
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

The CrossFit Journal: 10 Years of Excellence

Greg Glassman published the first *CrossFit Journal* article in 2002.
Ten years later, the *Journal's* overarching purpose remains the same:
To define CrossFit and inspire and support our community.

By Emily Beers

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CrossFit
Forging Elite Fitness

Foundations

CrossFit is a core strength and conditioning program. We have designed our program to elicit as broad an adaptational response as possible. CrossFit is not a specialized fitness program but a deliberate attempt to optimize physical competence in each of ten recognized fitness domains. They are Cardiovascular and Respiratory endurance, Stamina, Strength, Flexibility, Power, Speed, Coordination, Agility, Balance, and Accuracy.

The CrossFit Program was developed to enhance an individual's competency at all physical tasks. Our athletes are trained to perform successfully at multiple, diverse, and randomized physical challenges. This fitness is demanded of military and police personnel, firefighters, and many sports requiring total or complete physical prowess. CrossFit has proven effective in these arenas.

Aside from the breadth or totality of fitness the CrossFit Program seeks, our program is distinctive, if not unique, in its focus on maximizing neuroendocrine response, developing power, cross-training with multiple training modalities, constant training and practice with functional movements, and the development of successful diet strategies.

Our athletes are trained to bike, run, swim, and row at short, middle, and long distances guaranteeing exposure and competency in each of the three main metabolic pathways.

We train our athletes in gymnastics from rudimentary to advanced movements garnering great capacity at controlling the body both dynamically and statically while maximizing strength to weight ratio and flexibility. We also place a heavy emphasis on Olympic Weightlifting having seen this sport's unique ability to develop an athletes' explosive power, control of external objects, and mastery of critical motor recruitment patterns. And finally we encourage and assist our athletes to explore a variety of sports as a vehicle to express and apply their fitness.

An effective approach

In gyms and health clubs throughout the world the typical workout consists of isolation movements and extended aerobic sessions. The fitness community from trainers to the magazines has the exercising public believing that lateral raises, curls, leg extensions, sit-ups and the like combined with 20-40 minute stints on the stationary bike or treadmill are going to lead to some kind of great fitness. Well, at CrossFit we work exclusively with compound movements and shorter high intensity cardiovascular sessions. We've replaced the lateral raise with push-press, the curl with pull-ups, and the leg extension with squats. For every long distance effort our athletes will do five or six at short distance. Why? Because compound or functional movements and high intensity or anaerobic cardio is radically more effective at eliciting nearly any desired fitness result. Startlingly, this is not a matter of opinion but solid irrefutable scientific fact and yet the marginally effective old ways persist and are nearly universal. Our approach is consistent with what is practiced in elite training programs associated with major university athletic teams and professional sports. CrossFit endeavors to bring state-of-the-art coaching techniques to the general public and athlete who haven't access to current technologies, research, and coaching methods



Staff/CrossFit Journal

The first *CrossFit Journal* article, [Foundations](#), was published 10 years ago, on April 1, 2002, and the fitness world was forever changed.

It was written by CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman, who wrote all the content for the early editions of the *Journal*.

The first article was aptly named and went on to become a key part of the [Level 1 Training Guide](#), the companion to the CrossFit Level 1 Seminar and the resource thousands of new CrossFit trainers turned to for answers.

[The Garage Gym](#) followed in September, outlining a facility almost completely unimaginable in a period characterized by Nautilus machines and plate stacks sliding silently on oiled rails. The Garage Gym contained everything needed to create a world-class strength and conditioning facility that was elegant in its simplicity and profound in its functionality. In fact, over 4,600 gyms around the world—and countless garages—now contain essentially the same equipment recommended in the original 12-page article.

In October 2002, the seminal article [What Is Fitness?](#) was published. What Is Fitness? was revolutionary in the way of Isaac Newton's publishing on gravity. Gravity existed before Newton, but he was the first to articulate its principles in a measurable way. Fitness existed before Glassman, but he was the first to articulate its principles in a way that allowed measurable, observable and repeatable analysis of the safety, efficacy and efficiency of a fitness program. No one else in the history of fitness had done this.

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—Tony Budding

“It will come as no surprise to most of you that our view of fitness is a contrarian view,” Coach Glassman wrote in 2002. Yet, so successful has the CrossFit revolution been that this statement may not resonate with younger students who started their athletic journey with squats and deadlifts. For others who had been told leg extensions in 3 sets of 8 were the path to fitness, Coach Glassman's words were like an earthquake beneath traditional views of fitness.

