

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

August 2012

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THE CrossFit LIFE

More Than the Street: A Steve's Club Story

Through Steve's Club and CrossFit, a high-schooler found discipline, community and hope for the future.

By Liz Wolfe with Lee Knight and Steve Liberati

August 2012



All images: Rosemary Mackintosh

Kevin accomplished two major goals in one week: he graduated from high school and got a muscle-up. Both accomplishments were the result of perseverance, hard work and some help from Steve's Club National Program.

Steve's Club is a national network of programs that makes it possible for underserved youth of any socioeconomic background to join in the CrossFit community at reduced, low or no cost. Teens from tough neighborhoods and difficult family lives have the opportunity to be involved in fitness and other positive outlets instead of drugs, gangs and violence. After school, they go to their local CrossFit affiliate, where they sweat alongside other members of their local community: firefighters, lawyers, doctors, businessmen and soccer moms.

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Kevin moved to the United States in 2005 from Puerto Rico and has been working out with Steve's Club Camden since 2011. His neighborhood reflects some of the challenges we see many Steve's Club athletes facing.

"My neighborhood is kinda violent," Kevin said. "Every now and then, there is a robbery and drug-related problem. Steve's Club has been a positive thing in my life by keeping me off the streets."

Steve's Club National Program director Lee Knight sees the mission of Steve's Club in Kevin.

"Kevin is a good example of why Steve's Club and CrossFit is important. He was getting into trouble at school, got into a few fights, and it seemed possible that he'd let the attitude of his neighborhood prevail," Knight said. "Now he comes to Steve's Club and is excited to share things that happen in school, as well as new PRs in the gym. His successes in CrossFit carry over to a feeling of pride in himself and his accomplishments."

CrossFit isn't just the sport of fitness; it's about bringing the values of hard work, dedication and perseverance to everyday life. What we see in the gym is often a reflection of what happens in the outside world.

Kevin is no exception.

Steve Liberati, who started the first Steve's Club in Camden, N.J., believes Kevin has achieved so much in the gym based on dedication, follow-through and one of the Steve's Club values: discipline.

"On most days, Kevin walks to Steve's Club from his house, which takes about 45 minutes," Liberati said. "This really says a lot about the person Kevin is and shows his commitment, drive and dedication to CrossFit."

"As a result of his hard work and determination, he can now do advanced exercises such as rope climbs, handstand push-ups, ring dips, pull-ups and muscle-ups. I have seen Kevin make a major transformation both physically and interpersonally."

Kevin's accomplishments didn't come easily. According to Knight, he came to Steve's Club early, stayed late and did the work necessary to reach his goal. In the span of one month, Kevin went from being unable to do a single pull-up to doing 30 chest-to-bar pull-ups during the 2012 CrossFit Games Open.

Other Steve's Club kids look to Kevin as a role model. His great attitude can turn negatives into positives. He inspires others to work hard in school, at work and in life.



Kevin's new goals are getting a degree in computer engineering and figuring out butterfly pull-ups.

One of Kevin's mentors, John Costa, is a member of CrossFit Tribe, which shares space with Steve's Club. Costa sees Kevin as "the hope other at-risk teens need. Other teens need to see kids like Kevin and understand there is more than just the street. He has shown many athletes who are now part of Steve's Club a different way of life, one full of determination—which is followed by success. Kevin's progress spans past a set of rings and a barbell."

Steve's Club Athlete Profile

Name: Kevin

Local Steve's Club: Steve's Club Camden/CrossFit Tribe

CrossFitting Since: May 2011

Favorite WOD or Exercise: Muscle-up, deadlift, clean and jerk

Grace: 4:48 (RX)

Proudest CrossFit Moment: "The proudest CrossFit moments I've had so far are my first muscle-up, getting a PR on my deadlift (365 lb.) and doing Grace in 4:48."

Most Important Steve's Club Value: "Teamwork is the most important Steve's Club value to me."

School and CrossFit Goals: "My goal was to graduate high school, and my CrossFit goal was a muscle-up. I'm proud to say I achieved both in the same week."

New Goals: "My personal goal is to go to college and get a major in computer engineering. My new goal in CrossFit is to get butterfly pull-ups."



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Never Stop, Never Doubt

Lisa Mikkelsen, winner of the 45-49 Masters Division at the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games, talks about fitness over age 45. Hilary Achauer reports.

By Hilary Achauer

August 2012



All images: Staff/CrossFit Journal

When Lisa Mikkelsen stepped onto the competition floor as part of the CrossFit New England team at the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games, Anne Sargent took notice. Mikkelsen, who wears her long gray hair back in a ponytail, was 45 years old, twice the age of most of her competitors.



Mikkelsen completed 12 muscle-ups in two minutes at this year's CrossFit Games.

Sargent watched as Mikkelsen started the winner-take-all final event by taking on Elizabeth: 21-15-9, 95-lb. cleans and ring dips. Ring dips are not an easy movement for most women. The woman from Rocklin CrossFit, another team competing that day, got stuck on the dips, failing rep after rep and growing increasingly frustrated.

Mikkelsen had no trouble. She worked through Elizabeth quickly and steadily. Her performance helped her team come in first in the event and win the Affiliate Cup. After the Games, Sargent was so impressed by Mikkelsen she sent a message to her through Facebook.

"She said I inspired her when she watched me do Elizabeth," Mikkelsen said, "She is my age, and we have sons who are exactly the same age. She told me that if I could do it, then she could do it, too."

Not a Normal Family

This year, Mikkelsen did not compete on the Affiliate Cup team but rather entered the 45-49 Master's Division. She won five of the seven events and beat the second-place finisher by 41 points to stand atop the podium.

Mikkelsen admits that she is not an average 46-year-old. But for her, being active and athletic is just a part of who she is.

"My parents were always active when I was growing up," Mikkelsen said, "and it's always been a consistent part of my life. I never stopped."

Mikkelsen admits that she is not an average 46-year-old.

Mikkelsen's lifetime of athletics began at a young age. The youngest of four kids, Mikkelsen said the attitude in her family was that if one of the kids was going to do an activity, they were all going to do it. So she started swimming competitively at age 5 and made it to the Junior Olympics in swimming. Mikkelsen started running after college. She swam around Key West, qualified for the Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii and did a 200-mile relay with her husband, an ultra-runner.

"My husband couldn't come to the Games this year because he was running across Tennessee," Mikkelsen said. "We do not have a normal family."

A Winning Team

Most people seek out CrossFit, but in Mikkelsen's case, CrossFit found her. In 2009 Mikkelsen was running the U.S. operations and distribution for Inov-8, one of the original minimalist running-shoe companies. Brian MacKenzie, of CrossFit Endurance, contacted Mikkelsen because he was looking for shoes for his CrossFit athletes.

MacKenzie thought someone from Inov-8 should try CrossFit. Mikkelsen volunteered, and before she knew it she was in Atlanta attending a Level 1 Seminar. MacKenzie then put Mikkelsen in touch with Heather Bergeron, one of the owners of CrossFit New England. Bergeron told Mikkelsen to get her butt into the gym.



Mikkelsen's lack of weaknesses made her an important part of CrossFit New England's Affiliate Cup-winning team in 2011.

Mikkelsen nervously went to a 9:30 a.m. class “with all the moms.”

**Constantly competing
against—and beating—men
and women half her age
means that Mikkelsen often
forgets how old she is.**

“I was so scared to do pull-ups,” she said. “And do you know what my first WOD was? One hundred pull-ups for time. I could not put my arms above my head afterward,” Mikkelsen said. “But I liked it.”

Soon, Mikkelsen was a regular at CrossFit New England.

“It’s such a crazy environment, but I thought they were normal,” Mikkelsen laughed.

She kept running, and in the fall of 2009, Mikkelsen won the USA Track and Field New England six-hour championship in Warwick, R.I., running 37 miles to claim both the masters and open titles.

