THE

CrossFitjournal

Theoretical 52-Week Programming Cycle for a Military Unit

Maj. Donald Clarkson outlines how CrossFit can create fitter soldiers in a one-year period between deployments.

By Maj. Donald Clarkson

November 2012



All images: Maj. Donald Clarkson

The concept described below is based on having 52 weeks available between a unit's redeployment and its next deployment. Cycle lengths are not set in stone and can be adjusted based on the unit's OPTEMPO and deployment timeline, or to accommodate more rest/skills weeks as required.

Copyright © 2012 CrossFit, Inc. All Rights Reserved. CrossFit is a registered trademark ® of CrossFit, Inc. Subscription info at journal.crossfit.com Feedback to feedback@crossfit.com Visit CrossFit.com

1 of 9

The typical work week is five days, but often soldiers have a federal holiday coupled with a training holiday, resulting in a four-day weekend, which results in two four-day work weeks. It is recommended that you program for a four-day week and on the weeks with five days conduct a team WOD or some type of competition on that fifth day to foster unit cohesion and espirit de corps.

The Cycle of Training

Redeploy

- Post-deployment focused training—12 weeks— The focus during this time is on gymnastics skills, technical lifts, nutrition and the identification of individual weaknesses.
- CrossFit—18 weeks—This is traditional CrossFit training supplemented with distance movements under load. Incorporate movements under load one day every other week, preferably on strength days or days with very short met-cons. Recommend alternating faster movements with only body armor for one iteration and slower movements with a ruck/ full kit for the following iteration. By the end of this period, soldiers should be moving 3-5 miles under full combat load.
- Rest week/skills week*
- CrossFit—12 weeks—This is traditional CrossFit training supplemented with distance movements under load. Incorporate movements under load every week, alternating between movements with only body armor and movements with a ruck/full kit. Once a month, soldiers would move between 5 and 8 miles under full combat load over terrain as similar to their operational environment as possible. Anything further will be counterproductive to the soldiers' recovery.
- Pre-deployment focused training—8 weeks— About 50 percent of WODs in body armor. Incorporate team WODs, and focus WODs on area of deployment.
- Rest week*

Deploy—"Ready state" programming (see explanation and template on pages 3, 5, 6, 8).

*Two weeks to play with and/or use as rest weeks.

Post-Deployment Training

The 12 weeks of post-deployment focused training center around gymnastics skills, technical lifts, nutrition and the identification of individual weaknesses. There are several factors that soldiers cannot control downrange. These include their nutrition due to chow halls/MREs, sleep, supplements and access to traditional fitness equipment. All this can limit some of the movements they can execute and their ability to WOD as consistently due to mission requirements.

This phase is a rebuilding phase that refocuses the soldier's nutrition for optimal health and performance and concentrates on aspects that are likely to have deteriorated downrange, such as Olympic lifting, strength training, longer runs and gymnastics skills that have probably been neglected due to lack of equipment such as barbells and bumpers, GHDs, rings, etc.

- Month 1 focuses on gymnastics (body-weight movements) and aerobic capacity, with one met-con WOD per week, which may or may not include weightlifting. This month is an excellent time to utilize Olympic-lifting technique drills for warm-ups in order to rebuild skills. The month begins this way because gymnastics and an aerobic base set the foundation for strength training and higher intensity met-cons. They prepare the body for higher quality work and create a buffer from injury.
- Month 2 introduces two strength days, a monostructural interval day and two met-con WODs. This month will help rebuild strength that might have deteriorated during deployment and begin pushing the neuroendocrine system with an increased number of met-cons.
- Month 3 returns to traditional CrossFit programming and prepares the soldiers for the upcoming CrossFit programming and movement under combat loads.

Again, these cycles can be adjusted as required, based on the unit's OPTEMPO.

Copyright © 2012 CrossFit, Inc. All Rights Reserved. CrossFit is a registered trademark ® of CrossFit, Inc. 2 of 9

Pre-Deployment Training

In the 8 weeks of pre-deployment focused training, about 50 percent of WODs will be done in body armor to become accustomed to dynamic activity with the additional weight and movement restrictions. Also included more often will be rope/ladder climbs, buddy carries, litter carries and sled pulling. If deploying during the summer, train outside to get used to the heat. Incorporate team WODs every 2 weeks for espirit de corps/team building, and focus WODs on the area of deployment. For example, if the area of deployment is a mountainous region of Afghanistan, incorporate more lunges in body armor or with weight held overhead to develop requisite leg strength and climbing capacity. Ruck-march over broken, uneven, hilly terrain.



