
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Hot and Bothered at the Masters Competition

CrossFitters discover fitness over 45 is damn sexy.
Emily Beers reports.

By Emily Beers

July 2012



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A group of jacked, tanned, specimen-like men are climbing ropes with fluidity. They're jerking close to 250 lb. over their heads, and they're sprinting athletically.

Young women in the stands check them out and cheer them on.

It's your typical CrossFit competition.

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But then these women take a more intimate look at the men and the confusion sets in. They realize the men they're having slightly inappropriate thoughts about are old enough to be their dads.

Welcome to the Masters competition at the CrossFit Games, home of the sexiest group of middle-aged athletes in the world.

Ageless Capacity

Many young men and women don't get the appeal of older people, but the Masters competition at the Games might have changed some minds because CrossFit is changing the rules of aging.

Being 50 no longer means sporting a beer gut that hangs over a pair of pants that read "42" on the stretchy waistband, and it doesn't mean playing on a beer-league team relegated to the bottom tier of some God-forsaken house league. It also doesn't mean mall-walking and asking a disinterested personal trainer how to get rid of "this dangling thing under my arm."



Terry Peters fights the aging process one kettlebell swing at a time.

Sitting in a chair and doing nothing is most definitely not sexy, nor is finishing last in a workout and saying, "I'm old." Smacking Father Time with a 70-lb. kettlebell and telling him to back off while beating athletes half your age? Definitely sexy. Chest-to-bar pull-ups at 60? Hell, yes. Rippling abs and silver hair? A perfect pair.

Gord Mackinnon—with the body of a testosterone-fueled 21-year-old and the wisdom and maturity of a man looking to settle down—is the new face of masters athletics.

Hosts of commercials for medication and hair dye try to depict older people as distinguished, sexy and virile, but in the CrossFit world, few things are as sexy as work capacity and a smoking-hot Fran time. The best part is that it's pretty much been proven in 4,000 gyms worldwide that work capacity and smoking-hot Fran times produce aesthetic benefits beyond improved health—at any age.

And as the commercial says, who doesn't want to look old enough to know how to do something with skill and young enough to do it?

"There's some good-looking old dudes here," one woman in the crowd said.

"They look like they're in their 30s or even 20s, some of them," said another.

"I think it is awesome. I think it shows that they've still got it. Same with the women!" said still another.

The most definitive statement: "I'm 24 years old, and I'm attracted to 50-year-old men."

For the complete audio, including interviews with the competitors, click [here](#).

The Masters competition at the Games is proving beyond a doubt that age is indeed just a number, and it's an irrelevant number for many. Why give up performance, and why give up abs? Can't you have both? The Masters emphatically say, "Yes!"



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Mackinnon, in red, pushes past Brian Edwards to win the final event and the 50-54 Masters Division.

Lisa Mikkelsen competed on CrossFit New England's Affiliate Cup-winning team last year, going head to head with athletes 20 years younger. This year, she dominated the 45-49 division at the Games. Anyone who tries to guess her age outside the Games will almost certainly be wrong. Anyone who goes head-to-head with her in a WOD will probably lose.

Gord Mackinnon, a 53-year-old silver fox who found himself on top of the podium for the second year in a row, could make the leaderboard at most gyms. Mackinnon—with the body of a testosterone-fueled 21-year-old and the wisdom and maturity of a man looking to settle down—is the new face of masters athletics. People are now completely free to ignore the date on the calendar if they want to pursue fitness.

After the first event, which Mackinnon dominated, I tracked him down to hear his thoughts about the workout.

"I tightened up a bit. Part of it might have been just getting the nerves out. I need to hit the ice baths," he said.

As for Mackinnon's own CrossFit story, the firefighter from Vancouver, B.C., found CrossFit four years ago after earning a stellar international reputation playing flanker on the Canadian National Rugby Team.

**"I'm still hitting PRs.
I'm still improving."**

—Gord Mackinnon

At an age where he's theoretically past his prime, an age where we would expect him to be on the physical decline, Mackinnon is defying biology. But after four years of both training and aging, MacKinnon continues to hit personal bests.

"I'm still hitting PRs. I'm still improving. And I think that's a lot more impressive than people like Rich Froning getting a PR. He should be improving: he's young and healthy. It's much more impressive to see an older lady get her first pull-up," Mackinnon said.

Mackinnon doesn't take his physical gains in the last four years for granted.

"Just before I started CrossFit, I was told by an orthopedic surgeon that I should just stop running, stop biking, and that I should basically wait for a knee replacement," Mackinnon said.

He added: "Obviously I don't see that surgeon anymore."

Four years after rejecting that surgeon's advice, Mackinnon is kicking the asses of guys half his age. He's so confident in his physical abilities that he'd like to see even harder workouts in the Masters division.

"A lot of people think we're also-rans, but I'd like to do some of the same workouts as the individuals. Not that we'd keep up with the individual guys here at the Games, but I think we would keep up with lots of good CrossFit guys much younger than us," he said.

And as we learned at the Home Depot Center this July, not only can men like MacKinnon keep up with younger men during workouts, but they can also keep up with them on the hotness scale.



Richard Roston: CrossFit competitor and silver fox.

"It certainly is a compliment," Richard Roston laughed when told younger women were checking him out during the competition. "It makes you feel good that you can still present as an attractive person at almost any age. Our culture is aimed mainly for youth, and as we're aging, especially the Baby Boomers such as myself, we really don't want to get older."

Incredibly, Roston actually feels like he's getting younger.

"I generally feel stronger and better than I did ever four, five years ago," he said.

He added: "I don't feel I'm aging at all. If anything, I feel I'm getting younger."

Stronger, faster, sexier at 45 and beyond?

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About the Author

Emily Beers 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 2012 Canada West Regional.