

# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

## July 2012

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## Spencer Hendel's "Freaky Coincidence"

Spencer Hendel snagged third place at the North East Regional on the final workout of the weekend. At 23, he'll make his fourth appearance at the CrossFit Games this year. Andréa Maria Cecil reports.

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By Andréa Maria Cecil

July 2012

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All images: Staff/CrossFit Journal

Spencer Hendel was entering his fourth Regional competition.

If he made the top three, it would be his fourth consecutive qualification for the CrossFit Games. Not too shabby for being 23.

But things didn't begin well.

The three-day North East Regional started with Diane, exposing one of Hendel's weaknesses: handstand push-ups.

The 6-foot-2, 210-lb. athlete struggled at the wall, finishing in 3:48 and tying for 19th place in the opening event. It was nearly 2 minutes behind David Charbonneau, who managed to stay ahead of Hendel and sit in third place throughout most of the weekend—up until the competition's final workout.

It was then that Hendel was able to edge out Charbonneau in almost-identical fashion to how he beat A.J. Moore at last year's Mid Atlantic Regional. In 2011, Hendel came from behind to secure the third spot at the Regional, so he was in familiar territory.



**Spencer Hendel competing in the 2010 CrossFit Games. He finished 17th in his second trip to the Games.**

"It seems as though I planned that out," Hendel said nearly two weeks after the Regional ended. "I guess you can just call it a freaky coincidence. Déjà vû."

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**"I was confident. I was a little worried. I needed something to happen."**

**—Spencer Hendel**

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### **"I Just Caught a Break"**

Roaring back from a poor finish in the weekend's first event, Hendel finished first in the day's second workout—a 2,000-meter row, 50 pistols and 30 225-lb. hang cleans—with a time of 12:30. It was 11 seconds faster than second-placer Daniel Tyminski and nearly 2 minutes faster than Charbonneau, who finished 10th.

Still, the performance wasn't enough to put Hendel at ease or in contention to qualify for the Games.

Although he finished Day 2's workouts in second and third place, respectively, he still hadn't cracked the top three overall.

"I was confident. I was a little worried. I needed something to happen," Hendel said.

And so it did.

Eric Magee withdrew after Day 2's second workout, and Charbonneau suffered a heat stroke after the event only to be further plagued by ripped hands from the 120 pull-ups he had just performed.

"I just caught a break there, so to speak," Hendel said. "Had either one of those athletes not broken down ... that would have been the end. I would have been buried."

So, he explained, it wasn't so much his stellar performance as it was luck.

"It was the other athletes giving me the opportunity," Hendel said.

Magee's withdrawal and Charbonneau's injured state—not to mention Hendel's known prowess in the Olympic lifts—made the men's event on Day 3 anything but boring.

Heading into the last day, Charbonneau decided that if he didn't perform well on the snatch ladder event, he would withdraw from the competition for safety reasons.

"People (were) trying to pull me out. A couple of coaches and a couple of the event coordinators were talking to me," Charbonneau said. "I had a lot of people come to support me. I didn't want to let anybody down. I was still pretty close. If I didn't give it a shot, I would have regretted it."

The 26-year-old snatched 235 lb.—a 10-lb. PR that allowed him to finish the event in sixth place and keep him at the No. 3 spot overall. Only one event remained between him and a trip to California.

Meanwhile, Hendel snatched 265 lb., a good 35 lb. lower than his PR. His goal was to complete the snatch ladder that topped out at 295 lb.

Still, he was the only man to snatch that much weight at the Regional, finishing the event in first place.

That, his father said, was the point: not to PR the snatch ladder but to win it.

"It worked out perfect," said Andy Hendel, owner of CrossFit Charlotte in North Carolina. "That's the experience of not panicking."

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**"I'm going back to the CrossFit Games. I'm extremely happy about how I did."**

**—Spencer Hendel**

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As the final workout approached, four points separated the region's top four men.

"I have a game plan for Event 6," Hendel told CrossFit Media at the Regional. "I'm going to stick to it and see what happens."



*Hendel competing in the max-snatch event at the 2009 CrossFit Games at The Ranch. He finished 12th overall as a Games rookie.*

The workout was not for the faint of heart: 3 rounds of 7 deadlifts at 345 lb. and 7 muscle-ups, followed by 3 rounds of 21 wall-ball shots and 21 toes-to-bars, then a 100-foot farmer carry with two 100-lb. dumbbells, 28 burpee box jumps, another 100-foot carry with the dumbbells and, finally, 3 muscle-ups. There was a 17-minute time cap on the workout.

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**“On game day, the kid still amazes me—that’s a good competitor.”**

**—Andy Hendel**

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Hendel didn’t finish the event first or second, but he did finish third—almost an entire 2 minutes faster than Charbonneau, whose ripped hands made it painful to carry heavy dumbbells. It was enough to get Hendel on the podium.

“Can’t be too unhappy with it,” he said in the weeks following the competition. “I’m going back to the CrossFit Games. I’m extremely happy about how I did.”

### **“A Good Competitor”**

Hendel doesn’t have a dedicated coach, per se.

But he does have something most other competitors don’t: a former Miami Dolphins linebacker as a dad.

Andy Hendel was also a special-teams-leading tackler/short-yardage specialist with the Dolphins. He knows a thing or two about training.

“Every chance I get I try to talk to him on the phone,” Spencer said.

They talk about workouts and how they went. Andy advises his son to keep his workouts as varied as possible and to run.

“Running is a weakness for him,” said Andy, who programmed his son’s workouts in the weeks leading to the Regional. “Between now and the Games, I want to make sure he gets running.”

Other than that, Andy encourages Hendel to work out with Austin Malleolo, Hendel’s fellow coach at Reebok CrossFit One at Reebok International headquarters in Canton, Mass. Malleolo works with Hendel most often.

“Austin’s more of a coach than anything because he watches me every day,” Hendel said.

Still, there are times when Andy said he wishes Hendel would mind him better.

“I’ll bite my lip so damn hard it bleeds,” Andy said. “On game day, the kid still amazes me—that’s a good competitor.”

### **“The Best of Spencer Hendel”**

Hendel’s goal for this year’s Games is simple: be better than last year.

“Every year my goal as an athlete is to make it to the Games, so to get through Regionals. Everything after that is bonus,” he said. “Obviously, I’d like to do well.”

Doing well means anything better than ninth place, which is where Hendel finished last year. To do that, he’ll keep his training regimen relatively the same and add in a few other components, he said.

“I like the way I felt during the Regional, and I think all I need to do is work on my weaknesses and continue building my upper-body strength,” said Hendel, citing handstand push-ups and pull-ups as two weaknesses.



***A stronger, faster Spencer managed to snatch 265 in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games. He finished ninth overall in his third Games.***

Typically, he works out six days a week, two to three times a day, depending on his coaching schedule. Hendel adheres to a three-days-on, one-day-off routine.

“There’s an occasional time that I’m just not feeling it, so I take a second rest day or run or a row,” he said.

With a 300-lb. snatch and a 335-lb. clean and jerk, Hendel said he’s not focused on the Olympic lifts in his training.

“I try to focus more on the met-con side of things ‘cause that’s what’s at the CrossFit Games,” he said.

Andy said his son has made more gains in the past year—since graduating from college—than ever before.

Before that, Hendel was “just kind of keeping up,” Andy said.

This year, he said, will be different.

“I think they’re going to get the best of Spencer Hendel,” Andy said.

Nonetheless, he conceded that there are many variables at the Games.

“Everything has to fall into place,” Andy said. “Going into the Games, I’m not a big believer of guessing what Dave Castro’s going to have in the workout.”

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**“Whatever anxiety he has,  
that energy is focused on the  
workout. He won’t fall apart.”**

**—Andy Hendel**

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Castro is CrossFit’s Director of Training and one of several people who collaborate to program the events at the CrossFit Games.

Aside from handstand push-ups, pull-ups and running, Hendel generally struggles with body-weight movements, Andy said.

Still, he noted Hendel’s maturity, calling him a game-day competitor.

“Whatever anxiety he has, that energy is focused on the workout. He won’t fall apart,” Andy said. “I’m very fortunate to have a son like him. It’s been a blessing, that’s for sure.”



Courtesy of Andréa Maria Cecil

#### **About the Author**

*Andréa Maria Cecil* was the North East Regional Media Director for the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games. She spent nearly 13 years as a professional journalist—most recently as managing editor of the **Central Penn Business Journal** in Harrisburg, Pa. Cecil has been a freelance writer and editor for the **CrossFit Journal** since 2010. The 34-year-old is a native of New Orleans who lives in York County, Pa. There, she’s been doing CrossFit since 2008 at **CrossFit York**, where she coaches Olympic weightlifting as a USA Weightlifting Level 1 Sports Performance Coach. Additionally, Cecil dedicates three days a week to training in the Olympic lifts herself at **McKenna’s Gym**.

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THE  
**CrossFit** *kitchen*  
K I D S

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Sweet Cheeks Headquarters

**SMOOTH SILENCE**

by Shirley Brown and Alyssa Dazet  
Sweet Cheeks Headquarters

**overview**

The average child asks (brace yourself) 500 to 600 questions every day. If your ears and brain need a break, make your inquisitive little guys one of these smoothies. Make it thick and serve it with a straw. They'll be sucking on this for at least 15 minutes, giving you a quiet, question-free heaven.

**serves 3**

**ingredients**

- 1 cup full-fat coconut milk
- 3 bananas (frozen and chopped)
- 2 tbsp. almond butter
- 2 tsp. cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/3 cup of water

**notes**

*This smoothie can be used for breakfast on the go, as a snack or for dessert!*

**directions**

1. Add everything into a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Serve immediately and enjoy!

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## Being There: The 2009 CrossFit Games at Aromas

E.M. Burton hadn't done a CrossFit workout when she went to the Games in 2009. Here's what she found when she reviewed her photos from The Ranch.

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By E.M. Burton

July 2012

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All images: E.M. Burton

While CrossFit had been on my radar for years, in July 2009 I hadn't yet done a CrossFit workout when a friend took me to the CrossFit Games at The Ranch in Aromas, Calif. I wore heels.

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*Whether it's the Home Depot Center or a dusty ranch, CrossFit is still CrossFit.*

My good friend and architecture colleague Otto Lejeune had designed the CrossFit.com main site—amazingly still in use these many years later—and he'd scribbled up a cartoon called “Pukie.” Of his first-pass site design in 2000 for clients “Greg and Lauren,” I only remember seeing images of beautiful women doing Olympic lifts, though it’s not my practice to objectify people that way. My reaction was simply, “Wow,” but that was followed quickly by, “Those people are exercise freaks.”

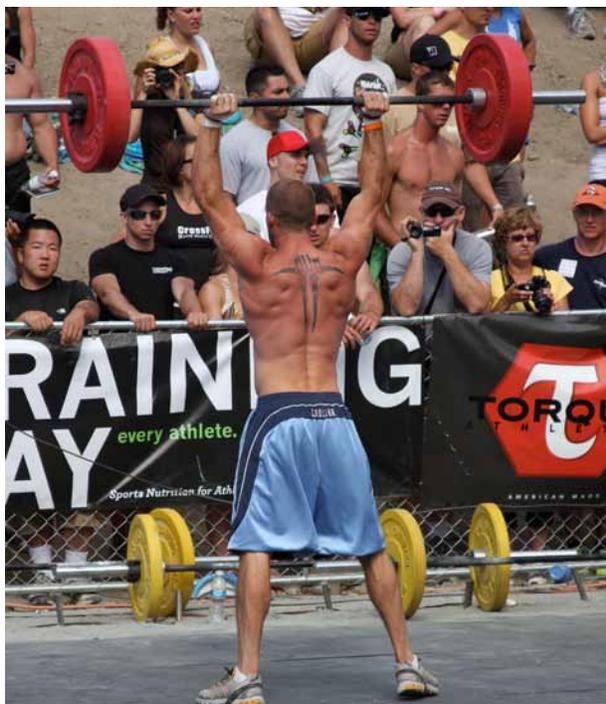
I told myself I would “never” do those workouts.

Well, you know what they say: Never say never.

As I was taking some pictures at the SoCal Regional in May, there was a lingering feeling that reminded me of my first Games and the experience I’d had there. So I took another look at some shots I’d taken during the 2009 event at The Ranch.

I was graciously allowed access to the barn, which was transformed into the “media hut” and athletes’ warm-up area. It was most likely because it was shady and they were worried about me in the 109 F heat, what with heels and all, but I was allowed to shoot freely. I knew no one. I’d only ever photographed buildings, interiors, works of art and toddlers, but I set my camera on automatic for fast-moving subjects, tried out a new zoom lens with varying degrees of success, and started to shoot.

While those in the crowd regularly checked online for scoring updates, I paid no attention to who was winning or losing. It didn’t seem to matter. It was like a handshake competition between friends, somewhat at odds with the grueling level of the events. I picked a few athletes who seemed to me to be quietly compelling, and whose warm smile and laughter in their toughest physical moments struck me as being full of grace, and I clicked away.



*Clockwise from top left: 2009 winner Mikko Salo; 2009 champ Tanya Wagner and future champs Annie Thorisdottir and Kristan Clever (from left); Chris Spealler alone on The Hill; Blair Morrison on his way to a seventh-place finish.*



***Tanya Wagner was dominant in 2009 and finished 18 points above second-place Charity Vale.***



***Familiar faces Mikko Salo (left) and Jason Khalipa (right) alongside Tommy Hackenbruck.***

Looking back at these images, I see that I was drawn to certain aspects of the experience. They make me smile now that I see all my friends and colleagues as I met them for the very first time doing what they all do so incredibly well.

- That hill! I'd seen Sevan Matossian's *Every Second Counts* on the plane on the way down, so I knew the beautiful natural backdrop. But climbing it repeatedly in 2009 must have been crippling.
- The "campground" area for those who'd driven thousands of miles in RVs to hang out all weekend had a Grateful Dead feel to it.
- The beautiful crowd! The majority were fit and healthy themselves. I doubt you will find anything similar at other sporting events.
- I noticed a lot of text-based imagery on Ts and banners—unique, I thought, in the sporting world. In CrossFit Land, your T-shirt expresses everything they need to know about you right there in that moment. The competitors' shirts were often emblazoned with the names of the people who had trained them.
- One also couldn't help notice all the hard work and serious dedication behind the scenes. The vast majority of the Games staff were hard-working volunteers who put in 12-hour days in extreme heat. The judges seemed to be working as hard as the competitors. Everyone, in every image, is so very focused.

As I was writing up this piece, I learned that the spectator tickets for the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif, have sold out. These images speak to how much things have changed in such little time.

To watch a video of assorted images from the 2009 CrossFit Games at The Ranch in Aromas, click one of the links below:

[MOV](#)   [WMV](#)



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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## Confessions of a Reformed CrossFit Hater

As a chiropractor and ultra-marathon runner, Dennis Lesniak spent many years being suspicious of CrossFit. Then he found out it really works.

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By Dennis Lesniak

July 2012

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Cristina Henkel

I started out as a CrossFit hater.

