the choice became simple: Take the high road. The high road is not the road less traveled but in fact the one that has never been traveled in the fitness industry. Ours is the only path to ensure the community of fitness professionals and their clients will be represented by the best standards of practice.

Choosing ANSI as the accrediting body best suited for CrossFit was easy. The higher cost, increased rigor and painstaking effort required for ANSI compliance reflect CrossFit's values, which are reflected by our trainers, affiliates and athletes around the world. ■

## About the Author

Nicole Carroll began training in 2004 at the original CrossFit Headquarters in Santa Cruz, California, with CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman. From 2005 to 2008, she traveled with Coach Glassman and assisted in delivering the CrossFit methodology, fundamentals and movements to Level 1 attendees across the world. Carroll is largely responsible for developing the Level 1 Trainer Course into the formalized and accredited curriculum it is at present. As Director of the Certification Department and Co-Director of the Training Department, she currently oversees all of the CrossFit curriculum, testing, and staff development for the Level 1 and 2 Certificate Courses and the CCFT/Level 3 and Level 4 Certifications.

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*Message in a Bottle*

BY RUSSELL BERGER

Clinton Foundation sends mixed signals by partnering with  
Coca-Cola while claiming to work for health and wellness.





©iStockphoto.com/jeff Fusco

The Clinton Foundation has partnered with Coca-Cola on 32 different projects and received between \$5 million and \$10 million in donations from the beverage company.

The Clinton Foundation is currently giving a nod to Coca-Cola by hosting a public art exhibit at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, until Feb. 15, 2016.

The exhibit marks the “Coca-Cola Bottle’s 100-year anniversary” and features iconic images from the last century of Coca-Cola marketing, complete with the classic small-town Americana of Norman Rockwell and Fred Mizen’s Coke-slinging Santa. While many will see [Coca-Cola: An American Original](#) as nothing more than a nostalgic tribute to a classic U.S. brand, the exhibit actually highlights the uncomfortably close relationship between Big Soda and big philanthropy.

Historically, the Clinton Foundation has taken a strong stance against childhood obesity, which Bill Clinton recently called “one of the most important issues facing our country today.” The foundation’s [website](#) also notes that “people are eating more but exercising less; working harder but sleeping less; and drinking more high calorie beverages but less water.” The former president himself, in [an article](#) co-authored with Nancy Brown of the American Heart Association, noted as positive the fact children are “drinking less sugar-sweetened beverages.”

The Clinton Foundation presents itself as an advocate for health and wellness through disease prevention—and yet a growing body of research suggests sugar is a [primary culprit](#) behind obesity, diabetes and heart disease. So why would the Clinton Foundation honor a company that sells products known to cause these diseases? And why would it showcase the work of a company that admits to [targeting children](#) with its advertisements?

I believe the answer is simple: As of September 2015, Coca-Cola is reported to have donated between [US\\$5,000,001 and \\$10,000,000](#) to the Clinton Foundation. Similarly, the [Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#) linked Coca-Cola and the Clinton Foundation to no less than 32 joint initiatives.

This is not out of the ordinary for the soda company, which was recently exposed for [quietly funding health professionals](#) in order to influence public opinion.

History shows that the Clinton Presidential Center’s artistic glorification of Coca-Cola is only part of a longstanding symbiotic relationship between the Clinton Foundation and Big Soda.

In this relationship, the Clinton Foundation plays the role of public-health champion by promoting policies that appear to be tough on soda. These policies, however, are little more than publicity stunts that actually have no meaningful effect on soda sales. The Big Soda companies then benefit by appearing responsible and proactive but dodge any negative economic or political pressure. And of course they continue to fund the Clinton Foundation.

Exhibit A: In 2006, the Clinton Foundation—along with the American Beverage Association (ABA), Big Soda’s lobbying arm—was involved in brokering a deal that aimed to reduce the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages in school cafeterias. The New York Times ran a story on the deal with the headline “**Bottlers Agree to a School Ban on Sweet Drinks.**” In reality, the agreement was not a ban but a voluntary policy statement schools were encouraged to follow. In essence, the ABA was encouraging school districts to sell less sugared soda and more sports drinks, diet soda and bottled water. This sleight of hand allowed Big Soda to appease critics while maintaining sales, and the PR posturing likely had **little or no impact** on students’ soda consumption.

Exhibit B: In 2014, Coca-Cola, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and PepsiCo announced **a plan** to reduce beverage calories consumed per person nationally by 20 percent in the next decade. The announcement was made at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting and represented a partnership between the ABA and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, an organization founded by the Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association.

As with Exhibit A, there are significant issues with Big Soda’s commitment in Exhibit B. First, soda sales have been in decline for 10 straight years. In other words, a 20 percent decrease in beverage calories consumed per person nationally is expected regardless of any action or inaction on the part of the industry. Second, Michael F. Jacobson, executive director of the **Center for Science in the Public Interest**, noted that the soda industry “could accelerate progress by dropping its opposition to taxes and warning labels on sugar drinks. Those taxes could further reduce calories in America’s beverage mix even more quickly, and would raise needed revenue for the prevention and treatment of soda-related diseases.”

While the Clinton Foundation publicly pats itself on the back for brokering this empty pledge to improve public health, the beverage industry is posturing to take credit for the declining popularity of soda. All the while, Big Soda simultaneously **battles against soda taxation** and pays health professionals



The Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, hosts Coca-Cola: An American Original until Feb. 15, 2016.

©Stockphoto.com/Ben Krut



A 250-ml bottle of Coca-Cola contains about 27 g of sugar. Sugar is a leading cause of obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

©iStockphoto.com/Mehmet Hilmi Barcin

to obfuscate the truth about the relationship between sugar consumption and metabolic derangement. Both groups win, and the losers are the millions of misinformed people who will suffer and die from sugar-induced diseases.

All that aside, the Clinton Foundation finds itself just another organization that claims to work for health and wellness yet accepts money from the very entities at the root of obesity- and sugar-related health problems. **This is not an exclusive club**—but it should be. Big Soda has no place in health and wellness.

Furthermore, Hillary and Bill Clinton should know better. Bill Clinton's diet has been a topic of popular discussion for years due to heart trouble beginning in 2004. Clinton has long struggled with his weight, and **Dr. Mark Hyman**, who served as the Clintons' dietitian for years, prescribed a sugar-free diet that helped the former president shed 30 lb., according to [Examiner.com](#).

"Sugar in all its forms is the root cause of our obesity epidemic and most of the chronic disease sucking the life out of our citizens and our economy," Hyman wrote on [Drhyman.com](#) in 2015.

And yet you can't escape the fact that the Clinton Presidential Center is somehow celebrating a substance the former president likely avoids in order to preserve his health.

On Nov. 6, Bill Clinton and Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent were featured guests at an invite-only **private preview** of the exhibition. The Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette report on the opening detailed several of Clinton's "Coke stories," including how he worked filling a grocery-store vending machine with soda at 13. Perhaps missing the irony altogether, reporter Brian Fannef had Clinton explaining how Coke is reducing the amount of calories it ships to schools just before a paragraph in which Kent bragged about selling 1.9 billion servings a day worldwide.