It was around this time that CrossFit New England started putting together their affiliate team for the 2010 Games, and Ben Bergeron asked Mikkelsen if she would join. She added in extra CrossFit workouts and trained with the team.

In addition to working full-time with Inov-8, raising her 8-year-old son and training with the CFNE team, Mikkelsen started running 200- and 400-meter races. In the spring of 2010, Mikkelsen entered the USATF National Masters Indoor Track and Field Championships, competing against past Olympians and world champions.

Mikkelsen won silver medals in both the 400 and 200 events, setting PRs in both. Then in the summer of 2010, she was a member of CrossFit New England's Affiliate Cup team. The 2010 competition lit a fire under the team.

"When we got back (after the 2010 Games) we wanted to win. It got crazy," Mikkelsen said. She kept running track and trained with the affiliate team. At the New England Championships, a track competition that took place before the 2011 Regionals, Mikkelsen won her age group with a 400-meter time of 59.92, but during the race she hurt her Achilles tendon.

Never one to let anything slow her down, Mikkelsen carried on. She competed with the CrossFit New England team at the 2011 North East Regional. The squad dominated the three-day competition and won every single event on its way to punching a ticket to the CrossFit Games. On the deadlift/box-jump workout, Mikkelsen was fired up and blazed through the reps.

"It was the most exciting event," Mikkelsen said. She pushed herself hard through the heavy deadlifts and box jumps. Her performance helped her team win that event, but Mikkelsen could feel her Achilles injury starting to bother her.

"On the last round of box jumps I was not rebounding," Mikkelsen said.

She was in so much pain after the workout that she did the final event of Regionals on one foot. Mikkelsen would later find out she suffered a partial tear of her Achilles tendon. She wore a boot on her foot leading up to the Games and rested it as much as she could.

Despite this injury, Mikkelsen competed at the 2011 Games, helping CrossFit New England take home the coveted Affiliate Cup.

Once she returned home from Los Angeles, Mikkelsen realized her body had been compensating for the Achilles injury, and she developed tendonitis in her soleus. Even though her box asked her to be on the 2012 Affiliate Cup team, Mikkelsen was worried about her injury and decided to make the move to the 45-49 Masters Division.



In 2012, Mikkelsen moved from the stadium to the Masters area and dominated the 45-49 age group.

Becoming a Master

Mikkelsen admits it was a tough transition to go from Affiliate Cup champion to Masters champion in one year.

"The team win was so much sweeter," Mikkelsen said, comparing last year's win with her first-place finish this year in the Masters division. "All your teammates are watching you when you compete on the team, and there's someone to share it with."

Constantly competing against—and beating—men and women half her age means that Mikkelsen often forgets how old she is.

"Well, you aren't looking at yourself," Mikkelsen said, which is especially true in the mirror-free CrossFit environment. "My hair is gray, but I don't see it."

Although Mikkelsen felt a little strange about being with the “old people in the parking lot,” she admits that the vibe over in the Masters area was special.

What often slows Mikkelsen down are not physical limitations but the responsibilities that often come with age.

“The Masters are so nurturing,” Mikkelsen said. “I didn’t hear any ill feeling. Everyone was helping each other out, and it was really a cool thing.”

Among the women who competed with Mikkelsen in the 45-49 division was Anne Sargent—the woman who was inspired to compete after watching Mikkelsen’s performance at the Games in 2011. Mikkelsen showed Sargent that a woman in her 40s could compete alongside 20-year-olds, and it was her example that led Sargent to qualify and compete at the Games.

What often slows Mikkelsen down are not physical limitations but the responsibilities that often come with age. Mikkelsen is married, she has a school-age child, and she runs a business. She can’t spend hours in the gym working on her mobility or refining technique. So, like many a working mom, she has learned to multi-task.

“I do mobility work at home after dinner,” Mikkelsen said. She does her physical therapy for her tendonitis while she brushes her teeth.

Despite her busy schedule and the number on her driver’s license, Mikkelsen is not slowing down anytime soon. She plans to compete in a national track competition in March, hoping to beat her PR of 59:12 in the 400-meter dash. After that, she thinks she’ll compete in the CrossFit Games Open in 2013.

Part of Mikkelsen’s success is that she doesn’t see anything remarkable about what she does. She is matter-of-fact and straightforward about her athletic achievements; they are all in a day’s work. The name of Mikkelsen’s new affiliate—which is focused on training ultra-runners and endurance athletes—says it all: CrossFit Never Doubt.

That, in a nutshell, is the secret of Mikkelsen’s success. No matter your age, your gender or the weight of your responsibilities—never doubt.



Gary Allard

About the Author

Hilary Achauer is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing websites, brochures, blogs and newsletters, Hilary is an editor and writer for the **CrossFit Journal** and contributes to the CrossFit Games site. She lives in San Diego and coaches and trains at CrossFit Pacific Beach. To contact her, visit HilaryAchauer.com.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Into the Light

Niki Rhodes was a heroin addict.
She says CrossFit helped save her.

By Niki Rhodes

August 2012



All images: Niki Rhodes and Yale Jesser

Let's start on a foggy night in July 2008 in San Francisco.

I'm waiting for the arrival of my only tool for survival. One month earlier I turned 25. As I wait, I wonder how I have made it this far in life—as if turning a year older was some sort of feat. For most this is not a serious accomplishment, but for a girl in the depths of a chronic heroin addiction, turning 25 was nothing short of a miracle.

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I'm cold and the fog is so thick it leaves a layer of mist on my face, stinging my skin. The chills and sweat of the "sickness" of withdrawal has made me sensitive to cold, and I wonder what is taking this bitch so long.

Fast-forward.

I'm lying on a cement floor, not sure where. Nausea and vomiting have taken over. If I should be scared of this foreign place, it doesn't occur to me. Two weeks into being in jail I realize where I am. The morning I realize this, I feel relief. The next two weeks of life are filled with boredom and court dates. When I am released, I have a court order to yet another rehab. Maybe life will fare well for me in a new place, and off to sunny Palm Springs I go. Here we go for another attempt at sobriety. I am not optimistic.

**"I don't care if you never
do anything for a career and
sit around and mindlessly
paint forever. Just please,
please don't do this."**

—Niki Rhodes' father

My dad's face looks tired. He has lost weight. I think back to the one time he visited me in jail. He was sobbing.

"Niki, I don't care if you are never successful in anything you do in life," he starts, choking back tears.

I cannot look at his eyes.

"I don't care if you never do anything for a career and sit around and mindlessly paint forever. Just please, please don't do this," he continues.

He is begging me.

I try to answer him.

I have no words.

Time for visiting is up.

I leave him crying behind the glass, where I cannot comfort him.

I am a failure.



An artist since she was a child, Rhodes kept painting even through her darkest days.

I was so excited to have been released from jail that my first week in rehab was heaven, it seemed. I had a bed, a bathroom with a door and freedom to walk around. Wow, the things we take for granted. They had a gym, and we were required to go to for an hour. Working out was always miserable to me, so I would slowly walk on the treadmill until my time was up. Within a week, I was over being there and was just wishing I could go back to jail so people would stop asking me questions about my feelings: "Blah, blah, blah, your addiction is a disease, blah, blah, AA meetings, blah."

**In my mind, I felt I was
doomed. I thought there was
no other way of life for me.**

My counselor is talking and I am a million miles away.

I was told I wasn't ready, I had personality issues. I had sexual problems. I had more than addiction. It was a long process. On Day 75 of a 90-day sentence, I left rehab upon staff request. Dad was pissed. I was 500 miles from home with nowhere to go.



An anti-exercise hippie for most of her life, Rhodes found something she was missing in CrossFit.

The last time I got loaded was shortly after this. In my mind, I felt I was doomed. I thought there was no other way of life for me. I was full of self-defeat and sorrow. I was afraid and acting cowardly.