I was first exposed to CrossFit in the fall of 2006 when a few people in chiropractic school heard of it from their military buddies. Some of our friends began embracing the lifestyle, but I thought I was better than CrossFit. I was stronger, faster and fitter. CrossFit workouts were ... fill in the blank—I probably said it.

The biggest turn-off was the supposed randomness, and I was fixated on that aspect. Dips on one day, overhead pressing the next, and push-ups on Day 3—it just seemed like a way to fry my shoulders.

The years went on, and I finished school and opened my own practice. I softened my views about CrossFit a bit, and even used many CrossFit templates and rep schemes for workouts. However, I was still skeptical about the effectiveness and the abilities of the CrossFit paradigm. After all, I was a doctor and had a master's degree in nutrition, a bachelor's degree in exercise science, my Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist papers, my American College of Sports Medicine Health Fitness Specialist certification, and seven years' experience training others—and even more exercising myself. I had successfully completed multiple marathons and a 50-mile ultra-marathon.

Courtesy of Dennis Lesniak



***A doctor of chiropractic, Lesniak found himself becoming more and more attracted to CrossFit.***

A friend from chiropractic school kept telling me to look into getting a CrossFit certificate. He told us that we were basically already doing it without really knowing it. My wife and I thought about it for about two days. We decided we would take the Level 1 Trainer Course, see if we liked it and go from there.

It was our own ignorance holding us back. Chiropractors fight an uphill battle against the medical community. We often joke when people say, "I don't believe in chiropractic." We respond with, "Good. It isn't a religion. You don't need to believe in it for it to work." Interestingly enough, CrossFit is very similar.

In our chiropractic office, we offer chiropractic care, nutritional counseling and functional rehabilitation, otherwise known as "exercise." We offer a whole-body approach to health. This is exactly what CrossFit does. It is an all-inclusive approach. When you are doing it, you do not need a yoga day, an arms day or a cardio day. You are hitting everything

you need. CrossFit includes so much. It is a perfect plan to have increased general physical preparedness. In fact, it was basically all I used to train for the 2011 Spartan Death Race, and I finished 12th.

As a chiropractor, I want to improve the mobility of my patients and increase their activity level. With CrossFit, I am seeing this happen with all my patients. I can see improvements in many patients, and it literally works for everyone. We have athletes with rheumatoid arthritis, people with full knee replacements, athletes returning from ACL and medial meniscus repairs, those who are very overweight, and elite level athletes all in the same class. The universal scalability is huge, and it allows people to see what will be possible in the future. After a couple of months, people realize that when we eliminate the word "can't" and replace it with "I currently struggle with," we are dead serious. We are giving people the tools to reclaim their lives. We do not do it—we just show them the way.



Cristina Henkel

***The good doctor prescribes a set of deadlifts for himself.***

My wife was nine months pregnant when we got our Level 1 certificates at CrossFit Morristown. We had some great instructors including Pat Sherwood, Austin Malleolo, Denise Thomas and James Hobart. We were thoroughly impressed by the knowledge and cues handed down. We got home on the night of the third of July, my wife went into labor on the seventh, and our baby was born on the eighth. On the 10th, my wife wanted to know if we had heard back about becoming an affiliate. It was that quick for us, as if a switch was flipped.

We began staging our switch over to CrossFit 716. The exercise space in our office was very modest—900 square feet over a pool that had been covered with plywood and trellised. It was very challenging to do any heavy lifting, let alone any Olympic lifting. We ended up creating more than a dozen dents in the floor that needed to be repaired after a few months.

The transition to becoming an affiliate was huge. We expanded our fitness area by an additional 1,600 square feet. My wife and I are fully immersed in the CrossFit lifestyle and teach that to all our athletes. The most nerve-racking moments of our day are those seconds before the WOD starts. The sweat starts in the palms, you can feel your heartbeat race, the nervousness sets in, and you cannot wait.

We spend our days tweaking our eating trying to find the best ways to get the best fuel. We are constantly searching for better ways to teach and reach people. We are in the business of changing lives, and the only way we can change anyone's life is to lead by example. Both my wife and I are in the best shape of our lives, and we both have our sights set on the 2013 North East Regional. We want to show our athletes what is possible.

CrossFit has become our lives. It permeates everything we do, and that is evident through our families. We have many family members who work out with us on a regular basis and some who have had career shifts because of what we are doing. Every day, we are doing our best to become better in the gym, in our lives, in our chiropractic practice and in our coaching. I think that is exactly what CrossFit is: giving your best—not just once but every day and in everything.



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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## It Makes a Village

Dallin Frampton built a home in Kenya, and now CrossFit is building momentum for its humanitarian efforts in Duruma land.

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By Dallin Frampton

July 2012

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All images: Dallin Frampton

Working in Kenya for just over two years now, it has been my opportunity to see just about everything that the people of Duruma land have to offer, traditionally and culturally, down to the very smallest detail of their day-to-day lives.

This 250-square-mile area of Kenya has been home to CrossFit's aligned non-profit organization, Koins for Kenya, for about a decade. Koins' hard work is summed up quite simply: to find sustainable and realistic solutions to the problems of food scarcity, water sanitation and drought, and educational challenges. Koins has had an unbelievable impact on these people's lives through sustainable community gardens, dam projects and countless schools that now dot the landscape of Eastern Kenya.

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However, I am still amazed at a basic necessity that is overlooked by Koins for many different reasons: shelter.

Unless you've been to a country that falls under the umbrella of the Third World or developing world, it's incredibly hard to understand the Duruma people's living conditions. Working with Koins in the village of Dzivani for many months in 2010, I not only saw the humble shelters built by Kenyans but I was also able to construct one myself. With the help of a few villagers and some newly made friends, I spent my first two weeks in Africa building and mudding a hut that I would call my own for the next chapter in my life.

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### Construction in Dzivani was one of the most humbling and eye-opening experiences of my life.

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Comparing my home in Kenya and my parents' house in beautiful Salt Lake City, Utah, I can now draw the conclusion that these two environments aren't comparable at all. In fact, the two are so far away from each other on the economic scale that it's hard for words to explain the division that exists between the North American world and rural Kenya. But I'll try.

#### Building Codes?

First off, you can't build a house in the U.S. without owning the land to put it on. I know my parents went through a lengthy process of looking, negotiating and finally buying the land where they later began to build the house they still live in today.

In Duruma land, however, land is passed down through generations and bloodlines. No banks or third parties are involved, and there are no property lines to abide by, home restrictions to consider or construction applications to file in order to begin construction. As long as the whole extended family is aware of where the relative's house is going and what the plan is, there is no problem whatsoever, and the soon-to-be homeowner can begin construction immediately if desired.

In my case, the people of Dzivani were so excited that we were constructing two classrooms with them that they actually gave me the land on which to build my house, but I don't think it would have broken my bank if I had to buy it from someone. You can get an acre in this area for about \$200 US.

The next step my parents undertook in constructing their home was to get with the general contractor and map out exactly how many rooms there would be in the house, how long and wide the rooms would be, and where the bathrooms, the family room, the kitchen and other rooms would be built. They had to look at how to connect power for electricity, how to hook up with the main sewage line, and how to get water to the house in order for us to have these amenities at the flip of a switch or turn of a knob.

Building in the Duruma land area of Kenya is a little different: they shortcut past all the details North Americans have to focus on. Not only do the Kenyans not have the resources available for these comforts, but these concepts are also so foreign to them that they wouldn't know what you were doing if you tried to dig a trench all the way to their front door for a water pipe. Nor do they bother with deciding on a number of rooms, because there is usually just one room, with the parents sleeping on one side and the children on the other.



***An acre of land costs about \$200 in Duruma land, but most land is passed down through generations and bloodlines.***

And sewage management? Well, to paint the picture for you, after a couple of days wrestling with sisal-leaf ropes, a couple of mango trees for support and a load of palm leaves, I was living the dream with my very own place to answer the call of nature, a common type of arrangement for the Duruma people.

For my parents in Utah, backhoes, cement trucks and lumber shipments started making the blueprints a reality. Countless days were spent pouring the footings, hammering plywood and abiding by the construction code in order to ensure the inspector signed off on the hard work of many skilled workers. The process went on for just over a year, and the finished product was a beautiful three-floor, six-bedroom home in sleepy Holladay, just outside of Salt Lake City.

Construction in Dzivani was completely different, and living through the process was one of the most humbling and eye-opening experiences of my life.

### **This Old Hut**

First, we started off by digging 18-inch-deep holes in the ground about a foot apart from each other, which would be comparable to laying the foundation of the building. These holes went around the entire perimeter of my house, as well as inside it to separate between my bedroom, my hallway-type kitchen and my roommate's room. Digging was no easy task considering the rocky layer just below the clay-like soil, and it took us almost an entire day to finish.



*The house is framed and ready for mudding.*

From there, we used nine-foot-tall adolescent mongrove trees and tree branches found in Dzivani forest to fill the holes we had dug. After packing the trees down firmly with stones and backfilling with natural clay, it was time for the horizontal pieces to be put in place, which would really make the house look like it was coming together.

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**CrossFit has now been  
working in this area of Kenya  
for about eight months,  
and our work has impacted  
thousands of people.**

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Once again using mongrove branches, we started at the top of our columns and worked our way down, attaching horizontal branches on either side of our posts, exactly parallel with each other, using rope made of sisal leaves. The insanely strong fibrous rope was cut extremely thin and soaked in water to increase flexibility. After we slowly wrapped the rope downward and attached more and more parallel horizontal branches, the skeleton of the house was complete. We were about four days into the house at this point.

Looking back, I was really confused and anxious at how these branches and ropes were going to keep me out of the elements, but I soon figured out that these Kenyans were no dummies. The horizontal pieces we had set in place actually acted as little shelves for our next step: the mudding of the house.

As mentioned earlier, the ground in this village is made of extremely tough and durable clay. This would work perfectly for the walls of the house, so we spent the next full day gathering and digging up a mountain of dirt and prepping it for the application. We split the dirt into sections, added precisely the right amount of water, kneaded it into what looked like loaves of bread, set them in place in between the horizontal sections, and filled in the gaps by throwing mud balls at the holes we could see. With the help of about eight other guys, we knocked this out in about two full days, and I was covered from head to toe in mud that I don't think came out of my hair for at least a week.



***Constructing a watertight roof entirely from materials growing nearby.***

The final stage was the roofing. This was by far the most important and tedious part because we had to ensure the place would be watertight in the approaching rainy season. Using large mango-tree branches, we made a criss-cross-type arrangement on top of the whole skeleton, which acted as the beginning of the ceiling. Once these branches were tied down securely, we used sisal wood and more mongrove branches to build a very simple variation of a vaulted roof, once again tying it all together with fibrous rope made from sisal leaf.

I had no idea what I was doing, and it was amazing to watch the Kenyans build an amazing-looking roof out of the simplest materials in their environment. As we were completing the skeleton of the roof, there was another guy who was working on the "shingles" we would use for it. Using nothing more than an 18-inch stick of wood and palm leaves, he individually wrapped each leaf around the stick, pulled it down tight and tied it off close to the base, making what looked like a giant comb. We needed about 500 of these, so while those were being finished up, my roommate and I, Malau, mudded in our doorframe and door, moved all our gear in, and got settled in our newly built but roofless house.

At this point there was really nothing more for me to do because the roofing was left to the experts, and they spent a day or two securing all the palm-leaf arrangements in perfect alignment. Finally, the house was complete.

### **Building a Community**

After literally building my own shelter, I can honestly say that I hold a respect for these people challenged by none. They use the simplest materials to build amazing houses out of sticks and mud. I don't think I have ever slept as well as I did in my hammock under the roof of a true Duruma house after those long days of working on it.

CrossFit has now been working in this area of Kenya for about nine months, and although our impact is in a relatively small village, our work has impacted thousands of people. By building a four-room school building, a 35,000-liter water cistern and 60 desks in the village of Dzendereni, we have seen incredible improvement not only in the classroom but also in the faces of the villagers. They have seen what CrossFit is capable of doing, and the hope that radiates from their eyes is contagious.

CrossFit is going to bring as many affiliates as possible on board to help create sustainable and realistic solutions for education, water and food for these villagers in Kenya, and no affiliate should underestimate the immense difference they can make in this part of the world and the incredible impact they will have on the lives of the Duruma people.

Coach Greg Glassman is bringing Kenyan CrossFit employee Anthony Yama to the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games to speak to the community about CrossFit's work in East Africa. He'll be at the Games all day every day to explain what CrossFit's assistance has meant to Dzendereni and how affiliates can get behind the projects in Kenya.

If you're interested in supporting CrossFit's efforts and helping change lives in Africa, look for me and Anthony at the Games or email me at [Dallin@CrossFit.com](mailto:Dallin@CrossFit.com).



*Putting the finishing touches on Frampton's new home.*



### About the Author

*Dallin Frampton is a 21-year-old Salt Lake City resident who is always thirsting for adventure. He's an avid skier, marathoner, triathlete, surfer, rock climber and mountain biker who now works for CrossFit as the project manager for the humanitarian effort that has just begun in Kenya. He holds Level 1 and CrossFit Endurance certificates and coaches at CrossFit South Valley. When he's not training, he's the lead singer and guitarist in his band The Down Harmonies.*

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## The Discount CrossFit?

Emily Beers examines how wildly popular websites like Groupon and Living Social can be used to the advantage—and disadvantage—of CrossFit affiliates.

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By Emily Beers

July 2012

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All images: Kim Bellavance Photographie

Websites like Groupon and Living Social, which sell coupons for anything from exotic vacations to painting lessons to spa packages, have exploded in the last couple of years.

It seems like a brilliant idea: the buyer saves money, the seller generates awareness and sells a product, and the website hosting the coupon profits from each sale.

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1 of 7

Kim Bellavance owns Kim Bellavance Photographe. Last year, she hosted a Groupon event in Vancouver that generated so much business she could barely keep up with demand. Her Groupon coupon offered a one-hour photo session, as well as five retouched images on a CD and one 8-by-10 enlargement. This Groupon cost the buyer just \$30, one-fifth of the price Bellavance normally charges for a one-hour photo session.

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**“More than that, it brought people to my website. Some of these people hired me and didn’t even buy the Groupon.”**

**—Kim Bellavance**

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The reason Bellavance was able to profit from her Groupon offer was because many of her buyers purchased more than the five pictures included in the package, and they paid full price for these additional shots.

Groupon also brought Bellavance countless referrals, four of which translated into wedding contracts.

“And more than that, it brought people to my website,” Bellavance said. “Some of these people hired me and didn’t even buy the Groupon.”

Perhaps driven by success stories like this, many CrossFit affiliates across North America have eagerly joined this online coupon frenzy, ultimately offering personal training or on-ramp introductory sessions for a fraction of their normal cost.

From Vancouver and Las Vegas to Atlanta and Milwaukee, a dialogue has been forming throughout the CrossFit community about whether Groupon offers are a good idea for the business of CrossFit. In fact, a better way to describe this dialogue might be to call it a lively and polarized debate.

### **“We’re Not the Discount CrossFit” in Vancouver**

Last year, a CrossFit box near my affiliate in Vancouver put out a Groupon coupon offering 10 introductory personal training sessions for CA\$20.