You can call Big Soda advertising art, but there's no artistry here. If you happen to catch a glimpse of the Clinton Foundation's glorification of America's most popular sugar drink, consider it a perfect display of the corruption and hypocrisy that comes with Big Soda dollars. ■

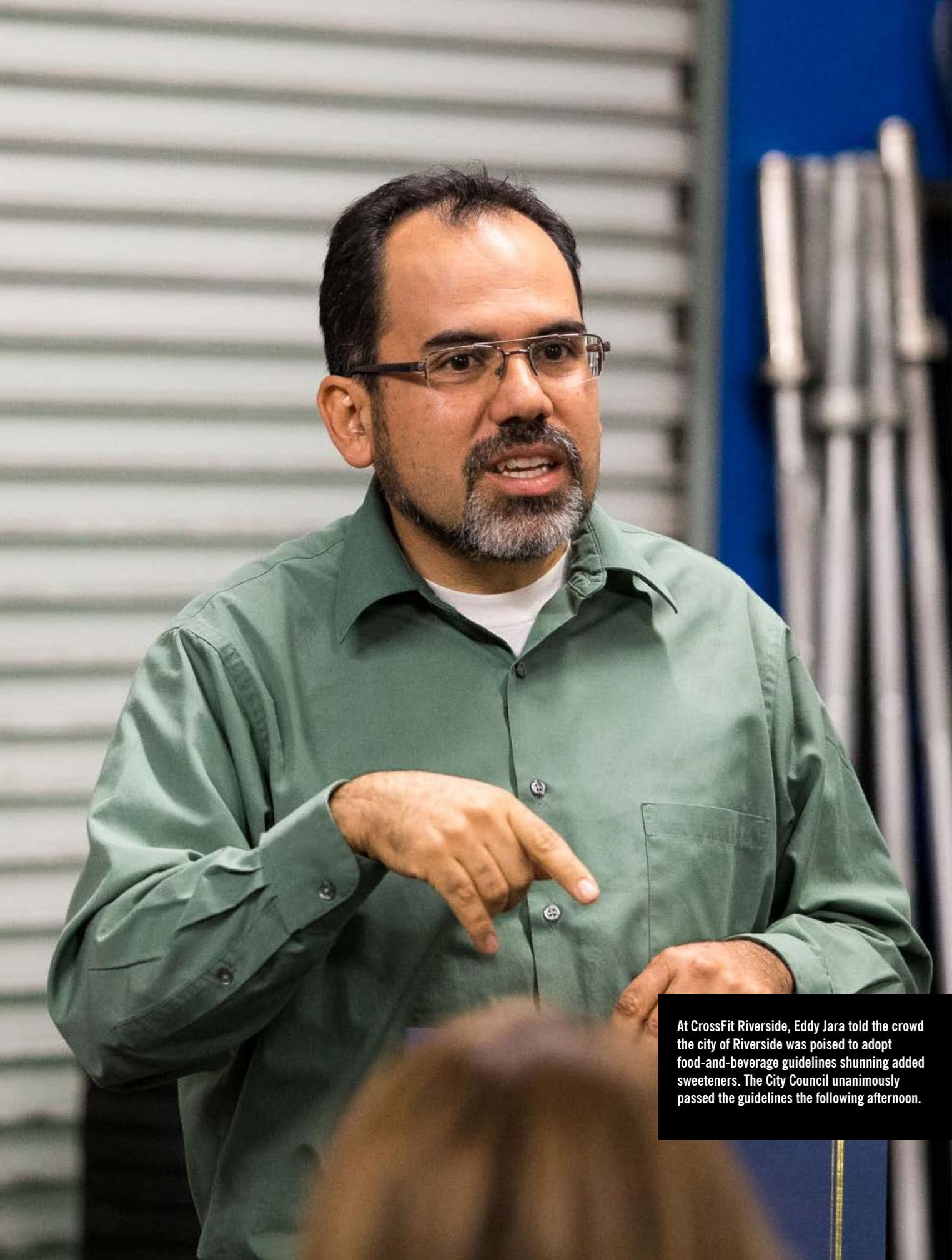
## About the Author

Raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Russell Berger spent four years in 1st Ranger Battalion. After leaving the military in 2008, he opened CrossFit Huntsville, where he spent three years as head trainer. He now works full time for CrossFit Inc.



THE **CrossFit** JOURNAL  
**BRING THE FIGHT**

BY ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL  
CrossFit Founder and CEO asks California community for help in support of statewide health-warning labels on sugary drinks.



At CrossFit Riverside, Eddy Jara told the crowd the city of Riverside was poised to adopt food-and-beverage guidelines shunning added sweeteners. The City Council unanimously passed the guidelines the following afternoon.

Change is afoot.

As CrossFit Inc. Founder and CEO Greg Glassman explained Big Soda's many evils to CrossFit athletes during the first few days of the **California Invasion**, seismic shifts were happening outside affiliate walls.

On Nov. 6, the University of Colorado School of Medicine **announced** it would return a US\$1 million gift from The Coca-Cola Co. Days later, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended a **daily limit** on sugar consumption for the first time. And in the city of Riverside, California—with a population of about 320,000—the City Council unanimously voted to adopt guidelines frowning upon the city's providing food and beverages with added sweeteners.

"There's a cultural shift already going on," said Eddy Jara, program coordinator for Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention in the Office of the Mayor & Community Development Department in Riverside.

Still, there's work to be done.

More than 29 million people of all ages in the United States—or 9.3 percent of the nation's population—have diabetes, according to the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**. When it comes to obesity, the numbers are even higher: More than **78.6 million adults** (34.9 percent of the population) and **12.7 million children** (17 percent of those aged 2-19) are obese, according to the CDC.

It doesn't end there: Chronic diseases are responsible for 70 percent of all U.S. deaths each year, according to **the Center for Managing Chronic Disease**.

"Soda has played a fundamental role ... in that suffering," Glassman told more than 100 people Nov. 9 at CrossFit Riverside, about 65 miles east of Los Angeles.

Big Soda's taint has been threefold: in the toxicity of its sugary beverages, in its **corruption of the health sciences** and in its **funding of legislative efforts to require licensure for personal trainers**.

The solution begins, in part, with a health-warning label on sugar-sweetened beverages, Glassman said.

"If we get the label on the can ... it will be increasingly hard for Coke to fund our enemies," he noted, alluding to Big Soda's ties to the United States Registry of Exercise Professionals (USREPS), the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA).

The label—which **Sen. Bill Monning** has introduced in the Senate during the previous two sessions of the California Legislature—would contain a simple statement: "Safety warning: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay."

"It's happened before with alcohol, with cigarettes. It's their turn. It's soda's turn," Glassman said.

He called on members of his audiences to visit **CrushBigSoda.com**, a site through which they can send their senator an email.

"Only you can stop 'em. Only you," he said.

As he stood before an intimate crowd at Trojan CrossFit in Los Angeles, Glassman said CrossFit affiliates represent a reversal of the chronic-disease epidemic; his goal is for it to remain so.