Nov. 9, 2008, I woke up on a friend's couch to a phone call from my dad. It was my sister's birthday and my first day sober again. I took this as a sign. I texted my big sis "Happy Birthday," and I went to check myself in to another rehab. Not a nice one; one for people with no money, nowhere to go and just a tiny bit of hope. I did everything they asked, starting with shutting up and doing the next right thing. I lived there for four months, got my foot in AA and worked the steps. The first 10 months of my sobriety, my family stepped in and helped me out a ton.

Enter Chad Kibbey

What I didn't tell you yet is that I left my heart in San Francisco, in the possession of an incredible man and artist. I left it with him because he had owned it for seven years. He also was a heroin addict. We split so we could get

clean, so we could have a chance. I had given up on the notion I could ever love someone else. Not so much given up; it actually just never crossed my mind.

Chad Kibbey, five days out of the big house at an AA convention, was not the boy you bring home to mom. He was new to AA, and with good intentions I offered my hand to help. We instantly became best friends.

This part could be a story all in itself—the process of falling in love, of becoming one with someone, of growing together, and finding out who we are and what we are made of. So let's take you right to the life-changing parts. I don't want to keep you here all year.

"What do you like?" I asked him, hoping for a long list of interests I could compare with my own for my childish compatibility test.

"I don't know," he said. "I really don't. You may think that is crazy."

In my mind, I am truly shocked.

"It's OK," I said. "We are just going to have to figure that out."

I thought about that statement he made to me many times afterward. I still remember it fondly today. I told him I used to paint and how I love art. He looked at photos of my art with amazement and interest, and for the first time since getting clean, I was proud of something besides doing the 12 steps of AA. It was the first moment I realized that life could be made up of more than just "not using drugs."

He was solid muscle and into health and fitness. He was like a bizarre animal to me.

He brought me my first client who commissioned a painting and then three more. I have not stopped painting since.

Chad spent most of his time at the gym. A different kind of man than I was used to. He was solid muscle and into health and fitness. He was like a bizarre animal to me. I was always around long-haired, cigarette-smoking art geeks. He was strange, masculine, ambitious and made things happen.

I have always been scattered and easily distracted—head in the clouds, wondering about the stars and the universe and who knows what else. He brought me down to Earth, and I pulled him into the clouds.

There is no one braver on the planet than the person turning his or her back on comfort to the unknown, following a passion.

We heard of some sort of fitness competition called The Marine Corps challenge at a local CrossFit gym. He was so into fitness I decided to go along. It was a chaotic scene. People lifting, jumping and pushing as fast as they could. Even to an anti-exercise hippie artist like me, it was exciting. The owner of the gym gave me a free one-week membership. It was awful and painful, and the most fun I had ever had. I was hooked. We both became regular fixtures at the gym, attending sometimes more than one class a day. My life was changed. I had a second passion.

"You love CrossFit and health and fitness, which is the answer to what you like. You should be doing that for a living. Don't sell yourself short by making it a hobby," I told Chad as we were driving home one night.

He looked over to me and placed his hand on my leg. He looked thoughtful. I knew he had heard me. We had answered the question I had asked so long before.

When Chad quit his job, I was not surprised. He had saved all his money while working behind the bar and was ready to pursue his dreams. Off he went to make them happen. There is no one braver on the planet than the person turning his or her back on comfort to the unknown, following a passion. Operation **CrossFit Shifted** had begun. Helping build this CrossFit community has changed my life.

Let me rewind and explain to you that CrossFit is not just working out but also a lifestyle. Let me also say that every time I have done a CrossFit workout, there is a moment where I feel like I cannot go on. As I push through those feelings of pain and fear, I come out victorious on the other

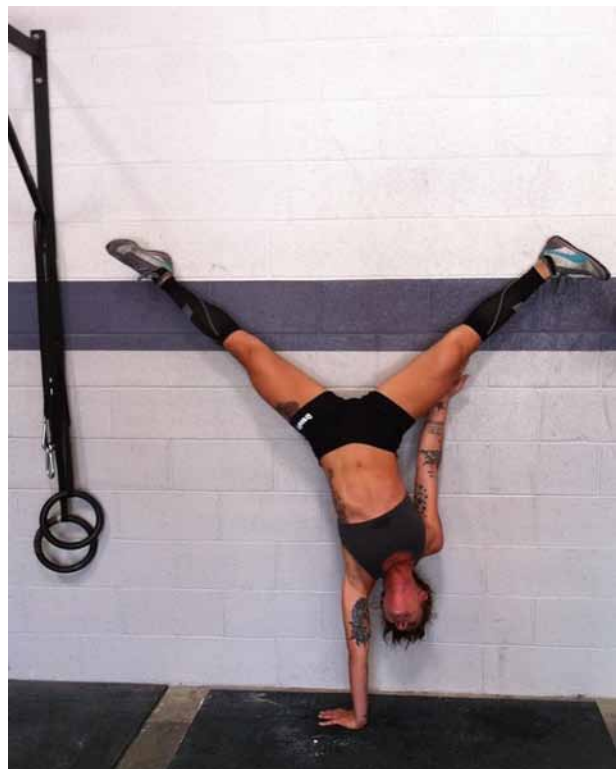
side and a part of me grows. The good part of me that has courage and never quits—the part of me that was stifled for years of neglect and drug abuse.

Then there is the community.

When you go through workouts like Murph, you feel as if you have survived a traumatic event with these people. That kind of bond is unparalleled. I imagine people who have survived a shipwreck feel similar.

"We will build a CrossFit gym that will be an inspiration to this valley," Chad used to say.

And that is exactly what we did. The gym has about 60 consistent members, and the whole town is buzzing about it. I cannot think of this place without tears in my eyes. It is a place where lives change for the better. Where people find out how far they can push themselves. I have watched women come in and have fear in their eyes and low self-esteem. Two months later they are on top of their world and are truly proud of themselves. To be proud of yourself is profound. It is a gift of life.



With every WOD, CrossFit reinforces a sense of victory, a feeling of triumph against pain and fear.

If you would have told me three years ago that I would have dedicated my life to fitness and helping others, I would have deemed you another crazy person on the streets of San Francisco. I had nothing to offer this world.

Today I am worth something. I love myself and my life. Since helping to open that gym, I have parted ways with my dear sweet Chad. He continues to make changes in people's lives. We are both thriving in our community. He runs a program for troubled teens at CrossFit Shifted, and I am a Level 1 trainer at [CrossFit Palm Springs](#).

However, not a day goes by that I am not grateful for that life-changing love. I am a stronger and better person who has committed to stay in the light.

I am writing this story for the people who have helped me along the way: my loving father, my big sister, my entire family, AA, CrossFit, Chad, every person I trained and continue to train. The list is endless.



About the Author

Niki Rhodes lives in Palm Desert, Calif., and is a CrossFit Level 1 trainer at CrossFit Palm Springs. She also spends her time painting at [Niki Rhodes Art](#).

**My success today is measured
in my self-worth, which I can
proudly state I have a lot of.**

My success today is measured in my self-worth, which I can proudly state I have a lot of.

Today I will stay in the light. I have walked through the dark and found that the light is a choice. With that choice, I am free. Free to think, to write, to love, to create, to be myself. With that choice, I walk forward to the unknown, to greatness, through fear. Today, although hundreds of miles away from where I was born, I am home.

THE CrossFit[®] *kitchen* K I D S



Sweet Cheeks Headquarters

CITRUS SKEWERS

by Shirley Brown and Alyssa Dazet
[Sweet Cheeks Headquarters](#)

overview

Meat on a stick: fun to eat, easy to prepare. Plus, citrus skewers look super cool!