Once it was released, a flurry of confused Grouponites flocked to my affiliate, CrossFit Vancouver, to inquire about whether we would honor the deal the other affiliate was advertising.

At first, I was polite.

“Sorry, all CrossFit affiliates are owned separately and we all do our own thing. I’m afraid that Groupon is not for this location,” I told the hopeful Groupon purchaser.

But that wasn’t the end of it. During the next couple of months, our e-mail inbox at CrossFit Vancouver became flooded with inquires about the Groupon deal.

Every time I read another e-mail, I grew increasingly more impatient. Eventually my internal ramblings were, “Really, you cheap motherfucker? You think I want to work for \$2 an hour?”

Needless to say, I was insulted, offended even.

So pretty soon, my colleagues and I started to be less politically correct in our responses. Our stock email reply eventually turned into, “Sorry, brother, we’re not the discount CrossFit.”



***Many new CrossFit affiliates use discount sites like Living Social to boost their membership and make a quick profit off of unclaimed coupons.***

### Hopeful in Englewood, Colo.

Matt Hathcock, owner of CrossFit Unbroken in Englewood, Colo., is hoping his advertisement will help him push past a current plateau in membership.

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**“Sorry, brother, we’re not the discount CrossFit.”**

**—CrossFit Vancouver’s response to “Grouponites”**

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“We recently put a coupon out on Living Social, but we’re still waiting for our advertisement to get posted,” Hathcock said. “We’re at 125 members right now, and we’re hoping it will get us closer to 200.”

Hathcock, who placed fourth at this year’s South West Regional, is also skeptical about whether the Living Social coupon is going to help business.

What his deal offers is a one-month introductory course for \$50. The usual monthly rate at CrossFit Unbroken is \$200.

The whole coupon idea goes a bit against what he believes in, Hathcock admitted.

“When I first opened up, I started cutting people deals left and right, especially to people who couldn’t afford it,” he said. “But now that we’re established, our pricing structure is more strict.”

Still, Hathcock said he figured it was worth a try. He had heard of affiliates selling a ton of coupons that never got redeemed. Ultimately this allowed them to avoid working for \$2 an hour and even make a profit on Groupon.

“That would be a good-case scenario, actually,” Hathcock said. “But the ultimate goal is still that it will help us get closer to 200 members.”

### Moderate Success in Las Vegas

Joe Marsh, owner of CrossFit Las Vegas, is one man who has had some online coupon success.

He advertised a deal on Living Social that offered his introductory program for \$50—one-fifth of the regular price of \$250.

Marsh sold 172 Living Social certificates. Half the purchases were redeemed, allowing him to profit. That was more than a year ago. Today, about 50 percent of those who came in through Living Social are still training with Marsh.

If nothing else, it gets people through the doors, Marsh explained.

“It’s a good idea for struggling gyms or those in the startup phase,” he said. “They might also be useful in pushing past a plateau in enrollment.”

### Best-Case Scenario in Langley, B.C.

Robert Perovich and Nate Beveridge opened a 7,000-square-foot training facility in the fall of 2011 in Langley.

The problem was they had a gorgeous, brand-new, world-class facility but just a handful of members to make use of the space. So they advertised a Groupon coupon that offered one month of introductory sessions for a little less than \$40.

“We started a business and thought it would be the best way to get people in the door,” Perovich said. “We knew once we got them in the door, they’d be hooked.”

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**“It’s a good idea for struggling gyms or those in the startup phase. They might also be useful in pushing past a plateau in enrollment.”**

**—Joe Marsh**

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What happened next was better than they expected.

“The Groupon brought in more than 70 people,” Perovich said.

Although their Groupon offer initiated an influx of potential CrossFitters, one of the criticisms of highly subsidized CrossFit training is that it attracts the wrong kind of people. This was not the case in Langley.

“Most of the people who came in through Groupon last fall are still here,” Perovich said.

Today, Hybrid Athletics has been up and running for just eight months and it has more than 100 members already. Perovich estimated that half these members came in through Groupon.

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**“Anyone with a sense of fairness will see the value in CrossFit training and realize you don’t get valuable stuff for free.”**

**—Julie Collens**

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Perovich, who will be competing with Beveridge at the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games as part of the Hybrid Athletics team, recognized that Groupon offers can be a nightmare. However, for his business—a new affiliate looking to generate awareness and get bodies through the door—it was a great business move.

“Groupons can be good if they’re structured properly. At first, everyone who came in through Groupon said they had no intention of sticking around after the first month. But now they’re all hooked and are paying the full price,” he said. “If you have the right coaches, it can work well.”

### **Never Again in Milwaukee**

Julie Collens is co-owner of Brew City CrossFit, which opened its doors in May 2011.

Her business partners thought that putting a coupon in Living Social would be a great way to generate awareness and attract potential members to their Milwaukee affiliate.

Collens, who also works as a financial analyst, said she wasn’t so sure.

“In the end, it was a big mistake,” she said.

Collens said she is fundamentally opposed to the idea of giving valuable things away for next to nothing.

“Anyone with a sense of fairness will see the value in CrossFit training and realize you don’t get valuable stuff for free,” she said. “I’ll never do the Groupon or Living Social thing again. It attracted the wrong kind of people.”

In Collens’ mind, the offers attract those who don’t want to push themselves and, instead, just want to see what CrossFit is all about. On the other hand, those who pay full price are usually into it right away, she said.

“When stuff is free or cheap, people treat it that way,” Collens said. “And it looks terrible in front of people who are there training and paying full price. It takes away from everyone’s experience.”

### **Not the Right Choice in Atlanta**

Dan MacDougald, a former defense lawyer and owner of CrossFit Atlanta, insists that when it comes to service industries like CrossFit, massive deals and giveaways aren’t good for anyone.

“The people who buy these coupons are choosing a gym strictly based on price. That is not what we’re selling. In fact, on our website we tell people that if you’re shopping based on price, read no further. Let the Globo Gyms have those knuckleheads,” he said with a laugh. “It makes no sense to think you can convert more than a small percentage of such people to the monthly rates we charge.”



***Good coaches are a valuable commodity, and many affiliates question the wisdom in devaluing their training services.***



*Before you post a deal on Groupon or Living Social, be sure you have the infrastructure to handle the new customers so your existing members won't be negatively affected.*

Worse yet, MacDougald insisted, you waste time on people who have no intention on sticking around once they have to pay full price.

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**“At the end of the coupon, the vast majority will just buy another coupon for some other low-priced gym.”**

**—Dan MacDougald**

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“At the end of the coupon, the vast majority will just buy another coupon for some other low-priced gym,” he said. “I call them ‘Grouponites.’”

The other concerns for MacDougald are the logistical coaching problems that might arise at the box.

“The coupon will bring a flood of new people into the gym. They all need to be brought up to speed on correct movement technique, so staffing and administration of the Grouponites will present a host of problems,” he said. “You and your staff will be hard-pressed to deal with them and, more importantly, you will be hard-pressed to give the non-coupon newbies the attention they deserve.”

But the biggest issue for MacDougald is that he said Groupon and Living Social offers go against what CrossFit was meant to be.

"Affiliates who resort to these kinds of gimmicks instead of focusing on excellence in coaching will inevitably churn out a lot of folks whose experience will give CrossFit a bad name," he said. "Coach (Greg) Glassman has repeatedly said that if your focus is on the pursuit of money, you will have neither money nor happiness. But, if you pursue excellence, you will have both."

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**"Let me guess? You got  
\$2-an-hour service,  
didn't you?"**

**—Emily Beers**

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### **A Grouponite Speaks Out in Vancouver**

A couple of months after the Groupon offer was released to the masses by an affiliate nearby to my own, a young guy wandered into my box.

"So I've done a bit of CrossFit already, but I wanted to come check you guys out because I was kind of rubbed the wrong way at the gym I went to," he said.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Well, I did this Groupon thing ...," he said.

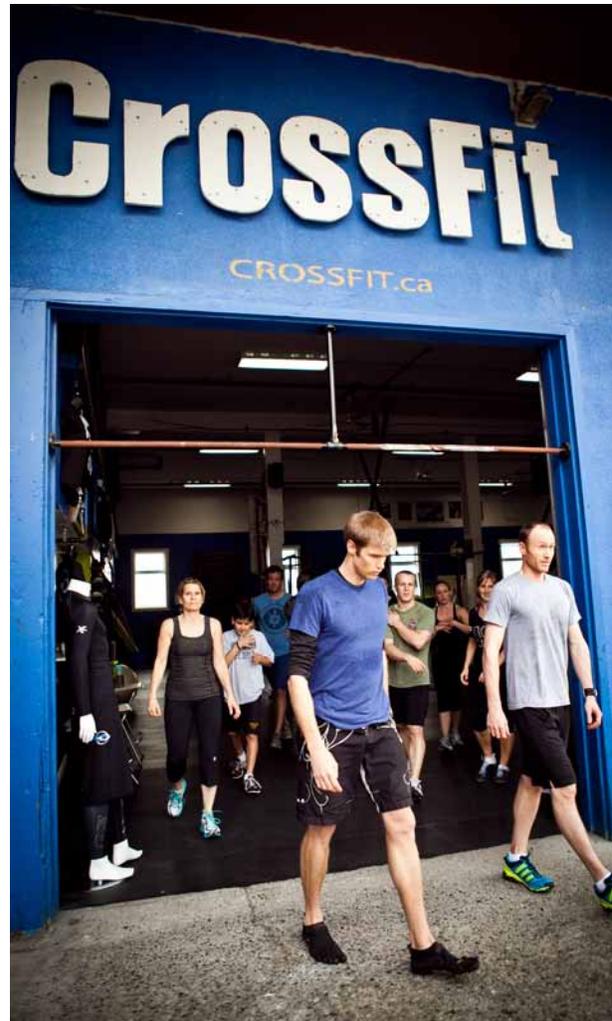
I smiled and facetiously thought, "Tell me more."

"Well, you were probably paying \$2 an hour to be there, right?" I asked. "Let me guess? You got \$2-an-hour service, didn't you?"

He laughed.

"Pretty much," he said.

That was eight months ago. Today, this defector from the discount CrossFit is one of my most devoted, loyal clients. He says that when it comes to Groupon purchasers, he is an anomaly.



### ***Can a deal-hunting Grouponite turn into a devoted CrossFit athlete?***

"Everyone else who bought the Groupon was a dabbler. They didn't really want to CrossFit. Their intention was to try CrossFit for a month and then do yoga or rock climbing or spinning the next," he said. "Most people who buy Groupons are just looking for the next Groupon, the next flavor of the month."



***Debating the pros and cons of discount training.***

In my client's mind, it was this general lack of both financial and emotional commitment among the Grouponites that led to a lack of care from the coaches at the discount CrossFit.

"At first, they told us we would be able to do unlimited classes, but when we got there, they changed their minds," he said. "And then a couple times, I showed up for a class and the coach didn't even come out. He kept sitting there in the office and never came out to coach the class."

One time, someone even tried to sell my client a year membership as he was working out.

"Mid-workout," he said with a laugh. "It felt very desperate, and I remember thinking, 'This doesn't feel right. This isn't the CrossFit I've seen on YouTube.'"

So after my client's almost-free month was up, he walked away from the discount CrossFit, did some research and found himself at my box, willingly paying CA\$75 an hour for personal training sessions to teach him CrossFit movements. Once he was technically sound, we graduated him to classes, where he continues to pay \$200 dollars a month for unlimited classes.

He said: "I guess you get what you pay for."

*Have you had a good or bad experience with coupons? Would you recommend them or advise against them? Post your responses to the comments section.*



### **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 in the 2012 Canada West Regional.*

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL KIDS

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## Cops and Robbers

Sean McCue introduces a simple game of sprinting that requires no equipment at all.

By Sean McCue

July 2012

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### Notes

Any exercise can be substituted for burpees, and the run distance and the partner-start delay can easily be manipulated for different ages and skill levels. The number of sprints will also depend on the age and ability of the class and the distance of the run.

Changing the starting position for the cops can add variety too. Start them at the same time but a couple of meters behind the robbers, have them spring up from the bottom of the push-up position, or even have them facing the opposite way so they have to turn around and pursue the robbers.

For younger kids (and perhaps even older kids), create a back story for the game, something like, "You have stumbled upon a jewel heist ..."

My high-school students did 50-meter sprints with a half-second interval between partner starts. Eight attempts (four for each person) were plenty for each pair. Even the students who don't like P.E. had a good time and a good workout.

This game works well to make sure the kids go all out every time and still have lots of fun because no robber wants to get caught and every cop wants to catch his or her prey.



### Set-Up and Equipment

All you need for this game is a place to run and cones, pylons, or lines on a field to indicate start and end points for the run.

### Rules of Play

In the sprints, one partner (the cop) chases the other (the robber).

Pair up the athletes according to their abilities. If the lead runner, the robber, crosses the finish line without being caught by the cop, the cop does 5 burpees to "get fitter" to catch the robber next time. If the cop catches the robber, then the robber does 10 burpees as penance for his or her "crime."

# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

## **SEX ON THE BRAIN AT THE BOX**

SEX WRITER ANKA RADAKOVICH BECOMES A CROSSFITTER  
BUT JUST CAN'T QUIT HER DAY JOB.



All illustrations: Howell Golson

AS A JOURNALIST WHO WRITES ABOUT SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS FOR A LIVING, I THINK ABOUT SEX LIKE MEN DO: FREQUENTLY.

WHEN I WALK INTO A CROSSFIT BOX, MY ONGOING "SEXUAL RESEARCH" CONTINUES. FROM HAVING RANDOM SEXUAL THOUGHTS TO OBSERVING THE MATING HABITS OF MY FELLOW CROSSFITTERS, I'VE LEARNED THROUGH THE YEARS THAT THE MORE I THINK AND TALK ABOUT SEX, THE BETTER IT CAN BE—EVEN IF I'M HAVING IT WITH MYSELF.

## **A HARD WORKOUT**

Sometimes when I work out, I notice things and wonder if anyone else does.

One day at The Black Box in New York City, where there are usually 10 men in each class to each woman, we were about to begin handstand push-ups when the only other girl in the class got into position and her workout pants fell down. There, in all its glory was her shaved and pierced “lady business”—in full view for the 10 male members to “accidentally” stare at. Meanwhile, the coach kept demonstrating the movement, oblivious to the pants blooper, but the CrossFit members apparently couldn’t forget about it.

After the workout was over a few minutes later and we were lying on our backs for a stretch, I noticed a strange thing, or shall I say “things”: members. And not just gym members. I couldn’t help but notice that at least half the guys had pitched tents in their workout pants. A circle of boners at full mast. There were so many erected tents, I thought for a minute I had walked into a campground on Memorial Day Weekend. Or bat day at Yankee Stadium.

I also notice that, as in sex itself, women are tense right before a workout, but after they have broken a sweat and the workout is over, they relax and get real chatty. Put a bunch of girls together and invariably the conversation turns to men.

