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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## Fashionista Finds CrossFit

Her work colleagues want fitness tips, and her CrossFit friends ask for fashion advice. Nicole Biscuiti on balancing a fashion career with CrossFit dreams.

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By Nicole Biscuiti

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All images: Matthew O'Connell

It was moments before a big chipper, the third event of my very first CrossFit competition. I looked over at my friends and family yelling for me. I saw friends from my home box, CrossFit Delray Beach. I saw my mom, who on several occasions had come into the gym while I was training and freaked out.

"You are going to hurt yourself," she told me. "You are crazy! Be careful!"

Next to my mom were my friends from outside the CrossFit world, who all think I'm a brick shithouse. I love them, but they don't care or even know if I "dead-clean" 100 lb. or 340 lb. They just think I do the craziest shit they have ever seen.

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*You can dress her up, but she still has pull-up calluses and deadlift scars.*

I saw my colleagues from work. One of my colleagues always asks me to write workouts for her to do at the YMCA but then comes back into my office and says things like, "What's a burpee?" So I show her—while wearing my suit and heels. She says, "Um, yeah, that looks hard. Anything else I can try?"

Last but not least, I saw my boyfriend, also a CrossFitter. I don't have to explain anything to him. He can look at me and he knows.

My friends and family were shaking Ketel martinis, popping Veuve Clicquot (my favorite) and drinking beers. The tent had tables with cheese and meat platters, pastries and sandwiches. The fresh-squeezed orange juice was for mimosas, and the only fruit was lime for the tequila. Pink pompoms and "Go, Nicole!" posters created a colorful, festive hedge.

I thought, "Just a few more minutes, guys. I'll be right there with you."

The triathlons and running races of my past were easy compared to this. I had butterflies in my stomach. I looked

over at what I kept referring to as my "fan club" and thought, "Damn I'm lucky. All these people are here for me!"

Once the "3-2-1 ... Go!" sounded, the butterflies immediately dissipated and I went into work mode, steadily chipping away at the workload in front of me and constantly thinking about how I could make up ground by perfecting and improving each movement. When I finished, I had taken third place in that event. I didn't win but certainly did not disappoint myself, either.

I am a public-relations executive in the fashion industry: I manage PR for Bloomingdale's in two of its five Florida markets. My life is similar in some aspects to that of Anne Hathaway's character in *The Devil Wears Prada*, and in other aspects I often feel like a glorified hotel concierge manager. Five to six days a week you can find me, BlackBerry in hand, wearing a black suit, highly accessorized, with a minimum of four-inch stilettos hugging my feet, working 12-hour days. I walk fast (non-CrossFitters can't keep up), and I'm always on my way to a meeting, event or walk-through.



**Training secret revealed: hot coffee in the ice bath.**

Event planning and PR are all-or-nothing job scenarios. Just like CrossFit. You are either in or you're out. A great event is all in the details, the minutiae, the things nobody sees. Just like a great squat snatch or a perfect golf swing. The best make it look easy. But it takes time and energy.

My fashion colleagues don't exactly know what CrossFit is, but I'm pretty sure they think I'm crazy. They love asking me, "What did you do in the gym today?" and let me describe my training to them over lunch (which for me consists of "approved foods" as I salivate over the greasy, fried goodness they have on their plates). My colleagues in the Orlando office got me a mini-fridge to house all the food I drag into the office with me each day on the condition that Dustin, our security officer, is allowed to keep his Rockstars in there. I have successfully converted one colleague into a CrossFitter, and now everyone in the office gets to hear his stories about box jumps and tire flipping.

My CrossFit friends think my work is awesome. They are always asking me, "So, what fun event do you have going on this week?" or "Hey—I want to buy something to wear for a party. What do you recommend?" I'm usually sporting new trends and bringing them little accessories to try.

I found CrossFit just by chance when I was looking for a place to work out that was convenient to my house. Up until that point I was running every day and weight training a couple of days a week, and I had just started training for my first triathlon with Team in Training.

My first experience with CrossFit was a Helen-esque workout—all stuff (now) in my wheelhouse, and I think it probably took me 40 minutes to complete. Even though I was "in shape" by L.A. Fitness standards, when I started CrossFit I was using bands for pull-ups, never did a thruster over 65 lbs., did double-unders that made me look like I was hopping around the house trying to avoid stepping on nails, and thought there was something wrong with people who ate organic beef jerky, nuts and grilled chicken before noon.

That was two years ago, and while I am nowhere near where I'd like to be, I'm also celebrating my small successes through various PRs (like my first muscle-up!) and very much living in the present, understanding that every day I accomplish something.

I can say with certainty that CrossFit is by far the best, healthiest part of my life. Currently, I spend half of my week training at CrossFit Delray Beach in my Florida hometown and the other half of my week at Kingspoint CrossFit in Orlando. Invariably, with my busy travel schedule, I am forced to crash a Globo Gym here and there. I have many very early mornings and late nights in order to get fit.

I believe that my CrossFit life has enabled me to be a better, more efficient person at work. I'm not bothered by the physical demands of my job because I know that no matter what it is, it's going to be 10 times easier than whatever I'm doing in my CrossFit box.

In the same manner, I've been able to apply the practical thinking that I've gained as a fast-paced executive to my training program, which has helped me see that even the smallest gains matter, and that this "CrossFit thing" I'm doing is not a fad—it's a long game. Having patience and enjoying the journey is all part of it. Along with Champagne tents and pink pompoms.

To follow along on my CrossFit journey, visit my website: [www.NicoleBiscuiti.com](http://www.NicoleBiscuiti.com).