This meat on a stick is better than the normal corn dog. Use grass-fed beef to ensure top quality and better flavor. Serve it up and watch your kids get excited to eat protein.

serves 4

ingredients

15 long wooden skewers
1 lb. grass-fed sirloin (cut into thin strips)
3 oranges (cut in half)
4 cups mixed greens of your choice
Trader Joe's Smoke Seasoning to taste
Coconut oil

dressing

1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1.5 tbsp. olive oil
Salt to taste

garnish

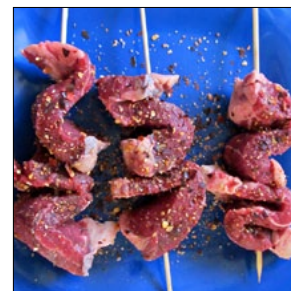
½ cup cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
¼ cup slivered almonds

notes

If barbecuing skewers, make sure to soak skewers in water for a few hours before cooking to prevent them from catching on fire.

directions

1. Heat frying pan or grill on medium-high heat. Add coconut oil.
2. Thread meat onto skewers in an S-pattern (see below) and season all sides with smoke seasoning.
3. Sear all sides of skewers in pan, turning when done. When meat is cooked to your liking, squeeze the juice of one orange in the pan and let it cook with the meat.
4. Plate oranges flat side down and set aside.
5. Toss mixed greens with olive oil, vinegar and salt, then set aside.
6. Stick approximately 3 skewers into each orange in a triangular pattern. Fill inside the skewer space with greens. Garnish plate with tomatoes and slivered almonds.



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

The New America

Marcus Hendren grew up American playing football and farming. Then he discovered a new sport. Hilary Achauer reports.

By Hilary Achauer

August 2012



Staff/CrossFit Journal

It doesn't get more all-American than Marcus Hendren.

Hendren grew up on a dairy farm in Johnston, Ohio. His grandfather started the farm in 1956, and Hendren spent his childhood working on the farm alongside his father and brothers. When other kids were off at the pool or playing summer baseball, Hendren and his brothers were busy feeding baby calves.

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Ann Hendren

The Hendrens on the land their family has worked since 1956.

In high school, Hendren was a star football player. He was the top rusher and scorer in the state of Ohio his senior year and earned state player-of-the-year honors in Division V. Hendren served as team co-captain for the football, basketball and baseball teams his senior year and also earned varsity letters in track and field and lacrosse. His athletic accomplishments and academic excellence earned him admission to Cornell University in New York. Hendren had a successful football career at Cornell and graduated with a bachelor's degree in business in 2011. After graduation, he did what was expected of him: Hendren returned to Ohio to work on the family farm.

However, Hendren was not the same person he was when he left Ohio. While in college, Hendren found CrossFit. This discovery had a profound effect not only on his body, but also on the way he viewed the world—more specifically, his opinions about food and the way it is produced in our country.

A New Perspective

Hendren's brother played football with Graham Holmberg, which was how Marcus first heard about CrossFit. He started doing CrossFit.com workouts while in college. When he graduated in 2011 and moved home, Hendren began working out at CrossFit New Albany. Even though he was an experienced athlete and had done CrossFit on his own, Hendren said he "got his ass kicked" during his first workout out CrossFit New Albany. "But I loved it," he said.

**As a third-generation farmer,
Hendren is more familiar
than most with the traditional
methods of producing our
nation's food.**

The CrossFit Games were a goal of Hendren's from the beginning, but he was committed to helping his family on the farm. In addition to raising dairy cattle, Hendren Farms also grows corn and soybeans. In the spring and fall, the farm's busiest time, Hendren works 14-hour days.

Right around the time Hendren discovered CrossFit, he also began learning more about food and nutrition. As a third-generation farmer, Hendren is more familiar than most with the traditional methods of producing our nation's food. At Cornell, he discovered there are other ways to produce food that are better for the environment but also result in better quality, healthier food.

"I read *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan, and that revolutionized my thinking," Hendren said.

In the book, Pollan visits several traditional farms in the U.S. and explores the way the corn-based diet of the cows negatively affects both the nutritional value of the meat and also the animal's life. Pollan discusses how the industrial model of agriculture is detrimental to the environment and our health, and he advocates a return to localized, sustainable agriculture.

Soon Hendren was reading about sustainable farms and thinking more carefully about food and where it comes from. This new way of looking at food and its production dovetailed perfectly with his growing interest in CrossFit and its emphasis on clean food and grass-fed meat.

Hendren's new interests and ideas were not popular with his family.

"I've been ostracized because of my beliefs," Hendren said. "My family doesn't understand."

**"Farming is a hell of a grind.
It's all about getting
through stuff."**

—Marcus Hendren

It would be one thing if Hendren was spending all his free time training for a sport his family had heard of, but he was disappearing to the gym to do CrossFit. The CrossFit Games are a big deal for CrossFitters, and the sport of fitness is reaching more and more people via airtime on ESPN platforms, but it's still not football or basketball just yet.

The Games

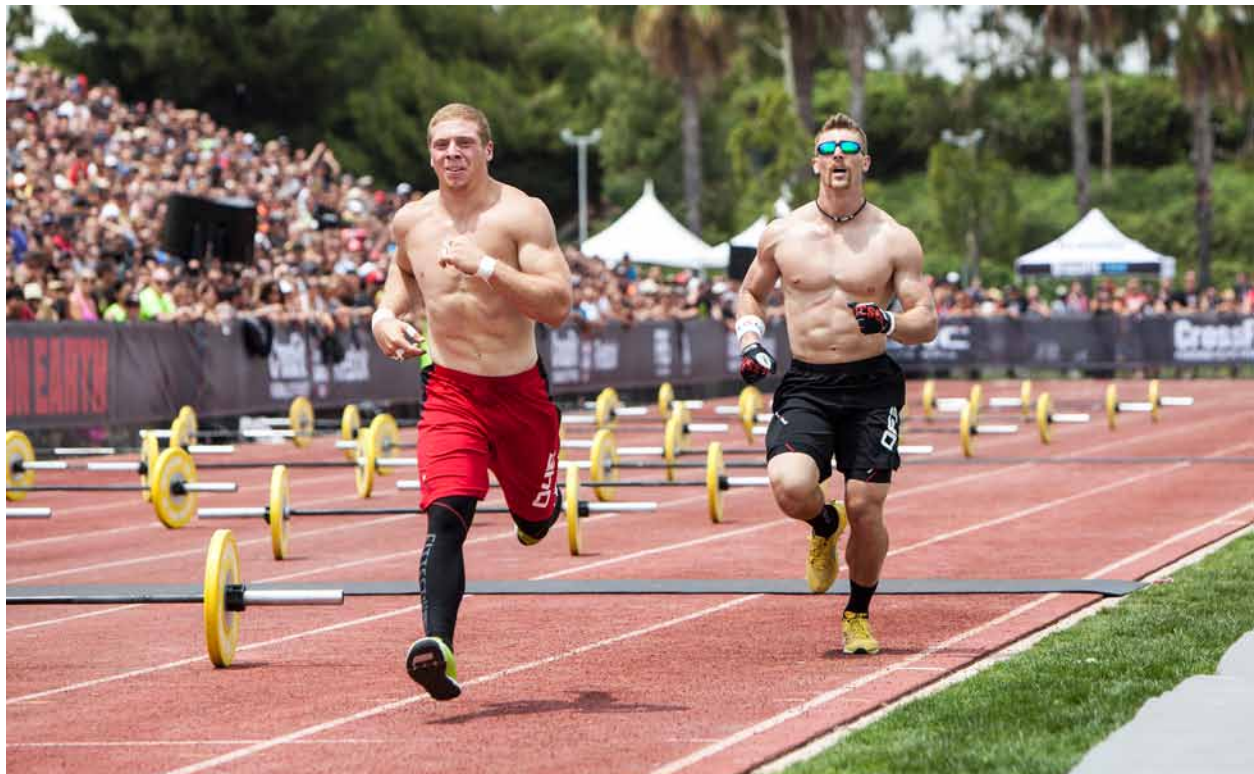
Even though his family did not support his efforts, Hendren trained hard all year. Some days he woke up at 4:30 a.m. to get a workout in before a day of farming, and other days he trained into the night after a full day's work.

