

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

April 2010

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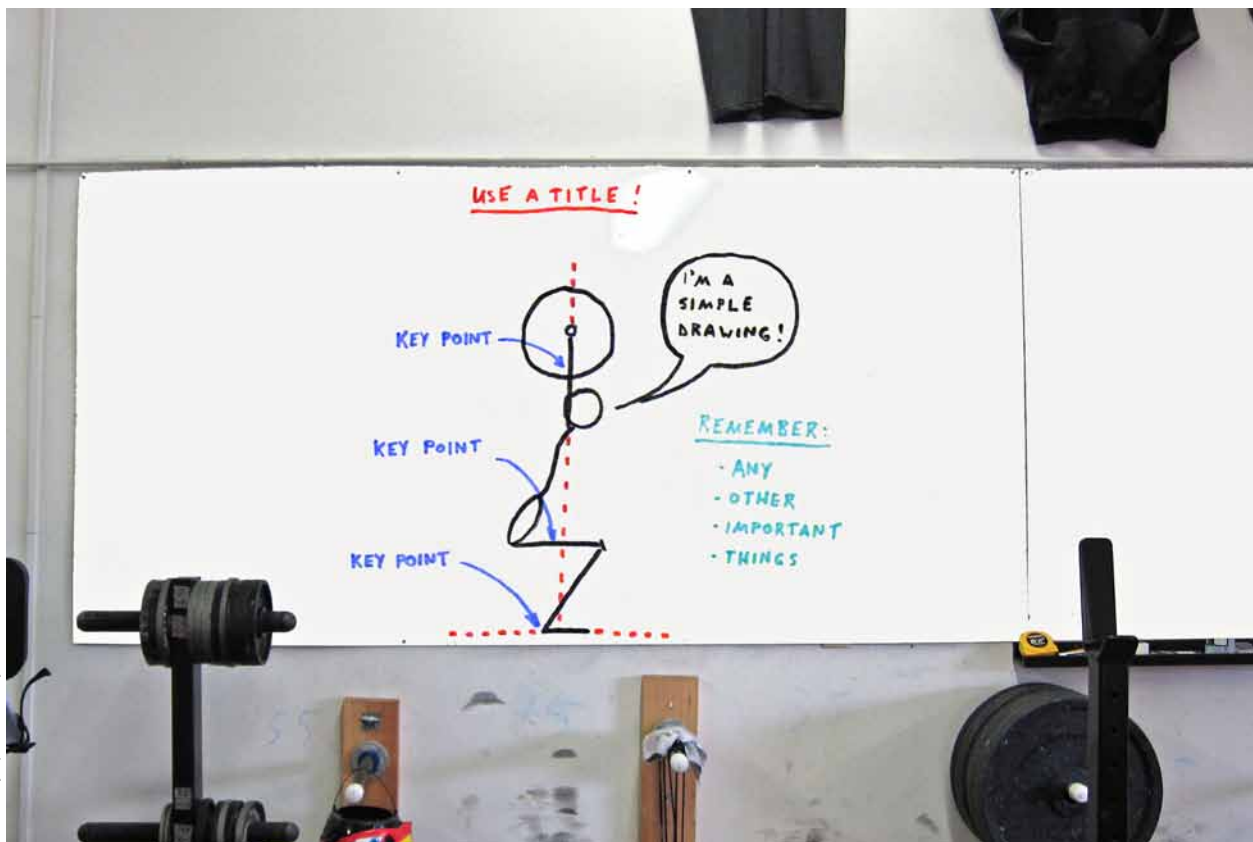
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Recovering From Ugly Whiteboard Syndrome

Great coaches are great communicators. John Hovey offers tips on how to use the whiteboard to get your point across to your athletes.

By John Hovey

April 2010



Courtesy of John Hovey

CrossFit people love the whiteboard more than most. We gesture wildly, and we furiously sketch charts and lists and diagrams. When it's over—to be honest—many of our friends and clients are confused, and some need to be woken up.

It doesn't have to be this way. You can communicate effectively with a whiteboard, but it's a skill that needs to be developed just like any other. Here are a few tips to help clean up your act:

1. Think twice before jumping into lecture mode—Having a toy doesn't mean you have to use it, so make the decision to draw carefully and with your clients' needs in mind. Folks come to the gym to move, not to sit and listen. Often, a live demo or a guided practice is more appropriate.
2. Check your equipment—All right, you're going to use the board. Prep it! Clean the thing, and make sure your markers are not all dried out. Find a proper eraser, too. It's gross to smear the board with a giant wad of paper towels or a client's workout towel.
3. Write notes beforehand of what you intend to draw—Most people think they're better at on-the-fly drawing than they are. When you wing it, it shows: your thoughts come out sloppy and out of order, and you send the subconscious message that you didn't care enough to prepare an intelligent presentation. Not good. Before your lesson, write down on a piece of paper *exactly* what your board will look like when it's finished. Instant improvement!

4. Make your words count—Assume your audience will remember only three main points from your talk. Do you know what you want them to be? Focus on your top three and leave out the rest. On your board, write the most important information in as few words as possible. Never write out entire sentences.
5. Draw simple pictures in bright colors—Use all the markers, not just black. Ever notice how people aren't lining up for black-and-white TVs anymore? If you believe the researchers at Xerox, using multiple colors increases what people remember by up to 78 percent. At least that's what they claim in the document [Color in the Office](#). Keep your drawings basic, too, so clients don't have to guess if they're looking at a deadlift or a map of Uganda. For examples of simple but effective diagrams, read the *CrossFit Journal* article [Anatomy and Physiology for Jocks](#) (August 2003).

Assume your audience will remember only three main points from your talk.



Courtesy of John Hovey

**Clear communication gets better results, and it can make you a better trainer.
You have the knowledge, but you have to find a way to get it to your athletes.**

6. Slow down, print neatly—Stop scribbling! Everyone says the same thing: “I’ve always had terrible handwriting,” and it’s a sorry excuse for poor performance. Were you always able to snatch? No. You worked on it, and you got better. Today’s WOD: practice writing in big, bold capital letters. Post thoughts to comments.
7. Talk to the people, not the board—Don’t be afraid of a silent moment while you write. Nobody will notice. When it’s time to write, you should pause, turn, draw, turn and resume talking. It’s very hard to hear you when you speak facing away from your audience, so just don’t do it. Also, if you’re having trouble talking and writing at the same time, see Point 8 below.

Today’s WOD: practice
writing in big, bold capital
letters. Post thoughts to
comments.

8. Write everything on the whiteboard beforehand—This isn’t always possible, but if you know what you’re going to present and you have the time, you can put everything on the board in advance. It’s also fine to announce you’ll start talking in a minute or two, just as soon as you write a few things down. Your artwork will look great and you can simply point to it during your talk.
9. Put the cap back on the marker—Or I will smack you.
10. Save a copy—Don’t wipe away all your hard work! Chances are you’ll teach the fundamentals of squatting a few more times in your career, and if you’ve done a good job making your board, you’ll want to reuse it. Snap a digital photo for your files. Make notes about what you liked and what you’ll do differently next time. Strive to constantly improve your whiteboard skills.



About the Author

John Hovey is a writer and photographer in Portland, Ore. He teaches for the [Wilderness Medicine Institute](#) and leads backcountry expeditions for the [National Outdoor Leadership School](#). One day, he hopes to rejoin his friends and mentors in Seattle at [Foundation CrossFit](#), where he finally learned to be a man.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Central Canada Showdown

Mike Warkentin talks to the organizers of the Central Canada Sectional and shares some of the best moments from Edmonton.

By Mike Warkentin

April 2010



Two days before the Central Canada Sectional, co-organizer Chad Williams was getting borderline hate mail from CrossFitters dying to know what WODs would test them in Edmonton, Alta.

By the end of the competition on March 28, it was apparent Williams would be receiving thanks and compliments rather than nasty notes.

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CrossFit at the Grassroots Level

While the workouts had been more-or-less set for about six weeks prior to the event, they weren't announced on the 2010 Games Web site until just over two days prior to the sectional, which kicked off March 27 at the Edmonton Garrison military facility in Alberta, Canada.

The WODs, programmed by the CrossFit Edmonton team of Williams and Auty Brooks, were classic CrossFit.

"Our main goal was to just provide as broad a spectrum of movements and challenges as possible within the realization that this is the sectionals and we want people to be able to do as much of the movements and workouts as possible as near RX'd as possible," Williams explained. "So we knew we wanted to have a strength component and a met-con component, and then we loved the idea of a classical CrossFit-type workout, so we have a small triplet in there."

The final WOD was a chipper Williams said was "somewhat based on the 2009 Games."

As with any large CrossFit competition, the venue can dictate the WODs to some extent, but Williams didn't feel particularly hamstrung by the Edmonton Garrison Military Fitness Centre. The cavernous field house has a 200-meter track circling a large infield, and a mezzanine above the main floor has enough pull-up stations to accommodate 12 athletes at once. The equipment itself was mostly pulled from CrossFit Edmonton, with a few extra pieces borrowed from the venue.

In contrast to sectionals that threw CrossFit's most challenging movements at the athletes, the Central Canada organizers didn't feel the need to cobble together a WOD of 30 muscle-ups, 60 handstand push-ups and 90 pistols.

"From our opinion, we just didn't feel that that's valuable at a sectional level but absolutely agree it's an important component of fitness and CrossFit," Williams said of including "bottleneck movements" most CrossFitters find very difficult. "I mean, we use (them) within our own box, but it's just that at a sectional level we didn't feel that muscle-ups, handstand push-ups and a lot more of the intense gymnastics movements are really necessary as a tester to filter or find athletes that are going to go on to the regional level."

The WODS

WOD 1

3RM overhead squat

WOD 2

Max thrusters in 7 minutes (95/65 lb.)

WOD 3

Five rounds for time of:

5 cleans (155/105 lb.)

10 burpees

Run 200 meters

WOD 4: The Canadian Crippler

30 pull-ups

15 deadlifts (225/155 lb.)

Run 400 meters

30 push-ups

15 push presses/jerks (135/85 lb.)

30 squats

15 front squats (135/85 lb.)

Run 400 meters

15 deadlifts (225/155 lb.)

30 pull-ups

"It's a community-building experience. It's a CrossFit-building experience. We wanted to see it as an opportunity for literally anybody to experience a CrossFit competition."

—Chad Williams

"I would expect that top athletes are going to have those skill sets, but I just don't see the necessity for it at a sectional level ... It's a community-building experience. It's a CrossFit-building experience. We wanted to see it as an opportunity for literally anybody to experience a CrossFit competition."

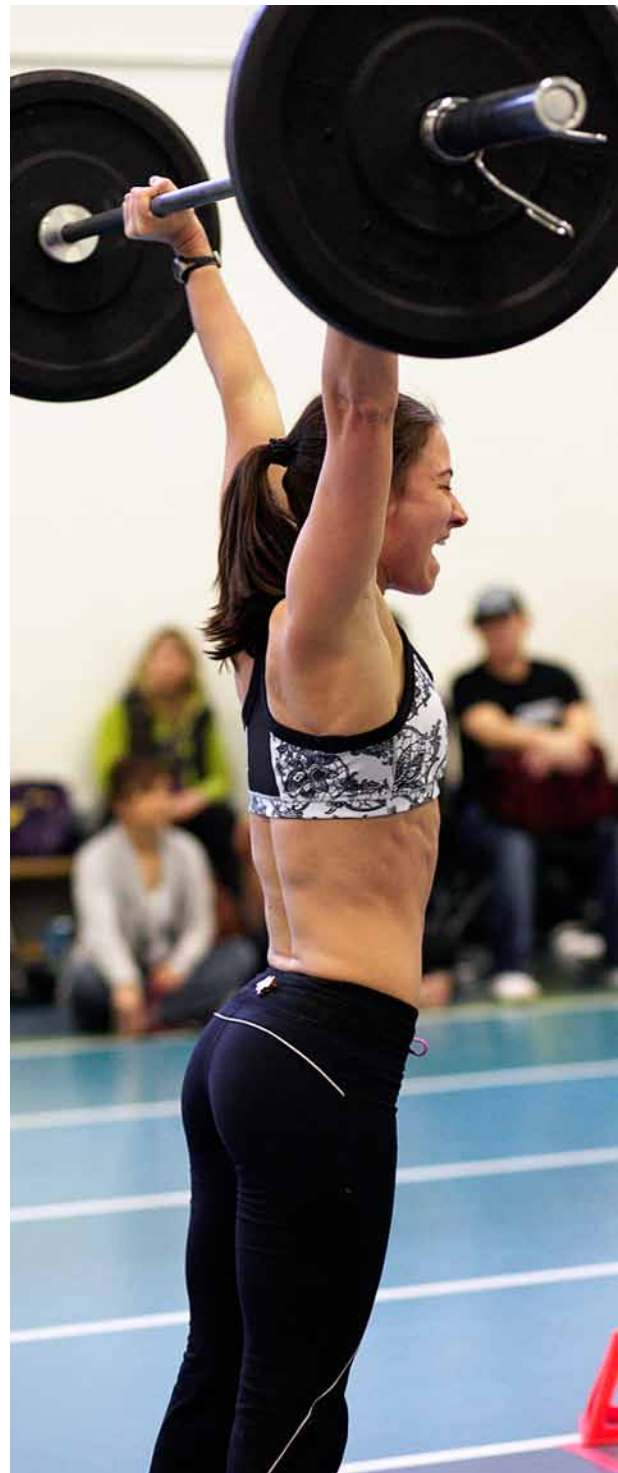
And a lot of athletes came to experience the competition. Sixty males and 47 females from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were registered before the event, though those numbers dropped slightly because of pre-event withdrawals due to injury. About 45 volunteers served the athletes, including 2009 Games competitors D.J. Wickham, Michael FitzGerald and Lauren Pryor, as well as 2007 Games champion James (OPT) FitzGerald.

Sights of the Sectionals

The event itself was pure CrossFit from start to finish: music pumping, bars bouncing, and coaches, athletes and spectators screaming. Only the beer garden and tent city of The Ranch in Aromas were missing, but late March on the Canadian Prairies doesn't lend itself well to outdoor fitness contests.



Chad Williams/CrossFit Edmonton



Chad Williams/CrossFit Edmonton

OPT (left) served as head judge for the weekend, and athletes such as Tania Tétrault Vrga (right) of CrossFit Winnipeg vied for a total of 30 spots in the Canadian Regionals to be held in Calgary at the end of May.

