
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

I Believe in Zombies

Andréa Maria Cecil advises you prepare for the Zombie Apocalypse not just with weapons, but with fit people.

By Andréa Maria Cecil

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Forget the word “zombie.” It’s a loaded term.

Next, think “infectious disease.” Better yet: “pandemic.”

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Are zombie walks (top) and characters like *Zombie Boy* (bottom) part of an education and preparedness program?

The condition spreads rapidly, has no known cure and affects humans in such a way that they no longer behave as such. Their minds and bodies become controlled by the disease. And what diseases want most is the same as every other living thing: To survive. Thus, their primary goal is to spread.

What I'm talking about here is a pandemic—one that turns people into flesh-eating monsters.

You think I'm joking?

Take a look at our culture.

What you see nowadays are not just a few live-action role players (LARPer) in their moms' basements entertaining the idea of zombies.

What you see is the undead—or allusions to them—on TV via AMC's *The Walking Dead* (based on Robert Kirkman's comic books), zombies in popular music with so-called "Zombie Boy" appearing in Lady Gaga's *Born This Way* video, hosts of movies focusing on various forms of the Zombie Apocalypse, and, on Oct. 23, more than 10,000 people willing to test their athletic prowess against people acting as zombies during the inaugural Run for Your Lives zombie 5K in Darlington, Md.

It's no coincidence.

Someone—or something—is trying to prepare us.

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Would you really put it past the government to use media and pop culture as a way to warn the population? Think *Zombieland* was just a movie and not a cleverly disguised instruction manual? Think again, my friend.

The message is this: Be ready, assholes. Things are about to get fucked up.



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Some dead things need to be killed again ... with a chainsaw.

Trust No One

I have yet to mention the most compelling evidence, which is that America's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—the federal agency that for more than 60 years has dedicated its existence to “protecting health and promoting quality of life through the prevention and control of disease, injury, and disability”—has drafted [Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse](#).

Originally published in May, the post was written by Dr. Ali S. Khan, who leads the CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response. Before moving into his current position, Khan was deputy director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases at CDC. He is an assistant surgeon general.

Yeah, he's big time.

An excerpt from his post:

“If zombies did start roaming the streets, CDC would conduct an investigation much like any other disease outbreak. CDC would provide technical assistance to cities, states, or international partners dealing with a zombie infestation. This assistance might include consultation, lab testing and analysis, patient management and care, tracking of contacts, and infection control (including isolation and quarantine).

“It's likely that an investigation of this scenario would seek to accomplish several goals: determine the cause of the illness, the source of the infection/virus/toxin, learn how it is transmitted and how readily it is spread, how to break the cycle of transmission and thus prevent further cases, and how patients can best be treated. Not only would scientists be working to identify the cause and cure of the zombie outbreak, but CDC and other federal agencies would send medical teams and first responders to help those in affected areas (I will be volunteering the young nameless disease detectives for the field work).”

This is no joke.

Of course, the CDC's official line is the post is all part of a “fun” campaign to get people—especially children—to prepare for “real” emergencies like earthquakes, floods and hurricanes.

So it claims.

“I don't think anyone's really thinking seriously (that) the CDC is worried about the Zombie Apocalypse,” said CDC spokeswoman Maggie Silver.

Oh? Why, then, are you on the so-called “Zombie Task Force,” Maggie?

I call bullshit.

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But enough with the case building. I've proven my point beyond a reasonable doubt. Let's talk defense.

Apocalyptic Weaponry

- The Crovel, which was awarded to the first-place finisher of the Maryland zombie race, is a shovel, a crowbar, a saw, an axe, a storage device, a bottle opener and a hammer all in one. Need I say more?
- Guns. Lots of guns. And, of course, a shit ton of bullets. A pistol would be great—easy to carry. But don't dismiss rifles; long range is good, my friend. Any video game that includes zombies recommends both long-range and short-range weaponry. A sniper rifle is great on a rooftop but worthless when searching for food in a walk-in freezer. At that moment, you need a shotgun loaded with buckshot, and consider double-ought the bare minimum size. At least half of CrossFit HQ's staff can assist you with any firearms purchases.
- A machete. A strong one that can slice through rotting flesh—like the one my grandmother used to chase her first husband out of her house in Guatemala.
- Gerber Gear. The company offers apocalypse tools/ weapons worth investigation. I like the Gator Machete Pro. "If the undead come calling, let the Gator Pro answer the door." Damn straight.
- Body armor. One scratch from the undead and you're changing teams.
- Gym equipment. Undoubtedly, some of you will not heed my advice and will end up caught at the box while the undead work on outnumbering us (don't say I never gave you anything). So, your barbell can be your makeshift staff, and bumper plates can be used like Frisbees to lobotomize the enemy. Light kettlebells can be thrown or swung with skull-crushing ferocity. In each case, you must be strong enough to maneuver such items, which brings me to my final weapon: people.