The now-well-known definition of fitness is increased work capacity across broad time and modal domains. This concise sentence came later, in 2006. In October 2002, CrossFit's founder used four models to give a comprehensive view of fitness: the 10 physiological adaptations to training, the three metabolic pathways, the Hopper Model, and the groundbreaking Sickness-Wellness-Fitness Continuum. Any training program could be evaluated by how well it improved its participants across all four models.

The issue also included the Theoretical Hierarchy of Athletic Development pyramid and, of course, World Class Fitness in 100 Words (the phrase “constantly varied functional movements performed at high intensity” would also come later).

The document contains Coach Glassman's original description of how to achieve high levels of fitness, and it created a feedback loop between training method and measurable results that would increase human capacity faster in a decade than at any other time in history.

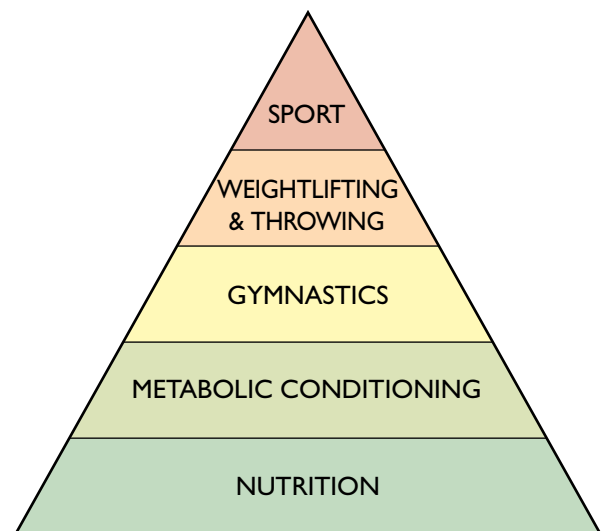
Making People Think

Tony Budding, head of CrossFit Media, reflected on what the first *Journal* stories were all about: they essentially began as Coach Glassman's articulation of his discoveries—discoveries he had expected to just look up in the established tomes of the fitness industry. As a young trainer, he found there were no practical manuals that described fitness and how to achieve it, particularly for fitness instructors.

“Greg was writing the articles he wished he had had as a young trainer, sharing insights he wished someone had shared with him,” Budding said. “He was building the gym he wished he could have belonged to.”

For the first two years of its existence, the *Journal* was circulated just once a month via e-mail. Today, the *CrossFit Journal* team publishes 45 to 50 stories per month, including its print, video and radio components.

Although the growth of the *Journal's* output helps highlight CrossFit's success, Budding said there was something innovative about the first *CrossFit Journal* issues that we'll never be able to re-create.



The Theoretical Hierarchy of Athletic Development.

"Those original articles are unlike anything that we're able to produce now. We wouldn't be here today without them," Budding said of Glassman's brilliance.

"We want to write about anything that makes the community better."

—Mike Warkentin

What we still have is Glassman's vision, a vision that has not only survived but continues to thrive every day in the *CrossFit Journal*. The basic principles of fitness are established, and the key movements required to optimize it are known and explained. So today, the *Journal's* orientation is to support all types of CrossFitters in their quest for fitness.

Mike Warkentin has been the managing editor since late 2009. Warkentin sees the *CrossFit Journal* as a fitness and lifestyle publication.



Budding discovered CrossFit in 2004, and before long he was contributing articles and videos to the *Journal*.

"Yes, we publish stories about how to technically squat properly, and there are science-based and nutrition stories, but there are also thinking stories and lifestyle stories," he said. "There's a very clear instruction that people need to learn how to think. It's not just about making their squat better. It's also about why logic is important in an argument."

This inevitably means that the *Journal* covers controversial subjects that might be considered outside the scope of a fitness publication. Not everyone will agree with the inclusion of some topics, and some will be downright offended by certain articles and videos, but the controversial stories are usually the ones that stir the liveliest debates—and the ones that make us think the most.

"Coach Glassman's goal is to make the community fit and smart, so we want to put out stories that make you think. This means we can cover any topic. Our goal isn't just physical fitness; it's mental and whole-body fitness. CrossFit wants to create better people. We want to write about anything that makes the community better," Warkentin said. "Coach's vision of making people better is not limited to perfect squats but includes the ability to think and debate."