The first month of post-deployment training focuses on gymnastics and aerobic capacity.

This phase is a preparation phase that focuses on the soldier's operational mission downrange, the conditions presented by the deployment environment and team building via competition. Increasing the soldier's confidence in his capability is just as important, if not more so, than increasing his physical capacity during this period.

Deployment: Ready-State Programming

Once soldiers deploy, they enter a period of maintenance executed to the best of their ability under the conditions present. During this period, they strive for a ready state that ensures they are prepared for any missions they may have to execute. This ready-state programming is a mix of met-cons, strength training and CrossFit Endurance. It utilizes a three-days-on/one-day-off, two-days-on/ one-day-off schedule, and every sixth week is a rest week/ skills week.

The schedule affords the soldier an additional rest day during a seven-day cycle when compared to the traditional three-days-on/one-day-off CrossFit cycle. This additional rest is critical to ensuring the soldier can apply the requisite intensity to all the WODs and allows for recovery and adaptation with the higher volume. It also provides some structure to the program by having the same days off each week.

It is critical that every sixth week is a rest/skills week. No strength WODs, CrossFit Endurance WODs or met-cons should be executed during this week. Instead, soldiers should focus on resting, recovering and working on weaknesses. Without this rest week, it is unlikely the soldier will be able to maintain the intensity demanded by the high workload of the ready-state programming, and likelihood of overtraining and overuse injuries increases.

The goal of this programming is twofold. The first goal is to allow the soldier to maintain a very high capacity so that the individual is well prepared for whenever he launches on an operation—regardless of the nature of the operation. The second goal is to provide enough volume that missing a day here or there due to missions produces no negative effect and the soldier still has an ample variety of stimulus. While this ready-state programming may not be able to be executed fully due to constraints of missions, equipment and location, soldiers should strive to replicate it as closely as possible.

3 of 9

Copyright © 2012 CrossFit, Inc. All Rights Reserved. CrossFit is a registered trademark ® of CrossFit, Inc.

Programming Templates

Exercises by Modality

Monostructural (M): metabolic conditioning or "cardio"	Gymnastics (G): moving your body through space	Weightlifting (W): moving your body and an external object through space
Run	Air squats	Deadlifts
Row	Pull-ups	Weighted squats
Jump rope	Push-ups	Presses
Bike	Sit-ups	Snatches
Swim	Handstand push-ups	Cleans/clean and jerks
	Dips	Thrusters
	Muscle-ups	Wall-balls
	Rope climbs	Kettlebell (KB) swings
	Back extensions	Sumo deadlift high pulls (SDHP)
	Box jumps	Tire flips
	Lunges	Buddy carries
	Burpees	Farmer carries
	Climbing walls/obstacles	Lunges with weight overhead
		Sled drags/pushes/pulls
		Sandbag carries
		Turkish get-ups
		Ruck marching



Weighted lunges build leg strength, essential if a soldier is headed to a mountainous region.

Copyright © 2012 CrossFit, Inc. All Rights Reserved. CrossFit is a registered trademark ® of CrossFit, Inc.

WODs by Modality

Strength Training (S)	CrossFit Endurance (CFE)	Met-Con WOD (CF)
Total body (T)	Interval WODs	For time
Deadlift	Tempo/stamina WODs	AMRAP
Snatch (all variants)		
Clean (all variants)		
Upper body (U)		
Press		
Push press		
Push jerk		
Bench press		
Dip (weighted)		
Pull-up (weighted)		
Lower body (L)		
Overhead squat (OHS)		
Front squat		
Back squat		

A One-Week Ready-State Programming Template

WOD Agenda	Specific workout	Specific Workout	Instructor's Remarks
Monday S (L) CF	S (L):	CF:	
Tuesday CF	CF:		
Wednesday CFE CF	CFE:	CF:	
Thursday	Rest	Rest	
Friday S (U) CF	S (U):	CF:	
Saturday CFE CF	CFE:	CF:	