Some of the highlights of the sectional tell the story:

CrossFit Games 2007 second-place finisher **Brett Marshall**, sick as a dog on Day 1, managed a 245-lb. triple overhead squat at a body weight of about 150 lb., which was good enough for a tie with **Jeremy Meredith** in WOD 1. Meredith later annihilated WOD 2 by pounding out 15 more thrusters than any other male competitor. Before the event, **OPT** had mentioned the 22-year-old from Fort McMurray, Alta., as one to watch, and Meredith didn't disappoint. He went on to finish four spots below overall winner **Erik Szakaly**, who actually trains at a Globo Gym.

Former powerlifter **Angela Desjarlais**, a police officer who trains at CrossFit Regina, put her strength to great use in the first WOD, tripling 155 lb. to take top spot. She later notched a tie in the thruster WOD with **Becky Hogg** and served notice that her strength isn't limited to a 200-lb. bench press. In another impressive show of strength, 108-lb. **Katrina Burton** of CrossFit Calgary managed three overhead reps at 145 lb. to take fourth place in the WOD.

Curt Manning of Spark Sport Conditioning made short work of WOD 3 and became an instant favorite when he managed to finish the workout just as the dynamic Marshall was starting his last lap of the track. Spark founder **Kim Layton** told the *Journal* that Manning is an electrician—and a beast.

Throughout the weekend, various trainers, friends and competitors jogged laps inside the track while motivating tired athletes to run just a little bit faster. The most creative motivator award went to **Funbobby Kwasny**, who ran his dog alongside Marshall and **Dan Rogers** as they ran 200-meter laps. The two athletes were almost neck-and-neck for all of the final chipper, with Rogers beating Marshall to the bar for a final 30 pull-ups. When the Calgary firefighter arrived a few seconds later, you could see a small smile on his face just before he started his pull-ups. Marshall went on to beat Rogers by 37 seconds and received warm congratulations from training partner OPT when he dropped off the bar. Erik Szakaly finished third, which put him in first place overall.



Chad Williams/CrossFit Edmonton

WOD 2 featured a grueling test: seven minutes of thrusters (95/65 lb.). The top women were in the 90s, while two men managed to break 100 reps.



OPT and the 2010 Games

When asked if he could compete with all the young firebreathers ripping up the sectionals, OPT, 36, laughed: “Yeah. And Brett Marshall? It’s going to be tough.”

Last year, OPT was a late entrant to the games after Coach Greg Glassman gave past champions automatic qualification. With only about five weeks to train for the Games, OPT had to put together a crash course to prepare himself. That showed in Aromas, when the popular athlete made the Top 16 but was forced to withdraw from the final WOD with injuries.

This year, he hopes it will be a different story.

“I’m feeling really good,” he said. “I’ve been training all this year—some ups and downs—but I’ve been very happy with my training. I’m going to compete this year. I went last year to be part of it, and this year I’m going to compete. I’m not going to show up as being a person who’s allowed to come and compete because I won the first year. I’m going to win it. I’m not going to just do OK this time.”

OPT himself floated throughout the WODs as head judge and took extra time to motivate failing athletes to coax out a few more reps. OPT even had the opportunity to bark some instructions to his wife, **Leighanne**, who finished in 19th.

Tattooed boxer **Shae Therrien** of CrossFit Regina finished sixth in the final chipper, but it cost him some blood. Determined to finish the pull-ups, Therrien smashed his chin on the bar and drew blood before launching a giant kip to get himself over one more time. We’d guess Therrien has taken a few shots to the jaw, because the blow didn’t seem to faze him at all.

Eleven females didn’t complete the last workout, including **Tammy Lechmann** of Pure Fitness/CrossFit Red Deer North. Tammy was the only athlete to come from her affiliate and didn’t have a coach with her either, so the crowd jumped in and cheered her to within one pull-up of finishing in one of the weekend’s special moments.

Kim Czismazia finished 11th overall and will be heading to the regionals in Calgary, but she’s no stranger to the pressure of competition. Czismazia won two ice-climbing gold medals at the X Games in the late ’90s, as well as an Ice Climbing World Cup. The only climber who might be able to beat her consistently is her husband, extreme sports hero **Will Gadd**. Gadd owns a World Cup Ice Climbing title and has three X Games gold medals around his neck. Pull-ups, by the way, were not an issue for Czismazia.

“For the regionals ... the programming will be such that you have to bleed CrossFit and understand the emotional and physical aspects of all of it in order to get through the next weekend.”

— OPT

Just like the men, female frontrunners **Chelsea Miller** and **Shelly Fleming** hit the pull-up bar almost in unison in the last WOD and raced for the finish. Miller finished ahead of Fleming but 17 seconds behind **Heather Gillespie** of CrossFit Lethbridge in a spectacular finish that would have looked good on TV.

On to the Regionals

After the competition wrapped, Brooks was very happy with the results: clear lines had been drawn between those who would move on and those with work to do, but all athletes had a great time and experienced a CrossFit competition.

"I think it definitely allowed people to run through the gauntlet of modal domains and time domains, and it really allowed the folks to have strengths in some areas as well as weed out folks with weaknesses in other areas," he said.

Williams was similarly pleased:

"Everybody was happy with the programming and felt it was very well rounded to allow everyone to participate. Everyone was happy with the schedule and flow of events, especially the athletes You look at the spectators leaning across the track trying to yell at the athletes to push to do more reps. The energy was amazing, and that was probably my biggest moment of feeling like it was a success."

OPT, who won the CrossFit Games in 2007 and has competed in all three main events, was impressed by the programming.

"Every athlete that leaves here has the same comment: 'I have been enlightened. This has changed me forever.' And these are people who came 16th and 17th. They're coming up and saying, 'That was the greatest. I didn't make it, and I was very close, but I'm leaving here and I'm changing gears.' So that's exactly what we wanted."

As for the Canadian Regionals to be held in Calgary May 29-30, OPT shared a bit of info without giving away any specifics about the event and the programming that will separate the good from the elite.

"For the regionals, it's coming to the point now where the regionals last year was exposure to CrossFit, and this year it's not anymore," he explained. "This year it will be three days. It will be the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I think I'm going to make it that way for the individual athletes.

We will definitely separate the CrossFitter and the fittest person—which will be grouped together or not—and the people who have just made it to the regionals. There will be a definite separation. So the programming will be such that you have to bleed CrossFit and understand the emotional and physical aspects of all of it in order to get through the next weekend."

This was the first time sectionals were held prior to the CrossFit Games, and OPT believes the competition at the grassroots level is only going to get more intense as the sport grows. At some point, it's going to be very difficult to even get to a regional, with only a select few heading on to the CrossFit Games.

"The competition is becoming exponentially more fierce here year after year," he said. "Next year, you're going to see in Alberta by itself, it's going to be savage competition, and every other province is going to be the same way. I think the growth has been exponential."

For complete results of the CrossFit Games sectionals, visit games2010.crossfit.com.



Robin Maier/CrossFit Regina

About the Author

Mike Warkentin is the managing editor of the **CrossFit Journal**. He enjoyed meeting all the athletes, trainers and affiliate owners at the Central Canada Sectional.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

On Top of the Western World

Dusty Wunderlich uses CrossFit training to scale Aconcagua—the highest mountain outside Asia.

By Dusty Wunderlich

April 2010



All photographs courtesy of Dusty Wunderlich

Aconcagua is a great peak to test one's high-altitude threshold, especially for those who have ambitions to climb higher. Located in Argentina, Aconcagua is the highest peak in the Western Hemisphere and measures 22,841 feet (6,962 meters), just shy of the magic 7,000-meter mark (22,966 feet). My attempt on Aconcagua would be my fourth time attempting a peak above 19,000 feet. Most of those experiences have occurred during my progression into CrossFit, and it's been fascinating to watch my ability to withstand high altitudes in relation to my CrossFit training.

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High-Altitude CrossFit

Two years before I left for Aconcagua, I had just been introduced to CrossFit and was also making my first attempt at a high-altitude peak. You could say I was a rookie in both regards, and it showed in both areas. I was a college athlete and always kept myself in good physical condition—or so I thought. However, I was becoming increasingly bored with my fitness routines and was having a very difficult time trying to find a balance of fitness for all of my different endeavors.

I will never forget my first CrossFit WOD: Michael. As most before me have done, I looked at the WOD on the site with pure confidence, but Michael crushed me that afternoon and I was immediately hooked on CrossFit.

I was able to get in a couple of months of sporadic WODs at my local gym before I set out to northern India to climb my first high-altitude peak, Stok Kangri. Stok Kangri is located in the Ladakh region, which is the birthplace of Tibetan Buddhism and one of the most incredible places I have ever been. My excursion started with a flight from New Delhi to Leh, which was set back one day due to weather.

Leh sits in the middle of the Himalaya Range and has an elevation of 12,000 feet. I spent a day and two nights settling into this altitude and seemed to feel good for the climb. I was set to climb Stok Kangri (20,135 feet) on a four-day plan, which turned out to be too quick a climbing schedule. I definitely benefited from living at 6,500 feet in Lake Tahoe and could feel the benefits of my relatively new CrossFit training; however, it was not nearly enough to overcome my lack of mountaineering experience and the aggressive climbing schedule. I was able to will myself 300 feet from the summit before I retreated with pretty severe altitude sickness. This was definitely a healthy dose of humility I was lucky to receive early in my mountaineering and CrossFit journey.

Once I got back to the United States, I couldn't wait to start planning my next expedition and dive further into my CrossFit training. Luckily, by the time I got home the first CrossFit affiliate in South Lake Tahoe was opening: CrossFit Lake Tahoe. I now had an arena to enhance my CrossFit skills and training to ultimately help build my high-altitude tolerance. I spent the next six months training at Lake Tahoe CrossFit three to four times a week.



The world's highest peaks require elite fitness of anyone who climbs them, and Dustin Wunderlich found that fitness with CrossFit.

I was extremely nervous about how my body would handle altitude the second time around and was truly hoping my increased CrossFit training would help me handle it better.

Because of my lean build and relatively light weight, I found the gymnastics and cardio aspects of CrossFit came to me easily, but the strength endurance was very difficult for me. I was able to perform the WODs in quick times but was not able to RX many of them. My Olympic lifts were strong for my size but still not up to par for an elite athlete. Right before I left for my next high-altitude climb, I could deadlift 330 lb. and had a Fran time of around four minutes with 75 lb. I had made good improvements but still had a long way to go before I hit an elite level of fitness.

I was extremely nervous about how my body would handle altitude the second time around and was truly hoping my increased CrossFit training would help me handle it better. I was able to summit Kilimanjaro in six days with few issues, but I did experience a massive headache and considerable fatigue on summit day, which is typical of high altitude and a big summit day but still unsatisfactory performance in my opinion. Kilimanjaro was a great experience but an easy climb from a mountaineering viewpoint, so I made a vow to further increase my CrossFit training and mountaineering skills when I got home.

For the next six months after my summit of Kilimanjaro, I started to CrossFit six to seven days a week and began pushing myself beyond my comfort level. At the end of six months I had brought myself to RX every WOD I had faced, and I had considerably decreased my times while increasing my lifting capacity. During this time I was able to easily summit Mount Rainier on a winter ascent, and I climbed a technical mixed route on Mount Sill (14,153 feet) in the Sierra. I was now starting to become more and more confident with my fitness level and my ability to push the envelope on larger mountains.

Climb 22,841 Feet for Time

In my last week of training before I hopped on my long flight to Argentina, I had just arrived at the gym for one of my last WODs and was reluctantly going to attempt Nancy, which is not a favorite of mine. At 5'9" and 150 lb., completing 75 repetitions of 95-lb. overhead squats puts quite a toll on my frame. Nevertheless, I saw this WOD like all WODs of the last year: as mental and physical preparation for facing high altitude. I dove into Nancy without a thought, and it was actually a WOD I thought back to when I labored through parts of my expedition.



Rugged terrain is challenging at any altitude, but it's a truly formidable test of fitness at altitudes approaching 20,000 feet.



At altitude, the author found his body was craving sweets and carbs rather than the Zone/Paleo fare he had packed.

Two days later, on the day before I left the country, I took on my last WOD, Chelsea. After 30 minutes on the minute of five pull-ups, 10 push-ups and 15 squats, I decided to push on to 40 rounds to test myself one last time. I felt truly ready to face the upcoming physical and mental challenges in my life thanks to CrossFit. I finally felt I had successfully reached a new level of fitness before my biggest challenge yet in the mountains. I was extremely pleased with my progress and was leaving for Argentina with a 3:30 Fran time, 395-lb. deadlift, 4:15 Diane and 815-lb. CrossFit Total. My body and mind felt in the best form of my life, and for the first time I was extremely confident to head into high altitude.

Our expedition started with a leisurely pace to base camp, Camp Argentina, at 14,500 feet. Our group took three days to make the 25-mile approach to base camp, and everyone was acclimating well. I was taking notice of our entire team—mainly their form of training and fitness. In my opinion, which was confirmed by others on the mountain, we probably had the fittest crew on Aconcagua at the time. Our team was also very experienced, and we had a combination of one Everest summit, over 20 Denali summits and nearly 10 Aconcagua summits.

Our group comprised mostly endurance athletes who spent a tremendous amount of time running, swimming and cycling. Two of the guys in our group were full-time guides who spent more than 200 days a year in the mountains, so their training came from mountain life. It was great to watch the performance of all the athletes and discuss fitness training for high-altitude peaks. One other individual in our group used CrossFit training regularly at an affiliate in Indianapolis, and it was great to have a fellow CrossFitter on the team. At 57, he was one of the strongest guys I have seen on a mountain.

Once at base camp, we spent a few days resting to let our bodies properly acclimate to the new altitude. Like most expeditions, this left us with quite a bit of time on our hands. The two full-time guides in the group brought a couple of pairs of rock-climbing shoes, which gave us the opportunity to go bouldering in an incredible area. It was a great experience to pull off a few pure anaerobic bouldering moves at 14,500 feet. When we had the opportunity to get on a few overhanging problems that required very aggressive moves, I was amazed by the strength and ability I had to pull off difficult moves at this altitude. It was entertaining to watch someone fall off the boulder or finish the route gasping for air like they just rowed 2,000 meters. Joel Kaufmann and John Race, the two full-time guides, were quite complimentary of my bouldering strength. I attributed it mostly to my gymnastics training on the rings, and they smiled and said that really strong climbers commonly train on rings.

One other individual in our group used CrossFit training regularly at an affiliate in Indianapolis At 57, he was one of the strongest guys I have seen on a mountain.

The weather began to move in as we started to move up, which made for a much different environment. We spent the mornings and early afternoons carrying 40-50 lb. loads to higher altitudes for a cache or to set-up new camps. The carries would usually leave me pretty tired, and my heart rate increased considerably from the new altitude, but I was always amazed by how quickly my body would recover and how quickly my heart rate would decrease.