"I want the people in here to do what they do unmolested." ■

### Remaining California Invasion Stops

- Nov. 12: **CrossFit Downey**, Downey
- Nov. 13: **CrossFit Reality**, Signal Hill
- Nov. 14: **Carson CrossFit**, Carson
- Nov. 15: **CrossFit Marina**, Huntington Beach
- Nov. 18: **Fathom CrossFit**, San Diego
- Nov. 19: **CrossFit Walnut Creek**, Walnut Creek

### About the Author

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

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## Sugar High

Film examines sugar-industry documents detailing PR campaign that mirrors the Big Tobacco playbook.



**Movie Review**

By Mike Warkentin

November 2015

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All photos courtesy of "Sugar Coated"

*Documents from this defunct factory reveal how The Sugar Association sought to influence governments and the public.*

Someone probably forgot to shred them.

When the Great Western Sugar Co. shuttered a factory in Colorado in 1976, its records eventually found their way to Colorado State University. You can find a detailed index [here](#), and toward the bottom of the list you'll note a series of entries related to the trade group The Sugar Association Inc.

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1 of 3

Dentist Cristin Kearns did exactly that, and when she dug through the boxes she found the confidential sugar-industry documents that are at the center of Michèle Hozer's documentary "Sugar Coated."

### **Trailer: "Sugar Coated"**

Just over 90 minutes long, "Sugar Coated" uses the likes of journalist Gary Taubes ("Why We Get Fat") and Dr. Robert Lustig ("Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Foods, Obesity and Disease") to outline how increased sugar consumption is linked to obesity-related health issues.

In support, the doc features the de rigueur formerly obese teen, but Alexis Gomez's story really isn't needed. Gomez, who hit 217 lb. at 14 years old, is representative of a problem that's so widespread examples can be found just by walking down the street.

And that's perhaps the main criticism of a documentary in possession of a smoking gun: "Sugar Coated" has to set the table for those who use the film as an access point to the sugar-obesity issue, and it does so at the expense of those who might want truly ruthless investigative treatment of an industry's repeated and very successful attempts to influence governments and the public over several decades.

Overall, the film does a fine job of summarizing the whole issue for neophytes, but diet-conscious CrossFit athletes might find the scenes linking added sugar and obesity to be preaching to the choir.

That's a minor criticism, and the reminder might actually be needed. After all, the sugar industry has succeeded in yelling more loudly than science for about 30 years.

"I'm very surprised that all of a sudden people are realizing that sugar is bad for you because we did this research 30 years ago," says Judith Hallfrisch, a researcher who co-authored "Metabolic Effects of Dietary Fructose" with United States Department of Agriculture researcher Sheldon Reiser in 1987.

The strategy used to bury such research on the negative effects of sugar is remarkably similar to the plans of another industry that came under fire only when science finally overwhelmed marketing and lobbying.

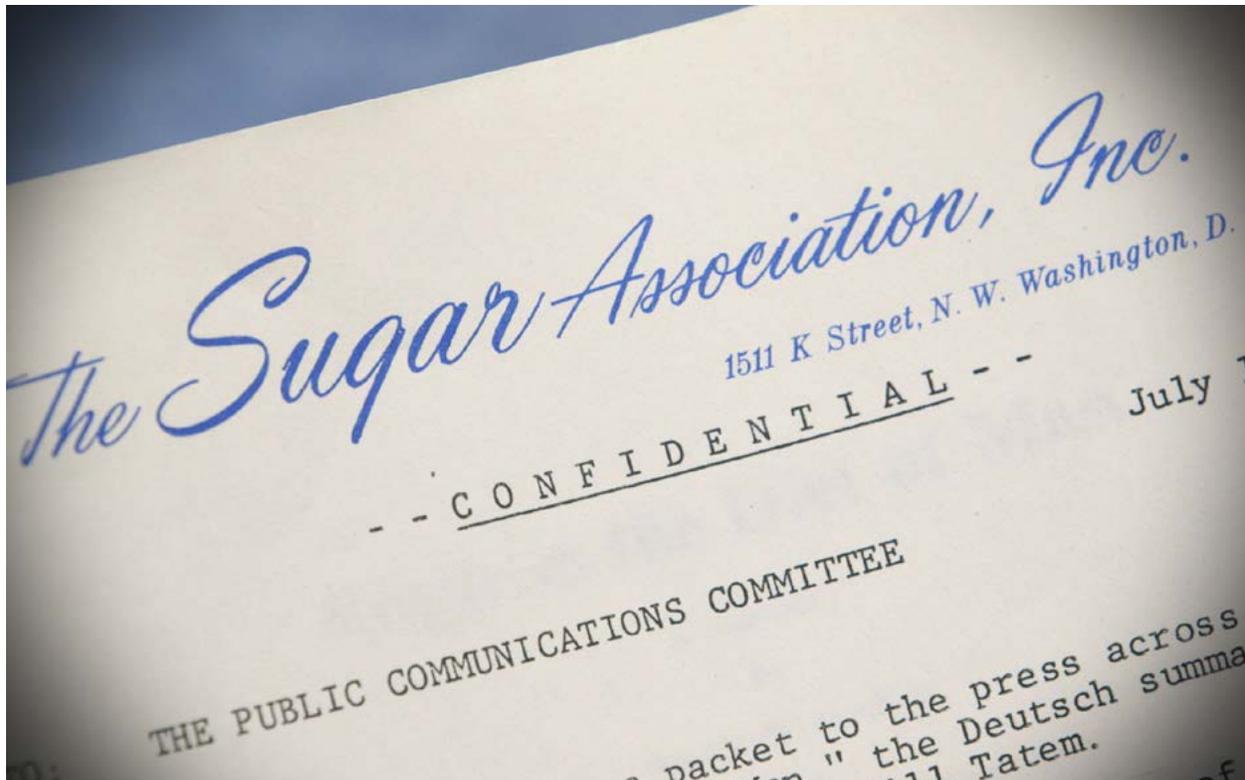


***Cristin Kearns, formerly a dentist, is now studying the marketing and lobbying tactics used by Big Sugar and Big Tobacco.***

"What the tobacco documents and the sugar documents that (Kearns) found show is that they're all using the same playbook," said Stan Glantz, a professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

Glantz, also director of the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, has been at war with the tobacco industry for years and was involved in the creation of the [Truth Tobacco Industry Documents \(formerly Legacy Tobacco Documents Library\)](#). Wrung from Big Tobacco through litigation in the '90s, the documents show how companies such as RJ Reynolds Tobacco Co. worked to break or obscure the link between secondhand smoke and cardiovascular disease, as detailed by Glantz and Dr. Elisa K. Tong in an article published in 2007 in the journal [Circulation](#).

When viewed through the lens of the tobacco campaign, the actions of the sugar industry come into perfect focus in "Sugar Coated":



**Now publicly available through Colorado State University, documents such as this one explain how research on the negative effects of sugar was obscured for 30 years.**

Roll out a PR campaign designed to promote “all-natural” sugar as part of a healthy lifestyle while pointing a finger at other factors—such as fat—as the cause of poor health. Fund research that supports the status quo and call into question any studies linking sugar to health concerns. Cloud the obesity issue by focusing on inactivity rather than nutrition. Lobby governments through trade associations. Change the names on packaging to hide the word “sugar.” Blur the lines and curry favor by **funding a host of health and fitness organizations**. Deny, divert, defuse, defend, distract and keep delivering the sugar.

