

WHAT CAN I DO WITH STEVE, THE 42-YEAR-OLD BANKER?

YOU
Be The Trainer!

#1

THREE OF CROSSFIT'S TOP TRAINERS PROGRAM A WORKOUT FOR A HYPOTHETICAL CLIENT.

WHAT WORKOUT WOULD YOU PROGRAM FOR THIS SCENARIO?

THE SCENARIO...

TONY BUDDING CREATED A HYPOTHETICAL CLIENT NAMED STEVE AND A PROPOSED WORKOUT TO CHALLENGE THE PROGRAMMING SKILLS OF SOME OF CROSSFIT'S BEST. HERE'S WHAT HE CAME UP WITH...

STEVE IS 42-YEAR-OLD BANKER AND HAS BEEN CROSSFITTING FOR SIX MONTHS. HE CAN DO MOST OF THE MAIN-SITE WODS AS RX'D, BUT SOME OF THEM JUST BARELY. STEVE OFTEN SCALES WORKOUTS BACK A LITTLE SO HE CAN KEEP MOVING. HE FOLLOWS THE MAIN-SITE WORKOUTS MOST OF THE TIME AND COMES IN FOR PERSONAL TRAINING ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK AS HIS SCHEDULE ALLOWS.

Today is Thursday. Steve will be in later today. It's time to program his session. Here's what Steve has done this week.

MONDAY:

Rest

TUESDAY:

Scaled version of Diane.

21 deadlifts (185 pounds) and 15 handstand push-ups. Then, 15 deadlifts and 10 handstand push-ups.

Finally, 9 deadlifts and 5 handstand push-ups. Steve's time was 9:40.

WEDNESDAY:

Kelly as RX'd.

Five rounds of 400-meter run, 30 box jumps on a 20-inch box, 30 wall-ball shots. Steve's time was 32:45.

THE PROPOSED WORKOUT:

50-40-30-20-10

Kettlebell swings
(1.5 pood or approximately 53 pounds)

Push-ups

Is this a good workout for Steve today? Decide for yourself or continue reading the article. Compare your answer to our trainers' opinions. Post your results to comments.

3-2-1... GO!

THE TRAINERS



TONY BUDDING, CROSSFIT HQ



**ADRIAN (BOZ) BOZMAN
SAN FRANCISCO CROSSFIT**

ADRIAN (BOZ) BOZMAN
SAN FRANCISCO CROSSFIT

We need to keep Steve safe.

Let's not crush him.

Today's proposed workout has too much volume. It includes 150 kettlebell swings. Steve had to scale deadlifts two days ago, and he did wall-ball shots and box jumps yesterday. That's a lot of hip extension already this week. His glutes, hams and low back are already pretty trashed.

If Steve were a hard-charging firebreather, this workout might be reasonable. But Steve is not training for any specific event right now. We should be building him up, not tearing him down. Let's be prudent. We want to promote a conditioning stimulus without going so far that training time is lost due to soreness or injury.

Let's dig in deeper. Steve has done a lot of pressing this week but no pulling. So push-ups may not be the best fit, either. The rep scheme for the workout might be altered from 50-40-30-20-10 to 25-20-15-10-5. This will still pack a wallop and allow Steve to finish quickly. That might be nice after two longer workouts this week.

But why not consider bigger changes? This week Steve has seen a lot of hip extension but little hip flexion. How about some sit-ups? Let's just use the plain ol' feet-planted AbMat (or equivalent) sit-up. Nothing fancy. And how about adding pull-ups?

Now we have our new workout for Steve: 25-20-15-10-5 of pull-ups and sit-ups. This is quite different from what Steve has done this week. He can hit the workout hard without getting destroyed.

Another alternative to consider would be programming a weightlifting day for Steve after all the huffing and puffing he's done this week. A clean-and-jerk or snatch day might fit nicely. The loads won't be heavier than the deadlifts he did two days ago. He should be able to manage his fatigue and hold his form because he won't be doing many reps. If Steve's form does break down, I'd use the session for Olympic lifting practice. After all he's seen this week, I wouldn't expect any 1RM PRs.

Here's another idea: weighted pull-ups might be another nice "weightlifting" alternative here. Sprinkle in some skill work and Steve ends up with a highly productive session that sets him up for a great next cycle of workouts.

My bigger point is there are many ways we can go with Steve. We need to think long term. People see the quick improvements CrossFit promotes and many think that faster results will always be better.

But it makes no sense to burn out a guy like Steve. He could end up with significant muscular soreness in his lower back and have some choice words for the trainer.

I'm not suggesting going easy on Steve. Just adjust the intensity to his limitations. The progress will come. More often than not, good training is a patient person's game.

**E.C. SYNKOWSKI
CROSSFIT BOSTON**

I do not like the proposed Thursday workout for Steve. There are four main reasons.

First reason:

It's another high-volume met-con, like Kelly the day before.

Second reason:

Steve is likely worn down. This will be his third day in a row working out. The volume in the proposed workout is again high. His intensity will likely suffer.

Third reason:

Steve hasn't done any short workouts yet this week.

Fourth reason:

The proposed workout is another pull-push combination, like the Diane workout he did two days ago.

If we needed to keep this workout generally similar to Tony's proposal, I would scale it from 50-40-30-20-10 kettlebell swings and push-ups to 21-15-9 and maintain the weight at 1.5 pood.

A completely different workout would be far better. Let's make this a strength day. How about 5x3 (or 5x5) back or front squats? We've already done plenty of overhead pressing this week.

