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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## A Vote for CrossFit

Studies revealed Oklahoma to be the fifth-most obese state in 2008, so Congressman John Sullivan is using CrossFit to lead the fight for fitness. He'll be competing in the upcoming South Central Sectionals in hopes of inspiring others to become fitter and healthier.

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By Congressman John Sullivan

March 2010

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All images courtesy of the office of Congressman John Sullivan.

I'm no different than most Americans. You show me a workout plan, and I can find an excuse why I'm too busy to do it.

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When it came to exercise, I dabbled in everything from running on the treadmill to cycling but found myself equally bored with all of it after only a few months. I started CrossFit just over one year ago in February 2009 and never looked back.

Ever since high school, where I wrestled and played football, I always separated cardio and lifting weights in my exercise regimen, until one day last year when I saw people doing CrossFit at Sky Fitness, my gym in Tulsa. I met Amy Quimby, a trainer at CrossFit Sky, who introduced me to this phenomenon. At first I was hesitant. After learning about the variety of the workouts and the muscle confusion, along with the short duration of the workouts, I did not think it was for me. I was wrong.

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CrossFit not only pushes me to the limits, but the variety is also what I love most about it. Every day offers a new and different challenge that can be completed in under an hour. I never thought I would enjoy exercising this much!

I have been able to see myself progress from a modified, scaled-down regimen to a prescribed, more difficult workout. It was intimidating at first mainly because of the intensity, but I said I would give it a chance. Once I got over that initial hump, I started loving it. Now at age 45, I am in the best physical shape of my life. During a treadmill test in my last routine physical, my doctor was surprised with how steady my heart rate held as the treadmill speed increased.

I do CrossFit in Tulsa, Okla., at CrossFit Sky, and when I'm in Washington, D.C., at Primal Fitness. The instructors at both gyms, Amy Quimby and Hollace Fugate at Sky and Jesse Woody and Quint Fischer at Primal, are incredible and have been a tremendous help. Not only do I rely on the trainers for help and encouragement, but I also find support from everyone else in the classes. At both gyms, I have developed camaraderie and friendship with everyone.



*How many members of the House of Representatives can do a handstand push-up? Congressman Sullivan is proof that a busy schedule including weekly travel is no excuse for poor fitness.*

CrossFit has even become something I can share with my wife, Judy. She was hesitant at first, but after giving it a try, she developed a love for it as well. It has been a rewarding experience for us to set an example for our kids and show them that even mom and dad can make time to live a healthy lifestyle. Judy and I enjoy talking about the next workout of the day most evenings.

As my confidence continues to build, I have decided to up the ante and accept my greatest CrossFit challenge yet: I will be participating in the CrossFit South Central Sectionals in Tulsa on March 13-14. A little over a year ago, I simply did not think it was possible for someone like me to compete against the fittest athletes in our region. My decision to enter is more about challenging myself than trying to beat them. Of course, I am intimidated by my competition, but there are no losers in CrossFit—you win just by showing up and leaving it all in the gym. There is no doubt that this competition will be both physically and emotionally draining, but I hope the fact that I am able to participate will be an inspiration for others to challenge themselves to make time to exercise regularly.

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***Congressman Sullivan hopes that his participation in the South Central Sectionals will inspire other Oklahomans to improve their fitness.***

In an era when we are faced with less time for physical activity and the temptation and convenience of unhealthy food, it is important for all Americans and Oklahomans to take simple steps to live longer and better lives, especially considering the obesity epidemic facing my state of Oklahoma and our nation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2008 Oklahoma was the fifth-most obese state, with an obesity rate of 30.3 percent. By exercising regularly and maintaining healthy eating habits, individuals can feel better and reduce their risk of chronic health conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. The medical benefits, increased self-confidence and stress reduction that can come from athletic activity help contribute to a healthier, more productive workforce. In order to become a healthy America, we must continue to promote fitness and healthy living and urge children and adults to improve their diets and make time every day for exercise.

I want to thank everyone at CrossFit, CrossFit Sky and Primal Fitness for all their encouragement and assistance in helping me get into the best shape of my life at 45 years old. Never before did I think I would be able to balance such a hectic work schedule and four children with consistent exercise that I truly enjoy. Now I can do it all.



#### **About the Author**

*John Sullivan is a United States congressman representing the 1st Congressional District in Oklahoma. As part of his job, he travels to Washington, D.C., almost every week. He is married to Judy Sullivan and has four children.*