Recently at CrossFit Hollywood in California, where there are more females for me to talk to about sex, the conversation somehow shifted to orgasms—how the female members have



them (less than half said they had them from intercourse alone), how often they have them (not as often as the men they are with), and how they wished their men would have them after instead of before them. It seems while women are trying to have orgasms, men are trying not to.

“I really wished my boyfriend would slow down,” confessed one of the girls, “I wish guys would lick or rub it for as many rounds as possible rather than for time.”

This is when I offered my odd expertise and suggested my favorite “sexercise” for both men and women: Kegels. The Kegel exercises target the pelvic-floor muscles, especially the pubococcygeus or “P.C.” muscle, which goes from the pelvic bone to the tailbone (coccyx). When fully developed in men, the P.C. keeps the boner longer—and stronger—and gives the man more control over when he ejaculates. And best of all for both men and women, orgasms will become more intense.

It's a simple exercise; just squeeze the muscles that control the flow of urine and count slowly up to 10, building up to 2 minutes a day. For women, besides the longer and deeper orgasms, Kegels have the added CrossFit benefit of keeping us from peeing ourselves when we jump rope or do tuck jumps. Try them after every WOD for a month and see what happens.

Last year as a sexperiment, I did Kegels for an entire year, every day, no matter what else I was doing. Ten sets of 10. Every day. The best thing about Kegel exercises is that you can do them anywhere: standing in line at the bank, watching douchebag dating contestants on *Millionaire Matchmaker*, or waiting for the jerk in front of you to stop texting while driving.

It took a few months, but by about the end of the fourth month, I noticed a marked difference in the quality of my orgasms. They were suddenly deeper, longer and more intense. It was crazy. I also noticed that I felt a lot tighter during sex. By the time another six



months went by, I was so tight down there I could open a beer bottle without an opener and remove the lug nuts from the wheels of my car.

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**KEGELS HAVE THE ADDED  
CROSSFIT BENEFIT OF KEEPING  
US FROM PEEING OURSELVES  
WHEN WE JUMP ROPE.**

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And there is one unexpected benefit of doing Kegels for men. For some guys, squeezing the P.C. muscles can raise the testicles (the "boys") up and down. It's always good to have an extra bedroom skill or stupid human trick to amuse the person you are having sex with.

**AURAL SEX**

One thing I enjoy now is giggling with other women over how loud the noises are when guys are lifting really heavy weights. Sometimes the groaning and moaning seem like the same sounds people make when they are majorly boning. One day, a couple of CrossFit guys were grunting and moaning so loud that when I closed my eyes and just listened, it sounded like the soundtrack to a hardcore porno movie. So hot.

"You know what's weird?" I said to a woman I have befriended at CrossFit Hollywood. "Guys are so loud when they come here to work out at the gym, but they rarely make noise in bed. And I wish they would."

"Yeah, It's super hot when a guy makes noises because it helps communicate whether he is enjoying himself or not," she said. "I've been with guys who are so quiet and silent that I'm not really sure if they like what I'm doing down there."

"Loud moaning is primal, passionate and exciting," I told her. "I love that 'Mmm-yumm' sound that someone makes when they just put something in their mouth for the first time and it tastes super delicious."

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**IN THE END, WE CONCLUDED  
THAT MOANING, GROANING AND  
GRUNTING ARE TURN-ONS.**

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"I like the audio dimension that deep moaning adds to my animal, sexual pleasure," she joked.

"I like grunting," she added.

In the end, we concluded that moaning, groaning and grunting are turn-ons but clucking and quacking are turn-offs.

**BEFOREPLAY**

My sex thought at another WOD occurred in the beginning of the class while the coach was explaining the day's movements and their form. It was then I realized that sometimes before sex even happens I want to discuss the movements and their form before we do them. More communication before sex would be good as opposed to less.

It could be a little like the movement standards that are announced before all CrossFit competition workouts. Yes, your hips must reach full extension on each and every thruster.

As a magazine columnist who has researched practically every strange sexual subculture known to man—I have gone to an orgy, an S&M dungeon, a swingers/wife-swapping

party, a nudist colony, a live sex show, a "furry fetish party," and an extremely kinky porn shoot, among other things—the one thing I have learned about people who are into extreme sexual practices is that everything they are doing is negotiated beforehand. In other words, if someone is going to tie you up to a steel beam, blindfold you and then spank you, at least you know what's coming.

A friend of mine, Dr. Ava Cadell, a sex therapist in Los Angeles, uses specific exercises in her counseling sessions for couples who have difficulty communicating what they want during sex. She says that sometimes couples shut down when they aren't getting what they want from each other sexually or are mad at each other for something else.

To open up the conversation and keep each from "judging" the other's sexual desires, she takes the pressure off the situation by having them play a "show-and-tell touch game." This involves taking the other person's hand and moving to the place or places where you want to be touched—in particular, places where you really want to be touched more but feel the other person doesn't visit enough. Those include areas such as the "tain't" (the area between "Scrotumtown" and "Buttville").

This exercise works because everyone gets something he or she felt deprived of but was too embarrassed to ask for. Whatever part you want touched will not be judged; it will be touched. Some women like their breasts touched more and feel that guys bypass them because they can't wait to "go in." So from now on, I'm going to go with something like this: "That feels so good. If you could just rub my funbags like that for two minutes longer I would have an orgasm in two seconds."

### **CONSTANTLY VARIED MOVEMENT**

One of the things I like the best about CrossFit is the constant variety, and if we all brought this aspect into the bedroom, we would all have more exciting sex lives. I don't mean trying to bang as many people as humanly possible, but just keeping it varied and playful.

I had a boyfriend once, an engineer/scientist who was smart and athletic, but when it came to sex he did the ol' in and out like an absolute robot. He did it the exact same way every time—from the amount and time of the "finger warm-up" to the "mouth pull-ups" to the sticking-it-in part. People ask me why I'm single, but how do I explain this to them?

In order to avoid the dreaded repetition, I've tried adding a little variety to my sex life lately by:

- Doing it on furniture (I have a cute new chair I have renamed the "Do-Me Chair").
- Trying it in a new place (I did it in the front seat of someone else's car parked in their driveway, which made it more exciting, although my head keep banging against the dashboard).
- Watching porn parodies instead of blockbuster movies on a Saturday night date (my favorite being *This Ain't Star Trek*, in which Capt. Kirk yells to Lt. Uhura, "Keep going or we're all going to die! Harder!" as he pushes her head down on the Captain's log).

Like the wall-balls, the big ol' giant tires and the other equipment at a CrossFit gym, mixing up the sex toys makes it more fun in bed. Something very fun to do on a Saturday night is to go sex-toy shopping on a date, which is particularly revealing because you get to ask the person you are about to have sex with what he or she wants to try next.

At a recent date at Babeland, a nice sex-toy store in New York City run by women, we found out that sex-toy sales rose more this past year than in the last 10 years, which tells you what everybody's new "hobby" is. The new sex toys for women are so well designed that one of them even remembers your favorite strokes in case you were too drunk to remember them. Another one hits all the sweet spots in case you can't get to them all.

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**IF WE ALL BROUGHT CONSTANT VARIETY INTO THE BEDROOM, WE WOULD ALL HAVE MORE EXCITING SEX LIVES.**

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"These elaborate vibrators look so efficient that I think I'm jealous of the one called 'The Champ,'" my date said.



But the biggest trend this year is “male vibrators.” These were invented because men love to play with their penises—a fact that doesn’t need proving by me or scientific research. One of them, the Tenga Flip, is so high tech that it looks like a mini orgasmatron. It has several gizmos inside that function like a carwash on your man muffler—good when you want to do a “workout” on your own.

After we visited the sex-toy store, we realized employees should tell people that when they first introduce sex toys into their repertoire, they should scale it at first rather than go nuts with the weirdest ones that would scare anyone off. It’s like starting with pull-ups before moving to butterfly pull-ups.

We decided to hold off on the scary “arm and hand,” designed for those hard-to-reach places, or the “fist” that looked like it might dislodge someone’s rectum.



We ended up buying The Accomodator, a rubber strap-on dildo the man wears on his chin to “assist oral pleasure.” The idea of this thing is for the guy to work on the girl while the dildo does most of the work.

Theoretically, this should almost guarantee that an orgasm will happen. Nice idea in theory, but when my “sex-toy tester” attempted to use it, neither of us could stop laughing long enough to continue.

At one point I even called him “Dildo Face.”

But in the end, I’ve learned that constantly varied functional movement performed at high intensity takes it to the next level and makes it all much more fun—in both the box and the bedroom.



### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Anka Radakovich is a journalist, author, screenwriter and CrossFitter. She wrote a popular sex column for *Details Magazine* for nine years and now writes a column for *British GQ*. She has written for *Maxim*, *Playboy*, *Men’s Journal*, *FHM*, *Complex*, *Arena*, *Razor*, *Penthouse*, and *Men’s Health*. Fun fact: she was a *Jeopardy* question under the category “Men’s Mags.” She has also written for *Marie Claire*, *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *Seventeen* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. She has made nine appearances on *Conan* and will make her 10th when her third book, *The Wild Girl’s Club, Part 2*, is published in September 2012. Follow her at [twitter.com/ankarad](http://twitter.com/ankarad).

# THE CrossFit *kitchen* K I D S

Sweet Cheeks Headquarters



## SWEET POTATO VOLCANOES

by Shirley Brown and Alyssa Dazet  
Sweet Cheeks Headquarters

### overview

Healthy food is always more fun when it looks like something kids can identify with. These sweet potato volcanoes are fun to build, bake and watch grow. Plus, they taste good, too! This explosive mountain is packed full of carbohydrates and protein, making it great for breakfast or as a post-workout snack.

**serves 3-4 people**

### ingredients

- 2 medium-sized sweet potatoes
- 2 eggs
- ½ onion (sliced)
- 1 tbsp. butter
- ½ tsp. cinnamon

### notes

*Onions can be subbed out for roasted red peppers, sun-dried tomatoes or another topping of your choice.*

### directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Slice the onion and cook in olive oil on low heat until brown and tender (approximately 30 minutes or until onions are caramelized).
3. While the onions are cooking, slice the sweet potatoes into pieces about 2 inches wide. Microwave the sweet potatoes until they are tender enough that you can scoop out the insides (approximately 2 minutes).

4. Remove the potatoes from the microwave and cool. Once they cool, use a melon baller or a small spoon to hollow out each potato piece, using the larger end as the base. You want to leave some potato (approximately ¼ inch thick) for the base and around the edges. Save the potato insides and put them in a separate bowl.
5. Beat the eggs in a clean bowl.
6. Line a cookie sheet with tin foil and place the potatoes with the volcano side up. Fill them with the egg mixture and add a small amount of the chopped onions into each volcano.
7. Bake for 12 to 16 minutes, until the egg is solid.
8. Mash the sweet potato insides with butter and cinnamon and put a dollop on each of the volcanoes. Put them back in the oven for 2 to 3 minutes or until the top is crisp.
9. Serve for breakfast or as an easy handheld snack.



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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## All for One

Tevita Ngalu's incredible effort sends a CrossFit affiliate owner to the Olympic Games in weightlifting. Emily Beers reports.

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By Emily Beers

July 2012

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All images: Courtesy of Richie Patterson

The Scene: The 2012 Oceania Olympic Weightlifting Championships in Apia, Samoa.

One more clean and jerk and New Zealand native Richie Patterson will qualify to the 2012 Olympic Games.

The 29-year-old Patterson feels powerless. The truth is, he is powerless. In fact, Patterson is sitting in the stands with his girlfriend watching the competition. His fate is in someone else's hands.

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That someone is Tevita Ngalu, Patterson's teammate, who severely tore his quadriceps muscle five days prior. The 39-year-old Ngalu steps up to the platform with an unmistakable limp.

Considering the severity of the injury, Patterson can't believe Ngalu is going attempt the lift in the first place.

*This is horrible to watch*, thinks Patterson, who can see the pain on his teammate's face.

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**“My hopes of going to London are over.”**

**—Richie Patterson**

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Ngalu sets up for his first attempt and successfully cleans 157 kilograms (345 lb.), letting out a shriek of sheer pain as he stands up with the bar. He takes a couple of breaths and goes for the jerk. He misses.

*It's over ... There's no way he's going to try again. There's no way he can. The sheer pain you can see on his face*, Patterson thinks.

Patterson is ready to accept his own fate.

*My hopes of going to London are over*, he thinks.

Generally, Olympic weightlifting is thought of as an individual sport. And normally this is the case.

However, when it comes to Olympic qualification, if a country doesn't qualify any athletes via the World Championships, it gets a second chance through the continental qualification system.

This meant that in order for New Zealand to send its top male lifter—Patterson—to the London Olympic Games this summer, New Zealand needed a strong showing at the Oceania Championships that were held at the beginning of June. More specifically, the country had to place in the top five, which meant that all six of the men on the team had to have strong performances to earn enough points to send Patterson to his second Olympic Games.

So the bottom line was New Zealand—and Patterson—absolutely needed Ngalu's 157-kilogram clean and jerk or it was game over.

### The Connection

Patterson first met Ngalu 11 years ago, one year after Ngalu competed at the Sydney Olympic Games for Tonga, his birth country. Patterson was just getting into the sport at the time. The two met in the gym during a training session. It was Patterson's birthday.

“I was training with Tevita for the first time, and I remember saying, ‘This is sure a boring way to spend your 20th birthday,’” remembered Patterson.

“He looked at me and said, ‘Same. It's my birthday, too,’” Patterson recalled.

The two lifters, who are born exactly 10 years apart, laughed at the coincidence, and there began an 11-year training partnership.

Even on that first day, Patterson was impressed with Ngalu's attitude.

“He always just went about his training. Never any flashy business, and no arrogance. He just enjoyed weightlifting,” he said.

Patterson has learned a lot from the more experienced Ngalu over the years.



**Richie Patterson has been one of New Zealand's best lifters for years and hoped to qualify for his second Olympic Games.**

"When you're young, you're bright-eyed and bushy tailed. And he was super calm. Training around Tevita and the other Olympians in the gym made me learn how to train and approach weightlifting," Patterson said.

### Enter CrossFit

When you're a CrossFitter, if you manage to lay hands on someone who knows something about Olympic weightlifting, you grab onto him or her and you don't let go.

That's exactly how Patterson got roped into CrossFit.

"CrossFitters kept approaching me to help them with their weightlifting," he said. "Slowly, I became more and more involved with the CrossFit community, giving people advice and coaching a niche group who wanted to work on O-lifting a lot more."

Eventually Patterson, who was already a personal trainer at the time, decided to open his own affiliate. He opened Functional Strength CrossFit, which is based out of the Millennium Institute, an elite fitness facility in Auckland that also has indoor and outdoor tracks, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a rock-climbing facility, as well as a traditional public gym.

"It's basically a hub for elite sports," explained Patterson, who coaches Olympic weightlifting classes at his box.



***Tevita Ngalu might be the best teammate in the world.***

As for Patterson's own CrossFit career, he competed during the first two workouts of the Open competition this year, but with the Olympic trials approaching, he opted out of the last three weeks to focus on getting to the Olympic Games.