At high altitude, I typically suffer from severe headaches and lack of energy multiple times along the expedition, but this was not happening. I attribute my recovery entirely to my increased training schedule. Since returning from Kilimanjaro, I had increased my training days from three to four a week to six and sometimes seven days a week. At first this was quite hard on my body, and I was sore almost every day, but over time my body adapted and was able to comfortably handle training six to seven days a week.

During our down time I had numerous discussions with John Race, owner of Northwest Mountain School, about his thoughts on fitness and nutrition on high-altitude peaks. Race is one of the most successful and safest guides on the planet, with over 60 expeditions worldwide under his belt. His experience and knowledge about mountain athletes are priceless. We discussed CrossFit at great length, and Race believes the program is among the best he has seen for high-altitude training.

The camaraderie, support and drive I received during my training enabled me to stand on top of the Western Hemisphere and feel strong at high altitude for the first time.



Pushing through Filthy Fifty gave Dusty Wunderlich the mental strength to overcome some of the most extreme conditions on the planet.

Before he came across CrossFit, he would tell his clients to continue doing the cardio training they were doing but add in manual labor. He would advise them to go shovel snow, dig a ditch or build a fence because so much of expedition living is manual labor or, in CrossFit terms, “functional fitness.” Throughout the expedition we would be digging tent platforms, moving big rocks to anchor down tents and hauling heavy loads. I was always thinking about the functional movements we were performing, and I had no doubt that my work capacity and my body’s ability to adapt to less oxygen were a combination of metabolic conditioning and strength training in the CrossFit setting.

The other vital aspect I was beginning to notice while I was on the expedition was the benefit of the mental toughness I had gained during my CrossFit training. In my early climbs I would always get very concerned about any headache, nausea or fatigue I felt. This is definitely something you want to take seriously and monitor, but it was mainly paranoia in my case before. This time around when I would feel the onset of such symptoms, I would smile and think back to Fight Gone Bad or the Filthy Fifty and how I felt much worse. That usually gave me the confidence to push forward.



Few people will get a view like this without a training program that provides them with elite levels of fitness.

Another benefit was the cold environment I had trained in at Lake Tahoe. I split my time between CrossFit Lake Tahoe and South Tahoe CrossFit. South Tahoe CrossFit has a 5,000-square-foot facility that can be difficult to heat in the middle of a Sierra winter, so most of the WODs we performed would be in the 40s, and if we ran it would be in the 20s or 30s. This was great for my lungs. I noticed that the cold, dry mountain air was not affecting my lungs, and my training also gave me a mental edge each day when it was time to get up and step out into the freezing temperatures.

The one aspect of the expedition that I still have out to jury is nutrition. I definitely went into the climb much too lean, which didn't hurt me for this expedition but would have on a longer ascent. I found it quite difficult to put enough calories through my body, and at night I would put down as much food as possible but would be starving two hours later. To give an example of the calories burned at high altitude, the doctor in our group stated that on summit day we probably used 8,000 calories and maybe took in 1,000. You are working on major deficiencies in high altitude, and nutrition plays a vital role.

However, the body reacts differently to foods at high altitude, and one major issue is the digestion of fat. The body has a hard time digesting fat at altitude, which is an issue for a CrossFitter used to major loads of fat in his or her diet. I was loaded down with Zone Bars and Paleo Kits but found that my body did not want this food at higher altitude. I was craving sugar and carbohydrates, which I imagine was due to the caloric deficiencies. One will notice that many experienced mountaineers live on a diet mainly of candy bars and sweets at high altitude. Nutrition at altitude is a big question mark for me at this point, but I look forward to experimenting with this on future climbs and seek the advice of experts on this subject matter.

Editor's note: For one CrossFitter's ideas about nutrition and climbing, read Rob Miller's CrossFit Journal article [Zone on the Rocks: Fueling Performance](#).

On Day 12 we moved to high camp, Cholera Camp (19,600 feet), and began to prepare for our summit bid the next day. We had a two-day weather window to make our assault on Aconcagua. The next day's forecast included 20-30 mph winds, which was just on the borderline. Aconcagua is known for severe winds that can cause frostbite very easily at high altitude.

It had been three days since we had a rest day, but my body felt in top form even though I was sleeping at altitudes nearly above what I had ever climbed. I had my typical restless night of sleep before a summit attempt but still felt strong when we woke at 4:30 a.m. We spent the first two hours ascending a moderate snow slope. The wind was strong and the temperatures were low, but the team was moving at a great pace. At our first break I had now broken my altitude record and felt as strong as I had ever felt on a mountain. We continued on as the sun started to expose the entire range around us.

It was about this time we moved onto the Canaletta traverse, which is not hit by direct sunlight in the morning and was exposed to bitter winds. As we were going across the traverse, my mind started to think about my training and how it applied to mountaineering. Many people on the mountain have a Globo Gym mentality and want to use any gadget, device or fad trainer to help them get to the summit. People will use hypoxia tents to prepare their bodies or take Diamox to increase respiration and help acclimate. Diamox and hypoxia tents have their place and purpose but are usually abused by those who want to cut corners. I think my mentality is that of CrossFit: no gadgets and no bullshit. I was proud to be climbing without the aid of gadgets or pharmaceuticals. I would rather take my defeat with grace and know that the mountain beat me fair and square than use any aid to get me to a summit.

The Canaletta traverse was all that they said it would be: cold. We labored across the traverse with every square inch of our body covered so we did not risk frostbite. It proved to be quite difficult to breathe at high altitude with your face and nose covered without fogging up your goggles. At one point a strong climber had to stop because he was hyperventilating. As I was struggling to breathe through all the gear, I started to think back to a WOD I performed throughout the last two months of my training. I would do five rounds of five squat cleans and front squats for time, which does not sound that difficult—except I would do it without breathing through my mouth so my body received less oxygen.

We ended the Canaletta traverse in great time and were now only 900 feet from the top of the Western Hemisphere. Our team efficiently climbed the steep slope, passing others who were bent over or collapsed on the side. On Sunday, Jan. 31, our entire team stood on top of Aconcagua. Our summit attempt took us only seven hours and 15 minutes. I'm not going to exaggerate and say it was easy. The summit day was still the most physically demanding event of my life, but I enjoyed every minute thanks to the transformation of my mind and body through CrossFit.



On summit day, Wunderlich relied on CrossFit training to get him through the final 3,000 feet required to stand atop the Western Hemisphere.

Shocking the Body

After being back home and reflecting on my experience, I have a few new ideas about getting prepared for my next high-altitude expedition. People who CrossFit and Zone strictly are elite athletes who have conditioned their bodies for peak performance and health, but it is a fact that living at high altitude is going to affect even an elite athlete's immune system. For this reason, there are times on an expedition when you will feel symptoms of altitude or illness that are not normal in a day-to-day controlled environment.

I will put more effort and thought into shocking my body in training to help program my body and mind for the trials of the mountain. For example, I want to get up at 2 a.m. (a normal summit-day start) and perform Murph. Or I will take in a fifth of the calories I normally would and perform Fran. I also will push myself to go train when my body is tired or sick. I know this sounds extreme, but that is what CrossFitters are, and I believe for some this is the next level of CrossFit. Is it any different than a firefighter doing Fran in full turnout gear?

Developing the body and mind through functional fitness to follow our passions or perform our jobs at the highest level is the greatest satisfaction one can receive. The next question is how can we continue to adapt training to the environments we will face in the field. I'm positive that soldiers, firefighters and police officers have had these same thoughts, which I believe will lead to the next generation of CrossFit WODs and the evolution of our philosophy.

Aconcagua was an amazing experience, and being a part of the CrossFit community in preparation made the experience even richer. The camaraderie, support and drive I received during my training enabled me to stand on top of the Western Hemisphere and feel strong at high altitude for the first time. I look forward to continuing my CrossFit training and programming around my mountaineering pursuits. I am currently looking at an expedition to Cho Oyu, the sixth highest peak in the world and a great training platform for Everest. I will continue to monitor my training and nutrition carefully as I strive to climb higher.

CrossFit has not only changed my body but also my mind. The philanthropic spirit of CrossFit motivated me to look for more purpose in my pursuits, and as a result my close friend and I started a non-profit last year

(Genung Wunderlich Opportunity Foundation), and Aconcagua was my first climb to raise funds for humanitarian projects. We are also in the process of putting together a Reno/Tahoe [Fittest of the Sierras](#) competition with the nine local affiliates, and all proceeds will go to a scholarship fund for firefighters, police officers and military personnel in the area.

I do not believe that without this community I would be in my current mindset, so I have great humility when I send my deepest regards to those who have influenced me in the CrossFit community. It would be a great honor for CrossFit community to follow the progress of the Genung Wunderlich Opportunity Foundation and give any feedback or thoughts on our direction.



About the Author

Dusty Wunderlich is an investment banker for ARVCO Financial Ventures and co-founder and chairman of the Genung Wunderlich Opportunity Foundation (GWOFF). Dusty grew up with a sports background and played Division 1 golf at Missouri State University, and he still carries a scratch handicap. He also spent his childhood in the mountains, honing his skills as a mountaineer in hopes that he could one day climb the big mountains of the world. CrossFit has allowed Dusty to expand his horizons and take on new and different challenges that were unattainable before.

He also has a passion for travel and has had the opportunity to climb peaks and conduct business on six continents. He believes his CrossFit training has transformed not only his body but also his mind. Dusty continues to set new goals to push his physical and mental limits while attaching a worthy cause to his efforts. You can follow Dusty's latest physical pursuits and philanthropic endeavors on the [GWOFF Web site](#) or the [GWOFF blog](#).

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

If the Shoe Fits ...

Athletes have a host of footwear choices for WODs. Richard Grimes surveys experts and top athletes to determine what their advice means in a GPP fitness program.

By Richard Grimes

April 2010



Susannah Dy/CrossFit Journal

I remember the first time I thought about the importance of shoes in CrossFit.

1 of 7

I was in my garage looking for my shoes so that I could work out. I had been looking for 20 minutes already and I was itching to get started on my box jumps. When I couldn't find the shoes, I decided I was just making excuses, so I walked up to the box, planted my socked feet and started jumping. I performed exactly three perfect box jumps. On the fourth jump, my socks slid like butter on a hot skillet and I fell backward and ended up in a position my less polite friends call the "Hucklebuck."

The Hucklebuck is not a good position to be in.

While I was in the air, though, I could see both of my huge, gorilla-like feet with the ceiling just beyond them. I remember my thought at that exact moment:

"Maybe I should have worn shoes."

So when the *CrossFit Journal* asked me to survey people about what shoes they wear when they CrossFit, it seemed like a slam dunk. Call up a few CrossFitters, send a few e-mails and write down the names of shoes. Common sense says shoes are important for athletic activity. They protect your feet, prevent injuries, improve performance and potentially help you avoid the Hucklebuck.

Except when they don't.

Look around the gym or the street lately and you'll see people exercising barefoot or in minimalist shoes. You might even see a serious triathlete running barefoot on grass. Even Nike, the biggest athletic-shoe company in the world, is selling a shoe called the Nike Free for people "who want to reap the benefits of barefoot training."

Some CrossFitters are even wearing Vibram Fivefingers, a glove-like shoe with individual pockets for each toe. Vibram Fivefingers can boast the distinction of having the most obscene-sounding name ever given to a shoe, and they're also the first footwear to make your feet look like Fred Flintstone's. They look so odd that one anonymous poster on a CrossFit board raved about Vibrams but explained that he rarely wore them because "he got tired of explaining them."

Are these people crazy? Why dump exercise shoes and risk glass in your feet or, even worse, the ridicule of your fellow gym members? Because more than a few experts are starting to think that shoes may actually cause injury.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

CrossFitters have a host of footwear choices, but at the end of the day, shoes won't lift the bar or run the race for you.

The Running Expert

One of those experts is an evolutionary biologist and professor from Harvard named Daniel Lieberman. Lieberman spends much of his time figuring out why humans evolved the way they did. In particular, he studied how they moved. Recently, he's been studying living humans and noticed that people running barefoot tend to land on the forward part of their foot and use the arch as a kind of spring. People who run in shoes tend to land on their heels, significantly multiplying the amount of force their body endures. In other words, shoes may actually sabotage your body's natural suspension and cause injuries.

Dr. Lon Kilgore wrote a recent *CrossFit Journal* article ([Running the Wrong Way?](#)) in which he proposed a similar theory: modern footwear containing elevated heels packed with cushioning technology may actually encourage poor running technique and defeat the foot's anatomical design.

Before I contacted CrossFitters, I contacted Lieberman. I wanted to talk to one of the experts to find out if he recommended a specific type of shoe for CrossFit-like activity. Like most scientists, Lieberman has an annoying habit of refusing to speculate without evidence, so when I asked him which shoes CrossFit athletes should use, he replied, "I really, really want to stay away from the shoe-recommending business."

This was unfortunate, because I really, really needed to talk to people in that kind of business. Even if he couldn't recommend a particular kind of shoe, I wanted to know if he or anyone else had done studies specifically measuring the relationship between athletic shoes and injury.

"I find it quite remarkable," he replied, "how little work has been done on the relationship between shoes and injury"

A few days later, I read a transcript of a National Public Radio interview with Lieberman. In it, it's mentioned that Lieberman has actually run marathons. A thought occurred to me and I whipped out an e-mail asking Lieberman whether he personally ran barefoot.

I got his e-mail reply the next morning. The time stamp said it was delivered at 5:38 a.m., which both impressed me and made me mentally remove "evolutionary biologist" from the list of things I want to be when I grow

up. It turns out that Lieberman has run two marathons, the last one in minimal shoes. He also does the barefoot thing, too.

"I like to run barefoot 3-5 miles a week when it's not cold, but I prefer to do most of my running in minimal shoes."



Susanah Dy/CrossFit Journal

Minimalist footwear is popular right now, even if some question the fashion appeal and functionality of the shoes.

"I like to run barefoot
3-5 miles a week when it's not
cold, but I prefer to do
most of my running in
minimal shoes."

— Daniel Lieberman

The Top Coaches

Now I needed some training experts. So I contacted Mike Burgener, Olympic weightlifting coach. Burgener runs Mike's Gym, a Regional Training Center for USA Weightlifting. I asked him if there was an all-purpose shoe a CrossFitter could wear, or whether an athlete should use different shoes depending on whether he or she was running or lifting. His answer? If you're working on Olympic lifts, you should be wearing Olympic shoes—for stability more than anything else.

"Personally," Burgener says, "I would gladly sacrifice a few seconds to wear the required footwear."

Of course, this made me feel like a total tool for CrossFitting in my socks, but Burgener made me feel better, though, when he mentioned that he once saw a Greek athlete snatch 330 lb. in shower shoes.