The entire campaign is detailed as the doc gains momentum in its final act, with Hozer sadly denied the chance to wave a damning sheaf of papers at representatives from the sugar industry, who perhaps wisely declined to be interviewed. But let’s hope this is the first in a series of films that push the issue further, as Kearns has left dentistry and moved to California for a job as a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, San Francisco.

“Once I found those documents, I didn’t know where the path would lead ...,” Kearns says in the final moments of “Sugar Coated.” “The goal (now) is to be demonstrating the similarities between the tactics used by the sugar industry and the tactics used by the tobacco industry.”

It’s a worthy endeavor that will be needed to help stem the mighty flow of sugar-sweetened beverages, candy bars and doughnuts. Even if the tide is turning against the industry, it’s certain Big Sugar will fight to the bitter end.



#### **About the Author**

Mike Warkentin is the Managing Editor of the CrossFit Journal and the founder of [CrossFit 204](http://CrossFit204.com).

THE  
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# NO MÁS

BY ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL

CrossFit Downey owner Oscar Ramos works to shatter cultural ties to Big Soda and educate his mostly Hispanic membership on the dangers of sugary beverages.



As a child, Oscar Ramos was not allowed to go outside to play unless he drank his entire “fat bottle” of lime-flavored Gatorade.

A 32-ounce bottle of the so-called thirst quencher contains 56 grams of sugar, or about 14 teaspoons—more than double the 6-teaspoon daily limit the World Health Organization recommends for normal-weight adults. Added sugar is [linked to metabolic and chronic diseases](#) including obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Today, 37-year-old Ramos knows better than to drink Gatorade, soda or other sugar-sweetened beverages. But that’s not the case for all of his members at CrossFit Downey in Southern California, or for his mother-in-law, a Type 2 diabetic who injects insulin and continues to drink soda weekly.

“It’s our culture,” said Ramos, who is half Mexican and half Puerto Rican. “It’s gnarly.”

Hispanics have some of the highest percentages of diagnosed diabetes in the United States: 12.8 percent, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [“National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2014.”](#) Other minority groups fared just as poorly or worse: Non-Hispanic blacks were at 13.2 percent, and American Indians and Alaska natives were at 15.9. Meanwhile, non-Hispanic whites were at 7.6 percent.

A likely cause, public-health advocates say, is Big Soda’s targeting of Hispanics in its marketing efforts.

The disparities between black and brown communities and white communities “can’t be understated,” said Harold Goldstein, executive director of the [California Center for Public Health Advocacy](#).

“The message needs to get out that the beverage industry is targeting low-income communities and communities of color with their marketing, and those communities are seeing those effects.”

The effects, he said, not only include chronic disease but also [blindness and limb amputation](#).

Lower-income black and Hispanic neighborhoods were home to more outdoor advertisements for sugar-sweetened beverages than lower-income white and higher-income neighborhoods in 2009, according to the [Center for Science in the Public Interest \(CSPI\)](#). In 2013, Hispanic youth were 93 percent more likely to visit beverage-company websites when compared with all youth, according to the CSPI.

“We know that 86 percent of the growth through 2020 for Coca-Cola’s youth-target market will come from multicultural consumers, especially Hispanic, and focusing on this segment



Oscar Ramos (left) grew up drinking sugar-sweetened beverages. He welcomed CrossFit’s California Invasion to his gym, CrossFit Downey, on Nov. 12.

is critical to the company’s future growth,” Bea Perez, then-chief marketing officer for The Coca-Cola Co., [was quoted as saying in 2011](#).

This is what Ramos must battle as he attempts to educate athletes at his gym, which sits a mile northwest of a Coca-Cola bottling plant in a city with the [oldest continuously operating McDonald’s](#) and the [country’s first Taco Bell](#).

“At the end of the day, the numbers speak for themselves,” he said shortly after CrossFit Inc. Founder and CEO Greg Glassman addressed roughly 75 people on Nov. 12 at Ramos’ affiliate.

CrossFit Downey was the fourth stop on CrossFit’s [“California Invasion: Rally to Fight Big Soda”](#) affiliate tour.

There, Glassman explained why he is asking the CrossFit community to support a [California Senate bill](#) requiring health-warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages.

“I want to drive the American Beverage Association and its constituent partners out of the health sciences,” he explained.

The taint of Big Soda, Glassman said, has manifested itself in three ways: the [toxicity of its sugary beverages](#), its [corruption of the health sciences](#) and its [financing of legislative efforts](#) to require licensure for personal trainers that would criminalize CrossFit coaching.

“The corruption is chilling,” Glassman said. “And the corruption begins with Dollar 1.”

He continued: “The toxicity of the product warrants the label. The corruption of the sciences warrants the label.”

For his part, Ramos was grateful that Glassman cared enough about the members of his community to explain why he was asking them to contact local elected officials about the health-warning label via [CrushBigSoda.com](#).

“I think it just clarifies what the purpose is,” Ramos said of Glassman’s talk.

The Hispanic community, he added, doesn’t receive enough education on the harmful effects of sugary beverages. After all,

Ramos noted, the cultural and emotional connections between Hispanics and soda run deep.

“If you look at South America, I mean Coca-Cola’s everywhere. Coca-Cola’s like a cartel in Mexico. They provide jobs. They’re at all the soccer games. They’re at all sorts of events. I mean, they run stuff. And people will support them.”

Mexico is the [fourth-largest](#) consumer of soft drinks in the world. In the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, locals believe Coke has magical powers and use it in religious rites, according to [The Guardian](#). The country’s leading cause of death is diabetes.

“Now it’s just educating people,” Ramos said, “not on soda but what soda’s trying to do and what ... soda can do to you.” ■

## About the Author

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

THE  
**CrossFit** JOURNAL

# EXPLOSIVE PROBLEM

BY HILARY ACHAUER

Nationally recognized experts gathered Nov. 13 to discuss the sugar-fueled diabetes epidemic that's costing billions.





Xavier Morales



Michael Long

The obesity epidemic that began about 15 years ago has resulted in a new health crisis: a diabetes epidemic.

In a Nov. 13 forum at National University in La Jolla, California, a panel of nationally recognized experts gathered to talk about ways to reduce the impact of sugar-sweetened beverages. Each of the speakers—including a scientist, public-health experts and a community activist—talked about the terrifying increase in the incidence of diabetes.

“Diabetes rates have tripled in 30 years,” said panel moderator Harold Goldstein, founder and executive director of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy. “It’s the primary driver of increased health-care costs in the United States.”

While sugar-sweetened beverages—soda, juices, sports drinks—are not the only cause of skyrocketing obesity and diabetes rates, they are the primary culprit, Goldstein said.

“Half of all the sugar we consume comes from sugar-sweetened beverages,” he said.