(P.S. I don't recommend chainsaws. The last thing you need is something that requires a power source.)

Zombie Apocalypse Team

My Olympic-lifting coach, Mike McKenna, has taught me two valuable lessons:



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***This guy wants nothing more than to eat your brain.
Show him your machete.***

1. The fast is in your ass.
2. Make sure you have the right people on your Zombie Apocalypse Team.

His first choice: Arden Cogar Jr.

Cogar won the Stihl Timbersports Series U.S. Championship earlier this year. He can cut up massive hunks of wood in a matter of seconds.

"My father gave me my first axe when I was 3. By the age of 4, I had chopped down all the trees surrounding our home," he told the Stihl Timbersports website.

Hand-to-hand combat during the Zombie Apocalypse is inevitable. You have to be fast and you have to be strong. Choose your teammates wisely.

Some suggestions:

- Every Navy SEAL or ex-SEAL you know. Josh Bridges, Dave Castro, Andy Stumpf. They're no-brainers.
- Tony Blauer, founder of Blauer Tactical Confrontation Management Systems, would be a good choice. Time to get "outside 90" on the undead.
- John Hackleman, founder of The Pit professional mixed martial arts association and training camp in Arroyo Grande, Calif. Anyone for Fight Gone Dead?
- Deborah Corder, a former scholarship sprinter at the University of Northern Iowa. You will put her to good use, I'm sure.
- Tommy Hackenbruck. Watch him use a sledge to drive his spike in footage of the 2009 CrossFit Games. He buries the thing with about three strokes, and he'll bury a few zombies with less.
- Jason Khalipa and Rob Orlando. You'll need brute strength.

Apply To Andréa—With Shotgun

As for me, I ran the zombie 5K and stayed alive in the cute little game of "Let's pretend zombies are real and they're chasing you."

That's right: I stayed alive, bitches.

My team would look something like this:

- Chuck Liddell, former UFC light heavyweight champion. He's proven and he's got his fair share of piss and vinegar. Love that.
- Neal Maddox, who finished 32nd at this year's Games. Weren't expecting that one, were you? Here's why: When I interviewed him after the Games' muscle-up/deadlift/GHD sit-up/sprint workout, he was visibly pissed. "If it wasn't for that judge that kept making me touch that line, I would have been ahead." Everyone had to touch the line. It was one of the rules of the workout. My point: Maddox has attitude.
- Rizelyx Rivera, an Olympic hopeful who snatches 90 kg and clean and jerks 110 kg. Not only that, but she also releases a wicked, high-pitched yelp seconds before she lifts that could quite literally rupture the rotting flesh of the undead.

- Daniel Tyminski, who finished 25th in this year's Games. You might say, "Why in God's name would you pick the guy who wears pink shorts and a girl tee that says 'Prize Winning Snatch' on it?" Because obviously he's fearless.
- Anyone from CrossFit New England, one of my favorite boxes filled with fantastic coaches and athletes. Not only is CFNE known for its impressive workout times, but, as owners Ben and Heather Bergeron have said, they emphasize training the mind. That's essential in apocalyptic times.

Nonetheless, I continue to accept applications for Zombie Apocalypse Team members.

The non-fit need not apply.



Chris Miller

About the Author

*Andréa Maria Cecil, 33, is a career journalist who is managing editor of the **Central Penn Business Journal** in Harrisburg, Pa. Andréa is a native of New Orleans who lives in York County, Pa. There, she's been doing CrossFit since 2008 at CrossFit York. Additionally, she dedicates three days a week to training in Olympic weightlifting at McKenna's Gym.*