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## Patterson says that CrossFit has been nothing but positive for the sport of Olympic weightlifting.

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Patterson says that CrossFit has been nothing but positive for the sport of Olympic weightlifting.

"Our sport has gained publicity because of CrossFit. Before that, we had no exposure to the general public. Nobody followed Olympic weightlifting. But now our numbers have doubled, and everyone seems to know what a clean and jerk and snatch are," he said.

"CrossFit has brought to New Zealand weightlifting a vehicle for promotion," he added. "It's awesome."

### The One-Legged Clean and Jerk

Patterson can't believe Ngalu is stepping back onto the platform for a second attempt at 157 kilograms.

At the same time, he knows that if anyone would do this, it would be Ngalu.

"Give it everything! C'mon!" echoes from the stands. And then the crowd is near silent.

As in his first attempt, Ngalu hits the clean, letting out a similar roar of pain.

He goes for the jerk. He catches it but looks unstable because all his weight is on his healthy leg. He takes a couple of tiny hops trying to regain his stability, still essentially balancing on one leg. Finally, he shows enough control. The white lights go on. The lift is good.

Patterson is speechless in the stands.

He's going to the Olympic Games, but he isn't sure what to say.

"I can't believe he just did that," says Patterson to his girlfriend before rushing off to find his teammate.

He has no idea how to thank Ngalu.

"You can't really go and say, 'Thank you.' How do you thank someone for that?" says Patterson. "It doesn't seem like enough."

Patterson finds Ngalu in the warm-up area.

"I don't know how you just did that," he says to Ngalu. "Are you OK?"

Ngalu has tears running down his face.

"It hurt so much," he says.

### More Memorable Than a Medal

After the competition, Ngalu told a local TV news station in New Zealand how he found the courage to push through the pain.

To watch the 3News video *Lifting for a Mate*, click [here](#).

"At the same time that I felt the pain in my leg, I thought about my team ... and him. And I thought, 'I have to put pressure on myself because I can't let them down. I can't come to Samoa and do nothing,'" said Ngalu.

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**"Before I walk onto the platform in London, there will be a moment of recognition of why I'm there."**

**—Richie Patterson**

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He added: "I stepped onto the platform ... and I turned my head up and looked at my team, and they were 100 percent focused on me. And then I thought about myself. I have to take one minute. Just one minute. The hurt and the pain is just one minute, and that's it."

Ngalu's coach, Adam Storey, couldn't be more proud of Ngalu. In the same television news piece, Storey added: "I said to Tevita, 'In one year's time, in 10 years' time, no one will ever remember whether you got a medal. But they will never, ever, ever forget the lift you did, mate.'"

Storey continued: "He's immortalized himself within our sport."

Patterson agreed.

"It's just amazing. He did this completely selfless act for someone else. I still don't know how to put it into words. It makes you speechless," he said. "But I do know that before I walk onto the platform in London, there will be a moment of recognition of why I'm there."

Patterson added: "I wouldn't be going to London without him. There's no one else in the world that would have done what he did."



CrossFit Vancouver

### 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 was the 2011 Canada West Regional Media Director and competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games with CrossFit Vancouver. She finished third in the 2012 Canada West Regional.*

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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## Strength From Struggle

Just as weightlifting builds strength, difficult experiences build character. Bradley Berlin explores how stress is relative and attitude is everything.

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By Bradley Berlin

July 2012



Rebecca Huyghe

One day, standing in line at Chipotle, I overheard the kid next to me talking to his friend. He was wearing an embroidered fanny pack that read “*Twilight’s* biggest fan,” and he was in total distress.

“If I don’t show up to recital it’s because I killed myself while studying so hard for midterms,” he said.

I laughed to myself about the comment, but he seemed rather serious. A bit dramatic, but serious nonetheless. I wanted to say to him, “Calm down, *Twilight*, you’re stressing way too much over some test.”

This “stress” in his life was humorous to me and monumental to him. A few days later, I was talking to an older man who had been drinking and was also in distress. He missed his wife. She was the love of his life and he regretted maybe not letting her know when he still had the chance. She had been dead for 10 years.

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## Struggle ... (continued)

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"She shouldn't have died so young. I was the unhealthy one," he told me. This man had also lost two out of his three sons in one year. One to cancer and one to asphyxiation. The son who died of cancer was an Olympic-caliber runner. He ate well, didn't drink or smoke and was very active. His death was unexpected. The other son choked on a hamburger and was brain dead minutes later. Needless to say, it was also unexpected. I did not think this man's stress was humorous.

### It's all Relative

My "stress caliber" is somewhere in between the kid with the *Twilight* fanny pack and the old man who lost almost his entire family. Relationships stress me out, both romantic relationships and relationships with family and friends. My job, sport, dreams and guilt all pile up and seem monumental.

Our distress is relative to the character we have developed to combat it. When your maturity is nil, a pop quiz is very stressful. Just like a mile jog would be stressful to someone who is extremely deconditioned.

My grandfather has been blind in one eye since he was a toddler, and 75 percent blind in the other eye for the last five years. He is deaf in one ear and often says with a smile, "And I can't hear out of the other!" He has had extreme asthma caused from asbestosis since his 20s. He ran away from home at the age of 14 because he was tired of being beaten by his father. He did not have parents to guide him after his early teenage years. His brother died young, as did his wife, and he lost two out of three of his sons last year. His life has demanded he develop an amazing pain tolerance and mental fortitude. This is the only way he can deal with stress that would kill most people.



Courtesy of Bradley Berlin

*Stress can kill you ... or make you stronger. It's up to you.*

I do not care to go through what my grandfather has endured, but I do hope to develop the same toughness. Character comes from adversity, and fitness is developed the same way.

CrossFit has made me a better son, brother, boyfriend, athlete, coach, trainer, uncle, cousin, friend and ambassador of my beliefs because it has shown me a very clear picture of actual progress. Things that go uphill have to be pushed. It has taught me that there are no bad lessons or workouts—just really hard ones. If I want to be stronger, I have to lift heavier weights. If I want to learn how to manage my time better, I take on a second job. If I want to be a better CrossFit athlete, I have to train the things I dislike. If I want to learn how to love with greater capacity, I need to have some children. Strength comes from struggle.

### Death by Fran

I started CrossFit roughly a year and a half ago after watching the 2010 CrossFit Games. I was under the impression I could start training for a new sport and it would make me \$25,000 within the next year or two. Great deal, huh? Yes, it would have been, but unfortunately my ego deceived me.

I walked into CrossFit Nasti/Cincinnati Strength and Conditioning and introduced myself to the owner, Stephen Flamm. I told Flamm I was interested in competing in CrossFit. I had recently transitioned from the sport of strongman. I was pretty successful in the teen class and then open lightweight. I wanted to join my friend and training partner, Jen Osborn, on her last foundations class. Flamm said it wouldn't be a problem and asked a few more questions about my background, current training protocol and goals as a CrossFit athlete.

I told him my goals were to go to the Games that year and win them the following year. I can imagine it was hard to hear my answers over the sound of my ego. I went through the third foundations class with Osborn and did not learn anything. My capacity to learn was turned off because I already knew everything there was to know. At this point, Flamm told Osborn and I that he had a special workout for us.

Most people would not be ready for this at their third foundations class, but Flamm said Osborn and I could handle it. Osborn was a successful collegiate track athlete and I was going to win the Games soon. The workout was



Courtesy of Bradley Berlin

*The author (second from the left) and his brothers, father and grandfather.*

21, 15 and 9 reps of 95-lb. thrusters (not even warm-up weight for me) and pull-ups. We went over the standards for a few minutes and then geared up to go. I asked what the record time was for their gym, and I remember thinking that it was going to change.

It did not change that day, but I did.

I did the first 21 thrusters faster than they had ever seen. Then I attacked about 15 near strict pull-ups, came off the bar and immediately felt like I was both very drunk and very hung over simultaneously. The next few minutes of my life were a painful blur. I finished Fran in 5:48, and Osborn finished about 10 seconds after. As soon as I finished I ran to the bathroom so I did not shit my pants. As I was going the bathroom I began to vomit as well. I was sitting on the toilet, with diarrhea, as I vomited both on and between my legs so hard that my nose began to bleed. Osborn and Flamm later told me I was in the bathroom for about 45 minutes.

When I came out I told Osborn, "We have to go." Something wasn't right. I needed to go see my brother, who is a chiropractor. I was under the impression that I had messed something up and was maybe dying.

I should have been wearing a fanny pack like my *Twilight* friend. Osborn told me to go out to the car and she would be out in a second. I came in several minutes later because I was so dazed I could not find the car.

When I got home, my brother checked me out. He advised me to take a cold shower, drink lots of water and go to sleep. I did exactly that. After drinking about a gallon of water in a cold shower, I got in bed at about 5 p.m. I woke up the following morning at 10 a.m., after roughly 16 hours of sleep, feeling great and wondering how I could improve my Fran time.

### Character Building

I have always enjoyed success. I think everyone does. As a child, I enjoyed being able to climb trees higher than my brothers because they kicked my ass in all the normal sports. Although this did not always happen, I loved the feeling of working hard on a project for school and getting an A. I enjoyed training for strongman contests and winning. I now enjoy training for CrossFit and getting new PRs. I love having athletes or mothers come to me and thank me for how well they did at their meet or how much weight they have lost. All these things have made me smile and given me some sense of self-fulfillment, but they have done little to develop my character.

What has developed my character is my family never letting me win. I built character when I came home from school after turning in a half-assed project and hearing my dad say, "Brad, you're smarter than C's. I know that you are! C's are average, and you're just not average."

I built character after training hard for a strongman contest only to injure myself cleaning a dumbbell rack at work just days before the competition. I became a stronger person after being so focused and dedicated last year in my Games training only to have to pull out of Regionals after three workouts because of severe shoulder pain.

We work harder for food when we are hungry. We care more about warm-ups and mobility when we are injured. We love with greater commitment only after having lost loved ones. Adversity builds character. Losing motivates. And fire purifies.

CrossFit, thank you. You have given me a platform to teach and exemplify the things I am most passionate about. Coach Glassman, you started something that is changing the world for the better. Thank you for your commitment to the mission and truth. All the coaches, trainers, friends and athletes along the way, thank you for all that you have done to develop my capacity as a coach, athlete and human being.

As the sport of CrossFit grows, I want to embody the principles that make our sport great. I want to continue to teach the world about health, fitness and progress. The struggles in your life will make you stronger.

Embrace adversity, accept the challenge and choose to become great.



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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## Fifteen Minutes of Hope in Indonesia

CrossFit Equator in Jakarta raises over US \$37,000 for sick kids. Emily Beers reports.

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By Emily Beers

July 2012

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All images: Brian Pandji/CrossFit Equator

When Brian Pandji told Mary's Cancer Kiddies that his gym was going to host an event to raise money for kids with cancer, they were polite but seemed skeptical.

"I don't think they thought we would raise much money just by doing a 15-minute workout," said Pandji, who owns CrossFit Equator in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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But Pandji knew something the Mary's Cancer Kiddies charity didn't: that an entire community of CrossFitters around the world was excited to collectively tackle the workout Hope to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. He also knew that his own members at CrossFit Equator had the will and were prepared to work their asses off for the cause.

However, instead of donating to St. Jude, Pandji and Scott Hanna, his partner for the event, decided to give the money they raised to the Jakarta-based charity instead.

"We elected to keep the donations local to help kids in Indonesia with cancer. St. Jude does amazing work, but the access to treatment for Indonesian kids is even more limited," Hanna said.

Pandji felt that focusing on a local charity would help his athletes feel more connected to the cause.

"Mary's Cancer Kiddies is a group of volunteers taking care of kids, something everyone can identify with," Pandji said.



**Hope: where every rep is more money for sick children.**

He continued: "A man named Scott Thompson did a fundraiser for Mary's Cancer Kiddies a while ago. He ran from Bali to Jakarta and raised a lot of money, so we knew we could do the same."

### **CrossFit Equator on June 9**

At Pandji's home in Jakarta, amidst the palm trees and blue skies, athletes mill about his garage gym. Some of them roll about on foam rollers to loosen sore muscles, while others socialize happily in corners. With the television on and a toddler or two running around, the box has a comfortable family-like feel, almost as if the group has gathered for a dinner party rather than a workout.

As the area starts to fill up, people spill into the backyard, an extension of Pandji's gym. One man wears a shirt that says, "Know Pain, Know Gain." "Hope" is written in big letters on the whiteboard.

In many ways it looks like a regular morning at CrossFit Equator.

But it's not.

With 36 athletes about to compete in a grueling workout, today's Hope WOD isn't about who finishes first. And it's not about work capacity or personal bests. In fact, it's not about the 36 athletes at all. It's about something bigger than that.

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**Today, working out will  
benefit children who need all  
the help they can get just to  
stay alive.**

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It's a day where people will go harder than they normally do because something other than pride is on the line. Today, working out matters. Today, working out will benefit children who need all the help they can get just to stay alive.

Pandji admits the day is refreshing because some days being a CrossFitter can feel like a selfish endeavor.

"Sometimes I feel selfish. We usually CrossFit for ourselves, for our personal health and fitness, which is good, but it doesn't really help anyone else," Pandji said.

He added: "There should be a time where we do this, where we work out for something that matters ... for a cause. It helps when you do it for someone else."

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**Through pledges, admission charges and direct donations, Pandji's crew manages to raise US \$37,171.**

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**\$2,400 Per Minute**

Pandji addresses the group of eager CrossFitters who have gathered at his home: "Let's make a difference. Today is our chance to not just do a workout, but to do a workout to make a difference."

Everyone cheers.

"3-2-1 ... Go!"

Suddenly, Pandji's backyard is filled with people busting out thrusters, burpees, snatches, box jumps and all sorts of variations of pull-ups, from chest-to-bar to chin-over-bar to band pull-ups to jumping pull-ups.

"It's controlled chaos," Pandji says.

It's controlled but beautiful chaos as the group fights for children. Each rep means more dollars.

Amidst the chaos, someone is sporting a shirt that says, "Think this hurts? Try chemo."

With that motto in mind and on the brink of physical collapse, Pandji's athletes push a little harder for one more rep. Just one more rep. Again and again.

And after just 15 minutes of work, through pledges, admission charges and direct donations, Pandji's crew manages to raise US \$37,171.

Everyone is thrilled with the result.

"We didn't have any formal goal articulated, but my thinking was that \$5,000 would be a great result," Hanna says. "When I saw the check, I was shocked and amazed."



*"One more rep!"*



*Proud athletes from CrossFit Equator.*

### 10K Tjandranegara

The top individual fundraiser in Jakarta on June 9 was Agnes Tjandranegara.

"I had approximately two and a half weeks to raise money," Tjandranegara said. "I did a mental calculation and decided to reach out to five people per day, with no goal to the end dollar amount."

So she did. She reached out to her family, to her friends, and when the results were tallied, Tjandranegara managed to raise \$10,706 in two weeks.

"Most of my friends and family members are very charitable and supportive of Hope, and the fact that it was a CrossFit event makes it an even bigger deal, as CrossFit has helped me with my physical and emotional transformation," Tjandranegara said.