Louie Simmons, the legendary powerlifter and strength coach at Westside Barbell, goes with an iconic—and relatively cheap—shoe for powerlifting:

"For powerlifting you want to wear Chuck Taylors, and for specialized sports you should use specialized shoes."

This is really good news in a world where a pair of shoes can cost hundreds of dollars. Chucks are one of the most basic athletic shoes, and they've been made almost the same way for almost 100 years—so why are they ideal for lifting big weight?

"To squat, you must push your feet apart, never downward," Simmons says. "The regular shoe will roll over. With Chucks you can apply force on the sides of the shoe without the shoe coming off of the ground for squatting and sumo deadlifting."

"For powerlifting you want to wear Chuck Taylors, and for specialized sports you should use specialized shoes."

— Louie Simmons



Susanmh Dy/CrossFit Journal

Experts recommend weightlifting shoes (top) and Chuck Taylor All-Stars for Olympic lifting and powerlifting, but "general physical preparedness" means you're ready for any task regardless of footwear.

He added, "It's been proven at Ball State University."

Simmons, of course, has his lifters use an ultra-wide stance in competition, so traction is far more important than it would be to an Olympic lifter driving his feet down rather than apart.

Another fan of Chuck Taylors is Chuck Carswell, HQ trainer and flow master for Level 1 and Level 2 CrossFit certifications.

"I like Chuck Taylors for general WODs, Nike Frees for running and Oly shoes for heavy days—even bench press," he explains.

In general, Carswell thinks CrossFitters should wear what they feel comfortable wearing. Carswell, however, did outline an approach to choosing shoes that embraces the spirit of CrossFit. He suggests you let your numbers decide for you.

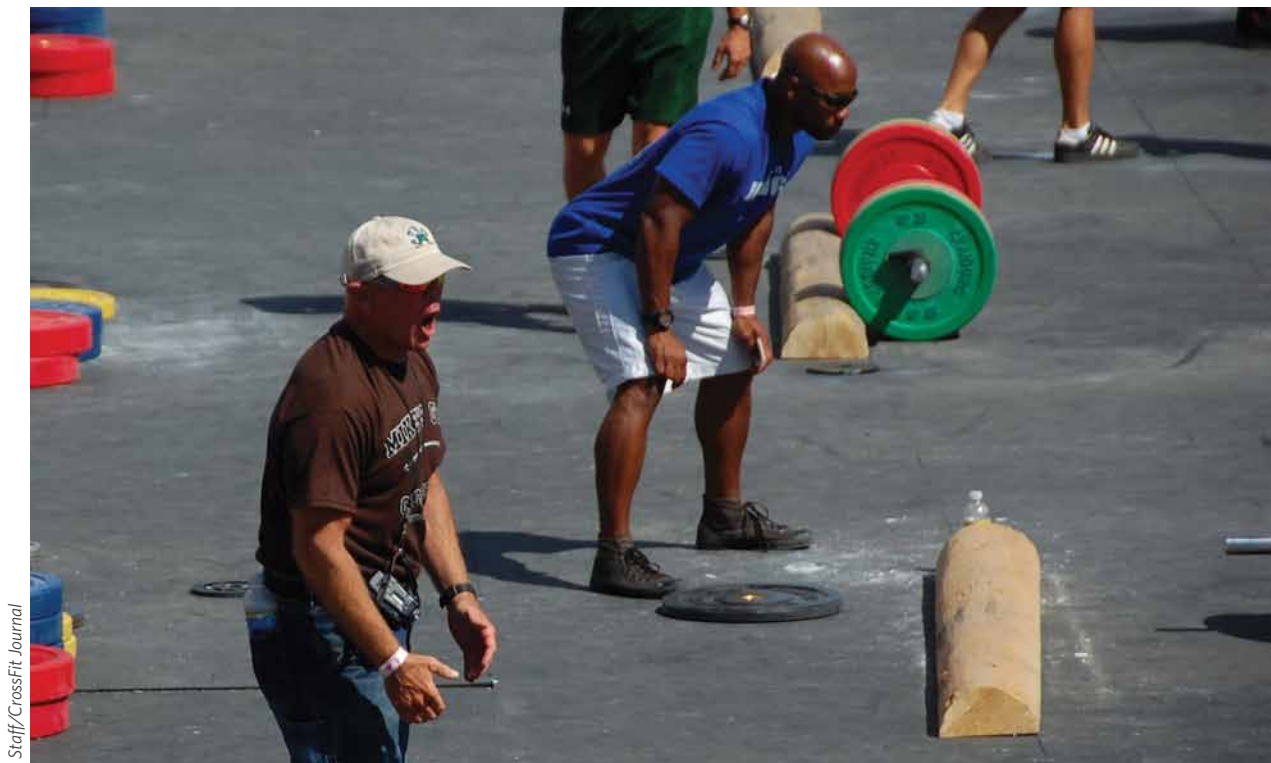
"The numbers don't lie," Carswell says. "So if they suggest that you run the 400 meters faster in your Oly shoes and you snatch more in your running shoes, wear them ..."

And how does the trainer feel about Vibrams? He hasn't tried them yet.

"Thongs between more than two toes sketches me out a little."

Thanks, Chuck. Now it sketches me out, too.

**"Personally, I would gladly
sacrifice a few seconds to
wear the required footwear."
— Mike Burgener**



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Mike Burgener (left) is an Olympic-lifting specialist who recommends weightlifting shoes to his athletes. HQ trainer Chuck Carswell uses different shoes for different WODs but has a soft spot for Chuck Taylors.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

2007 CrossFit Games champ Jolie Gentry uses weightlifting shoes for most WODs that don't involve running.

The Champion

I figured it was time to find a really competitive female CrossFitter and get her views on the best shoes to wear. Jolie Gentry fit the bill. She was the women's champion in the 2007 CrossFit Games and placed fifth in the 2008 games and seventh in '09. She deadlifts close to 300 lb. at a weight of about 125 lb. She has completed a Fran in less than four minutes, which is way, way faster than almost any writer could do it (without naming names).

Gentry detailed her standard equipment: "I pretty much wear my Adidas IronWork III weightlifting shoes every day I train unless I'm going to be running."

When running, she has several different pairs of running shoes she wears, depending on the rest of her clothes. If she's doing trails, though, she's got a definite favorite.

"I love my inov-8s."

Based in Great Britain, inov-8 produces shoes that are based on barefoot locomotion—but Gentry is not a fan of the barefoot craze.

"No way! I'd try the Nikes (Nike Free) because they look sweet," she says. "I'm not interested in running without shoes, and I have talked too much shit about Vibrams to buy a pair."

In the interest of journalism, I tried to get Gentry to detail the "shit" she has talked. So far, no dice.

The Local Gym

For those readers who think writing an article on CrossFitting shoes is a walk in the park, consider my visit to BGI Fitness in Jupiter, Fla. I had most of the bases covered: I had legendary instructors, HQ trainers and a CrossFit champion. I even had an evolutionary biologist. But I didn't have any local CrossFitters. I decided to visit BGI, which is down the road from me.

I called the day before I visited and explained that I was doing an article about shoes and would like to visit. I spoke to Christine Castelli, and though the conversation went well enough, she seemed less than enthused about my impending visit.

I showed up on a Friday afternoon, just in time, naturally, to interrupt a WOD. I introduced myself to Castelli and Tommy Orr. Both Castelli and Orr eyeballed me.

Then Castelli said it.

"So ... you want to look at people's shoes while they work out?"

This was exactly what I wanted to do—but it sounded way perverted when someone said it out loud. I quickly changed my game plan. Instead of staring at CrossFitters' feet, I spoke with Orr briefly. He was very practical and straightforward about CrossFitting and shoes.

"A couple of our members use Vibrams, but most just use some type of regular exercise shoe."

Weightlifting shoes were similarly straightforward: "If we're weightlifting and the client doesn't have weightlifting shoes, then we just have them do it in barefoot."

The Finish

Every CrossFitter has his or her own preferences when it comes to footwear, and there's little scientific evidence detailing the relationship between specific types of shoes and whether they prevent or cause injury. This seems to underscore the importance of experienced and certified trainers in CrossFit. They can point you toward the right shoes for each discipline—and they won't necessarily be the most expensive shoes, either.

Chuck Carswell probably makes a good point, too, when he tells you to pay attention to your numbers. They can be an indication of what's safe—and what works. But Carswell also advocates something he calls "forced comfort," or learning to be comfortable in uncomfortable situations. It means being prepared to run in Oly shoes or lift in a pair of Nike Frees, adjusting to the situation and adapting. It may not be the conclusion endorsed by scientists or subject-matter experts, but it's an idea CrossFit forces you to grapple with.

As for me, I've decided to work on designing a new shoe. They will look very similar to socks and will be built specifically for box jumping.

I'm gonna call them Vibram Hucklebucks.



About the Author



Richard Grimes started CrossFit a year ago and lives in southeastern Florida. He has written for newspapers, Web sites and magazines.

*He also writes under the name Grim Richard, and his *The Book of Gabriel* is available on Amazon.com or by visiting www.bookofgabriel.com. More of his writing can be found at www.grimrichard.com.*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

The Coaching Cycle

Straight from Corporate America, the Coaching Cycle can help CrossFit trainers teach complicated movements. Zach Zavadel removes the business suit and explains how.

By Zach Zavadel Keystone CrossFit

April 2010



Susannah Dy/CrossFit Journal

"So what do you do for a living, other than CrossFit?"

I'm often asked that question by my clients. Like many affiliate owners, I've got a full-time job and family responsibilities that require a large amount of my time. Usually, my answer is a complicated description of organizational development and talent management. To summarize, I help to maximize performance in employees through training and leadership development.

You're thinking, "That's nice, but what does all that have to do with CrossFit?"

Step by Step, Over and Over

Corporate America, while usually boring and monotonous, has a few gems that can be utilized in teaching and coaching clients in functional fitness. One of the leadership-development models I teach to employees at my organization is called the Coaching Cycle. I in no way invented this model, but it is fairly well known in the learning and training functions of many leading businesses. The Coaching Cycle also has great applicability in sports and, even more specifically, CrossFit training.

You can use this model to effectively manage and improve the performance of your clients, and the model is particularly helpful when clients are first learning a movement, whether it's the overhead squat or clean and jerk. I've also found it a valuable resource for clients who have been training awhile and seem to be stuck on something without much progress. It should be used in conjunction with the learning model and cues you learned at your Level I Certification. They are the foundation for your teaching; however, the Coaching Cycle helps simplify how to continually improve the performance of your clients.

The Coaching Cycle is a five-step process that ends only when mastery of the movement is achieved. It is important to remember that this cycle is just that: a series of steps that might have to be done over and over until your client performs the movement perfectly. The Coaching Cycle is as follows:

1. Tell them how to do it.
2. Show them how to do it.
3. Let them try it.
4. Observe their performance
5. Praise and redirect.



A CrossFit box is about as far from a boardroom as you can get, but good trainers borrow the best teaching tools from any environment, including the business world.

Corporate America,
while usually boring and
monotonous, has a few
gems that can be utilized in
teaching and coaching clients
in functional fitness.

Here's how you might use the Coaching Cycle with your client "Tim," who is new to CrossFit and just learning how to squat properly. As I'm sure many trainers do, I always conduct a skill-building/practice session prior to doing the WOD. This is the perfect opportunity to use the Coaching Cycle, as you don't want to be teaching during the WOD. Doing so risks injury (because they haven't mastered the movement) and produces a lower quality workout due to interruptions and slow pace. Your role during the workout is to provide encouragement and quick spot fixes to form and technique, not a lengthy discussion on corrections. Also, if I see Tim is not able to master the movement in our skill-building session, I take that exercise out of the workout and sub with something comparable.

Step 1

Tell your client how to do the movement. In our example with Tim, review correct squat form: foot placement, keeping his weight on his heels, maintaining proper lumbar curve, hitting full depth. Then explain what a full squat entails and what the requirements are for successful completion. I would also include what is not a proper squat; i.e., the guy at the gym who loads 300 lb. on the bar, only to squat down about 2 inches. Also tell Tim why each component of this movement is important for both safety and maximum performance. After you've sufficiently explained the movement, it's time to show it to the client.

Step 2

Show Tim how to do the squat—and make sure you know what you're doing! If it's a movement you're still not comfortable with (a full snatch, for instance), demonstrate to the best of your ability. This is when it's especially important to tell Tim everything you know and be an effective coach. It's OK if you haven't mastered the movement, but you've got to be able to teach it properly. Be sure to highlight all the key components you told Tim about earlier. Point out how you can wiggle your toes, so you know your weight is on your heels. Demonstrate a good lumbar curve and squat to proper depth. Do this multiple times as you re-describe each component for Tim. If you know you have deficiencies in your own movement, point them out to the client so he doesn't mimic your faults.

Steps 3 and 4

Now it's Tim's turn to try it out. Initially, say nothing to see what Tim has picked up from listening and observing. Steps 3 (try it) and 4 (observe) happen simultaneously. As Tim squats, you are observing his performance. I usually let my client do a few reps without my interjection, unless of course there is a real chance of injury due to poor movement. During your observation, focus on the key components of the squat that you described and demoed to Tim. Is he doing it correctly? Are his heels planted? Does he have a nice lumbar curve? Is he doing a "butt wink" toward the bottom of his squat? Make note of all these things (write them down if you have to). Stop Tim after you've got all the information you need to give him feedback.

A general rule is to give the positive feedback first.

Step 5

Praise and redirect Tim on his squat. Provide recognition for the things Tim did well. A general rule is to give the positive feedback first (hopefully there is some to give). Don't lay into Tim right off the bat, even if his movement is poor. Make sure he's encouraged to proceed despite some obvious shortcomings. This is a great opportunity for you to build a trusting relationship with your client as well. In all reality, this step makes or breaks you as a successful coach. You need to be able to encourage your client yet enhance his performance as a CrossFitter. After you've given praise, be sure to redirect Tim by explaining and demonstrating again, placing particular emphasis on the most glaring faults.

Tips for Giving Good Feedback

Be specific—I can't stress this one enough. What would happen if you said to Tim, "Hey, Tim. Pretty good job there. Maybe just try a little harder with putting all the components together." What the hell does that mean? How is Tim going to improve his squat based on that feedback? A more specific critique would be, "Tim, you did an excellent job of getting deep in your squat and keeping your lumbar curve. Next time, be sure to really get your weight on your heels." If you aren't specific about feedback, the positive parts of the performance are not likely to be repeated and the negative ones are.