Despite his Ivy League degree, Hendren works in the field, not an office. Some days he shovels dirt all day long. The next day he might spend eight hours moving hay bales. In a video on Games.CrossFit.com, Hendren described how moving a hay bale is the essence of functional fitness.

"The movement of picking the hay bale up and putting it somewhere—you pick it up with your deadlift, bring it up here, explode with your hips, and push press. It transitions into everything," Hendren said.

Beyond the physical benefits, Hendren said farming's biggest impact on his performance is on the mental side of CrossFit.

"Farming is a hell of a grind," Hendren said. "It's all about getting through stuff."



Staff/CrossFit Journal

At the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games, Marcus Hendren (left) finished seventh overall.



Hendren cleans hay bales all day, so perfectly balanced barbells didn't pose much of a problem for him in the Clean Ladder at the Games.

He said that mental toughness has served him well during grueling CrossFit workouts.

The hours in the field apparently paid off. Hendren finished 11th in the Open, just one spot behind 2010 Games champ Graham Holmberg. At the Central East Regional, Hendren battled through a stacked field that included Holmberg, 2011 Open winner Dan Bailey and 2011 Games champ Rich Froning. Hendren finished fourth and earned a trip to the Games because extra qualifying spots are opened when a past champ takes one of the podium positions.

Even though his parents watched him compete at Regionals, they still didn't understand his dedication to CrossFit.

"We got into a fight before I left (for the Games)," Hendren said about his family.

In Carson, Hendren performed consistently and steadily throughout the four days of competition. While he finished well back of the leaders in the Camp Pendleton events, he hit his stride on the Saturday of competition.

Over the weekend's eight events, he took no lower than 12th place and threw in a second on the Double Banger and a third on the clean ladder. Of course, Hendren was comfortable with a sledgehammer, and the awkward hay bales had him more than ready to pull a nicely balanced barbell weighing 355 lb.

Overall, Hendren placed seventh in the Games—an impressive accomplishment for someone so new to the sport.

Once he returned home, it was back to work on the farm. When asked if it's difficult that his family is not supportive of an endeavor that's such an important part of his life, Hendren answered with workmanlike stoicism.

"It's more annoying than anything," he said.

Moving Forward

Determined to practice the type of farming he believes in, Hendren has applied for an internship at a farm in Virginia that is the "exact opposite" of his family's farm.

"They do sustainable farming with grass-fed beef and pastured poultry. I'm in love with that kind of stuff," Hendren said enthusiastically.

**"I could help a lot more
people by starting a farm."
—Marcus Hendren**

When I told Hendren my family had just ordered goat milk from a local farm, he said, "That's what I'm talking about! I try to tell people about this, but the Midwest is so dominated by big farms," Hendren said. "People are totally into work, and health is not a priority. I saw a lot fewer obese people in San Diego and Los Angeles," he said of his trip to California for the Games.

Hendren's dream is to put his business degree to work and start a sustainable farm. He's interested in working as a CrossFit trainer but said "I could help a lot more people by starting a farm."

With Hendren's help, maybe someday CrossFit and sustainable farms will be as American as football and industrial agriculture.



Gary Allard

About the Author

*Hilary Achauer is a freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing websites, brochures, blogs and newsletters, Hilary is an editor and writer for the **CrossFit Journal** and contributes to the CrossFit Games site. She lives in San Diego and coaches and trains at CrossFit Pacific Beach. To contact her, visit HilaryAchauer.com.*



Ann Hendren

***If Hendren gets his way, he'll be raising
grass-fed cattle one day.***

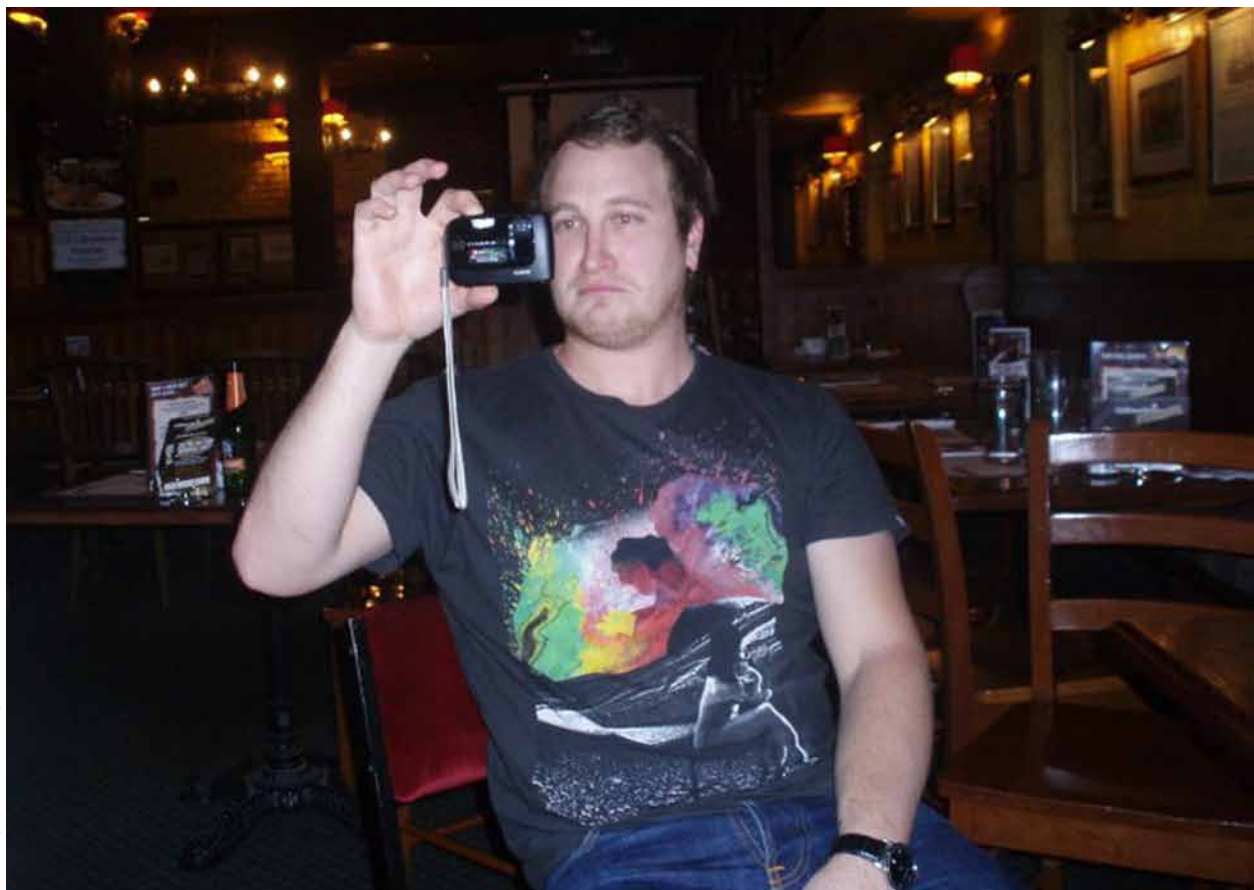
THE CrossFit LIFE

Rediscovering Fitness

Chris Borbas thought he had health and fitness all figured out—until he discovered CrossFit.

By Chris Borbas

August 2012



All images: Caitlin Flanagan

I honestly thought I was living an athletic lifestyle. I ate what I thought was a healthy diet and went to the gym regularly. Monday was chest and tri's, Tuesday was back and bi's. Sometimes I would do leg presses, but cardio was for fat old ladies.

1 of 3

I read every issue of *Men's Health* magazine, trying many of the recommended workouts. Some of the workouts would have me in the gym for over two hours at a time. I ate oats, brown rice and multi-grain bread because they were the smart choices. I drank protein shakes pre-workout and took a cocktail of other supplements and stimulants. I spent hundreds of dollars each and every month for years. But all it took was a photo for me to realize that none of it was working. In September 2010, I tipped the scales at 89 kilograms (about 196 lb.).

