
THE CrossFit LIFE

“I’m so Glad Daddy Found CrossFit”

Angie Fontes’ husband discovered CrossFit and inspired their family of six to lose a combined total of more than 185 lb.

By Angie Fontes

April 2012



Jennifer Sheppard

Scott Fontes (left) was 295 lb. when he started CrossFit but lost almost 100 lb. in a year.

On March 17, 2011, my husband Scott walked into CrossFit Lake Mary in Lake Mary, Fla., to collect on his two free classes and see what this “CrossFit stuff” was about. Scott is 5 foot 6, and he weighed 295 lb. Greg Sheppard, the affiliate owner, gave Scott a basic workout to perform while the other lady in the class flew around the gym during her workout as if it was the easiest thing in the world. Scott came home that day saying, “Angie, there’s something to this. I’m going back.”

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Losing 100 lb. looks exactly like this.

We spoke about the expense. It was a little more than a Globo Gym membership yet cheaper than a personal trainer. Scott truly felt this was something he would commit to and wanted to keep going back. I agreed to the expense with some reservations, and Scott continued to go.

After a few weeks, Scott asked me to go to a Saturday class to watch. I was very hesitant. I was still suffering from a great deal of postpartum depression and never wanted to go anywhere. We packed up our four kids on a Saturday morning, and I watched the class. It was intimidating. I thought that neither Scott nor I really belonged in a place where so many fit people were lifting heavy things and running around with such ease. Then I watched Scott. Everything he did was scaled. Running was rowing and weights weren't as heavy as what was on the whiteboard. I didn't realize CrossFit allowed you to scale until that visit.

Before I attempted CrossFit, I emailed the gym and asked some simple questions. They gave me links to review and even sent me a follow-up email to see if I had reviewed them. It wasn't until six weeks after Scott started that I went to collect on my two free classes. I'm 5 foot 1 and weighed 222 lb. It was Scott's success that encouraged me to at least try. Still reluctant and not in the right frame of mind, I began on April 27, 2011.

Just eight days after I started CrossFit, our gym began a Paleo challenge. I cut out processed foods and pasta, dairy, beans, legumes, and other items loaded with

gluten and sugar. Scott and I are both competitive, so we studied up on this Paleo way of eating and worked hard to implement it for the 30-day challenge. We supported each other and made sure we could each make class while maintaining our home, holding two jobs, and caring for four kids and two pets. It was never easy. I struggled with many additional challenges. I suffer from polycystic ovarian syndrome and have insulin resistance, which added additional concerns as we planned our diet.

We each lost a decent amount of weight during the challenge. Scott even won second place! He lost 20 lb. and I lost 11 lb. Scott was beginning to see changes to his size. *Perhaps this is working*, I thought.

Running a Family—and Running

The New Year's Eve before all this CrossFit stuff, Scott made a resolution to do a 5K a month for the entire year. He thought it would spark his weight loss. He had lost 20 lb. prior to CrossFit but did not see significant body changes until he added in CrossFit WODs. In July, I joined him in his 5K challenge. We had done only one other 5K earlier in the year together, in February 2011, just three months after the baby was born. I thought it was going to kill me. Each race became a little easier, even though I didn't really train for them outside of CrossFit WODs.

We continued to eat Paleo through the summer as often as possible. Consistency is what worked. We performed a WOD five to six days a week and ate Paleo 90 percent of the time. We allowed a cheat day every other week just for sanity.

School started back, and the pressure of running a household increased once the kids' activities ramped up. Our children are 13, 10, 5 and 1. Each child has individual interests and activities. In the past, this has led to a few nights of KFC or McDonald's when food was not easy to prepare; however, our slow cooker became our saving grace.

Our day started with a 6 a.m. CrossFit class for me and then an 8 a.m. class for Scott. We then each worked eight or more hours. After work I shuttled kids around to this or that. Then we would come home to cook Paleo and do it all over again the next day. Scott has an hour commute each way, so much of his time driving includes listening to podcasts or videos about CrossFit to improve his knowledge and performance.

In late September, I was fortunate enough to participate in a nutrition seminar put on by Jeremy Mullins of CrossFit HQ. The seminar went over both Zone and Paleo diets. It also covered some science and basic principles about how to properly evaluate your food intake. Everyone's personal needs are different. I gained valuable knowledge about how to dial in and tune our diet in such a way that we really began to see body changes like never before. We kept up the effort regardless of stalls or hiccups along the way.