As proud of his pupil as he is, Pandji explained that the day wasn't just about raising money. It was also about generating awareness of CrossFit in Indonesia. For some, the Hope event was their first CrossFit experience.

Drew Harkness is a newbie to CrossFit. He joined CrossFit Equator in April and is rapidly falling in love with it. He brought his wife to the fundraiser as a way to expose her to the culture and community for the first time.

"She appreciated the camaraderie here," Harkness said. "There were a lot of people experiencing CrossFit for the first time, who I would say really learned something that day, and it opened their eyes to a different way of exercise—and life."

Pandji is so proud of everything that went on at his box that day.

“Everyone really used their networks and their diligence and bought in,” said a humble Pandji, who doesn’t believe he had much to do with the success. “I didn’t really do anything special. I just told them we would be doing Hope, a worldwide event, and they just got excited.”

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**Pandji believes  
it was ultimately the spirit  
of CrossFit that led to the  
success in Jakarta.**

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Tjandranegara added: “Maybe it was because the workout was dedicated to a very good cause, or maybe it was due to having a much bigger audience than normal. Whatever the reason, the energy level that day was such a positive high that most of us went above and beyond our personal goals.”



***This same scene played out all around the world,  
raising millions for charity.***

Pandji believes it was ultimately the spirit of CrossFit that led to both the excitement and the success in Jakarta.

“We maintain a very competitive culture on every WOD and every skill—beginner to advanced,” Pandji said. “And when I look back, that is the one thing that I think made it all work: competition.”



#### **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 was the 2011 Canada West Regional Media Director and competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games with CrossFit Vancouver. She finished third in the 2012 Canada West Regional.*

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## On Transformation

Nick deadlifted 300 lb. at 13—and then he changed his entire life. E.M. Burton explains.

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By E.M. Burton with Tracy Watzek

July 2012

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All images: E.M. Burton

I've been interviewing CrossFit trainers in the course of my work lately, and it seems the No. 1 thing they like about their job is seeing people transform.

The transformation will be different for everyone undergoing it, but it has a common thread: you're watching someone get better. At everything.

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*Nick's 300-lb. deadlift in November 2011 stirred up the Facebook community in a very big way.*

The reality is we are all transforming all the time. Without our even trying, our bodies are constantly changing. The difference with CrossFit is that you're controlling the direction of the shift.

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**Everyone who begins to  
CrossFit knows intimately  
how the workouts have  
changed their lives.**

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When you change form from one thing to another, the mass you were before is gone forever. This sounds too essentialist, you think. Life is perhaps more leaky than that. But I don't think I'm off the mark here. The physical changes are the most obvious and immediately apparent: the legs firm up, the skin clears up, the smile comes more easily, the

shoulders become strong and look great when hung with the same old clothes. But there are ways in which our lives evolve and become new that are also intensified—for lack of a better word—by the workouts. These things are not always tangible or really easily described.

Everyone who begins to CrossFit knows intimately how the workouts have changed their lives. The intensity of the workout destroys you down to next to nothing; we learn things about ourselves in our darkest hours.

CrossFit offers me the opportunity to see my life differently all the time. I have learned that I have incredible fortitude. Now I know that I can bear more of the unfortunate things in life than I ever thought possible.

This might seem like it's of a smaller scale, but one of the things I most love about my own transformation is picking up my daughter. All the time. It seems like such a silly thing. But thanks to CrossFit, it's been fun to pick her up and bounce her around the room. Even her teachers have remarked on it. Dancing, too. We dance more now.

As a parent, I admit for me the concept of transformation is much more significant when we're talking about positive change in a child's life, when young people come to have a sense of themselves that is greater than their previous conception. This made me consider the kind of transformation that can occur in an entire family. By doing CrossFit, we build capacity. In this context, what I'm finding is a greater capacity for love.

Last month, I met with three families to discuss how CrossFit has transformed their lives. In the course of interviewing Tracy Watzek; her nephew, Nick; and her new husband, Doug, and in the ensuing emails that followed, I found that Tracy has a great ability to tell her family's story. So I asked her to write it down for us.

### **Tracy and Nick: By Tracy Watzek**

If you follow CrossFit's Facebook site, you may remember Nick from early December 2011. A video of Nick deadlifting 300 lb. was posted on the site, and it caused a stir. Most comments praised him and his strength. Some comments were critical of his physique, others of the fact that he was lifting 300 lb. This might seem unremarkable, except for the fact that when Nick lifted that 300 lb. on Nov. 19, 2011, he was only three weeks past his 13th birthday.

It was just days before this lift—the one heard 'round the world, based on the number and divisiveness of the Facebook comments—that Nick had said, "I'm ready." By "ready," he meant that he had decided to turn around his life. I also committed to do whatever I could to help him accomplish what millions of people fail to accomplish: to start and maintain healthy eating.

At the time of his decision, Nick was 13 years old and 222 lb. He had reached the threshold between "unhealthy" and "sick" and was crossing over into the "sick" range. Nick was always a big child—almost 10 lb. when he was born. He was always taller than other kids, and, beginning around 10 or 11 years old, he significantly outweighed most kids his age.

He was not always overweight, however. When he began attending classes at CrossFit Brand X in November 2005—first in martial arts (my idea, to teach him structure and self-discipline), followed by CrossFit Kids a short while later—Nick was thin, perhaps even underweight. For a few years, Nick regularly attended his classes. He eventually outgrew the CrossFit Kids classes and was invited to the Teen CrossFit and Teen Weightlifting classes.



***Nick has lost nearly 50 lb. since he committed to eating better.***

I hoped that the increased level of intensity in his workouts would reverse, or at least stabilize, his increasing weight, but it did not. Nick reached a point where he no longer had a desire to regularly attend classes because he was not making progress and he was increasingly self-conscious of the fact that he had to scale so many exercises, such as pull-ups.

I struggled to help him with his situation. Trying to keep Nick's mind off other problems, I indulged him in unhealthy ways with poorly chosen food and breaks from the gym. However, every so often, I would try to make a change to his eating habits—better foods and smaller portions—but our resolve would wane, and his weight continued to slowly but steadily increase.



***A young Nick training at CrossFit Brand X.***

Coach Jeff Martin of CrossFit Kids and owner of CrossFit Brand X approached me around the second week of November 2011. He wanted to let me know he had heard Nick was having some difficulties at school due to being picked on about his weight. Jeff also wanted to check with me about whether or not he could talk to Nick about healthy eating because Jeff strongly believed Nick had to make a change now or struggle with his weight for the rest of his life. Both Jeff and I also knew that while Nick was tremendously strong physically, he was still a young teenager and required a positive, non-critical approach.

I gave Nick a heads up that Jeff would be talking to him soon. Nick immediately knew that the focus would be on his weight. I began explaining why it was concerning us and how a change had to happen now before it was too late. Nick stewed for a couple of days until Jeff talked to him on Nov. 17, 2011. I'm not exactly sure what Jeff said to him as I let him take Nick aside without me (I did not believe my crying would make the conversation enjoyable for anyone involved), but I do know that Jeff is gentle, straightforward and honest and has quite a knack for commanding one's attention, respect and agreement.

Nick and I both knew that the road ahead would be tough. However, that same evening we began following Jeff's simple rules: no bread, no sugar, no pasta, no potatoes and regular attendance at class. I made ham and eggs for the

entire family, and Nick seemed satisfied. The next day, and every day since, we have worked hard to follow Jeff's rules, although it has been a difficult transition for both of us.

It is not easy enabling Nick to eat healthfully. It is difficult to ensure healthy meals and snacks are ready and always available, but it is essential for him to avoid poor eating and to learn proper portioning. The extra time spent in the kitchen cooking, preparing and packaging, not to mention the extra time shopping, is more than worth it. Nick has rarely complained about no longer eating the things he previously ate; he simply says "OK" when presented with the day's menu. He now recognizes that small goals lead to long-term change.

Although the choice to be patient with and accepting of this new lifestyle was wholly Nick's, the previous choice to eat poorly was not necessarily his own. Being only 13, he obviously can neither drive to the grocery store to shop nor cook his own meals. As a result, he wound up in an unhealthy state. I carry the guilt that, because I decided to take the easy route and enable him to eat unhealthy meals and snacks, he suffered physically and mentally. Because I shirked my responsibility to ensure he had healthy food, he was bullied, depressed and unhealthy. As a parent or

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### **Nick now recognizes that small goals lead to long-term change.**

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guardian, it is our responsibility to ensure our children's health. Those who deny that the weight issues of today's children are not significantly the fault of their parents or guardians are misguided.

Six months after the lift heard 'round the world, Nick has lost nearly 50 lb. and as a result has gained access to a whole new world. He is filled with self-confidence and walks with his head held high and chest out. He is pursuing athletic opportunities; he will play football this fall when he enters the ninth grade, where previously he was too big to qualify.

And he is learning self-control and healthful living. I am confident that if left to his own devices, Nick will not raid the carbs. Nick is unrecognizable from the video posted on Facebook. He looks like an athlete. He is an athlete. Strangers compliment him on his physique and are stunned to find out he is only 13 years old. He no longer has to scale the workouts. Kipping pull-ups? Too easy. Dead-hang pull-ups? No problem! Toes-to-bars? Even easier. Double-unders? C'mon—maybe triple-unders are hard, but not double-unders. Run? What 13-year-old kid wants to? His current list of exercises to conquer includes handstand push-ups, handstand walks and muscle-ups. I have no doubts he will achieve all of them soon. He feeds off moments of success and is hungry for the praise that comes with each achievement.

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### Engaging in CrossFit and healthy eating turned around my health.

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Yet Nick is a typical 13-year-old—he rolls his eyes when he is complimented (by me, at least), he faces academic and home-life struggles, he lives for video games, and he has not had the world handed to him. Despite all his challenges, he's still found something to embrace, something that gives him hope, something that makes him feel like he can conquer the world: CrossFit.

The support, education, compassion and encouragement we receive from Jeff and Mikki Lee Martin and all the trainers at CrossFit Brand X (Dan Strametz, Dan Edelman, Connor Martin, Keegan Martin and Debbie Rakos) is priceless, and I cannot thank them enough. Jeff said to me, after Nick had lost about 30 lb., "If he gets nothing more out of this or goes no further in CrossFit, he has learned control and that he can control things." A very powerful concept for a young person.

Not to be forgotten, of course, are Nick's fellow CrossFit Kids, who have cheered him on and encouraged him when times are tough. For instance, Cole Dick, a young athlete with an inspirational story of his own, came up to me a couple of months ago after I had helped Nick struggle through extra pull-up work. He patted me on the shoulder and said, "Nick's doing great, and so are you, Tracy."

As I write this, I have tears streaming down my face, thinking of how I should have been more careful and proactive with Nick. Having gone through my own transformation, I should never have allowed Nick to become unhealthy. I was in dire straits when I began CrossFit shortly after Nick. I would like to say the appeal of lifting heavy things and jumping around a lot was what drew me to CrossFit, but it was not. As a result of taking Nick to his classes, I began to feel obligated to participate. At the time, I was withdrawn, depressed, and taking prescription antacids and diabetic medication on a daily basis.

Engaging in CrossFit and healthy eating turned around my health. Medication was no longer necessary, and because my health improved, my outlook and my mood improved. I have so much more confidence that I opened myself up, I let another person into my life, and last year I got married in front of a crowd that included all my trainers and several fellow gym members. Without CrossFit and the gains I have made directly as a result of my participation, I would not be where I am today—happy, healthy and sore (sometimes), with a happy and healthy family. CrossFit is life changing. CrossFit is life improving.

Who would have thought being able to do pull-ups could have such a profound and deep effect on your life? I honestly felt I could do anything after my first one. I have no doubt that Nick felt the same, although I would never know because he would never tell me. The fact that he was, at that point, equal to his peers must have filled him with such pride—something so difficult for children to feel. The empowerment you feel after killing a workout, even for the average CrossFitter like me, is unparalleled.

By the way, my first pull-up was on March 11, 2010 ... not that I'm keeping track or anything.



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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## Back to the Beginning

With CrossFit's popularity exploding, Craig Hysell describes his box's introductory program and why it works.

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By Craig Hysell CrossFit Hilton Head

July 2012

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All images: Craig Hysell

So, you got 'em into your free trial class, and they fell in love with you at "constantly varied functional movement at high intensity." That fawning prospective member is in a sweaty heap at your feet and, when he can breathe again, he practically begs you to tell him how to get started.

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1 of 9



***Elements, fundamentals, bootcamp ... whatever you call it, the point is to teach new members form, technique and terminology.***

You say it's simple, when his legs stop involuntarily shaking from the air squats he just did and can walk to your desk, he needs to sign up for your Elements Class.

"What's an elements class?" he asks.

You swallow a sigh. How many times do you have to answer this freakin' question?

"It's our foundations class," you say with a tight smile.

"OK ... so ... what's the foundations class?"

Biting your tongue, you answer, "It's our elements class."

WTF? Did somebody just mention "broad time and modal domains" or something? How could a concept so, ahem, elemental, be so confusing?

Well, it is.

And it's your fault.

### **Get With the Program**

Foundations. Fundamentals. Elements.

These terms might be keeping prospects from your business simply because people have no idea what they mean. It doesn't matter if you understand what you are talking about; it matters if the customer understands what you are talking about. You can have the greatest cues in

the world, but if the athlete, member, exerciser or potential client in front of you doesn't "get it," you aren't doing your job. Period. A good coach or owner always finds a way to get his or her message across.

"Who cares if they don't get it," the hardcore box owners might huff, and that's certainly their right. It's their business, and I don't pretend that anything we do at our box is the only way to do something.

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**A properly formatted  
introduction sets a tone  
for safety, understanding,  
adaptation and then progress.**

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Here's what I do know: we are a 2,200-square-foot facility on an island of 45,000 year-round residents. We opened in April 2010. We had 50 members when we started 2011. We grew to 133 members by the end of the year, we have a much lower turnover rate than in our first year, and we have significantly less sports-related injuries. I credit a majority of this to our BootCamp.

BootCamp? Seriously? Did I just combine “boot” and “camp” into some kind of lame CrossFit-style one-wordism to denote our FoundationsFundamentalsElements class? Yes. Yes, I did. And it works.

Bootcamps have been a rite of passage with military institutions—a community of people for whom CrossFit is well suited—for millennia. Bootcamps are traditionally a time of learning, cultural initiation and trial by fire. It’s where all our voodoo and “brainwashing” happens if you buy into the ridiculous notion that CrossFit is a cult. What really happens, however, is that a properly formatted introduction sets a tone for safety, understanding, adaptation and then progress.