My name is Chris Borbas. I'm 27 years old and I live in Brisbane, Australia. Like many others, I actually started my CrossFit journey at my local Globo Gym. One day, my brother told me about this site where they posted random exercise routines, called "WODs," and you just do what it says for that particular day. How hard could that be?

I had a quick look and decided I was qualified to make up my own CrossFit workout. Deadlifts (80 kilograms, or 176 lb.) and box jumps (24 inches) sounded good. Three sets of 10 reps because that was the magic formula for any successful routine. I remember taking about 10 minutes to complete it, with my mandatory rests and rehydration trips to the water cooler.

That wasn't so hard. What's all the fuss about? I thought afterward.

About three months later, I decided to go to an actual CrossFit box and show off my skills and athletic prowess. I had been half-assing WODs at the gym, avoiding the movements I couldn't do and customizing my routine to accommodate my strengths. The only thing constantly varied at that point was the music on my iPod.



Borbas, pre-CrossFit.

After a quick explanation of the workout, I was standing in front of my box, ready to smoke everyone in the room. After all, it was only three rounds of five exercises, one minute at each, as many reps as possible. I wondered why it was called Fight Gone Bad. Oh well. 3-2-1 ... Go!

Needless to say, it was a very humbling experience that cut me right down to where I needed to be. Not only did I post a less-than-average result, but I also scored the lowest number of reps in the room. Both the "fat guy" and the "old guy" beat me. I couldn't believe it!

To say this lit a fire inside me was an understatement. I started going to CrossFit five days a week, and I improved quickly. My times came down and my lifts went up. I learned new skills like front squats, muscle-ups and double-unders. This pattern continued for several months, and I even managed to drop around 12 kilograms (26 lb.) without addressing my nutrition. I looked and felt much better than I had in years.

I was enjoying CrossFit and everything it had to offer so much that I decided to enter a local competition to see if I liked it. Turns out I loved it, and I continued to enter completions all over Brisbane.

I earned my Level 1 Certificate and completed the Coaches Prep Course in the same year I started CrossFit. While my newfound skills as a coach and athlete were helping me perform better, it was only short-lived. An injury that was minor in theory but persistent in reality left me unable to train for weeks at a time. This happened on a number of occasions over 12 months. I underwent countless physical-therapy sessions and did pointless rehab exercises. The only thing prescribed was rest. By this stage, I had accumulated enough equipment at home to do most WODs there—when I wasn't injured.

There is only so much a man can take before he starts losing motivation. In my case, it was the most recent setback that started my downward spiral. Ten weeks in total. Ten weeks and the only exercise I was allowed to do was to tuck my chin into my chest 10 times a day while lying on a pillow. Not even an AMRAP?

So I started eating. I ate worse than I had in years. Nothing was off limits. I wasn't training, so what was the use of watching what I put into my body? I actually justified this train of thought so I wouldn't feel guilty about stuffing my face. As you can imagine, no exercise and excessive calorie consumption caused my weight to increase to 80 kilograms (176 lb.), decreased my strength significantly and blunted my aerobic capacity.



Borbas after dedicating himself to eating clean and training hard.

Finally, I decided enough was enough. My injury had backed off and I was given the all-clear to train again. This time I decided to do things a little differently.

A wise man once said, "Eat meat and vegetables, nuts and seeds, some fruit, little starch and no sugar. Keep intake to levels that will support exercise but not body fat. Practice and train major lifts: deadlift, clean, squat, presses, clean and jerk, and snatch. Similarly, master the basics of gymnastics: pull-ups, dips, rope climb, push-ups, sit-ups, presses to handstands, pirouettes, flips, splits, and holds. Bike, run, swim, row, etc, hard and fast. Five or six days per week mix these elements in as many combinations and patterns as creativity will allow. Routine is the enemy. Keep workouts short and intense. Regularly learn and play new sports!"

For 42 days I stuck to a strict Paleo diet, following the Zone guidelines for portion control, and I trained three days on/one day off like my life depended on it. And in a way, I guess it did—the life I want anyway.

I'm not going to lie: it was a tough six weeks! There were days when I just didn't feel like training. Either I was sore from the day before or tired from working all day. But with the help of my beautiful girlfriend/training partner/coach, Caitlin, I tied my laces, rolled out my aching muscles and got on with the WOD at hand. I have come to understand that the key to forging elite fitness isn't what you want to do, or what you could have done; it's about what you actually do. Day after day. Your results are a direct reflection of the effort you apply.

I couldn't have been happier with my results. Not only has my physical appearance changed dramatically, but my strength numbers are also up and my met-con times are down as a result of dropping 9 kilograms (19 lb.). I have a newfound sense of determination when it comes to training, and I have realized that anything is possible with a little hard work and discipline.

Even though this challenge is over, it's not the end. Very little has changed with regards to my diet and exercise regime. Sure, I've had couple of beers over the last two weeks, but I firmly believe that this type of lifestyle is something I will continue for the rest of my foreseeable time. Eat clean, train hard, compete, short rest ... repeat.

Following this cycle, I am excited to find out what I can achieve in six months or 12 months or even a few years! Crossfit Games 2015, here I come.



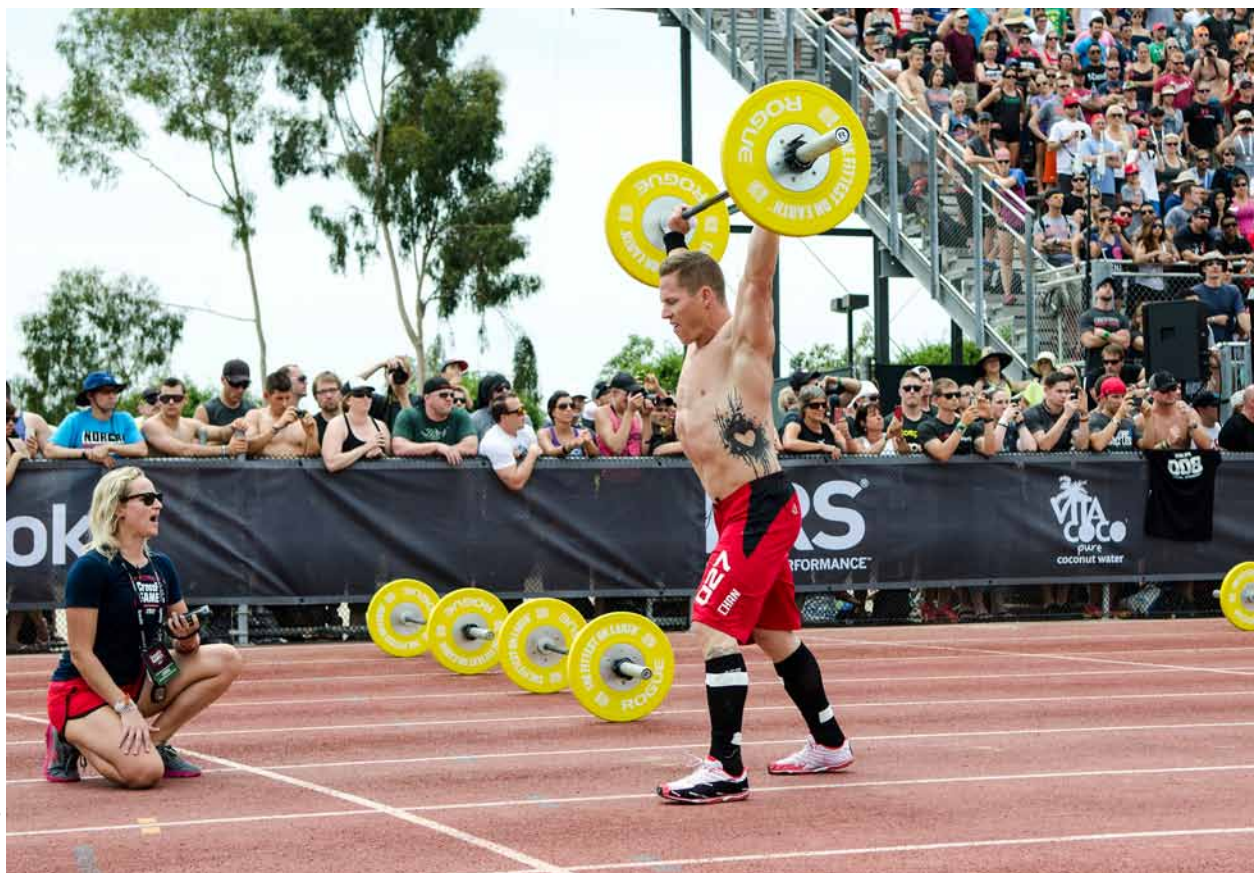
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Losing Control, Winning a Medal

Games veteran Matt Chan cedes control of his programming to someone else and has his best CrossFit Games finish in five years of competition.

