

Outside the Games Bubble

Some people don't do CrossFit, and Emily Beers discovers what they think of us and our antics.

By Emily Beers CrossFit Vancouver

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All images: Staff/CrossFit Journal

The path to becoming a CrossFitter looks similar to most of us:

We rapidly get fitter, stronger, faster. We cut out gluten and sugar (although I'm still working on eliminating Skittles from my diet). We suddenly have more energy. We become addicted to personal bests.



Drinking the Kool-Aid.

Soon, we find that most of our friends are CrossFitters. We start dating a CrossFitter. We even develop a sort of CrossFit humor and jokes that make only CrossFitters laugh.

And sometimes we forget that our CrossFit bubble is just that: a world in a bubble. With a million dollars up for grabs this weekend and ESPN broadcasters on site, it often feels like CrossFit is officially mainstream. But there's still a big world out there, and it's full of people who haven't heard of a thruster.

Never does this become more obvious than when you saturate one city with hundreds of CrossFit athletes, like this weekend in L.A.

From cab drivers to waitresses to bystanders on the street, people have noticed our group of tanned, ripped, spandex-wearing athletes, and they want to know more about us.

"What sport are y'all here for? Cross what? What's that?" I've been asked countless times.

I'd like to share a few moments I've had this week with regular people, people who, when surrounded by CrossFitters, become confused and bewildered by our behavior.

The Heavy Whipping Cream Confusion

Setting: A coffee shop near my hotel, which is currently flooded with Reebok-wearing athletes.

I order an Americano and ask for heavy cream to top it off.

The barista, a plump woman who was just as wide as she was tall, says, “OK, that’s enough. I have to ask. What is with all you fit-looking people drinking this high-fat, heavy whipping cream in your coffee? There have been so many of you here this week asking for this high-fat cream. I would think you would ask for skim milk or soy milk. How y’all remain so fit?”

I didn’t want to get into a nutrition talk with this woman. There was a lineup, I was in a rush, and I am in no way a poster girl for the 100 percent Paleo lifestyle, so I came up with a quick answer.

“Fat doesn’t make you fat. I ate bacon for breakfast this morning, too,” I said.

“So you’re telling me I should start eating bacon and I can look like you?” asked the woman, an excited sparkle in her eye, clearly visualizing the bacon she was going to fry up as soon as her shift was over.

I got the distinct feeling I may have set this woman off on the wrong track and immediately regretted my careless bacon promotion.

The Leftover Bagel Mystery

The hotel I’m staying at serves a continental breakfast in the morning. When they were told a group of athletes was coming, they upped their bagel quota.

“Usually when we know sports teams are coming, we know athletes like their bagels. We always seem to run out when the football teams stay here,” said one of the hotel employees.

This weekend bagels are going stale.

Oddly enough, this weekend bagels are going stale.

“Y’all are more into the sausages,” laughed the same hotel employee, shaking her head in what looked like confused disgust. “We’ll remember that for next year—CrossFitters like sausages.”



CrossFit stuff: part of the ritual.



Bacon does this?

Shoes With No Support

Setting: Albertson's grocery store. I was wearing a pair of barefoot shoes when a fellow shopper stopped me to ask about them.

"I keep seeing people in here with those CrossFit shirts with the numbers on them and those shoes ... what kind of shoes are those?" asked the intrigued shopper.

"They're a barefoot shoe," I said.

"Are they more supportive than regular sneakers?" he asked.

"No, there isn't any support in them," I tried to explain. "It allows you to feel your feet a little better when you move, so it sort of forces you to walk and run more correctly," I said.

"No support? So you don't put no orthotics in those?" he asked. "You CrossFit people have some different ideas."

Pitching a Tent

Setting: Just outside the stadium

While it seems like 90 percent of the spectators at the Home Depot Centre are CrossFit athletes themselves, I came across at least a pair of local males watching the event who were obviously new to the sport.

One young man says to his friend: "I can't believe how hot those girls are out there. I didn't even know which one to look at."

His friend replies: "Seriously. I've been pitching a tent in the stands all day. I couldn't even get up to go to the bathroom."

Friend replies: "No shit, dude. I've never seen hotter asses in my life. We should start this CrossFit shit."

Ladies and gentlemen, it looks like we have two new recruits to our sport.

Emily Beers is competing on CrossFit Vancouver's Affiliate Cup team and will be writing from ground level throughout the competition.