Here are a few things that happen if we CrossFitters and non-CrossFitters don’t understand one another:

1. You (a non-CrossFitter) relate to me (a CrossFit coach) that you know all about CrossFit due to your experiences with P90X or Insanity. I look at you like Louie Simmons would look at me if I told him I thoroughly understand the conjugate method of training because I did band-assisted sumo deads last Friday for 10 sets of 2. Except I don’t have a back the size of a refrigerator door or super cool “Louie-isms” that relate your ignorance to some obscure 185-lb. powerlifter from 1978.
2. You could injure yourself if you run headlong into the program without understanding the mechanics-consistency-intensity principle. That is completely unacceptable.
3. You have no idea what I’m talking about when I use terms like WOD, rounds for time, AMRAP, clean and jerk, elbows up, get tight, head through, etc. That means I hold the entire class back much longer than necessary to explain these things in detail to you instead of relating one or two quick “refresher points” to jog your memory.

In no way, shape or form do we take credit for the initial formatting of our BootCamp. Much, much smarter owners, coaches and trainers came up with this template long before I came along and were gracious enough to put it out there in the intraweb world where CrossFit nerds like me could find it.

What we do take credit for is the evolution of our BootCamp. Our BootCamp is a living document, and it goes through some sort of monthly permutation in order to improve upon the month before it and better prepare our newbies for our regular CrossFit classes if they choose to join up. It is particular to our needs as a box and not necessarily universal to the constantly varied functional movement world. What this simply means is: once you understand it, the template is yours to manipulate as you see fit. We feel that as soon as we stop tweaking our BootCamp, that probably means we no longer care about it and the training will drift into mediocrity.

Our BootCamp starts the first Monday of every month and runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for four weeks. Classes are either 5:30 to 6:30 a.m. or 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., and the slots are interchangeable. We take 20 people maximum per class time, which means we can take up to 40 new members a month. Each class builds off the one before it, so attendance is mandatory. If BootCampers miss more than one class, they must repeat the BootCamp or schedule a make-up class.

We go through a little five-minute spiel on Day 1 to lay down some concepts and our expectations. Our BootCampers do the same WOD only once, on Day 1 and Day 12 because we don’t want to tell them they have gotten better; we want them to see it for themselves. They record everything in a notebook we give them on Day 1. Each class is followed by a short discussion going over some specific points we want to get across. We garner a majority of our BootCamp sign-ups through our Facebook page, our free trial class and word of mouth.



*A BootCamp participant is introduced to the thruster.*

(We tried a Groupon once, and it didn't work out for the most part. Yes, we got a few members, but mostly we got cheap people who either had no interest in working hard to get better or didn't want to spend the money even if they did. Most of them had no respect for what they were getting into, and we way undersold what we were doing. Other boxes might have had other experiences. Groupon was not a total waste of time, but it wasn't enough of a positive experience for me to try it again.)

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### You will have created a member with a significant understanding in the fundamentals, concepts and expectations of your box.

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#### Bootcamp Pros

- Prospective members know what a bootcamp is and usually are not intimidated by the word or concept. (Yes, our BootCamp is, for all intents and purposes, an elements class, but just like in cueing, some people don't understand what you're saying when you tell them, "Push your hips back and unhinge at the knees." So you have to simply say, "Pretend you are sitting in a chair.")
  - You will, usually by the end of the first week, weed out all of those people who do not want to be a part of your gym or CrossFit training in general. That means you will not waste your valuable time training members who have no intention of sticking around. (We do not give refunds.)
  - We have an 80-90 percent sign-up rate by the end of our BootCamp from those who stuck around. That happens monthly. We give them a special deal at the end of the BootCamp as a reward: six months of membership at the yearly rate (our cheapest monthly option).
- You will get to know all your prospective members on a much more personal and athletic level due to the intimate nature of the group environment and speed of the beginner courses. And they will have plenty of time to process and practice what you are telling them.
  - They will know other people when they get to regular classes—members they "graduated" with—and understand the very special concept intrinsic to healthy CrossFit boxes: community.
  - They will have the feeling that they accomplished something special, which they have.
  - They will have the respect of your current membership because they will have been "initiated" to a degree.
  - You will have created a member with a significant understanding in the fundamentals, concepts and expectations of your box, which keeps people safe and retention up.
  - You will save time, create a more competent and culturally cognizant athlete, and make more money more efficiently—which is why Coach Greg Glassman went to the group-training concept in the first place.



***After a month of BootCamp, graduates integrate seamlessly into the regular classes.***



*BootCamp participants are guaranteed safety and results -- but it's not easy.*

### Bootcamp Cons—And Our Answers

- It's only once a month. Answer: Funneling people into once-a-month classes adds not only to the anticipation but also gives prospective members time to recruit friends to come with them. At our box, the more friends they bring, they cheaper the BootCamp becomes. We do make exceptions from time to time on putting members through our BootCamp.
- It's too early or it's too late. Answer: Suck it up and make a decision. Can you get up a little early or stay up a little late for 12 hours of your life? If you can't, then this isn't for you. No hard feelings. Remember, the coach or trainer gets up earlier and stays later than all of you.
- It's expensive. Answer: You are getting 12 hours of personal training in a group environment. Personal trainers can cost anywhere from \$50 to \$150 per hour. Our program is \$200 per person and \$150 if you bring a friend. It's \$100 if you bring two or more friends. Our program is not expensive.
- I can't make it to every class: Answer: We understand that life gets in the way. How many classes are you going to miss, and why are going to miss them? You are allowed to miss one without having to make it up. Yes, we make exceptions, but not many.
- It's challenging/hard. Answer: Of course it is. If it were easy, it would be mediocre, making us mediocre, which means you wouldn't respect what you have earned or what we do. What's more, because it is hard and only continues to get harder, in three months you will look back on these workouts and treat them as merely warm-ups. We do not guarantee "easy." We guarantee "safety and results" if you are listening and putting forth the effort.

**Bootcamp Chart**

|          | <b>Warm-Up</b>  | <b>Skill</b>  | <b>WOD</b>  | <b>Post-Wod</b>  | <b>Discussion Points</b>   |
|----------|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>1</b> | 200-meter run<br>Samson stretch<br>Hip flexor mobility/<br>plank<br>Over/under the fence  | Posture<br>Air squat<br>Push-up<br>Sit-up   | 200-meter run<br>15-12-9<br>Squat/push-up/sit-up<br>200-meter run   | Calf roll-out with<br>roller.<br><br>Lacrosse-ball chest<br>roll-out on wall | Explain importance of<br>recording WODs  |
| <b>2</b> | 200-meter run<br>Hip mobility from<br>plank. Figure 4 from<br>back.<br>2 x 10 squats/5<br>push-ups  | Pass-through<br>Good morning<br>Deadlift<br>Shoulder press<br>Push press  | Amrap in 7 minutes.<br>100-meter run<br>7 barbell or dumbbell<br>deadlifts<br>7 barbell or dumbbell<br>push presses<br>(PVC if necessary) | Hip mobility from<br>plank<br><br>Upward and<br>downward dog twice           | Flexibility<br>Attrition<br>Treating soreness<br><br>Stay away from<br>NSAIDs and ice when<br>hurt |
| <b>3</b> | 200-meter run<br>10 squats/passthru/<br>push presses/deadlifts<br><br>Lacrosse ball in<br>scapula for one<br>minute<br><br>Low-back mobility<br>PVC mobility for<br>better front rack | Front squat<br><br>Thruster   | 3 rounds of:<br>200-meter run<br>10 barbell or<br>dumbbell thrusters<br>10 sit-ups  | Pigeon pose<br><br>Upward and<br>downward dog                                | Attitude<br><br>Mental toughness: "I<br>can't vs. I can"   |
| <b>4</b> | 3 over-under the<br>fence per leg<br>Samson stretch<br>10 squats/pass-<br>throughs /good<br>mornings/thrusters<br><br>Shoulder mobility on<br>bands                                   | Hollow rock<br><br>Pull-up progression<br>(body row, ring<br>row, jumping, band<br>assisted, singles)<br><br>No kipping | 4 rounds for time of:<br>100-meter run<br>7 pull-up progressions<br>of choice<br>25 squats<br><br>10:00 minute time<br>cap                | Roll-out with lacrosse<br>ball   | Fish oil and protein<br>powder   |

## Bootcamp ... (continued)

### Bootcamp Chart ... continued

|   | Warm-Up   | Skill  | WOD  | Post-Wod  | Discussion Points   |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| 5 | 200-meter run<br>Hip mobility from plank<br>PVC roller in T-spine<br>Band shoulder stretch<br>10 push-ups/squats/pass-throughs/push presses                     | Knees-to-elbows<br>Handstand push-up progression                   | 3 rounds for time of:<br>200-meter run<br>10 knees-to-elbows<br>5 HSPU progressions of choice  | Upward/downward dog twice<br>Low-back mobility<br>Stretch triceps | Paleo Diet: stick to outside of grocery store                                     |
| 6 | 400-meter run<br>3 over-under the fence per leg<br>Upward and downward  | Wall-ball<br>Kipping pull-ups                                      | 5 rounds for time of:<br>7 wall-balls<br>7 push-ups<br>7 pull-up progressions  | Pigeon pose<br>Hip mobility from plank<br>Upward and downward dog | ROM and technique under stress: the clock is just a tool<br>Failing intelligently |
| 7 | 2 minutes of jump rope<br>10 passthroughs<br>10 squats<br>10 pull-ups<br>10 thrusters<br>10 knees-to-elbows   | Double-unders<br>Re-visit kipping                                  | For Time:<br>400-meter run<br>30 squats<br>15 pull-up progressions<br>15 barbell or dumbbell thrusters<br>15 knees-to-elbows progressions<br>15 double-unders<br>400-meter run | Full body roll-out  | Scaling<br>Talk about ice again   |
| 8 | 2 minutes of jump rope<br>30 seconds of hollow rock.<br>20 pass-throughs<br>10 deadlifts<br>5 kipping swings<br>Hip and shoulder mobility<br>Address front rack | Hang power clean<br>Using Burgener Warm-Up to instruct<br>Box jump | AMRAP in 8 minutes of:<br>5 barbell or dumbbell hang power cleans<br>7 box jumps<br>9 sit-ups  | Couch stretch<br>Calf and adductor roll-out                       | Hip pop   |

Bootcamp Chart ... continued

|    | Warm-Up  | Skill  | WOD   | Post-Wod   | Discussion Points  |
|----|--|--|---|--|--|
| 9  | 400-meter run<br>2 x 10 passthroughs/<br>good mornings/front<br>squats/pull-ups<br>Front rack mobility<br>Burgener Warm-Up<br>(clean)                                  | Back squat<br>Front squat<br>Rack safety<br>Loading weight<br>Dumping weight                   | 3 rounds for time of:<br>Front squat<br>3-3-3-3   | Figure 4 from back<br>Hamstrings from back                 | Reiterate rack safety,<br>dumping weight   |
| 10 | 2 minutes of jump<br>rope<br>2 x 10 good<br>mornings/ squats/<br>deadlift/ push-ups<br>Hips, T-spine with PVC<br>roller<br>Triceps stretch                             | Dip (ring, parallel bars<br>or box, band assist OK<br>on parallel bars only)<br>Overhead squat | AMRAP in 10 minutes<br>of:<br>5 dip progressions<br>10 barbell or PVC<br>overhead squats<br>15 hollow rocks | Triceps<br>Hip flexor<br>Shoulder band stretch             | How our classes<br>work and our class<br>schedule<br>Tell them of the deal<br>we have coming up<br>on Class 11 |
| 11 | 400-meter run<br>2 x 10 thrusters/<br>passthroughs/OHS<br>3 over-under the<br>fence per side   | Kettlebell swing<br>Burpees  | 15-12-9 reps for time<br>of:<br>Kettlebell swings<br>Barbell thrusters<br>Burpees                           | Couch stretch<br>Lacrosse ball                             | One-day-only sale<br>price:<br>6 months @ \$115 per<br>month. Or \$575 up<br>front (cash or check<br>only)     |
| 12 | 400-meter run<br>2 x 10 passthroughs/<br>good mornings/<br>squats/push-ups/<br>sit-ups<br>Shoulder mobility<br>from back, pressing<br>above head, keeping<br>abs tight | Burgener Warm-Up<br>(snatch; PVC only)   | 200-meter run<br>15-12-9<br>Squats/push-ups/<br>sit-ups<br>200-meter run                                    | Hips from plank<br>Upward/downward<br>dog<br>Lacrosse ball | Graduation picture.<br>T-shirt   |

### Building the Affiliate Community

Now more than ever, proper introduction into CrossFit is paramount. More and more people are going to be drawn to your box looking for the answers. Reebok is throwing out ads during major network television events. The Games are on The Deuce (ESPN2). People are hearing about CrossFit from a friend who heard from a friend who heard it from another you've been CrossFittin'. The responsibility of where the community heads is in the hands of the local box owner, not Reebok or CrossFit HQ.

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**They need to know that form  
and intensity are a couple,  
and that 10-minute  
couplets are brutal.**

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Your noobs need to know that this CrossFit thing is about technique over weight and weight over time. They need to know that we cheer each other on just as much as we compete against one another. They need to know that form and intensity are a couple, and that 10-minute couplets are brutal. They need to know that as soon as the camaraderie of what we do is lost, what we do is then also lost. They need to know that we are not some elitist underground cult of fitness freaks but, instead, we can explain our idea of fitness simply so that anybody who has the balls to walk into a box will have the opportunity to evolve into his or her best self through the hard routine of constantly varied functional movement at high intensity.

There is nothing wrong with being different and going mainstream as long as you keep the integrity of what you are doing intact. This starts on Day 1. The more people you can get to understand this, the better off your product and your business will be, and the better off we will all be.



Courtesy of Craig Hysell

### About the Author

*Craig Hysell is the owner and head coach at CrossFit Hilton Head. He lives in Bluffton, S.C., with his daughter and girlfriend. He would like to thank all the people in the constantly varied functional movement community who throw their information on the Web for free in their best effort to positively affect the learning curve on safe, proper, stellar training.*

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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## In Pursuit of Excellence

Dave Newman never intended to start a business; he just wanted a better jump rope. Hilary Achauer catches up with the founder of RX Jump Ropes and finds out how it all began.

By Hilary Achauer

July 2012

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All images: Dave Newman

The workout was simple: 50-40-30-20-10 burpees and double-unders, followed each time by a 400-meter run.

I had been struggling with double-unders. I was able to do them when warming up, but any sort of grip fatigue or WOD-induced nervousness led to me repeatedly stepping on the rope. This time, it was a disaster. I got about 10 double-unders in a row during the first set of 50, but after that the wheels came off.

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1 of 5

Each time I started jumping, the rope caught under my feet. After a few of these frustrating attempts, I threw down the rope and looked at my coach, Bryan Boorstein. He had watched my double-unders worsen over the past few weeks and always offered tips on how to improve. This time he just looked at me sadly and said, "Hilary, I don't even know what to tell you anymore. You need to go see Dave."

"Dave" is Dave Newman, double-under guru and founder of RX Jump Ropes, a company that makes custom jump ropes and runs double-under clinics. Being told to go see Newman felt a little like getting sent to the principal's office. It was discouraging to say the least, but I had reached the end of my rope (pardon the pun).



***Newman deadlifting at the 2011 Regionals, his third Regional competition.***

## Finding CrossFit

Newman never planned to make a living selling jump ropes. After graduating from college, he joined the family business: real estate.

"I had a passion for it," Newman said. "I never considered myself a salesperson; I just really liked helping people."