WOD Agenda	Specific Workout	Specific Workout	Instructor's Remarks
Monday	S (L):	CF:	
S (L)	OHS	AMRAP in 7 min. of:	
CF	5-5-5-3-3-3	14 KB swings, 14 box jumps	
	90% of max (175 lb.)	Rest 5 minutes	
		AMRAP in 7 min. of:	
		7 ring dips, 7 burpees	
Tuesday	CF:		Shoulders-to-overheads
CF	Freddy's Revenge		means a press, push press, push jerk or split jerk. The
	5 rounds for time of:		bar can also start behind the
	5 shoulders-to-overheads (185 lb.)		neck.
	10 burpees		
Wednesday	CFE:	CF:	
CFE	Sprint chute repeats:	AMRAP in 10 min. of:	
CF	20 seconds on, 30 seconds rest x 6	Clean and jerk (155 lb.)	
Thursday	Rest	Rest	
Friday	S (U):	CF:	
S (U)	Push presses	21-15-9 reps of:	
CF	5-5-5-3-3-3	Deadlifts (275 lb.)	
	90% of max (175 lb.)	Pull-ups	
Saturday	CFE:	CF:	
CFE	Run:	AMRAP in 12 min. of:	
CF	1 mile hill climb, incline between	10 box jumps (20")	
	6-12%. First half mile run backward;	8 burpees	
	second half mile run forward.	6 front squats (135/80 lb.)	

A Two-Week Example of Downrange R	eady-State Programming: Week 1 (March 7-13)



It's recommended soldiers take advantage of equipment such as barbells and rowers whenever possible because they aren't available in many operating areas.



Training should be focused on preparing for environmental conditions such as heat and rough terrain.

7 of **9**

Copyright © 2012 CrossFit, Inc. All Rights Reserved. CrossFit is a registered trademark ® of CrossFit, Inc.

WOD Agenda	Specific Workout	Specific Workout	Instructor's Remarks
Monday	S (T):	CF: Air Force	For Air Force, each athlete must
S (T)	Cleans	For time:	do 4 burpees at the beginning
CF	90% of max	20 thrusters	of every minute before moving on to the barbell work. The
-	5-5-5-3-3-3	20 SDHP	athlete is allowed to move to
		20 push jerks	the next barbell skill once he/
		20 overhead squats	she has completed all 20 reps. If the minute clock beeps during
		20 front squats	a rep the athlete will complete
		(95/65 lb.)	the rep and then do four
			burpees.
Tuesday	CF:		
CF	10 burpees		
	5 SDHP (135/95 lb.)		
	25 double-unders		
	20 burpees		
	5 SDHP (135/95 lb.)		
	25 double-unders		
	30 burpees		
	5 SDHP (135/95 lb.)		
	25 double-unders		
	20 burpees		
	5 SDHP (135/95 lb.)		
	25 double-unders		
	10 burpees		
	5 SDHP (135/95 lb.)		
	25 double-unders		
Wednesday	CFE:	CF: Max reps of:	
CFE	500-meter row x 4 with 1 min. rest	Thrusters (4 min, 110/75 lb.)	
CF	between each row	KB swings (3 min., 1.5 pood)	
Cr		Muscle-ups (2 min.)	
		Burpees (1 min.)	
Thursday	Rest	Rest	
Friday	S (L):	CF: 2 rounds for time of:	
S (L)	Front squats	Row 500 meters	
CF	5-5-5-3-3	15 OHS (95/65 lb.)	
	90% of max	Row 500 meters	
	9070 01 max	15 toes-to-bars	
Saturday	CFE:	CF: 3 rounds for time of:	
CFE	Row 2K under 8 min.	4 handstand push-ups	
CF	Then AMRAP in 10 min. of double-unders	8 barbell ground-to-overheads (135/95 lb.)	
		12 burpees	

A Two-Week Example of Downrange Ready-State Programming: Week 2 (March 14-20)



When equipment is limited, creativity can be used to invent very effective workouts for soldiers.

About the Author

Maj. Donald Clarkson would like to thank Coach Greg Glassman, Josh Everett and Tony Budding for their mentoring and contributions toward the development of this program.

9 of 9

Copyright © 2012 CrossFit, Inc. All Rights Reserved. CrossFit is a registered trademark ® of CrossFit, Inc.