Keep it simple—A good rule of thumb is to not overwhelm your client with feedback. If Tim is really struggling with the squat, my feedback will not be a list of 10 things he's doing wrong. I may pick two to begin with and then direct him using the Coaching Cycle until he has those two components down. Then I'll pick two more, and so on. The same rule applies to a positive performance. Pick one or two components that went well, praise them with specific feedback and then finish by giving feedback on the other positive components as you observe them. The No. 1 objective for feedback is to ensure repeat performance of things that went well and eliminate poor performance. If you bombard your clients with multiple items, it's unlikely they'll absorb all that information, reducing the impact of your coaching on their performance.

I've found the Coaching Cycle helpful not only when training a new client, but also when he or she has been struggling with perfecting a movement.

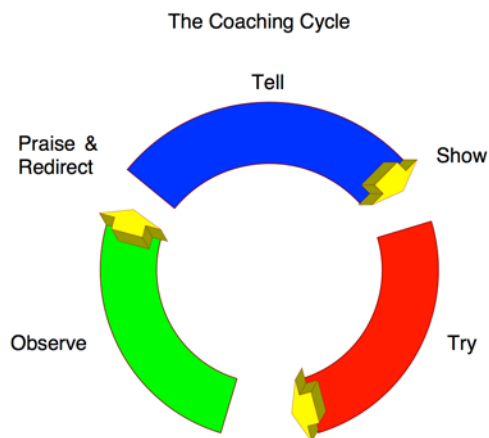


Good coaches reinforce good movement with praise and then give specific feedback that encourages athletes to correct their faults.

Homing in on Perfection

As I mentioned earlier, you may need to go through these steps multiple times until your client has mastered the movement. In fact, you should. When I teach this tool to managers at work, I'm often asked, "How many times will I have to do this with an employee?" Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. For a CrossFit trainer, the number of cycles will depend on the athletic ability, history and motivation of the client. I usually require an 80-90 percent mastery rate before I incorporate the movement into a WOD. For lifts where injury is a greater risk (deadlift, back squat, etc.), I reserve inclusion in a WOD until the athlete is close to 100 percent proficient.

I've found the Coaching Cycle helpful not only when training a new client, but also when he or she has been struggling with perfecting a movement. Sometimes a simple reminder has helped. I've often assumed a client knows what to do because I've already told him, but going back and re-describing the movement is sometimes enough to make it click. Maybe I said it in a different way this time or demonstrated something a little differently. Think of new and creative ways to give specific feedback on performance as well. We all strive to know how we're doing with anything we put our minds to. As trainers, if we can provide that meaningful information to clients in an instructive and motivating way, they'll almost certainly be successful.



The Coaching Cycle can help you create a structure to your skill-building and practice sessions with your clients. For me, the Cycle is imperative when coaching clients on CrossFit's nine foundational movements: squat, front squat, overhead squat, deadlift, sumo deadlift high pull, med-ball clean, press, push press, and push jerk. It certainly has great application for the Olympic lifts as well. For easier movements such as the push-up or sit-up, you may not need to repeat the Coaching Cycle as often, but you still might need to do one or two cycles until your client masters the movement.

The next time you're unsure how to proceed with a difficult client or want some structure in beginning your training, try referring to the Coaching Cycle. I've often asked the leaders I work with to keep a small picture of it with them in case they need a quick cue. You can do the same or post a graphic inside your box. Sharing this process with your clients is also a good thing. They learn

when to ask for more help and have an understanding of good coaching. Who knows? It may spark them to get to a Level 1 Certification and continue spreading the word of elite fitness.



About the Author

By night (and sometimes early in the morning), Zach Zavadel is the owner and head instructor of [Keystone CrossFit](#). By day, he is an organizational development manager working in Corporate America. His time is largely spent coaching and training other leaders on how to maximize their leadership potential. He has a master's degree in industrial/organizational psychology and enjoys bridging his professional life with CrossFit training. He can be reached at zzavadel@gmail.com or through the [Keystone CrossFit Web site](#).

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Favela Fitness

Residents in Rio de Janeiro's Rocinha favela use CrossFit to rise above poverty and violence.

By Chris Clark CrossFit Rocinha

April 2010



All photos courtesy of Chris Clark/Rocinha CrossFit

I woke up to the heavy thumping of a military helicopter circling, diving and banking hard to avoid the gunfire from the ground. I ran to my window, small and square with bars, and I could see it all when I was standing on my toes.

Rocinha, perhaps Rio de Janeiro's most famous favela (slum), lies like a beast carved into the cradle of the Rio de Janeiro mountains, standing guard forever over the ultra-rich penthouses sprawling and spilling toward the Atlantic Ocean. Rocinha is governed by drug traffickers, and the police enter only on raids with elite troops and helicopters. The heartbeat of Rocinha is loud and never stops—300,000 favelados (slum residents) shouting, dancing and surviving with style. I can never claim to be one of them, but that morning, after three months living in the favela, I felt it ...

On the Rooftops of Rocinha

One year ago, I had a green 1997 Jeep Wrangler with oversize tires, a beautiful blond and a life many would envy. I left and moved to Brazil, and within two months of my arrival I accidentally started **Rocinha CrossFit** in one of the most notorious slums on the planet.

In the beginning I was teaching English for a non-government organization (NGO) named Two Brothers Foundation. I never lied about being a U.S. Marine, and when the word spread, I was nudged toward teaching exercise classes. We found old basketballs and volleyballs and made medicine balls and kettlebells. With an old, rusty iron bar and two used tire rims, we welded an Olympic bar, and so on.

I e-mailed CrossFit co-founder Greg Glassman to let him know there was a community here very interested in his product. He replied instantly and enthusiastically, and we were granted a not-for-profit affiliation. We struggled with no formal training and minimal equipment, but the affiliation gave us hope and we persevered.

The principal driving force for Rocinha CrossFit is Rogerio. Rogerio, born and raised in Rocinha, is the lead volunteer coordinator for Two Brothers Foundation, the NGO that I volunteer with in Rocinha. Rogerio speaks English, French and Spanish fluently. Aside from working full-time with the NGO, Rogerio boxes, teaches boxing and is the lead instructor for Rocinha CrossFit. Since Rocinha CrossFit's inception, two other instructors have joined the program. Kleber is a talented boxer and expert instructor, and Dani is a university student and boxer.



Rocinha CrossFit, a non-profit affiliate, is housed on a rooftop in the favela. Its athletes use do-it-yourself gear for their WODs, and programming requires a great deal of creativity.



CrossFit has found a home in the cramped favela, where homes are seemingly built one on top of the other.

Rogério found an empty rooftop to rent, a spartan area in need of much repair. You get to our rooftop via three flights of concrete stairs through the middle of an apartment building, passing open doors to families cooking and children playing. Our rooftop stands in the center of the most active area of Rocinha, providing a beautiful view from the center of the concave bowl that shapes the slum. During workouts, you can look to the ocean and to the community, and you can feel the ocean wind and see the kites flying above the impossible mosaic of homes built too close together with urgency and more regard for survival than elegance. Our area has faulty lighting, a toilet that doesn't function and a leaky roof, and after 20 minutes of class the dust from the old concrete floor makes breathing difficult.

The past four months have seen much improvement. Our team has repainted the walls, and we used a donation from the Vickers family in Ohio to fix the concrete floor. Classes continue, and the market for more membership is there, but the WODs always need to be modified due to lack of equipment.

During workouts, you can look to the ocean and to the community, and you can feel the ocean wind and see the kites flying above the impossible mosaic of homes built too close together with urgency and more regard for survival than elegance.

Fitness—and Hope

Life in a favela is vibrant and exciting, but it is also fatiguing even on the strongest of hearts. The Rocinha child holds daring dreams that speak and sometimes yell in the mind and heart, but those voices grow faint to a whisper and become inaudible not due to a single event but rather an infinite number of barely perceptible negative daily occurrences. Over years, these occurrences collectively form an opposing force that's wave-like—deep and mighty yet invisible.

These conditions that hold back the growth of the individual also force him to become stronger. Small investments in these individuals cause changes in the positive direction. We can seize this opportunity to help by using CrossFit as the channel.

My motivation to start this project was entirely selfish and not at all altruistic. Rocinha accepted me with an open heart and a strong embrace. Rocinha gave me the privilege of investing and creating something truly unique, and the joy that I receive from this project doesn't seem to have a limit. In this lifetime, I cannot possibly give back what Rocinha has given me, nor in a hundred more lifetimes, and I am ready for others to experience the power of what I have experienced. There is more work to be done.

Rocinha CrossFit is ready to grow, but the following issues need to be resolved: our equipment is minimal and in poor condition. Equipment purchase in Brazil is prohibitively expensive. We need to find organizations that can help with donations. If equipment donations can be found, we need economical shipping solutions.

Small investments in these individuals cause changes in the positive direction. We can seize this opportunity to help by using CrossFit as the channel.



Chris Clark has found that just a little effort with a young Brazilian athlete brings an incredible reward.

Rocinha CrossFit's competitive advantage lies in our instructors' energy, our location in the community, our price point, and CrossFit's natural product differentiation vs. standard gyms. However, without a baseline set of equipment, our value proposition suffers and the accounts receivable figure will continue to rise. I believe we only have a few more months until our unpaid instructors will need to focus their time toward something that can pay their rent.

I am early in the process of forming a non-profit corporation in order to obtain federal 501(c)(3) tax-exemption status. We need to form a board of directors, ideally including someone with non-profit and fundraising experience, a CrossFit instructor and a lawyer familiar with non-profits. Certainly being a director with Rocinha CrossFit presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage in meaningful international social work, not to mention the satisfaction of involvement with a hardcore project in the city of Rio de Janeiro, site of the 2016 Olympic Games.

My first year in Rio de Janeiro, I tried to capture the essence of the city: what is good, what is bad, and why it is so. I failed. By conceptualizing Rio, the truth constantly evaded me. Rio is everything and nothing at the same time. It is death: the threat of violence producing a thin cloud of fear, the stark contrast of rich and poor, the socioeconomic conditions, the thin margin between life and death. Rio is also life: the sun and the bustle and heat and sweat that melt into the soft sex electricity of the night. Rio de Janeiro is the city of this decade, rich in culture and tremendously complex, yet only human. The world watches as the city exposes itself and at the same time exposes man's true nature to the world.

Rocinha CrossFit is raw and human, and the story represents everything that is good and everything that is bad. With some help and a few resources, the story can be glorious.



About the Author

Chris T. Clark was born and raised in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. He went to Miami University and studied physics under an NROTC scholarship. He was commissioned as a Marine officer and went to flight school in Pensacola, Fla., and he flew an F/A-18D Hornet as a Naval Flight Officer (Nav). He saw two Pacific deployments and one combat tour in Iraq during the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom Campaign. After the first tour he moved to Nashville, Tenn., and spent three years as NROTC Unit Vanderbilt University's Marine officer instructor.

In 2008, he completed an MBA from Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University. He was separated from active duty in August 2008 (from Nashville) and moved to Brazil in November of that year. He is currently working and living in Brazil's capital, Brasília, as a liaison officer for the U.S. Military Liaison Office, U.S. Embassy Brasília. He is on one-year active orders as a reservist.

For more information about how you can help Rocinha CrossFit, contact Chris Clark at sparkyfighter@gmail.com.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

CrossFit for Physical Training

Capt. Davitt Broderick believes implementing CrossFit at the company level can produce fitter soldiers. Here's how to do it.

By Capt. Davitt Broderick, U.S. Army

March 2010



Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook/U.S. Army

Several years ago during college, I was introduced to CrossFit by a close friend of mine. Like many others, I quickly dismissed the idea, reassessed it later and then began incorporating CrossFit workouts from time to time.

During my deployment to Iraq I dove in a little further, and after returning I decided using the methods and theories of CrossFit would be the best way to train and prepare myself for life and combat. Luckily, the commander of the company I was serving in shared my sentiments, and we began implementing CrossFit during physical training each duty day.

The Fast Track to Military Fitness

I will admit that at first I found the idea of implementing CrossFit somewhat unrealistic for several reasons. Many of these same reasons, I believe, are what prevent many other leaders from attempting to implement CrossFit on a large scale in unit-held physical training. In my opinion, physical training is the single most important thing a soldier will do on any given day to prepare himself for combat. Furthermore, I also believe using CrossFit as a template for physical training is perhaps the single best way for the military to conduct physical training in preparation for life and, ultimately, combat.

CrossFit has now undoubtedly made its way into the special-operations community, and there are also several non-profit military affiliates. However, I don't believe this program has found its way into many of the unit-held physical-training sessions in the capacity that it potentially could. This, in fact, is how the majority of the regular military conducts physical training: soldiers do physical training on a daily basis at the start of their duty day as a group with their unit—and this is where I think it is most important to implement CrossFit.

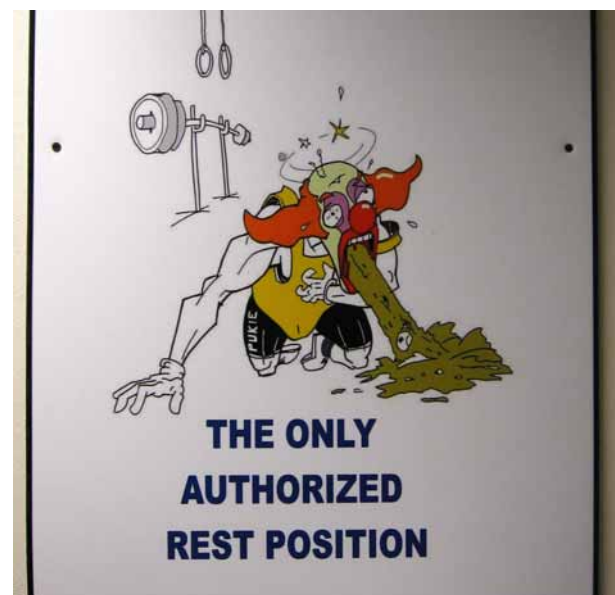
I also believe CrossFit is the single best way for the military to conduct physical training in preparation for life and, ultimately, combat.

Nevertheless, I have seen many leaders sometimes discouraged by their lack of knowledge about CrossFit and even more so by the perceived logistical challenges of equipping a unit using CrossFit as a physical training program. These individuals could simply get a

subscription to the *CrossFit Journal*, and they would have all the resources they would ever need. But we all know how busy these individuals are, not to mention the fact that they often don't know what to look for even if they know where to find it.