Newman had always been active. He played football and did gymnastics in high school, and then he was a gymnastics coach throughout college. He ran marathons for a few years but got wrapped up in work and family and completely stopped working out.

Before Newman knew it, his sedentary lifestyle and poor eating habits caught up with him. He found himself 35 lb. overweight, which was unusual for the normally trim former gymnast. In 2008, Newman's buddy dragged him to CrossFit East County to try a workout.

"I had to modify everything," Newman said. "The workout was a mix of box jumps, burpees, pull-ups, kettlebell swings and push-ups. It took me 30 minutes to finish, and I threw up afterward," he said.

However, Newman kept coming back. Helped out by his gymnastics background and desire to work, Newman saw rapid improvement. A year after he started, the owner of CrossFit East County, Paul Flores, had Newman repeat his first CrossFit workout. He finished it in 13 minutes with no modifications.

## Hundreds of Ropes

Despite his success at CrossFit, there was one movement Newman couldn't do: double-unders. When faced with a difficult movement, most people turn inward and blame themselves. Many avoid the movement or give up in frustration. Newman took a different approach.

"At this time, in early 2009, there were three primary ropes available: Buddy Lee's rope, the thin wire speed ropes and the black PVC corded rope," Newman said. "I didn't have success with any of them. I wondered, 'Why do I suck at this?' Part is me, and part is the equipment."

Newman started taking ropes apart to make new jump ropes.

"Everyone would laugh at me," Newman said, "I've always been a tinkerer. I took the handles I liked from one rope, the cables from another and started making my own ropes."

The speed cables were too thin for Newman's tastes because he felt they forced him to move the rope too quickly. He also didn't like the skinny handles, because they made him close his hands too tightly. He knew he wanted to use his wrists as a swivel, but many of the ropes available had the cables attached directly to the handle, which meant he had to turn the rope with his shoulders, not his wrists.

The other thing Newman noticed was that the jump ropes made with rubber, PVC or braided rope stretched as he jumped.

"I measured them," Newman said, "and I found some of the ropes stretched at least a foot and a half as I jumped."

Double-unders depend on consistent timing and rhythm, and Newman knew that the changes were causing him to adjust his posture mid-jump.

Newman found that cable didn't stretch as he jumped, so he went to Home Depot and bought a variety of different cable sizes. He bought out all the jump ropes he could find at the local sporting-goods store and started making his own jump ropes. He combined the handles from the jump ropes with the cables from the hardware store, playing around with different swivel mechanisms to attach the rope to the handle.

"I made hundreds of ropes," Newman said, "and I gave them all away. I tested every thickness and length of cable, and I finally found a length that worked. I realized a heavier cable was easier for me."

At this point, Newman was spending almost all his time in his garage.

"My wife never saw me," Newman said.

All his extra money was going to jump-rope materials, and then he'd give the ropes away to his friends. One day his wife checked the bank account and told him he had to at least start charging for materials.

Word was spreading around San Diego about Newman's ropes, and people came out of the woodwork asking if they could try them. He started charging a minimal price, not even enough to cover the cost of his jump ropes, which were still made from parts of other jump ropes and cables from the hardware store.

Mainly to keep up with demand, Newman decided to place a bulk order of jump ropes, which he planned to use just for the handles. He took them all apart in his garage and donated the ropes to local elementary schools.

"I had to dismantle the entire jump rope and then rebuild it," Newman said. "I hated it."

Still making the ropes out of his garage, Newman finally decided to buy the handles overseas. They came to him as raw plastic handles, which he felt were too slippery. Trying to figure out a way to improve the grip, Newman thought about other sports where grip was important. He realized that tennis players swing their rackets hundreds of times, so he bought tennis grips and wrapped the jump-rope handles. As an added bonus, he discovered he could customize the handles with different colors and patterns.

### The Business Takes Off

While Newman was spending time making the perfect jump rope, he was also becoming a formidable CrossFit athlete. At the 2010 Southern California Sectional—which preceded the Regionals before the Open began in 2011—Newman placed seventh. He didn't make it to the Games—he placed 50th at Regionals—but at Regionals something more important happened. A representative from Rogue Fitness had heard about Newman's ropes and asked to try one out.

"He loved it," Newman said, "and he wanted Rogue to start selling them." The owner of Rogue, Bill Henniger, asked Newman to come to the 2010 CrossFit Games and sell his ropes.



*The RX Smart Gear team in front of their new office space.*



*RX Jump Ropes offers five different cable choices, and the ropes are assembled by hand by very fit individuals.*

Not knowing what to expect, Newman brought material to make 125 custom jump ropes, and he pre-made 20 demo ropes with different lengths and cable sizes for people to try. In all his experimenting, Newman had discovered there is an ideal cable length and weight for each athlete, depending on the athlete's height and double-under style. Newman customized each of the ropes he sold, meaning that he and his assistants were up all night making the ropes people ordered during the day at the Games.

By the end of the weekend, not only had Newman sold out of his ropes, but people were also paying full price for the beat-up demo ropes. After that weekend, Newman realized his hobby was no longer a hobby—it was a full-fledged business. Rogue Fitness started carrying Newman's ropes, and by the end of the year, Newman had turned over most of his real-estate business to a partner. RX Jump Ropes was off and running.

### **The Tinkering Continues**

Now, two years later, RX Jump Ropes is growing rapidly. The business is still built on customized ropes. Customers choose their own cable weight, length and color and pair it with the handle color of their choice. Just this year,

Newman moved the business from his 2,000-square-foot house into a dedicated office and warehouse space. The business has 10 employees and is expanding into other CrossFit-related products under the name RX Smart Gear.

Newman hasn't stopped tinkering. While I walked with him around the RX Smart Gear offices, he showed me some of his new inventions. Just like his jump ropes, his inventions are all created to solve annoyances he encounters in CrossFit—like protecting the top of his hairless head during handstand push-ups and a solution for sweaty, slippery AbMats that result from shirtless sit-ups. The company is also expanding their double-under clinics throughout the country, and they have plans to take them worldwide.

"We're still pinching ourselves," Newman said. "I'm having so much fun."

### **Back to Basics**

After taking me on a tour of the offices and warehouse, Newman got down to business.

"Let's see those double-unders," he said. I managed to get about 15 in before I stepped on the rope.



***RX Jump Ropes employees assembling the custom handles.***

"The problem is that your form doesn't allow any room for error," Newman said. "If you get tired, then everything falls apart."

That sounded about right.

"Let's see some singles," he said.

I started to do some single jumps, and I couldn't even string together four in a row. It came as a bit of a shock. I used to jump rope all the time in my boxing days, and I couldn't understand what had gone so wrong that I couldn't string together 10 singles.

Newman worked with me for about 20 minutes, taking a quick video to point out what I needed to correct and giving me specific things to work on.

"I want you to work on your singles," he said. "Start with that."

Although I didn't expect to have my double-unders magically fixed in just one visit, I certainly didn't anticipate being told I had to start all over again. To add insult to injury, Newman cut up my old RX Jump Rope and affixed balls on the short ends so I could practice the grip and wrist technique he taught me. He gave me a new rope with a heavier cable and told me to go home and practice.

When Boorstein, my trainer, found out that Newman had told me to go back to singles, he laughed.

"Remedial jump rope!" he teased.

My timing and rhythm were so off it took me a few days of practice to figure out singles. I focused on the tips Newman had given me, and soon I was doing singles with no problem.

Then I started working on double-unders. To my surprise, they felt completely different. I felt more in control, especially once I established my rhythm with a few singles. I practiced all week, avoiding any WODs with double-unders, not wanting to jinx my fledgling skills.

Finally, after a week of practice, I felt like I had the hang of it and another double-under workout appeared on the whiteboard. After a 21-15-9 of kettlebell swings and box jumps, we had a two-minute rest then had to do three rounds of a 400-meter run and 50 double-unders.

I finished the first part, waited the two minutes, and then went on the run, trying not to psych myself out for the double-unders. I got back inside, caught my breath and picked up the rope. After a few singles, I calmly did 40 unbroken double-unders. I did the same in the second round, and then in the third I did all 50 double-unders unbroken.

As embarrassed as I was about having to start all over again and work on my singles, it turns out that was exactly what I needed. Maybe it was the fact that Newman himself struggled with double-unders. Maybe it comes from years of tinkering with and thinking about jump ropes, but Newman was able to pinpoint exactly what I needed to do to pull myself back from the brink of double-under disaster.

Like most successful entrepreneurs, Newman didn't start his business looking to make money. In fact, he didn't plan on turning his tinkering into a business at all. Newman had a passion—CrossFit—and he had a problem: double-unders. The success of RX Jump Ropes is built on those hours in the garage, alone, trying to make the perfect jump rope.

As I walked with Newman around his offices, we chatted about how far he had come since those early days.

"It's so satisfying to have created this out of nothing," Newman said. "It's never a day of work here."



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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## Heart of a Warrior

Wounded Warriors inspire on Saturday afternoon at the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games.

By Emily Beers

July 2012

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All images: Danielle Concepcion

At the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games, Ali Barrera from Alamo CrossFit is holding a sign that says “Crush Fran, Stomp Hope.” She’s in California to cheer on Mike Gallardo, an athlete from her affiliate in San Antonio, Texas.

Gallardo is a war veteran who lost his leg while serving with the United States military, and he’s part of the Wounded Warriors demonstration at the Games.

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*Mike Gallardo finishing Fran in 5:03 during the Wounded Warriors demonstration at the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games.*

Barrera competes against Gallardo at her box all the time. It's hard not to notice the fact that he's missing his left leg. And although she can imagine, Barrera has no idea how and when Gallardo's injury happened.

"I'm not even sure if he served in Afghanistan or Iraq," she said. "I've never asked him about it."

Rick Martinez, the man who got Gallardo into CrossFit a year ago, is also foggy about Gallardo's war history.

"I was an army nurse and worked with so many amputees for a big portion of my career, but their service in the sandbox is service in the sandbox for me. So I couldn't tell you where he served. All I can tell you is the guy was blown up, lost a leg while serving our country, so I don't ask anything else," Martinez said.

It's not that Barrera and Martinez don't care about Gallardo. They care a great deal about him, but they put their curiosity aside for Gallardo's sake to allow him to be just another gym member.

"CrossFit is that common language, and so he's just another guy in the box," Barrera said.

Then she looks over, and there's Gallardo doing Fran. He does 21 thrusters in a row and then hits the pull-up bar and does 21 unbroken pull-ups. He completes Fran in 5:03, with one good leg.

Suddenly it's impossible to call him "just another guy at the box."

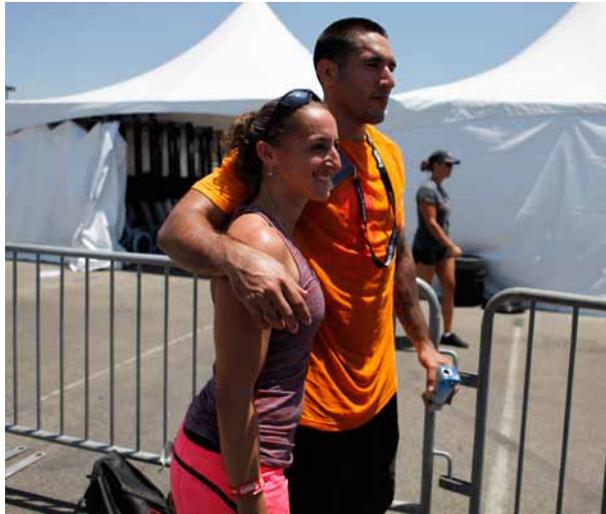
Wounded Warriors Video: [.mov](#) [.wmv](#)

Wounded Warriors Audio: [.m4a](#)

### **CrossFit as Therapy**

Barrera admits that it's hard not to be inspired by Gallardo.

"He's got such heart," she said. "He's inspiring to say the least. When you're doing box jumps and you feel like, 'Oh crap, I can't finish,' and you look over and he's going like a rabbit, you think, 'How can I stop if he's still going?' He's got a spirit and drive like no one I've ever met."



**Gallardo says CrossFit is both physical and emotional therapy.**

It's time for the second event of the competition. The WOD is Hope. The announcer speaks to the lively crowd: "Today, these warriors are out to prove to themselves that they can continue to live a healthy lifestyle."

The crowd cheers.

Gallardo gets through the burpees and the snatches and moves to the box jumps. On a prosthetic leg, he bounces up and down, even able to cycle his jumps with impressive coordination. At the end of the 15-minute workout, Gallardo collapses to the ground in a heap.

Then he gets up and explains why he's working out in front of the crowd at the Home Depot Center.

"I just want to help other warriors and to show people that adaptive athletes can do this," Gallardo said.

Gallardo, who served in Iraq and lost his left leg in 2007, admits that he went through a period of post-war depression.

"I was always depressed after the amputation, always thinking that God wanted me, but I know now that there are people out there worse than me, so I want to be a good role model," he said.

CrossFit has helped him become exactly that.

"It's emotional and physical therapy," Gallardo said. "Mentally, it helps you every day. You gain confidence as you get physically stronger, and as you get physically stronger, you get mentally stronger."

Both Barrera and Martinez have witnessed Gallardo's growth in the last year, watching him transform into one of the best role models they know. And the wounded warriors' presence at the CrossFit Games is a perfect showcase for the cause.

"I think it's inspiring to our members to see these guys. You know, they served our country. They've had a traumatic experience, and they have found a way to believe that life goes on, and that you just have to do it differently," Barrera said.

She added: "And I think that transcends just working out in the box. That's everyday life."



**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.*

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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## 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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Danielle Concepcion

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.

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## 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.

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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.

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

**—Gord Mackinnon**

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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?

Sign up by clicking [here](#).



### 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.*

## Tire Island

The gym is a river. The gear is the raft. Set sail for Tire Island—and beyond.

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By Alison Patenaude

July 2012

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Danell Marks

### Object

Teams work together to get all teammates and all pieces of equipment across the “river” without falling in.

### Equipment

- Anything in your gym that kids can stand on and transport: AbMats, low boxes, bumper plates, etc.
- Cones (2 per team)
- Tires (1 per team to be the team’s Tire Island)

### Set-Up

Cones on one side of the playing area (river) designate start points for each team of 4 to 6 kids. Cones directly across the river denote the team’s final destination.

Place each team’s Tire Island in between its respective start and end cones. The width of the river is determined by the number of kids and their ages.

### Rules of Play

On “3, 2, 1 ... Go!” in brigade fashion, team members place objects in the river and use them to cross to Tire Island without falling in. All items must be picked up and must travel with the team to Tire Island, where the whole team must stand together before moving to the other side.

The team must then use the brigade method again to cross from Tire Island to the other side of the river, again without falling in. If any member of the team touches the river at any time, the whole team, including the equipment, must return to the start cone and begin again.

The first team to have all team members and equipment to the other side wins.

### Variations

1. If time is tight, make the penalty for falling into the river less severe. For example, make the team return to Tire Island rather than the start.
2. Blindfold one team member on each team.
3. Implement a rule that permits only the team leader to talk.