The Growth of the Journal

Budding started training with Glassman in 2004. That fall, he wrote his first *Journal* article, a story about bringing CrossFit to a high school's physical-education program.

After that, something told Budding to wade a bit deeper into the CrossFit pool. What struck him immediately were the universal truths associated with CrossFit.

"Functional movements, high intensity—these are universal principles. They have nothing to do with Greg, per se. But he was the first to articulate them, and the only one to identify them," Budding said.

Budding admits that back in 2004 he never thought about what CrossFit, CrossFit Media or the *CrossFit Journal* would look like in 2012. He didn't necessarily envision working in an office in Santa Cruz with 30 full-time media employees, and he didn't picture the *CrossFit Journal* growing from one publication per month to 50 pieces each month, but he did know he wanted to be part of the evolution.

"I didn't really think about what it would look like in terms of how many affiliates, or how many *Journal* subscribers. But I knew this was real, and I knew Greg was brilliant, so I abandoned other things and put all my eggs in one basket," Budding said.

By 2006, he started contributing videos to the *Journal*. He would wake up each morning, grab his camera and head to the gym to film footage he'd edit himself. Soon, young athlete Pat Barber got on board and started helping Budding.

“Part of my job is to push people to stretch themselves and stretch the content.”

—Tony Budding

“By the end of 2007, Pat stayed with me. He rented a little cabin on my property and helped me make *Journal* videos,” Budding remembered.

In fact, CrossFit’s complete media archives were housed in a closet in Budding’s house.

Today, Budding’s day-to-day looks much different than it did five years ago. He rarely deals with individual stories or videos anymore; instead, his role is to make sure his team of people are both qualified and have the resources they need to produce quality media.

“Now, most of what I do is talk,” said Budding, who spends his days in meetings, on the phone and answering e-mails. “If you think of CrossFit media as a big bus, I’m the guy out in the jungle figuring out how to build a road where Greg has directed us to go. If there’s no existing path, I have to figure out how to clear the way so the bus can get through.”

Budding admits that he does miss getting his hands dirty from time to time. There was something profoundly satisfying in the direct relationship between filming and editing videos and the reception they received in the community.

But today’s challenges are profoundly rewarding also.

“People like to settle. It’s human nature to settle. So a big part of my job is to push people to stretch themselves and stretch the content,” Budding said.

“And I have Greg pushing me to make sure I don’t ever settle,” he said.

CrossFit Media and the CrossFit Games

This year, it was the CrossFit Games’ third year at the Home Depot Center. In 2012, there were more than 200 members on the media team, by far the biggest Games media crew.

Like many things in CrossFit, overlap between departments made it hard to decipher who was working for the *CrossFit Journal*, the Games site, the *Update Show*, the live feed, or the ESPN broadcast. Everyone kind of looked the same, and everyone was working together.

In a way the Games are total chaos. But it’s a controlled sort of chaos that’s a lot like a CrossFit workout.

Pat Sherwood, who competed as an athlete at the Games in 2009, is now a well-known face on the *Update Show*.

“From 2010 on, I became better at talking than working out, so I kind of made the switch, and since 2010 I’ve been involved in the coverage side of things,” Sherwood said.

He has watched the Games media team grow tremendously in just two short years.

“The amount of organization is incredible. Every year we learn from the last year—every year it gets bigger,” he said.

“Two years ago, it was still a great event, but you could see empty seats in the crowd. There was still room to walk around. And now just two short years later, this place is jammed to the gills. We’re bringing in extra seating . . . I don’t know where it’s going to go next year—it blows my mind,” Sherwood added.



The CrossFit Games media team includes photographers, videographers, writers and editors, all working together to cover every aspect of the Games.



Rory Mckernan and Megan Mitchell hard at work on the CrossFit Games Update show and ESPN broadcast.

Sevan Matossian is another one of the big names in the CrossFit media world. He's been a popular contributor to the *Journal* for a number of years and has earned himself a loyal fan following in the process. Matossian explained how his role has changed over the years.

"In 2008 and 2009, I basically shot the entire Games with a crew of three or four people. Now I just do behind the scenes," he said.

Despite his more specific role today, he says his job is actually tougher now than in 2008.