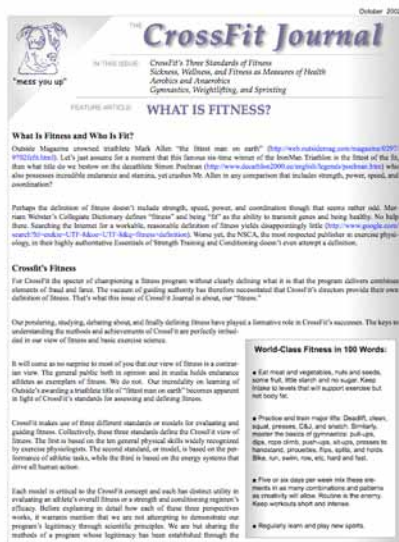
It has been my experience that in certain instances a stagnant attitude can develop: "We can simply keep doing things the way they have always been done because they seem to work and we have no spare time or effort to contribute to changing." However, it is no longer good enough to train for two minutes of push-ups and sit-ups and a two-mile run. In combat, soldiers will be asked to do so much more, and their physical training will help to ultimately decide who will survive.

In implementing this program, I have come across numerous sources, most from the *CrossFit Journal* and other online resources, which were instrumental. What I wish to do is pass along the information I found particularly helpful. The intent is to reduce some of the initial legwork involved in this process and facilitate a more expedient process. These reference materials are packaged with the intent of creating a one-stop document to be used by commanders and leaders looking to use CrossFit for a template as physical training in their units.



Courtesy of Capt. David Broderick

More and more members of the military are finding that the high-intensity training CrossFit provides prepares them for the challenges of combat.



What Is Fitness?

This is a free *Journal* article written by CrossFit's co-founder, and it contains perhaps the best overall description of what CrossFit is in one simple read. Greg Glassman lays the foundation for how CrossFit is constructed by first answering one simple question.

Theoretical Template for CrossFit's Programming

This will show you how to apply a method to a program that is intended to be constantly varied. This article is best used as a “plug and play” system in which you can establish a template and then plug in various workouts that already exist. Workouts, however, can and should be scaled and adapted to accommodate the ability levels of the participants and the resources available. When scaling, keep in mind the original intent of the workout with regard to time, modality and domain. The CrossFit workouts can certainly be tweaked to provide a level of variance, but I believe it is important to do the majority of work with high intensity while sticking to the most functional movements and skills. This will ensure maximum benefits from the program.

One other thing to note is the importance of strength-training days. Metabolic conditioning (met-con) days will not be as difficult to program as they will require either easy-to-acquire equipment or none at all. The strength days—or “W” days in the article—will be challenging to include because they usually require a barbell and an amount of weight that will be difficult for

a unit to accommodate. These days still must remain a priority. It will be crucial to acquire as much free weight as possible, as well as the use of on-post gyms during physical-training hours.

One other thing regarding terminology: the term “metabolic conditioning” now refers to “cardio” workouts that can include weightlifting, throwing and gymnastics but may not involve locomotive activities such as running or rowing. Running 10K, for example, would be referred to as a “monostructural activity.” The locomotive activities, of course, can also be a part of a met-con workout or can even be met-con workouts themselves when performed in a certain manner (i.e., more intense training such as tempo or interval training but not long, slow distance training).



Finally, it is important to touch on the fact that many units set themselves into a battle rhythm with regard to physical training. One such example would be company physical training usually consisting of a “cohesion” or unit run Monday, battle-focused physical training or combatives on Tuesday, and non-specific platoon or squad PT on Wednesday and Friday, with Thursdays designated as the day to complete ruck or road marches.

This doesn't lend itself well to the fundamental element of constant variation. Depending on the leniency of the higher command, a program with somewhat more variation can be achieved. For starters, using the five-day schedule listed in the *Programming* article and then plugging in the above-listed events as they are appropriate would be ideal, although this would not meet the intent of conducting these events on a weekly basis. If that is, in fact, the requirement, other variations can be made. Using the above-listed schedule, you could require that Wednesday and Friday be used as met-con and weightlifting days and plug in a rotation that would suit your requirements. Many of the "grinder workouts" (explained below) will work on a combat-focused physical-training day (Tuesday). Mondays, or days where company physical training is required, you can find workouts that are not as resource-intensive and can be conducted at the company level. Murph, Angie, and many other body-weight workouts, some using Tabata intervals, fit nicely into this category.

Finally, the use of a rucksack to meet the requirement of road marches on Thursdays can be varied to follow a CrossFit methodology. Using the ruck as weight resistance for certain movements coupled with short, fast movements wearing the ruck make for a good met-con workout. One such workout that has had good results is wearing a ruck of whatever designated weight and then completing the triplet of an 800-meter run/walk followed by 20 push-ups and 20 squats, all done without taking off the ruck. Complete as many rounds as possible of this trio in 45 minutes.



A Better Warm-Up

This article outlines a routine that will efficiently prepare the body for the intensity that is a staple of CrossFit training. It will also provide a basis for practice of many fundamental and advanced movements or provide a continuum for proficiency leading up to the use of these movements in the upcoming workout. In addition to the standard CrossFit warm-up that is explained here, [The Burgener Warm-Up](#) can also be referenced, especially on days featuring Olympic lifts. [The Russian's Gymnastics Warm-Up](#) is another great warm-up that will aid in developing the more difficult gymnastics moves.

Training in Austere Locations

This article looks at making due in austere environments and using resources that are typically accessible in these environments and in the military in general. It provides helpful information when planning for sustainable physical training while deployed and when dealing with a limited budget and few resources.

The AOF CrossFit Austere Program

This will perhaps be the single most useful document for units using CrossFit for physical training. The program was designed to make use of items that would be accessible in the most austere environments, and it makes use of easy-to-acquire and inexpensive items such as ammo cans filled with sand, vehicle tires and makeshift rings. The initial draft outlines the equipment that can be used and lays out a nine-week training program that, if followed, would itself make a great physical-training plan for any unit.

The Grinders

The 12 grinders in the *CrossFit Journal* series are simply an addition to *The Austere Program*. They are designed using the austere equipment and are written in OPORD format. After the initial OPORD, subsequent FRAGOs appear over the course of several different *Journal* articles. These workouts are geared toward teams, squads or groups rather than individuals. They are great for use in team and squad competitions and can be used by the leaders of the respective elements to gauge the progress of the overall element.



CFJ Issue 21: Zone Meal Plans

Issue 21 gives a concise description of what CrossFit advocates for fueling the athlete/soldier. Nutrition is of great importance if someone is going to thrive with this training or even survive it. A wealth of nutrition articles and videos in the *CrossFit Journal* will provide more nutritional information. Quite simply, CrossFit provides a basis for establishing wellness and fueling performance through high-quality Paleo foods and Zone Diet principles.



The Garage Gym

This article will provide more specific information on how and where to acquire certain items if you choose to purchase equipment from commercial vendors. One approach to the prioritization of items is discussed, and the article also provides some information on fabrication of certain items with reference to many do-it-yourself approaches to building commonly used CrossFit equipment. Other useful *Journal* articles on this topic include [Garage Gym II-The Revolution](#), [Strategic Shopping](#), [Outfit your Box](#) and [Smart Shopping for Your Home Gym](#), as well as the aforementioned article *The Austere Program*.

Another helpful note on equipment is to lay out an ideal kit of equipment per element size and estimate cost using both commercial equipment and the gear used in the Austere Program. Certain commercial vendors offer standardized team-, squad- and platoon-sized packages, and these same packages can be used as the basis for establishing an austere set of equipment as well.

Killer Workouts

When conducting CrossFit within a unit for physical training, the topic of risk mitigation will inevitably come into play, and eventually the topic of rhabdomyolysis may come about. Given the nature and intensity of this type of training, it is important for everyone, especially leaders, to understand the risks and potential lethality of rhabdo. The risks could potentially be used as a reason

not to adopt CrossFit as a PT program by those inclined to continue with more traditional fitness programs, and it is best if the topic is well understood and researched so that the facts can be explained. Eugene Allen of CrossFit Pierce County was also very helpful during my research of this topic, and Dr. Michael Ray of CrossFit Flagstaff recently added the article [The Truth About Rhabdo](#) to the resources in the *Journal*.

Consistency Before Intensity

With such an emphasis on intensity in CrossFit, it is easy to overlook a desired balance with consistency and efficiency. It is important both for safety and the quality of training to ensure proper mechanics (form), then consistency, and then intensity.

Full Mission Profile

This article once again uses the idea of publishing a workout in OPORD format similar to that used in the Grinders. These WODs are more difficult and also feature a tactical scenario broken down into tasks that are simulated by groups and sets of exercises all done for time in true CrossFit fashion. [Brass Ring Fitness](#) offers several more Full Mission Profiles. These are long and very taxing workouts, and the realistic scenario can add an intriguing element to your morning physical-training session.



The CrossFit Total

The CrossFit total is the standard of measurement for pure strength. It will be useful to become familiar with the standards and proper technique for the three main lifts: the squat, the press and the deadlift. It also provides an extremely useful metric in gauging an element of soldier fitness that is often overlooked.

I found it useful to combine these articles into a single manual with a table of contents, which is extremely useful in orienting new leaders and will also serve as a reference throughout planning and training.

Tips for Successful Implementation

- In our company area, we had several posters made to communicate and constantly reinforce the basics. One of them includes a daily outline designed as the best possible way to make CrossFit work for daily physical training in the time allotted. It is also the way many affiliates would organize sessions with groups and individuals. Because many of the WODs take only 10-20 minutes to complete, it's easy for many to use this as an excuse to shorten the time they spend on physical training. By using the daily outline, you will best utilize the time allotted by planning for a proper warm-up and post-workout cool-down, as well as post-workout stretching to help to minimize injury. It will also allow for the specialized skill work needed to further develop skills that can often be overlooked and neglected if they don't show up in a WOD for a lengthy period of time.
- We also summarized some of *A Better Warm-Up* and some Zone and Paleo information and placed the info on posters in the company area. We were surprised at how much this sparked interest in nutrition. As soldiers began competing, they had a new motivation to find ways to improve times and scores. For good measure, you can even throw up a sign of "Pukie" over the drinking fountain.
- Make a listing of all the Girl and Hero WODs as they appear in the FAQ section on CrossFit.com. These workouts show up periodically on the main site and can be used as benchmarks to track progress. These workouts are typically more difficult, especially the Hero workouts, and will often need to be scaled. These WODs may also be more challenging to resource, particularly for larger elements, but they

can still be adapted to fit whatever equipment is available. Another great way to promote competition throughout the unit is to make a board and post the top times and scores for these workouts, just as most affiliates do.

- Organize a list of workouts by approximate duration and difficulty. This is especially handy when planning under time constraints. Units deploying to the field or under other extenuating circumstances may have limited time to conduct physical training. Having a list ready will allow a unit to select a shorter but still effective workout for these instances. Also develop a list of workouts requiring no equipment or simply featuring body-weight exercises, because these will be the easiest to organize on short notice.
- CrossFit as it is prescribed on the main site is a challenging program for most. It will often be necessary to scale and adapt workouts to skill levels and resources available. The *CrossFit Journal* and the Internet have a wealth of information on how to do this and be successful. CrossFit Brand X has done a lot in this area, and there is a link to their scaled workouts under the “Start Here” tab on the main site. Scaling is very useful when training less-conditioned individuals.
- It is recommended that a unit implements a “train the trainer” program. Ultimately, it is ideal to have a maximum number of personnel, especially leaders, attend a Level 1 Certification. This will ensure that these individuals properly learn how to execute the movements and understand the basic principles of CrossFit training. These individuals can then be used to ensure the unit can conduct the training efficiently and safely. They can also instruct other individuals. From here, smaller workshops or seminars can be held at a more reasonable cost using the unit’s Level 1 trainers and the instructors from local affiliates to train the rest of the unit. We were lucky enough to have John Velandra of CrossFit Cape Fear bring in a crew and run a one-day workshop for our company. This proved to be instrumental in familiarizing everyone with the movements and principles behind CrossFit.

Editor’s note: After this article was written, John Velandra was tragically killed in a car accident on Jan. 6, 2010, in Fayetteville, N.C. The day after, the members of CrossFit Cape Fear completed a WOD named in his honor: Johnny V.

- We also held a weekly video session when time allotted. We gathered available members of the unit into our conference room and played videos from the main site and *CrossFit Journal*. These video sessions can contain everything from lecture material from certifications to movement instruction, or you can simply play motivating videos of WODs being conducted by some of CrossFit’s firebreathers.
- The Internet is littered with useful resources, most of which can be found linked from the main site. The *CrossFit Journal* is inexpensive and provides an almost endless wealth of knowledge, and the main site has numerous videos showing all the movements, demonstrating various workouts, and providing lectures on assorted topics. The FAQ portion of the page will be extremely useful for newcomers, and there are several links to other useful sites.

CrossFit as it is prescribed on the main site is a challenging program for most. It will often be necessary to scale and adapt workouts to skill levels and resources available.

Lots of Resources, Great Results

The amount of quality resources and information available on this topic is endless. The intent of this document is to collect the resources that were essential to implementing CrossFit as a physical-training program. It is by no means complete but will hopefully take some of the work out of the process and generate further interest.

After implementing a CrossFit-based physical fitness program for approximately the last two years, the benefits were apparent. Using the Army’s measurement of physical fitness, the APFT, the overall average increased by roughly 12 points. This alone does not seem like a significant increase, but for an infantry company already conducting regular PT, it is relatively significant.

While we noticed an overall average increase, we saw the most change in soldiers at the ends of the bell curve. New soldiers who arrived with a low APFT score increased rapidly, but at the same time we saw more above-average soldiers move into what we might call the “elite category.” The ability of the program to have such an impact on the least-and most-fit soldiers in the company was impressive.

We could have potentially noticed a decrease in some of our long, slow distance performances, but this was fixed by ensuring we programmed long runs, and we used WODs such as “Runny Angie,” where we added a one-mile run between each 100-rep exercise. Additionally, some soldiers saw a decrease in sit-ups in the beginning, but this was rectified by adhering to the prescribed warm-up including the multiple sets of sit-ups.

We saw a significant increase in strength and power in all soldiers in the company. If we had the foresight to record our CrossFit Total scores when we started, the increase between then and now would likely be the most significant. We did notice several other results that were less quantifiable. The constant competition and inability of anyone to hide bred an aggressive and competitive mentality that motivated soldiers to work out on their own time and even adopt a Zone-friendly diet in order to remain competitive.

In a battalion-wide competition, Alpha Company swept the top finishers in a strongman competition and won the tug-of-war and combatives competition—earning the company top spots in three of the four physical events. Alpha Company also held the top platoon times in another battalion-wide competition which included a battle-focused course through an urban area. Obstacles included moving in and out of buildings through the second and third stories, in and out of windows, and over walls.



Courtesy of Capt. Davitt Broderick

About the Author

Capt. Davitt Broderick, U.S. Army, is an infantry officer who was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., during the implementation of this program. He is now stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky., serving in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). He would like to thank Brian Mandock, Maj. Mike Farmer and the men of Alpha Company, as well as the late John Velandra and the staff at CrossFit Cape Fear for providing a wealth of assistance in gathering information and implementing CrossFit as a unit physical-training method.