Each expert who took the floor agreed: The crisis that threatens to overwhelm our health-care system will not be stopped without a fight.

“Half of all the sugar we consume comes from sugar-sweetened beverages.”

—Harold Goldstein

## Emergency Call to Action

“When I talk to people in my community and ask, ‘Do you have diabetes?’ they answer ... ‘not yet.’ It’s an expectation,” said Xavier Morales, executive director of the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California and a longtime advocate for health equity and environmental justice. Morales holds a doctorate in city and regional planning from Cornell, and he was a leader in the recent movement to institute a soda tax in Berkeley, California.

Treating diabetes is costing California US\$27.6 billion each year, Morales said.

“I don’t understand why we aren’t calling a state of emergency on this,” Morales said. “If another country was inflicting this type of damage on our country, what would we do? We’d go to war.”

“The rules are such that people are dying and the health of our country is going to collapse.”

—Harold Goldstein

Goldstein feels public policy is crucial in the fight against obesity and diabetes.

“Our job as participants in democracy is to change the rules of the game. When the rules are such that people are dying and the health of our country is going to collapse ... we are literally killing ourselves in the name of corporate freedom,” Goldstein said.

Mexico and Berkeley have already implemented a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, and CrossFit Inc.’s recent California Invasion affiliate tour was designed to drum up support for a California Senate bill that would require health-warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages.

Michael Long holds a doctorate of science and is assistant professor in the Department of Prevention and Community Health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University. He’s spent more than seven years studying the potential effects of a nationwide soda tax.

Long and a team of researchers created a “Sim City”-style model of the United States using U.S. Census data. The model predicted the result of a one-cent-per-ounce tax on sugar-sweetened beverages over 10 years.

According to the model, implementing the tax nationally would cost \$51 million the first year. In the second year, the tax would reduce sugar-sweetened-beverage consumption by 20 percent and cut mean body-mass index (BMI) by 0.15 among youths and .08 among adults. The model predicted the tax would result in health-care savings of \$23.6 billion and generate \$12.5 billion in annual revenue from 2015 to 2025.

Long said he believes the evidence supports prioritizing an excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages in public policy.

“It would reduce obesity, save populations and reach adults as well as children,” he said.

## Health Over Profits

The evidence regarding the terrible influence of sugar-sweetened beverages on our health is unequivocal, but the products are hugely profitable for The Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and others. These companies and the American Beverage Association (ABA) that represents them would like nothing more than to maintain the status quo, and the ABA actively opposes soda taxes and similar legislative efforts to curb consumption.

The ABA and beverage companies have a vested interest in keeping the profits flowing, but those outside the industry very much want to use policy to make changes that will result in improved health.

We are at a crucial point in history, Long said: “The moment in time where risking doing nothing means seeing the epidemic continue.”

*Lend your voice in support of warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages in California: [CrushBigSoda.com](http://CrushBigSoda.com).* ■

## About the Author

Hilary Achauer is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing articles, online content, blogs and newsletters, Hilary writes for the CrossFit Journal. To contact her, visit [hilaryachauer.com](http://hilaryachauer.com).

THE **CrossFit** JOURNAL

# LABEL YOU UNFORGIVEN

BY **ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL**

CrossFit Founder on health-warning label for sugary beverages in California: "We know sugar is poison."





Dave Re/CrossFit Journal

A health-warning label on sugary beverages in California is the first step in addressing chronic-disease epidemics, public-health advocates said.

“Putting a skull and crossbones on a Coke can is the beginning of the end for sugary drinks. And it should be,” said Harold Goldstein, executive director of the California Center for Public Health Advocacy. “Sugary drinks are the single leading contributor to obesity and diabetes. That’s where we need to start.”

Such a label would give the consumer a moment of pause, said Laura Schmidt, professor at the Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California-San Francisco School of Medicine.

“The main thing that the warning labels can do is they can make the consumer think twice before reaching for the product,” she explained.

CrossFit Inc. Founder and CEO Greg Glassman is a label supporter. He recently visited nine California affiliates as part of CrossFit’s “California Invasion: Rally to Fight Big Soda.” At each of the nine stops in Southern and Northern California, he asked members of the community to contact their state senators via [CrushBigSoda.com](http://CrushBigSoda.com) to voice their support for such a label in The Golden State.

Once a label is in place in California, it will spread to the East Coast and then abroad, Glassman said.

“Current consumptive levels of sucrose are deadly.”

## Seeking Balance

For Bill Monning, it’s about informing the consumer. The Democratic California senator has twice introduced a state bill that would require a health-warning label on sugary beverages.

“This isn’t happening on a level playing field. We have the most sophisticated marketing of these products, particularly to young people, just like the tobacco industry used to do,” he said of Big Soda’s advertising might. “The label warning is one way we can try to balance that overwhelming assault of marketing tools.”

The label would read, “Safety warning: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay.” It would apply to any nonalcoholic drink that has added caloric sweeteners and contains 75 calories or more per 12 fluid ounces.



Laura Schmidt



Dr. Robert Lustig

Courtesy of UCSF

Courtesy of UCSF Medical Center

Monning, the Senate majority leader, first introduced the Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Safety Warning Act in February 2013 as [Senate Bill 1000](#). SB 1000 passed the Senate but wasn't considered in the House. In February 2015, Monning again introduced the act—this time as [SB 203](#). It was one vote short of making it out of the Senate Health Committee.

Come the next legislative session—scheduled to begin in December—Monning said he intends to revisit efforts aimed at reducing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. That could manifest itself as a version of SB 203 or of 2013's [SB 622](#)—which would have required a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages—or an entirely different strategy.

“We will explore all options,” Monning told the CrossFit Journal in mid-October. “We will continue to explore the label warning, we may review the tax proposal, and we may come up with some other innovative approach.”

“[Sugar Coated](#)” filmmaker Michèle Hozer noted that warning labels on food were on the table in the 1970s, but the U.S. sugar industry successfully lobbied government officials to reconsider. In short order, the government declared sugar a safe product—free of adverse metabolic effects—that could even curb hunger.

“The idea that we go after liquid sugar,” she said, “that we put warning labels on those sugary beverages, is important because of that tsunami effect on the liver.”

## Not the Only Solution

Even with a warning label, multiple strategies are needed to affect people's behavior, public-health experts said.

“Not one policy is going to make all of the difference. It's going to take a lot of small changes,” Schmidt said.

Christina Goette described “system-level changes” that would make sugary drinks less accessible; for example, forbidding government funds from being used to buy sugar-sweetened beverages and limiting sales of the drinks wherever children are present. Goette is the senior health program planner at the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

The best public-health strategies are small changes in the environment, Schmidt noted. That can mean anything from counter-advertising and making water more accessible and affordable to disallowing the sale of sugary drinks when children are going to school, she said.

“What we're hoping for is bundling strategies,” Schmidt continued.

What's necessary is a variety of “tweaks,” she said, to bring the food environment back into balance so “it isn't so dominated by corporate interest.”

Changing the food environment by changing the industry is what's most important, said Dr. Robert Lustig, a pediatric endocrinologist of 32 years at UCSF.