By Andréa Maria Cecil

August 2012



If Matt Chan's second-place finish at this year's CrossFit Games was a surprise, it shouldn't have been.



At the Regional level, Chan has been dominant in winning the South West competition every year.

"I've been doing this for a long time," said Chan, who has competed in the Games since 2008. "If I snuck up on people, (I) shouldn't have ... I've been in the top 10."

Indeed, Chan finished eighth in 2008, 18th in 2009, fourth in 2010 and 10th in 2011.

"I don't think it should have been a surprise to people that I finished in the top three. And I'll tell you right now, I expect to be in the top three again next year."

—Matt Chan

"I don't think it should have been a surprise to people that I finished in the top three," Chan added. "And I'll tell you right now, I expect to be in the top three again next year."

"I knew it was going to be a massive commitment ... because of how long he'd been training and competing."

**—Joe Alexander
on agreeing to
coach Matt Chan**

But at least one person was a bit taken aback by Chan's performance: his coach.

"He kind of surprised me along the way. I really think his conditioning paid off," Joe Alexander said.

"I knew he was prepared. I didn't quite anticipate that he was going to be so robust. It was surprising how well it transferred over. I'd be lying if I said I knew precisely how he would respond to the volume."

A site supervisor for CrossFit Level 1 seminars, Alexander is pensive, analytical and humble. His approach to Chan's training was equally methodical. So much so that he didn't immediately agree to coach the CrossFit Verve owner without careful thought.

"Nobody wants to send someone backwards," Alexander explained. "I did feel that performance pressure. Here was a guy that had a history of success for the last four years and the only variable that was changing in his life was me."

Relinquishing Control

In the year leading up to the Games, Chan made several changes.

"The first thing I did is I took my own training and my own programming and handed it over to someone I trusted and respected," he said.



In 2012, Chan had his best finish at the CrossFit Games: second.

In August of last year—shortly after the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games—Chan asked Alexander to be his coach. Alexander didn't immediately agree.

"I told him I wanted to think about it a little bit. I knew it was going to be a massive commitment ... because of how long he'd been training and competing," he said. "I wanted to make sure I wasn't biting off more than I could chew."

After two weeks of deliberation, Alexander agreed.

"It was a huge privilege and I said, 'Why not?'"

And so the number crunching began.

"I grabbed as much data as I could from a month, as many benchmarks as I could, and tried to get a picture of what he looked like in terms of his capacity," Alexander said. "I looked for holes, gaps."

The ensuing analysis was "massive."

"It took hours and hours to sort all that out," Alexander said. "I restructured the plan from there."

The data revealed that Chan, a member of the Level 1 Seminar Staff, was "really strong" but lacked in stamina and endurance. In the past, the former firefighter had focused on strength, which was easy for him. This time around, it was different.

"I focused more on going longer on workouts," Chan explained.

He did at least one 20-minute-plus workout a week.

"Every week there was two running workouts typically, and it was one in a workout and the other was just training volume of running—running for longer," Chan said.

Alexander started by writing Chan's program a week ahead of time.

"I found that to be a failure because I couldn't project how he was going to respond with the training," he said. "I didn't know when he would need a rest day. If he needed a rest, I wanted him to take it."

So Alexander programmed one day at a time.

**"I think the change was
that he relinquished
control. That's not
normally what he does."**

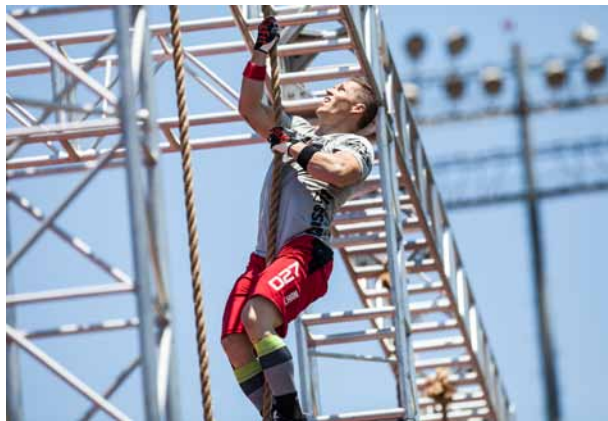
—Cherie Chan

The workouts didn't reinvent the wheel. Many were from CrossFit.com or "very typical" CrossFit workouts that focused on stamina rather than strength, Chan said.

The athlete also began using Restwise, a recovery-analysis tool based on qualitative and quantitative markers. The software assesses an athlete's condition and provides a score.

"I didn't necessarily train three on, one off," Chan said. "I trained based on my recovery score."

That shook out to be three to four workouts per week most of the time.



Chan finished first in the Rope-Sled event to set himself up for a podium run in 2012.

"Stamina, cardiovascular endurance were weaknesses, and I addressed those all year long and got better at them," Chan said.

The 34-year-old also tweaked his recovery and nutrition.

Chan found himself getting "extremely tight" throughout the year, so he was vigilant about mobility. Some of Alexander's programming included movements to improve flexibility.

And after retiring from firefighting in January, he was able to sleep more and consistently.

In terms of nutrition, Chan increased his Zone Diet blocks from 18 to 21.

Chan's wife, Cherie, said her husband has always been dedicated to CrossFit. The major difference she saw this year was that he handed over the reins.

"I think the change was that he relinquished control," she said. "That's not normally what he does."

**"Overall, I'm as happy as
I would have (been had I)
won. I'm ecstatic about it."**

—Matt Chan

Chan gave up so much control that an athlete from CrossFit Verve was charged with timing his warm-ups and his eating at the Games.

"He didn't argue," Cherie said. "He ate what he was supposed to. At one point, he walked on the (competition) floor with a chicken breast on a fork and a banana. He needed someone to tell him, 'I don't care that you feel like shit right now. You need to eat that piece of chicken.'"

Realizing More Than the Goal

The year of work paid off. Chan finished the first part of the Games' two-part opening endurance event—on Wednesday at Camp Pendleton—in third place. He was 17th in Pendleton 2, which was a solid placing for an athlete known more for strength and power than endurance.

"That triathlon normally would have scared the crap out of me," he said three days later, just after the Games' Chipper workout ended on Saturday. He described his prior year's training as a period focused on CrossFit and not "nonsense."

CrossFit competitors, he said that night, should spend time on "what they're not good at."

After the first Pendleton workouts, Chan had several finishes that were all over the board: 17th, 21st, 10th, 24th, 42nd, 11th, eighth, 10th. But he placed second in the Ball Toss event, first in the Rope-Sled workout, second in Elizabeth and third in Isabel.

Spectators started noticing just how close Chan was to the top of the leaderboard during Saturday night's chipper. He remained on the heels of defending champ Rich Froning Jr. until the final few seconds, when Jason Khalipa edged him out for second place overall in the workout.