"Now, you have to communicate a lot more. You know, you actually gotta talk to people and interact," he said, smiling. "And media people are weird."

Although he spends Games week at the Home Depot Center working 18-hour days, Matossian never seems to run out of energy, and he never stops joking around, as is evident in his videos. Jokes aside, Matossian takes his job very seriously.

"It's way more organized now, but it's equally stressful. It's like a CrossFit workout—you just keep working harder and harder. The more resources you have, it doesn't make things easier—you just keep working harder," he said.

Budding agreed.

"You can't imagine how big it is," said Budding, who compared covering the Games to the Super Bowl. "It's not the same level of production, but a Super Bowl is a three-and-a-half-hour production. Ours is a four-day, 12-hour-day production."

And in the Super Bowl, you actually know when and where the game will be played, as well as all the rules and details of the competition. At the Games, only a select few know all the secret details, and much of the media team adapts on the fly as workouts are announced and twists show up to bring the world's best athletes face to face with the unknown and unknowable.

"It does get easier each year. But it was far from easy," said Budding, who addressed and thanked the media team emotionally at the end of the 2012 Games weekend with a tear in his eye.

**"I traded my *Oxygen*
and *Shape* magazines
for the *Journal* and never
looked back."**

—Alicia Connors

The Journal and the Community

Robert Beaupre is new to CrossFit. He was one of those CrossFit athletes who signed up and bought his pair of CrossFit shorts and minimalist shoes the day after his first WOD. And by the end of his first week of CrossFit, he was already subscribing to and reading the *CrossFit Journal* on a daily basis. Within a week, Beaupre had memorized the components of Coach Glassman's "What Is Fitness?" article.

For Beaupre, the *Journal* has been like a CrossFit 101 class, teaching him about the history, the science, the lifestyle and the community he now belongs to.

And more than anything, the *Journal* has been a place for him to connect with people.

"From cooking demos to inspirational videos to people who have come from injuries to sickness and have found a way to be passionate about life again ... What the *Journal* has shown me is an amazing community of people who, like me, want to better their lives and the lives of those around them," Beaupre said.

Part of the beauty of the CrossFit community is its diversity, which is reflected in the *Journal*, making it a place for new CrossFitters like Beaupre, as well as seasoned veterans, to absorb information.

Two-time CrossFit Games competitor Alicia Connors has been subscribing to the *CrossFit Journal* since she was in high school.

"I traded my *Oxygen* and *Shape* magazines for the *Journal* and never looked back," Connors said.

Today, Connors uses the *Journal* to help her with technical skills.



Command central for the CrossFit Games media team.

"I try and watch all the gymnastics videos—always lots to learn and practice," said Connors, who has watched the evolution of the *Journal* since its infancy.

And the *Journal* is about to take a new step in its evolution: The *Journal* will likely be moving away from its current PDF publishing format. Budding said that the infrastructure that drives the current [CrossFit Games](#) and [Community](#) websites will become the structure of the *Journal* very soon.

"In that environment, we can publish a huge variety of content," said Budding, who expects the changes to occur within the next 12 months.

But the main thing isn't the form of the *Journal*.

"The delivery is irrelevant. The content is the important part," Budding said.

And when it comes to content, the goal has remained the same since day one: Excellence.

"This excellence can be in any form, and we're a culture of appreciating excellence. So our media should reflect this," Budding said.

For Beaupre, the *Journal* is like the oral traditions from ancient communities.

"In ancient times, information was transferred from generation to generation by oral tradition. Elders would tell stories to younger members of the community, who would in turn tell those stories when it was their turn," Beaupre said.

"For the CrossFit community, the *Journal* is a collection of elders telling stories for others in the community, stories that will be available and passed down to people young to CrossFit for years to come," he said.



About the Author

*Emily Beers is a **CrossFit Journal** staff writer and editor who finished a master's degree in journalism at the University of Western Ontario in the spring of 2009. Upon graduation, she worked as a sportswriter at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, where she covered figure skating and short-track speed skating. Currently, she hosts **WOD HOG**, a not-always-PG publication of the CrossFit Vancouver School of Fitness. She ruptured her Achilles tendon in December 2010 and served as the Canada West Regional Media Director while recovering from surgery. Beers also competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games on CrossFit Vancouver's team. She finished third at the Canada West Regional in 2012.*



The look of the *Journal* may change, but the focus will still be on high-quality coverage of a variety of topics.