“I'm for (a warning label), but you know what? Warning labels on cigarettes didn't stop people from smoking cigarettes,” he explained. “It's an educational moment but education hasn't solved substances of abuse.”

A label is necessary, he continued, but not sufficient.

“I'm just not under the delusion that accepting a warning label is somehow going to change what people do.”

## Three Reasons

Warning labels are only on things known to be dangerous: gasoline cans, ladders, solar panels, alcohol, cigarettes.

For Glassman, the warning label goes deeper. It's about toxicity, corruption and targeting of CrossFit affiliates.

Big Soda has knowingly added a toxin—sugar—to its products for decades in an effort to purposely addict consumers, and in the process sugar-sweetened beverages have been the single leading contributor to skyrocketing rates of obesity and diabetes, Glassman explained at the affiliate rallies.

“We've got the smoking gun. We know. We know sugar is poison,” he said on Nov. 13 at CrossFit Reality in Signal Hill, citing research from Lustig and Dr. Richard Johnson, professor of renal diseases and hypertension at the University of Colorado -Denver's Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora.

Then there's the manipulation of health science. Both The Coca-Cola Co. and PepsiCo Inc. have funded scientists who say their products are safe. [Coke's commissioned research](#) has blamed consumers' obesity on a lack of exercise instead of on the fact that sugar—particularly in liquid form—suppresses satiety. Pepsi's research, meanwhile, has pointed to sports drinks—such as its very own Gatorade—as necessary for

optimal athletic performance and a remedy for muscle cramping and heat stroke. Independent science has not supported these claims, which have had [fatal consequences](#).

“The label on the can makes it hard to take money from 'em,” Glassman said.

And, finally, Big Soda has funded organizations seeking [legislation taking aim at CrossFit affiliates](#). The most successful effort was in [Washington, D.C.](#), where lawmakers wanted to require licensure for personal trainers. That legislation has been all but repealed after lobbying efforts by CrossFit prompted reconsideration.

“I believe that a warning label will address all three of my concerns quite magically,” Glassman told a crowd of roughly 75 people on Nov. 12 at CrossFit Downey in Southern California.

## A Righteous Cause

The number of diabetics in the U.S. is expected to grow to 100 million people in 35 years, Glassman noted.

“It will be devastating in its impact. It will be the zombie apocalypse,” he told the audience of approximately 60 people at CrossFit Reality.

And medicine does not have a cure for chronic disease.

“You're the only effective, successful and growing response to chronic disease in the world today,” Glassman said.

He continued: “It is a global imperative that your work continue unimpeded. ... I'll fight till the end of my days to keep you doing what you're doing.”

While at CrossFit Downey, an audience member asked Glassman what was next after Big Soda. His answer was simple.

“Anything that offers poison, targets my industry, threatens my trainers—I'm comin' after ya.” ■

## About the Author

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

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

## VIRTUOSITY

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### Virtuosity 12: Reconnecting

Jill Zamoyta finds friends and fitness help her rebuild the mind-body link that was severed when she was abused.

By Jill Zamoyta

November 2015

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Andie Lopez

I have held this story in the cells of my body for nearly a lifetime. I've questioned every word, wondering whether it should even be said. I know now that I have to speak for those who are still muted by fear, unacquainted with their strength.

I am no longer afraid.

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1 of 2



Andie Lopez

**Jill Zamoyta (right) found a safety net at Stellar CrossFit in Big Bear Lake, California.**

When I was 10, I was molested daily at school by my fifth-grade teacher. I am strong enough to write this because of my journey in CrossFit and the power of love and true acceptance through an extraordinary community that's vastly diverse but also profoundly united.

As a survivor of abuse, it's a common protective mechanism to be able to dissociate your head from your body. While that ability allows one to endure certain horrors, it is ultimately destructive. Disconnection breeds disregard, dissolves faith; I have spent most of my 47 years feeling betrayed by and distrustful of my body.

As CrossFit itself creates strength of body and mind, Serena Carvalho, the head coach and owner at Stellar CrossFit, has likewise forged a sacred space. She expects nothing less than excellence—and not just in our numbers on the board.

The environment at Stellar CrossFit is so transformative because she expects each of us to live the soul of CrossFit every day. This expectation has created a community that heals, inspires and strengthens.

At Stellar, we have a 12-year-old who has a depth of character beyond his years and touches everyone who meets him. He'll even high-five you while fighting through a workout, with a "good job!" to keep you going. Multiple sclerosis does not stop another of our athletes from showing up at 6 a.m. despite deep pain and two hours of sleep. After a grueling shift, firefighters arrive ready to go with the last traces of their adrenaline.

Each of us walks through the door with his or her own story, and we are met with compassion. Embodied by Serena and our coaching staff, this balance of encouragement and grace allows us to rise from the ashes of our former selves on a daily basis.

Recently, I was working a one-rep max. I felt the pain, pushed through, heard the voices cheering me toward success. And I understood, finally. I had spent all these hours in the box building a bridge between my spirit and my body. I was no longer broken, no longer alone. I smiled quietly to myself, acknowledging the safety net we provide for each other, and I picked up the bar for one more rep.

I realize I will fight this daily battle for the rest of my life. There's still the voice that tells me I will never get better and that I am not worthy, that convinces me of inevitable failure. But the roar of the blood rushing through my veins is drowning out the dark sound of that voice, one WOD at a time, allies by my side.

*The Virtuosity call for writing submissions is now closed. The CrossFit Journal will release details of a new opportunity to share your CrossFit story shortly.*



THE **CrossFit** JOURNAL  
**SWEET LIES**

BY HILARY ACHAUER

New documentary "Sugar Coated" reveals a secret PR campaign and its disastrous impact on health.





Michèle Hozer, director of "Sugar Coated."

"All of a sudden this debate sort of stopped," said Michèle Hozer, director of the new documentary "Sugar Coated."

By the '90s the low-fat craze swept the country. Snackwells cookies—introduced in 1992—were all the rage, and consumers became fat-phobic, ignoring the high amounts of sugar that went into making the low-fat treats.

"And I thought, 'Well, what happened? Did we get this collective amnesia? Why did this debate stop?'" Hozer asked.

In "Sugar Coated," Hozer reveals her answers.

## The Smoking Gun

Dentist Cristin Kearns got involved in the sugar debate almost by accident.

She was working at Inner City Health Center in Denver, Colorado, and the majority of her patients had cavities in every tooth. She saw massive bone loss and 45-year-olds who had to have all their teeth removed.

"Obviously sugar consumption was the root cause of much of the disease I was treating," Kearns said in the documentary.

She attended a conference on gum disease and diabetes in Oregon, and the keynote speaker passed out a booklet called "The Fast Food Guide to Nutrition." Sweet tea was listed as a healthy drink. Angered by the misinformation, Kearns approached the speaker and asked how sweet tea could get a green light.

"Well, there is no evidence that links sugar to chronic disease," Kearns said she was told.