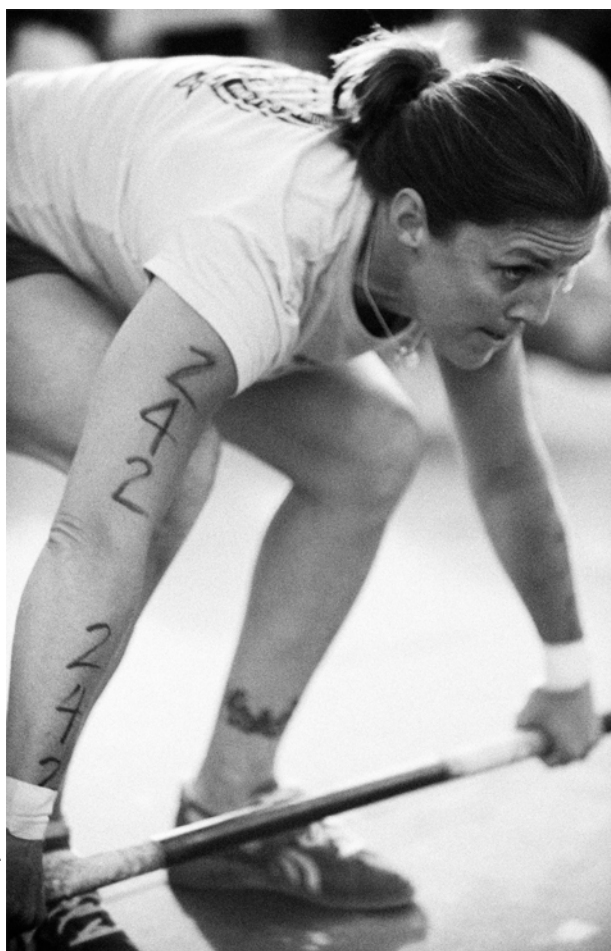
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Beyond the Body

CrossFit girls are beautiful—but it's more about attitude and determination than appearance.

By Louis Hayes

April 2010



Susannah Dy/CrossFit Journal



CrossFit chicks are hot.

Ever hear that saying? Well, it's true. And here's why:

Being "hot" has a lot more to it than physical appearance. Plenty of women and girls have all the physical components and gifts of the cover girl but simply "aren't hot." And then there are those magnetic ones who might never be a runway model but are irresistible.

Out With the Old Standards

Historically, women have been told about all the things in life they can do. They can cook, clean, put on makeup, be a mommy and a loving wife. The bold ones were once “allowed” to cut the grass, do yard work, move the furniture and paint the living room.

More importantly, women have been told all the things they cannot do. Women can’t lift heavy boxes, enlist in the military, become police officers or firefighters, fight back or play men’s sports. It’s a mindset harvested after planting poisoned seeds, and it’s a mindset that’s instilled in young girls from the earliest ages.

In grade school, the Presidential Physical Fitness Test has boys doing pull-ups and girls doing the timed “dead hang.” And the name “girl push-ups” for those push-ups done on the knees is damaging. It says, “You as a female are incapable of doing full push-ups like men.” So in high school, when most sports trainers tell female athletes to lift light weights for lots of repetitions, they are only building on an already-behind-the-curve attitude that began when some elementary-school gym teacher said it was OK for women to do push-ups on their knees.

The mainstream fitness equipment industry capitalizes on this tainted image. They sell pink and purple rubber-coated dumbbells of 5 and 10 lb. Some women might be saying, “Hey, that’s all I can lift!” And I say to them, “It’s ‘all you can lift’ because it’s exactly what everyone has told you that you can for your whole life.”

Popular cardio machines in gyms are yet another disservice. There is some mistruth about the efficiency of staying at some target heart rate for maximum fat loss. With such a low-intensity pace, it’s no wonder women see low results. And to hold onto the participants’ interest for these boring 45- or 60-minute workouts, the manufacturers incorporate nifty magazine holders into their designs.

Lastly, weight machines that use cables, pivot points or stacks of weights have been to the ruin of realistic fitness. This is the fitness industry’s way of saying, “You are too stupid to learn free-weight exercises, and you definitely can’t learn how to do them safely!” Manufacturers design and sell these machines for profit, exploiting the ignorance of both women and men.

Uneducated personal trainers fertilize this mutation.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Fitness secret: Human bodies—male or female—respond to exercise and training with favorable adaptations.

**If you as a woman believe
in toning or tightening,
you have bought the lie!**

Trainers use fake terms like “toning” and “tightening” to describe their methods or programs. If you as a woman believe in toning or tightening, you have bought the lie! Women are scared away from strength training by looking at sick images of manly and chemically enhanced female bodybuilders. Many women equate weightlifting with fake-bake tans, oiled bodies, abnormal swells and bulging veins. So these trainers stick with the machines, which ensure the quickest and safest session, limit their liability and put a little sweat on the client's brow. The client leaves feeling good, and the trainer moves on to the next paying client.

And at the root of this epidemic is the press and media. As usual, I blame print and video media for putting out what is popular vs. what is right. Supermarket check-out magazines advertise this flawed image of 5-lb. dumbbells, low-intensity cardio machines like the elliptical trainer, and unrealistic photos of airbrushed abdominals and thighs.

Pissed off at me yet?

A New Mentality

It's not women's fault. Some women are unfortunately the product of a perpetually twisted mantra. Gym teachers, sports coaches, equipment manufacturers, marketing agents, personal trainers and the newsstand keep telling our girls that they cannot do it. It's no wonder some women believe it. This sinister mainstream message is disguised as something digestible: women are better off doing long, drawn-out sessions on cardio machines, they should use ridiculous ab machines sold on late-night television, and they need special equipment. Lies.

All these factors have grown into a culture filled with denial and want. It's no wonder many women desire more. They desire to lose more fat, get a firmer tummy or run faster. They want to lift heavier weights and be more independent. Women want to live healthier, more active lives. Some women are also left in a state of denial. They believe certain things are outside their grasp. They never imagine themselves doing pull-ups or deadlifts. They deny themselves the confidence to believe their goals are possible or attainable or winnable. Their whole lives, they have heard one thing: “You can only do as much as we tell you that you can.”



CrossFit women have a new fitness mentality that includes squats, deadlifts, thrusters, presses and Olympic lifts.



CrossFit creates strong, confident women who aren't afraid to challenge themselves while challenging stale, outdated viewpoints.

But not CrossFit chicks. And not women who use kettlebells. Or those who do Olympic weightlifting. Or those who participate in other functional fitness models.

These women are different.

CrossFit chicks swim upstream. They battle against all the images of female physical fitness that have been implanted since birth.

They are defiant, but not the pierce-my-face-and-tattoo-my-forearms sort of defiant (well, sometimes they are). They defy this handicapped mantra with one of their own: "I can do it. They snub their noses at the magazine models who crash-diet and get airbrushed before the printing press. In the gym, they walk past the rows of treadmills and recumbent bikes on their way to the squat rack. They ignore paid advertisements for trendy fitness equipment. And they impress the hell out of muscle-bound men by ripping out deadlifts, burpees and rope climbs!

CrossFit chicks swim upstream. Through work capacity and high performance, they battle against all the images of female physical fitness that have been implanted since birth. They fight the self-limiting mentality put upon their gender community to deny women a way out or above. CrossFit chicks possess a confidence, commitment and sense of accomplishment that puts them at the forefront of their gender. They know the anxiety of stepping up to competition. They savor the

taste of victory. They sweat, suck wind, and give their all. They are part of a community that snuffs out the mantra of popular culture—the CrossFit community.

Somewhere, each female CrossFitter was introduced to a new, unorthodox philosophy of physical fitness. It's a model that allows women and girls to face their fears and weaknesses and learn how to win. They learn the movements and programming and attitude that put them on the pathway to a place the gym teachers and TV infomercials told them they could not go.

And once these ladies get on the path, there is no turning back. They quickly realize all the lies and deceptions that have flooded their existence. They set their sights on lofty goals and objectives that are now attainable. And they reach them. CrossFit chicks question authority and search for the truth. They rebuke folklore for something more substantive. They see a world filled with opportunity rather than obstacles. They search for answers rather than questions. They make plans instead of excuses.

The confidence seeps through their pores. The resolve shows on their faces. Resilience shines through. These traits are common to all CrossFit chicks. There is an added element of beauty and attraction given to these women.

Confidence Is Sexy

I'm married to a CrossFitter. She was bold and brimming with conviction and confidence before her introduction to functional fitness (which was why I married her). Goal-driven women don't have to be CrossFitters. Many women have broken the gender barriers to male-dominated careers and hobbies.

But what comes first: the attitude or the CrossFit? Which is the cause, and which is the effect? Does CrossFit turn shoulder-slumping, hesitant girls into driven women seeking excellence? Or do secure, positive-minded women simply find themselves at home in the spartan simplicity of a barbell-laden studio gym?

Maybe the answer is a little of both. Like my wife, I've seen previously poised women attracted to CrossFit and kettlebell work for another chance to get better at skills and abilities. They become even more goal-driven in search for personal excellence. But I've also seen pre-CrossFit women who lacked self-confidence and were disenchanted by the wheel-spinning of health clubs

and magazine fitness. After functional fitness training, they were strong, able women who now stand tall with pride and assertion. It has been a great reward to see these women dig for the courage to fight the screams of "You cannot!" and make the transition.

The rewards of CrossFit are found in more than physical ability and body composition. Women find a strange, comforting home in CrossFit. The community allows them to become whatever they want to become. Beauty is more than what is simply captured in a mirror or camera lens. Good looks, attractiveness and sex appeal are found in the souls of women and girls who believe in themselves.

And that is what makes them hot.



About the Author

Louis Hayes is a police officer for the Hinsdale (Illinois) Police Department, currently assigned as a supervisor and trainer for the FIAT SWAT Taskforce. He contributes to the not-for-profit [Trinity Training Group blog](#), and he writes a quarterly police fitness column for the [Illinois Tactical Officers Association](#). He'd rather watch his wife juggle kettlebells than see her get all dolled up for a night out.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Don't Quit Your Day Job?

More and more people are finding fulfillment with a career in CrossFit. Dr. Allison Belger talks to several affiliate owners who successfully made the jump and put their skills to use in the CrossFit box.

By Dr. Allison Belger

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In today's economy, plenty of people are working multiple jobs in order to make ends meet. It's not uncommon for people to make use of different talents, different experiences and different personality strengths when working jobs that sometimes have nothing to do with each other. At a certain point, though, many working people would probably be happiest if one career could provide enough financial stability, psychological satisfaction and flexibility for life's interests.

With the increase in popularity of CrossFit and the growing number of affiliates, many people are becoming part-time affiliate owners, and countless others have completely devoted themselves to the business of CrossFit, leaving behind other careers for good. Members of the CrossFit community know all about the program's incredible fitness benefits, and a growing number of people are also experiencing the rewards of a career in CrossFit.

Dr. CrossFit Is in the Box

It's been just over two years since my husband TJ converted his personal-training gym to a CrossFit affiliate in March 2008. At that time, I was working almost full time as a psychologist, specializing in assessments of adolescents and young adults. The work was at once rewarding, challenging, intriguing and exhausting, especially with two young children at home. My income was quite helpful, and I had worked hard for my degrees and my reputation in the field, but I was also tired and stressed much of the time.

As a newcomer to CrossFit, I was a cherry-picker, taking on the met-con days with fervor but hopelessly puzzled by strength training. I progressed quietly and randomly, never tracking my workouts and mostly adhering to my own way of doing things ... or not. As my engagement with CrossFit intensified over time, I found myself increasingly frustrated by the limitations put on my performance by my work schedule, stress level and lack of sleep. While some of these factors come with raising young children and having a generally busy life, my job had a clear and present impact on my ability to apply myself as a CrossFitter. More importantly, I was feeling more and more constrained with regard to how much I could help develop our family's CrossFit business, and it was clear that the business was about to boom.

My eventual decision to take a break from my work as a psychologist came after many sleepless nights. Ultimately, though, I knew I needed a break from the intensity of my position, and I decided to scale back my duties. Although I still took on cases from time to time, this retreat afforded me more time to become involved in our growing business, so much so that I became the owner and manager of CrossFit Corte Madera shortly thereafter.



Matt Barnes/TJ's Gym

Originally a psychologist, affiliate owner Allison Belger competed on the TJ's Gym Affiliate Cup team that finished 11th at the 2009 CrossFit Games.

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As far as career transitions go, mine has been ideal in many ways. I am fortunate enough to be able to grow our CrossFit business while still keeping my job and identity as a psychologist. While I am sometimes overwhelmed by how much I need to do on any given day, ultimately I feel lucky to be able to combine passions and pursue careers in two different realms.

My thinking about this topic has peaked in recent weeks. In opening CrossFit Novato, the third branch of the original TJ's Gym/CrossFit San Rafael, my husband and I partnered with Andy Boone, a family friend and our local middle-school assistant principal. A people person who would probably excel at any career, Andy rose quickly through the public-school ranks and was honored with his current position four years ago. Andy came to our CrossFit program in September 2008 and soon became a devotee, proving his athletic prowess was as impressive as his ability to connect with other gym members. Over time, Andy helped us create a discounted program for school-district employees, worked with us as we became the strength and conditioning coaches for local high-school sports teams, and told just about everyone who would listen about his passion for CrossFit and our TJ's Gym community.

As Andy's involvement in our community deepened, it was becoming clear to us that he would be an asset to our program on a whole other level if only he didn't have that pesky career. As our relationship evolved, Andy would talk about his passion for CrossFit, his long-standing desire to have his own business, and his frustrations with the many reasons that made him feel unable to combine the two into a career. One of these reasons was that he actually loved his job as middle-school vice principal. In many ways, Andy's was a dream job for an educator who CrossFits, affording him a work schedule that included time for a three-on/one-off routine, the ability to drop off his children at school or day care, and the freedom to be home in time for dinner with his family. He was blessed to work with motivated students who looked up to and respected him. Still, with each WOD Andy was becoming more and more intrigued by the possibility of becoming involved in CrossFit in another way. In the summer of 2009, he competed on the TJ's Gym team at the CrossFit Games Affiliate Cup and later got his Level 1 Certification. This turned out to be the first step of many for Andy.



Allison Belger/TJ's Gym

Andy Boone, a middle-school vice principal, will soon be leaving the school to devote all his time to CrossFit.



As an educator, Boone had summers off—which is convenient for a man looking to compete at the CrossFit Games.