On Oct. 6, 2011, we began our second Paleo challenge. I was determined to win this time. Not for the prize but to finally get my diet under control. I spoke to Scott, and he was on board to bring the kids in 100 percent as well. This Paleo challenge would prove our most difficult yet. We would be preparing 100 percent Paleo food for six people and even constructing CrossFit Kids WODs at home. We were focused and ready to make it a success.

Before the challenge, our oldest son was about 15 lb. overweight. Our four-year-old daughter was at risk of being overweight. During the course of this Paleo challenge, our 4-year-old learned that McDonald's is not good food. Our 13-year-old dropped 12 lb. and two pants sizes. Many of his friends say he needs a new nickname—he's not "Stubby"

anymore. Our 10-year-old took his lunch every day, knowing he was eating healthy even though classmates made fun of him. He lost 7 lb., and our 4-year-old lost 2 lb. She dropped from the 95th percentile for BMI to the 75th percentile. Our baby girl has had healthy check-ups at each milestone for BMI.

The most heartwarming event from this Paleo challenge was a conversation I had with our oldest. He said, "Mommy, I'm so glad daddy found CrossFit. It really has changed all of us. Daddy isn't angry anymore and you seem happier. I'm just really glad he found it."

Our success was amazing. And as for me, I lost 17 lb. and dropped two pants sizes for a 5.4 percent body-fat reduction. I won first place! Scott lost 20 lb. and won third place.

Not only had I lost 65 lb., but the symptoms of my polycystic ovarian syndrome were disappearing. My hair loss had stopped, and hair was actually returning. My cyst issues were non-existent and my postpartum depression was gone. Even my prescription for glasses was cut in half. Scott was seeing more drops in size. He went from wearing a 3XL to an XL or a large. Scott had lost almost 90 lb. at this point.



Courtesy of Angie Fontes

The Fontes clan one year and about 185 lb. apart.

Jennifer Sheppard



Angie Fontes, then and now.

Just because the Paleo challenge was over didn't mean we were done. Not by a long shot! Our gym decided to do the 12 WODs of Christmas. This was 12 WODs over 12 hours; the buy-in went to charity. Those who completed all 12 WODs got a T-shirt.

Scott was amazing during the WODs. He completed every one of them and, yes, got his T-shirt. I had the kids with me that day but was still able to complete seven of the WODs, including the 120 burpees, which our oldest completed, too.

Holidays weren't without a struggle, of course. After coming off a hardcore Paleo challenge, we just wanted a rest. We still ate Paleo and worked out, but not with the same consistency as before. Our results suffered. While we did not gain weight, we did not see the results that we saw when we were consistent with our efforts.

Full Circle

Two years prior, I had lost weight and completed the Disney Princess Half Marathon at Walt Disney World in Florida. I was just thrilled to complete it. Afterward, we had baby No. 4, and I gained all the weight I had lost plus some. I had asked Scott if I could travel to complete the Tinkerbell Half Marathon in Disneyland in California.

On Jan. 28, 2012, I completed the Tinkerbell Half Marathon, and I beat my previous half-marathon time by 18 minutes. This was a wonderful accomplishment, and my box back home sent me notes and messages of encouragement.

As if that PR was not enough, four weeks later, on Feb. 26, 2012, I once again completed the Disney Princess Half Marathon and beat my previous PR, earned just four weeks prior, by 14 minutes. I know CrossFit prepared me for those PRs far better than training on my own. By completing a half marathon in the same calendar year at each Disney location, I earned the coveted Coast-to-Coast Medal.

Now 2012 is here, as well as Scott's one-year anniversary with CrossFit is approaching. At the time of writing, he is poised to lose 100 lb. since CrossFit and 120 lb. overall. His journey has inspired so many. First me, then it spread to the kids. We've inspired family members, friends and even strangers.

People I haven't spoken to in years contact me to ask what I am doing and how have I done it. My mother has even spoken to me about her own diet and exercise. This means more to me than she'll ever know. Scott's brother has begun his CrossFit journey and Paleo efforts. People we had no idea we had inspired or touched have reached out to us. We truly feel we must pay this journey forward.

Where do we go from here? Our weight-loss journey is still not over. Scott has another 20 to 30 lb. to lose, and I have about 40 to 50 lb. left to lose. We have our children to mold into healthy individuals who will make good choices even when we're not around. Both Scott and I have taken a CrossFit Level 1 seminar, and I hope to take the CrossFit Kids course as well. We have started **Primal Gourmet**, a Paleo-style food business. All this plus four kids, two jobs (now our own business too), pets and trying to complete our journey.

We are very glad daddy found CrossFit.