I'd love to throw in some snatches or clean and jerks, but I think Steve may be too neurologically fried to hit them with any significant load. I'd rather open with them on the next cycle.

THE TRAINERS



**E.C. SYNKOWSKI
CROSSFIT BOSTON**



**CHRIS SPEALLER
CROSSFIT PARK CITY**

CHRIS SPEALLER
CROSSFIT PARK CITY

Scratch the whole workout. It's too much. Putting Steve through 150 kettlebell swings doesn't make sense. Steve's posterior chain is already a bit fried from the 45 deadlifts and 150 wall-ball shots earlier in the week.

Today, let's focus on pulling and time priority. Normally, I would like to see some heavy work like a 3x3 push press or push jerk. But I think even this would be too much, especially considering Steve's slower times on the heavier deadlifts from Diane.

I'd program a warm-up of mobility drills and some work on Olympic lifts with light loads (or other technique work on things Steve struggles with, such as double-unders or muscle-ups). The main WOD would be a Tabata Mash-up of pull-ups, hang power snatches at 75 pounds and sit-ups.

(A Tabata Mash-up means using the Tabata interval while alternating exercises. In this case, that would mean doing max pull-ups, snatches and sit-ups in 20 second intervals, each followed by 10 seconds of transition time. There are eight rounds total.)

Why? The total workout time for Steve is already set. The work is up to him. It will be 12 minutes and allow him to work in some short intervals. I think this is a great option for someone who needs some recovery but may still have the ability or energy left to work super hard. I can gauge how he's feeling by his performance in the first couple of rounds and tell him to slow down or pick up the intensity depending on what his technique and motivation are like.

The pull-ups will be tough. But I want Steve to stay away from pressing today. The hang power snatch is designed to be more technical, and the lighter load will lay off the posterior chain a bit (compared to full squat snatches). This will be a great opportunity for Steve to focus on how well he is moving and how that affects his rep-count score. The sit-ups are there more or less as filler. I want him working into that 12-minute range but don't want to smash him. They will be tough but provide good recovery from all the pulling in the first two exercises.

I also think it's important to give him an opportunity to really push himself. Diane seems like it was a bit of a slugger and took him a while to do. Kelly is a longer workout, and although tough, it's a bit more paced out.

The idea here is really making Steve work hard but not overtraining him with the same movements. The Tabata interval provides us with a built-in rest, which allows us to hit the work intervals harder.

Post-WOD: stretch out the hips, low back, hammies and lats. Foam roll as well. I think this is super important as people start to build up some significant work capacity. The more we are capable of doing, the more we have to stay on top of taking care of ourselves.

Steve sounds like he's getting close to this point, and we want to make sure we stay on top of his recovery.

**THE LAST WORD:
TONY BUDDING, CROSSFIT HQ**

Good programming is both art and science. Programming for individuals is different than programming for groups. Setting the workout of the day for your gym is different than programming a single workout for one athlete.

In this scenario, we know enough about Steve to recognize that the proposed workout is far from ideal. All three of our trainers wanted to reduce the volume and get him away from excessive hip-opening and pushing movements. All three at least considered going heavy.

There was some disagreement about what to do heavy, particularly around the Olympic movements (clean, jerk, snatch). Good programming could only happen here with more extensive knowledge about Steve's history and the quality of his mechanics in these movements. It's certainly possible that Steve would be too fried to be able to give the Oly lifts a legit effort, or it could be that the intense focus required for a heavy Oly day is exactly the challenge Steve needs. Chances are pretty good, though, that Steve's proficiency in the Oly movements isn't sufficient to wreck him physically, and a good dose of technical instruction with gradual weight increases could be a perfect session.

Fitness is capacity across broad time and modal domains throughout life. Many factors are at work here, including a psychological aspect. Steve is relatively new to CrossFit, isn't young enough to aspire to becoming a top Games competitor, and seems to have a full life. Quality of life is probably more important to him than maximizing performance. I'm sure he wants a good bang for his buck, and none of these trainers was suggesting taking it easy on him. But it's probably smart to aim for 90 percent, leaving a little cushion.

Ninety percent of your genetic potential is still worlds better than isolation movements and cardio at the Globo Gym. And it gives you a little breathing room to guess wrong and have more fun. You can always ratchet up the effort over time if Steve keeps coming back asking for more.

All three trainers recognized this and modified the programming accordingly. If Steve has pretty solid pull-ups, Boz's idea of a 1RM weighted pull-up combined with some skill work could be ideal. It's completely different from every other workout and movement trained this week. But if Steve is still working on high-volume pull-ups, the 1RM weighted pull-up probably wouldn't be enough of a challenge to comprise an entire workout.

Speal's idea of the Tabata Mash-up is also great because it's extremely difficult for an athlete to run this workout alone. As a trainer, you can really help him manage his effort within each 20-second interval, and you can keep score for him. This allows him to focus exclusively on his effort. Done properly, this is an excellent bonding workout.

E.C.'s idea of heavy back squats could also make for a productive session. It's hard to push back squats to the limit alone, as there is no easy way to dump if you get stuck. Having a trainer there to spot can give Steve the confidence to go where he wouldn't by himself. He's still pretty fresh to the program, so he should still be seeing good gains. With the spotting, he's likely to set a PR, which is always a good thing.

There's no black or white answer when it comes to ideal programming, but hopefully these trainers have given you some solid reasoning for how to think about effective programming.