Despite the allure of CrossFit as a career, Andy's decision to leave his job was not an easy one. He and his family wrestled with the pros and cons for several months, in large part because of economics: Andy would be giving up a paycheck upon which his family relied. The cost of living in Marin County, Calif., is quite high, and Andy's salary is extremely important to him, his wife Karen and their two young daughters. Easing the risk to some extent is Karen's lucrative position as a CPA at a large consulting firm, but in these economic times, nothing is certain. Despite the financial risks, though, Andy's wife was supportive from Day 1, recognizing that CrossFit could provide him with the vehicle to do what he has dreamed of doing since the couple were college sweethearts at UC Davis over a decade ago: owning his own business.

Further mitigating the stress was the fact that Andy had the opportunity to partner with close friends (TJ and I) who were already running two successful affiliates. He and Karen were deeply rooted in our community, and Andy felt confident that, as a group, the management of TJ's Gym/CrossFit Novato share "an ability to teach and work with people and an unceasing passion for what we do."

He explains: "We are all people people, and we all want to help people change their lives. We are giving people the tools to create maximum capacity for life. I am inspired by, and grateful for, the opportunity to wield something that powerful and to change lives for the better every day."

Andy has now decided to follow his dream and make the jump to a full-time CrossFit career after finishing the current school year.



Courtesy of Gregg Arsenuk/Guerilla Fitness/CrossFit Montclair

Gregg Arsenuk, former trader and current coach.

Trading Wall Street for Wall-Balls

Much like Andy, Gregg Arsenuk, owner of Guerilla Fitness/CrossFit Montclair in New Jersey, became passionate about CrossFit soon after his introduction to it. Having searched the Internet for new, dynamic ways of training, Gregg discovered a CrossFit workout called Fran and decided to give it a go.

"That was the crack hit that got me addicted," Arsenuk says.

While the rush from Gregg's first CrossFit workout was the spark, what really fueled his fire was the honesty and loyalty within the CrossFit world. He sensed it was there in the beginning, and it ultimately led him to CrossFit as a career. Like Andy, Gregg realized that his passion for CrossFit was something he had to pursue.

"What was exciting was that for the very first time in my life I really felt passionate about what I was doing," he says. "I was completely inspired, and that was a very new feeling for me. It kept me energized, and it still does today. The decision was never a struggle. It was oddly easy and reassuring."

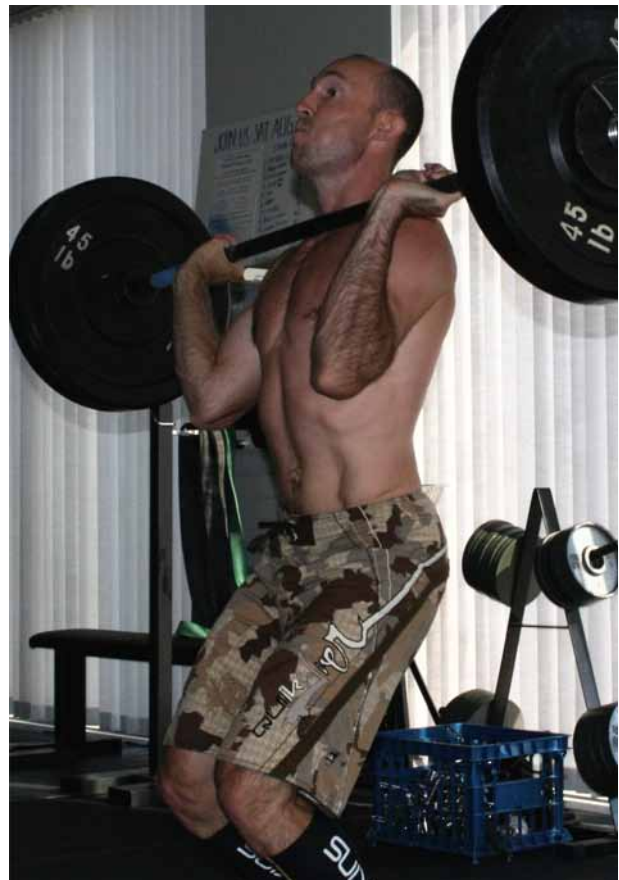
This inspired approach to work was something Gregg had sorely missed as a trader on Wall Street. While his paychecks were substantial, he was uninspired and unfulfilled in every other way. His job afforded him material pleasures he now realizes were ways of "filling a big empty hole." His job offered no other meaningful rewards, and eventually the money wasn't enough to make it worthwhile. Within months of doing Fran, Gregg left his job on Wall Street, moved to Denver, and immersed himself in research and a self-directed CrossFit education. Gregg later returned east, earned his Level 1 Certification in January 2008 and opened his affiliate in March of that same year. Opening the doors of Guerrilla Fitness meant the realization of a long-standing personal dream to open his own gym, but before he found CrossFit, Gregg never knew just what that dream might look like. In the months following Fran, it had all become clear.

Taking Care of Business

Before he discovered CrossFit, Damon Stewart of Wasatch CrossFit in Utah was a wrestler who stayed in shape by running and doing triathalons. When someone online recommended CrossFit, "It was on." That was in 2004, back when Utah didn't have a single affiliate. Damon trained out of his well-equipped garage for two years before getting his Level 1 Certification and opening his affiliate in the summer of 2007. Damon and Chris Spealler affiliated at the same time, providing mutual moral support and developing camaraderie along the way. Damon later earned his Level 2 Certification at the last cert held in the original HQ facility.

Unlike Gregg, whose career track was relatively one-dimensional, Damon had started as a salesman and later bought into a small start-up company that identified and purchased troubled assets from large mortgage debt servicers. He helped grow this company to over \$1 million in annual revenue. When the economy turned, however, Damon's 10-hour workdays became 20-hour work weeks, and 50 percent of the company's employees were let go. By that time, Damon had already opened CrossFit Wasatch, which was thriving. He retired

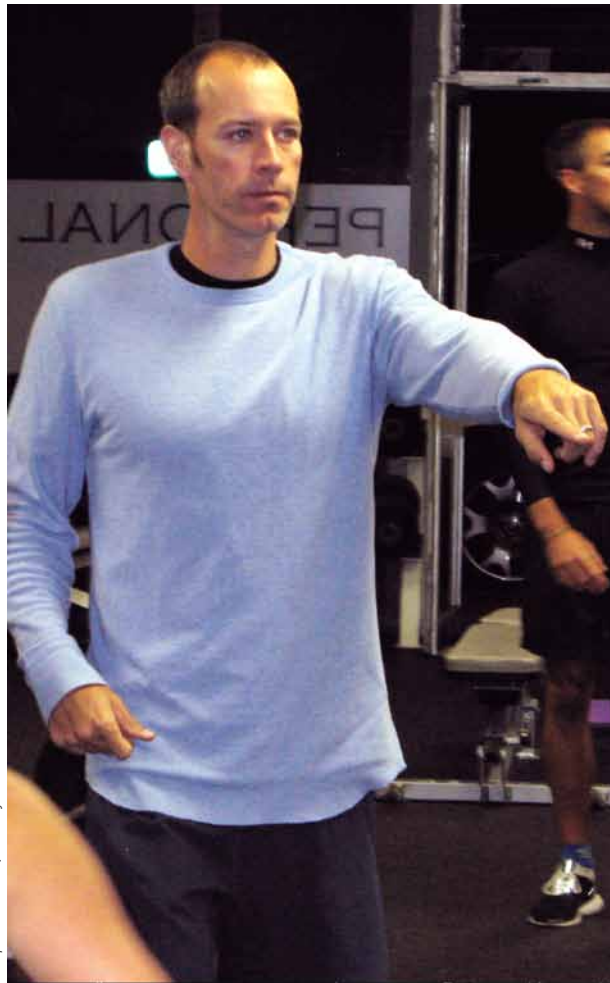
from the real-estate company two years into his CF affiliation, retaining his ownership percentage and remaining active as a board member. The money he continues to make from the venture means he can stop working at any time, but Damon's CrossFit career isn't just about financial success.



Damon Stewart's "office attire" isn't what it once was.

"I feel fortunate to be able to combine my background in psychology with my passion for fitness and for making change in people's lives."

—Dr. Allison Belger



Stefan Meholic/TJ's Gym



C.J. Rendic/TJ's Gym

TJ Belger (top) has expanded his collection of affiliates, with boxes in three different California locations.

CrossFit, apparently, has much to offer a previously successful businessman. For Gregg, there is the appeal of the raw, the real, the honest, the loyal—the absence of the pretense and bling he had endured on Wall Street and the chance to make real connections based on human interactions in a community striving for something other than money. For Damon, there is the appeal of the “grassroots revolutionary vibe of CrossFit”: he was convinced CrossFit would “change the world’s view of fitness.”

While Damon acknowledges his passion for CrossFit and the communities it creates, for him there is an allure of another kind. “I love growing businesses,” he says. “The idea of taking a vision from dream to reality is what gets me out of bed every day, seeing the dream come to fruition.”

Back in New Jersey, Gregg also finds himself able to get out of bed much more readily these days.

“Now I toss and turn at night thinking about what is on deck for tomorrow, knowing I have a ton of stuff to do, but I can’t wait to get to the gym to do it,” he says. “I know some new person is going to come through my doors and ask me a bunch of crazy questions like, ‘But when is the cardio?’ or tell me how they are ‘in shape and don’t need an intro session,’ and I am going to want to lose my shit. But I welcome those challenges.”

Transferable skills?

So how do people from other fields make it as affiliate owners, and what skills, traits and talents do they make use of in their new role? Judging from the four affiliate owners (myself included) profiled here, different people emphasize different aspects of the job depending on their unique set of skills and their previous experiences. The psychologist (me) makes an extra effort to connect with clients, learn what makes them tick and offer support through the inherent vulnerabilities of CrossFitting. The business developer (Damon) has a knack for the organizational and logistical challenges of growing a business. The former trader (Gregg) feels so liberated to be able to work with people in a meaningful context and calls upon his attention to detail and capacity for work. The public-school administrator (Andy) treats each class, each client encounter, as a teaching moment and a chance to offer something new. What unites all four different trainers is passion for the job.



Megan Kelly/TJ's Gym

Boone (center) instructs students who are slightly older than the middle-school children he's used to, but his teaching skills no doubt serve him well in the box.

Gregg talks about his passion for the loyalty of CrossFit, the sense of real that comes from laying it all out there with the same groups of people day in and day out. He talks about teaching his soon-to-be-born child a life lesson about doing what is inspiring and not necessarily fitting into some kind of mold of supposed success: "Go after something you want. Create something for yourself." He has no regrets about leaving his job on Wall Street and pursuing a longtime dream. He greets each challenge with gratitude for the opportunity to change lives, the friendships he has made and the community he has created.

Damon talks about his passion for growing businesses and the learning opportunities that come from overcoming mistakes along the way. He talks about his confidence in his business-development skills like someone reflecting on days on the football field as captain of the high-school varsity squad. He's full of childlike exuberance mixed with pure conviction.

"I spent the last five years of my life learning how to grow, how to develop systems, deal with employees, learn bookkeeping and accounting, deal with people, compete on a national scale, communicate, deal with money—you name it—and at the same time pursued every scrap of CrossFit knowledge I could in my spare time. It was the

hard-knock version of an Ivy League business education. I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that this is helping us springboard to massive success, and I hope to share some of that with the affiliate community."

Andy talks about his good fortune for having the opportunity to combine passion and purpose with a career. Still juggling dual roles as affiliate owner and school VP for now, Andy revels in each teaching moment he is given.

"Each class represents an opportunity to impact individuals, and there are a number of ways this happens," he says. "We can correct form of movements and feel good about helping people progress while avoiding injuries. We can offer new content and instruction and create new experiences for people. We can inspire and push and cheer and calm and support others. We can compliment and encourage and correct.

"We consistently run into people in our classes who are physically and mentally and socially vulnerable. There is a tremendous responsibility that comes with the job. A great coach keeps these social components at the front of his or her agenda. It's more than rolling out a WOD and turning up the tunes. It's the ability to create better lives for people each and every encounter we have with them. It is this responsibility and opportunity that has compelled me into the business."

For me, a dual career as a psychologist and affiliate owner/coach seems easy and obvious in so many ways. Despite the logistical challenges of fitting everything into a 24-hour day, much of the work in both realms is strikingly similar. In both roles, I evaluate, question, listen, learn and try to offer something new, something potentially helpful to my clients. Be it a small pointer on waiting for the hips before pressing the arms in a thruster or a five-minute chat after class about an emotional moment a client had, working as a psychologist prepared me for the CrossFit box.

And while I hate to admit it, my mom was right: when TJ and I first got married, she couldn't stop talking about how cool it would be for us to combine our expertise and have some kind of "mind-body" facility. I used to roll my eyes, picturing some cheesy gym tagline about serving the total person. But, as I've said in a previous article, CrossFit changes everything. Organically, and without any sort of plan, my work life evolved to what it is now. I feel fortunate to be able to combine my background in psychology with my passion for fitness and for making change in people's lives. I've learned in the trenches how to operate a business, and though mistakes are made I've gained a whole new set of skills I never thought would interest me.

A Career in CrossFit

Along with the passion for CrossFit, what seems to be present in the larger population of affiliate owners is a conviction that whatever their background, whatever their work experience, whatever their skill set, running a CrossFit box can give them a place to apply their strengths. Two of the great things about CrossFit are its variety and its inclusiveness. The variety allows people with different specializations to focus their business in a certain way (e.g. the former football coach who emphasizes Oly lifting or the former collegiate gymnast whose clients do more muscle-ups). The inclusiveness allows affiliate owners to work with clients from all walks of life and all demographics. This means specific experiences with different populations can come in handy.

All kinds of skill sets can apply when CrossFitting as a career. The business side, management demands, athletic forums, community-outreach possibilities, interactions with clients and many other domains combine to make owning an affiliate a multifaceted, challenging and exciting prospect—maybe exciting enough to warrant quitting that day job!



Courtesy of Dr. Allison Belger

About the Author

Allison Belger lives with her husband, TJ, and their two young daughters in Marin County, Calif. They own and operate *TJ's Gym*, with three CrossFit affiliates: CrossFit San Rafael, Corte Madera and CrossFit Novato. Allison is a clinical psychologist specializing in assessments of children, adolescents and young adults. She juggles management of the family business, her private psychology practice and her role as mom.

Although Allison recently began fitness coaching after finding CrossFit in 2008, she has a long history of involvement in athletics, as both a player and a coach. Allison played soccer at the Division I level in college and has since coached a number of youth soccer teams in the Bay Area. Allison has a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College, a master's in learning disabilities from Northwestern University, and a doctorate in clinical psychology from the Wright Institute in Berkeley, Calif.