Kearns knew this was false, so she figured some sort of political agenda was shaping the advice given at the conference—and she wanted evidence. She typed "sugar" into the computer at a local library, and a reference to Great Western Sugar appeared. When the company closed in 1976, it donated its records to local libraries in Colorado. Kearns followed the trail to Colorado State University, where she found confidential documents from The Sugar Association Inc. that outlined its PR strategy in the 1970s.

The '70s were a crucial time for the sugar industry. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was reviewing the scientific evidence surrounding the health effects of sugar, so The Sugar Association launched a massive PR campaign aimed at getting a safety approval from the FDA. The campaign worked. Sugar won.

**D**aily consumption of sugar increased by 46 percent in the last 30 years—and rates of diabetes, obesity and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease increased as well.

In the archived documents Kearns found a photo of smiling sugar executives accepting a Silver Anvil Award—the equivalent of a Grammy in the PR community—for influencing public opinion about the health effects of sugar consumption.

Soon fat was the dietary enemy. Daily consumption of sugar increased by 46 percent in the last 30 years—and rates of diabetes, obesity and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease increased as well.

## Same Debate, Different Decade

Hozer's entry into the sugar wars began when she went to a conference and heard a doctor talk about the relationship between sugar consumption and Alzheimer's disease. She'd always been conscious of what she ate and concerned about her health, but Alzheimer's? That was something else.

So Hozer began researching. She read Gary Taubes' 2011 New York Times article "Is Sugar Toxic?" and reached out to the author, who told her about Kearns' discovery. Hozer watched Dr. Robert Lustig's 2009 lecture "Sugar: The Bitter Truth," which went viral and by 2015 had 5.8 million views. Lustig, a pediatric endocrinologist, believes sugar is the fundamental problem in the modern diet.

Everything came together when Hozer and her research team watched the 1986 documentary "The Sugar Trap," which dealt with the health effects of eating too much sugar.

"Our research team had this epiphany when we saw (that) old film," Hozer said. "That film, I'll tell you, it looks like it could have been made today. Same kind of studies, same kinds of issues—is it sugar, is it fat?"

When Hozer saw the papers Kearns found, she realized the issue was much larger than the simple question "is sugar toxic?"

"Because until we understand our history, we are not going to be able to change our present situation," Hozer said. "As a filmmaker, I thought that was really important ... there is the idea that we've been through this before. I think that's really important."

Beginning in the 1940s, the sugar industry funded research that pointed to fat, not sugar, as the cause of diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Frederick Stare was a key scientist. Founder and chairman of the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, Stare was an outspoken advocate of sugar, testifying before Congress about the health benefits of sugar and going on TV and radio shows throughout the United States to spread the industry's message and dispel fears about the harmful effects of sugar.

"(Stare's) department at Harvard had been taking money from the sugar industry since, well, the 1940s, in significant sums ... hundreds of thousands of dollars in a time when that was a lot of money," Taubes said in the film.

A [Mother Jones article](#) written by Taubes and Kearns (credited as Cristin Kearns Couzens) reveals the sugar industry funded 30 papers in Stare's department from 1952 through 1956, and General Foods—the company behind Kool-Aid and other products—donated \$1 million in 1970 for a new building for the Harvard School of Public Health. The Sugar Association documents outline a media plan with Stare as a primary spokesperson.

Ancel Keys was another critic of fat and defender of sugar. His University of Minnesota laboratory received money from the sugar industry starting in the 1940s, and Keys loudly and regularly identified fat—not sugar—as the cause of heart disease.

We weren't always so unhealthy.

Until 1980, approximately 12-14 percent of Americans were obese, but by the end of that decade the number had about doubled, reaching 22-25 percent. Similarly, diabetes rates tripled over the last 30 years to produce about 347 million worldwide cases. Obesity has become an epidemic, affecting children, putting a strain on our health-care system and introducing previously unheard-of conditions such as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

In the '70s and '80s, scientists and the media engaged in a lively discussion about the health effects of sugar versus those of fat. Scientists pointed to the links between high sugar consumption, diabetes and heart disease.

“Like in the tobacco debate, I think there was a turnaround in public opinion when the public knew or realized through the tobacco secret documents that the tobacco industry knew (cigarettes were) bad for them, and that it was addictive and it caused cancer. When (the public) realized that those companies just sort of lied to them, there was a lot of movement and a turnaround,” Hozer said.

By shining a light on the sugar industry’s manipulation of public opinion, Hozer is hoping people will realize much of what they know about the health effects of dietary fat and sugar comes from a sugar-industry-funded PR campaign—a campaign that has made much of the population overweight and extremely unhealthy.

## Conscious Consumption

The American Heart Association recommends women consume no more than 6 tsp. of sugar daily and men no more than 9 tsp. However, a 2009 [Associated Press story](#) reported Americans consume 22 tsp. of sugar per day on average, while teenagers consume about 34 tsp. of sugar daily.

Sugar has infiltrated every part of our life, and most people are unaware of exactly how much sugar they consume. A group of elementary-school-age boys finish a baseball game, and each is handed a 12-oz. bottle of Gatorade. Each bottle contains 21 g of sugar, or about 5 tsp.—just about the recommended daily allowance for adult women consumed in a few gulps. They’d be better off eating a cookie, which typically contains only about 6 g of sugar.

Soda is the worst offender. A 12-oz. can of Coca-Cola holds 39 g of sugar, more than 9 tsp. Measure 9 tsp. into a bowl and imagine downing the pile in the time it takes to drink a can of soda.

“Studies from Europe show that if you consumed one soda per day, your risk of diabetes goes up 29 percent—irrespective of the calories, irrespective of your weight, irrespective of anything else you eat,” Lustig said in a TEDx Talks clip used in “Sugar Coated.”

Hozer thinks we might be more aware of how much we’re consuming if food were labeled differently. Most people can’t picture a gram, but they do know what a teaspoon looks like (4 g of sugar is equal to 1 tsp.).



In the '70s, The Sugar Association worked to ensure people never connected the dots and discovered the true health effects of sugar.



A successful PR campaign made sugar a part of birthdays, holidays and special occasions, while fat was demonized.

A 12-oz. can of Coca-Cola holds 39 g of sugar, more than 9 tsp. Measure 9 tsp. into a bowl and imagine downing the pile in the time it takes to drink a can of soda.

“If (the number of teaspoons) were on labels, then foods that were 80 percent sugar or 90 percent sugar would have a hard time putting front-of-label health benefits like ‘we’re good on fiber and good on this,’” Hozer said.

Before that happens, we as consumers can make a difference with our wallets.

“You stop buying juice. The companies will notice,” Hozer said. “Stop buying that stuff and start demanding a lower sugar count.”

“Sugar Coated” is now available on [Vimeo on Demand](#). ■

## About the Author

Hilary Achauer is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing articles, online content, blogs and newsletters, Hilary writes for the [CrossFit Journal](#). To contact her, visit [hilaryachauer.com](#).

THE  
**CrossFit** JOURNAL

# CHILD'S PLAY

BY HILARY ACHAUER

CrossFit Kids trainers say early sport specialization can have negative consequences on young children, especially when winning is placed above the joy of movement.





When my daughter, Rosemary, lost interest in soccer at age 8, I signed her up for the swim team.

“She loves the water,” I reasoned. “This will be a perfect sport for her.”

Rosemary practiced twice a week on and off for two years. Whenever I asked her about competing in a swim meet, she said she wasn’t interested.

Then, when she was almost 10, she tried out for Junior Life-guards and came in first of all her friends in the 100-yard swim. Her hours of practice had turned her into a strong, effective swimmer.

“Rosemary,” I said, excited to see her hard work paying off, “you should try a swim meet! You’d do so well!”

“No thank you,” she said.

We went around this merry-go-round many times over the summer. She happily went to her 75-minute swim practice but was steadfast in her refusal to compete. I was equally determined to have her try at least one swim meet in the fall of fifth grade. Everyone around her was competing in his or her chosen sport. Shouldn’t she?

Not necessarily said Todd Widman, head flowmaster for CrossFit Kids.

“I think we are doing kids a disservice by forcing them into the competition mode,” Widman said. “If they want to do soccer practices and not the games, awesome. To me that shows a maturity level in a child well beyond anything that I ever had as a child.”

CrossFit Kids is designed to improve the general physical preparedness of young people and set them up for a lifetime of fitness.

At the CrossFit Kids Trainer Course, coaches learn that fitness must be fun: Happy young athletes are much more likely to continue training as teens and adults.

Raising a child in the United States today means entering a world of competition that starts at an early age, and competition and team sports offer kids many positive lessons about teamwork, persistence and improving through practice, all while getting exercise and gaining physical skills.

There are equally powerful negative consequences of pushing kids to compete and specialize in a particular sport at a young age, including burnout, overuse injuries and unbalanced muscle development, to name a few.

CrossFit Kids is designed to improve the general physical preparedness (GPP) of young people and set them up for a lifetime of fitness. The program is about broad, general, inclusive fitness, and making fitness fun is a major focus. Overuse injuries due to early specialization and competitive burnout that eliminates fun are obviously anathema.



Cheryl Boatman/CrossFit Journal

Todd Widman (right) said he believes young athletes should focus on general physical preparedness.

## Fitness First

Widman said there were two possible outcomes of forcing my daughter to compete. The best case would be she discovered she liked competitive swimming.

“The worst case is what if she doesn’t like it?” Widman asked.

“Now it ruins the whole thing and potentially her relationship with you. ‘My mom doesn’t trust my decision. Mom doesn’t listen to my words, so with my actions I have to show her,’” he said.

Widman started CrossFit in 2005 when he was an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He began working for CrossFit Inc. in 2006 and got involved in CrossFit Kids in 2008. He said he strongly believes children are competing and specializing in sports too early.

“A growing human being needs to have GPP,” Widman said. “They need to have the ability to jump and roll and tumble and pull and push, and it all has to be fun. With the base of GPP, absolutely you can start specializing in junior year of high school, maybe senior year of high school. Then it’s a choice.”

“A growing human being needs to have GPP. They need to have the ability to jump and roll and tumble and pull and push, and it all has to be fun.”

—Todd Widman

Widman teaches CrossFit Kids in a nonprofit arrangement out of his garage in Puyallup, Washington. He works with a 14-year-old girl who has been doing CrossFit Kids since she was in elementary school. An exceptional athlete, she’s progressed to the highest levels of competitive soccer. She plays year round and tries to fit in CrossFit Kids classes when she can.

Widman said he’s concerned by what he sees when she shows up to his garage.

“She’s always finding herself injured, she’s always tweaked, and she’s always sick,” he said.



Basic functional movement patterns provide a firm foundation for sport-specific movements such as throwing a football or swinging a bat.

Colleen Baz/CrossFit Journal

“This is your body overtraining,” he said he told her. “You should not have knee problems at 14—(it’s) horrific and inappropriate.”

Jon Gary is another flowmaster for CrossFit Kids. He’s been doing CrossFit since 2003 and has been a part of CrossFit Kids since its inception. Gary received a bachelor’s degree in biology from Northwestern University and a doctorate in molecular biology from UCLA.

Like Widman, Gary thinks children should be allowed to develop a variety of physical skills before specializing in one sport. Working on the foundational movements will ultimately make children better at the sport of choice once they specialize.

“If you can’t squat, if you can’t explosively open your hips, if can’t do core-to-extremity (movement) ... you’re not fulfilling your potential in the outlet of that, which is sport,” Gary said.

Learning to handle the psychological side of competing is another concern for Gary. One child might thrive at a baseball game hitting in front of his parents, coach and teammates. Others might shrink from the attention and learn to dread the experience.

Gary said CrossFit Kids is a safe platform for children to experience success and failure. He said when he sees 7-year-olds playing competitive baseball with playoffs, he thinks they would be just as well served by having a great time on the playground with their friends.

“My view on competition changes in the teenage years,” he said. “Teens get it. If you’ve led them up to that path in their childhood years, they are very able to turn successes and failures into positive things.”

He continued: “I absolutely believe in learning about winning and losing and about failing and succeeding, but not if it’s going to take away from the desire to continue to do the thing. That to me is what differentiates a sport from, say, what we do in CrossFit Kids.”

## Competitive Delay

Kelly Brown, owner of CrossFit Agoge in Montrose, Colorado, started her CrossFit Kids program in 2008. She said she sees three types of kids in her program: homeschooled children



Kelly Brown (center) said her Kids classes at CrossFit Agoge have competitive elements, but the focus is not on winning and losing.



Daniel Baribeau

As their competitive drive increases in the teenage years, young athletes can focus more on competition. But before that, CrossFit Kids is all about fun.

who use CrossFit Kids as P.E., kids who use the program as a supplement to their sports, and children who are not interested in sports and need movement in their lives.

Competition isn't unhealthy by nature, but it's not the focus for young athletes in CrossFit Kids.

"It's just us doing our thing in class. There's no win or loss," Brown said. "There (are) little (competitions) throughout the class, but there's no 'you're on the winning team or the losing team.'"

The 2001 statement paper "Organized Sports for Children and Preadolescents" examined the pressures sports place on children.

"Tournaments, all-star teams, most valuable player awards, trophies, and awards banquets are by-products of adult influences. Despite good intentions, increased involvement of adults does not necessarily enhance the child athlete's enjoyment," stated the paper, which was published in *Pediatrics*, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The paper detailed how organized sports must have reasonable goals for children and preadolescents, including acquisition of basic motor skills, increasing physical activity, learning about social skills and sportsmanship, and having fun.

In the end, I realized my desire to have my daughter compete in a swim meet was more about my competitive drive than hers. The situation reminded me of being at the airport with checked bags and a seat assignment in my hand but still feeling anxious about getting a good spot in line at the gate. It was a knee-jerk reaction—competition without purpose.

When I told Rosemary about my conversation with Widman and how I wasn't going to force her to compete, she smiled.

"Thank you, Mommy," she said. ■

## About the Author

Hilary Achauer is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing articles, online content, blogs and newsletters, Hilary writes for the CrossFit Journal. To contact her, visit [hilaryachauer.com](http://hilaryachauer.com).