For his part, Chan took note of how well he was doing on Saturday afternoon.

"I realized I could not only achieve that top-three goal but could probably get second place," he said. "Overall, I'm as happy as I would have (been had I) won. I'm ecstatic about it."

That sentiment was evident as Chan stepped up onto the second-place box Sunday afternoon. His ear-to-ear grin was almost goofy—and contagious. It was nearly impossible not to smile, too.

"I think it's outstanding," Alexander said. "He's a fantastic competitor. And in that environment he does not choke. When it's time to perform, he performs."

A judge at the Games, Alexander couldn't coach Chan during the competition because it would have been a conflict of interest. So Alexander snuck peaks at the leaderboard and tried to talk to Cherie whenever he could.

"I pretty much knew where he was," he said. "At the end of (Saturday), I realized he was going to make the podium."



Always a strong, powerful athlete, Chan made sure his endurance was dialed in for 2012.

The Road to 2013

The year ahead will bring few changes for Chan.

"I'm going to keep following the same model. I asked Joe if he would work with me again this year," he said five days after the Games ended. "That's the plan—is to continue to work on weaknesses."

**"He's a fantastic competitor.
And in that environment he
does not choke. When it's
time to perform,
he performs."**

—Joe Alexander

In patented form, Alexander did not rapidly sign on to coach Chan for a second year. He waited four days before agreeing.

"I know more now than I did before," Alexander said. "Picking up where we left off is a lot less challenging than starting from scratch."

Plus, he added, he was "pretty impressed" with Chan's performance.

"Well, damn," Alexander jokingly said, "we can certainly do that."

There will be no dramatic changes in programming, he noted.

"One thing I will do is that last year I didn't worry a whole lot about strength," Alexander said. "What I am going to do this year in the off-season (August and September) is I'm going to let him play with the heavy weight, do things he enjoys so we can kind of rehab the body a little bit."

He added: "Even though it was a strong point for him, if it's neglected for too long he can lose that edge."

One thing that will change is how coaching is delivered.

Alexander recently moved from the Denver area, where he coached at CrossFit Verve, to Charlotte, N.C., to be closer to family.

The two men plan to see each other for several days at a time several times throughout the year, Alexander said. And Chan will video selected workouts for review.

Alexander called the experience of working with Chan "a real privilege."

"He was the first guy that I seriously coached," he said.

Being a so-called "flowmaster" for Level 1 seminars, Alexander said he is in a unique position as he has contact with "so many fantastic coaches" and access to "a huge amount of information."

"It gives you like a 1,000-foot perspective of the landscape," he explained. "It makes you question what you're doing, but you also get great ideas."



Chan finished third in the Pendleton 1 event to start off the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games.

As he trained Chan, Alexander encouraged him to seek out Greg Amundson for mental coaching and Kelly Starrett for mobility work.

“I think it’s a testament to CrossFit to be 34 years old and still have the ability to be one of the fittest human beings on Earth.”

—Matt Chan

“You need to know what you don’t know,” Alexander said. “You have to put pride on the back burner because what it comes down to is giving the athlete the best of what they need.”

A Better Athlete

With his second-place finish, Chan became the oldest individual male competitor to ever medal at the Games.

“I think it’s a testament to CrossFit to be 34 years old and still have the ability to be one of the fittest human beings on Earth. And I’m not doing anything special. I’m doing CrossFit.com programming,” Chan said.

“I’m willing to work harder at something that I hold near and dear to my heart, and that’s CrossFit Games competition. I live for it right now. Thirty-four, 40—I’m going to keep going for it.”

Alexander said he couldn’t have been happier when Chan showed up “as the best version of himself” at the South West Regional and the Games.

“That’s cool,” he said. “I did my job.”

What made Chan successful, Alexander noted, is that his eye wasn’t on the carrot. He took both competitions one workout at a time.

“The goal at the end of the year is to improve him,” Alexander said, “make him a better athlete. Whether or not he wins the Regional or is first, second or third at the Games is a byproduct of that. By just trying to improve everything, those things happen. How can they not?”



Courtesy of Andréa Maria Cecil

About the Author:

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

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

If It Doesn't Say CrossFit, It's ...

Dale Saran explains how you can help defend the CrossFit name.

By Dale Saran CrossFit General Counsel

August 2012



Staff/CrossFit Journal

CrossFit's legal team, Defenders of the Faithful, run into all species and genus of thievery of the CrossFit trademark and brand.

1 of 4

CrossFit defines what we do. It means we perform constantly varied functional movement at high intensity. We pursue virtuosity. We squat, we press and we deadlift. We learn and play new sports. We eat meat and vegetables, nuts and seeds, some fruit, little starch and no sugar. We time our workouts. We demand measurable, observable and repeatable results. We are a part of the global affiliate community that's over 4,000 strong.

"CrossFit" is a federally registered trademark (USPTO No. 3007458) in Trademark Class 41, which means the U.S. government and the many other countries where we have registered the mark recognize CrossFit as a distinctive identifier for fitness services (part of Class 41).

In short, CrossFit, proper noun, defines a very specific style of training, just as Coca-Cola defines a very specific soft drink. But that doesn't stop others from trying to steal our mark and use it illegally to market a style of training similar to CrossFit or something that's not CrossFit in any way. For us, it's simple: CrossFit defines exactly what we do, and the name means a great deal. We fight to make sure everyone knows exactly what that name means, protecting our intellectual property, our brand and our community.

If we don't define what CrossFit is and fight to protect it, the name can lose its meaning and slide into common usage, known as "genericide." An "Escalator," for instance, was once a proprietary product of the Otis Elevator Company. Otis, however, lost control of the term, and "escalator," lower case, became the catch-all term for moving staircases.

We want to prevent that because our style of training and our lifestyle are most certainly not generic. They're specific. They're CrossFit, and CrossFit is about virtuosity and the very specific mindset that comes along with it. We are not aspirin, made by any one of a number of companies. We are CrossFit.

Other Uses: Fair and Unfair

Because our trademark is valuable, others try to poach on it for their own means. I want to explain the most common and most insidious threats to the CrossFit name and solicit our community's help in policing it.

The copycats are the main problem, and they're simply stunning in both their ingenuity and stupidity. I've seen people buy up hundreds of CrossFit domain names and sell them back to affiliates at a high markup (we sued and won a \$100,000 judgment), and I've had people argue with me about how they had never heard of CrossFit before they created their exercise program called ... wait for it ... Cross-F.I.T. I wish I were making that one up. I've heard some guy make a statement, "What if my name was C. Ross Fit?" Again, not a hypothetical.

One of the most common riffs of the CrossFit trademark is the Globo Gym or solo trainer who, after having received a cease-and-desist letter from our team for illegally advertised CrossFit classes, immediately changes tack: "XFIT Group Classes, starting Wednesday! Learn how to use kettlebells and Olympic lift and other uniquely scalable stuff!"

There are 45 different trademark classes, and most hardcore CrossFitters would be horrified to learn that "crossfit" is also registered by two other companies in different trademark classes: dental appliances in Class 10 (makes sense when you think about it) and computer shipping/logistics in Class 9 (makes very little sense no matter how I think about it). These companies, one in Switzerland and the other in Chile, like us, have an interest in protecting the trademark, and no one is likely to confuse what they do with what we do: "AMRAP of change your elastics in 12 minutes. 3-2-1 ... Go!"



Staff CrossFit Journal

Not X-Fit. Not Cross-F.I.T. Not C. Ross Fit. CrossFit.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

CrossFit is a brand and a lifestyle.

There is also a company in New York, a small gym, that owns the trademark for X-Fit. In Class 41, too. It is clear from their filing that this was entirely incidental and they likely had no idea about the registered CrossFit name, nor were they trying to rip off our mark. It's just one of those strange things. Their logo and mark actually stand for "Excellence in Fitness." There is also something called "XFit Lycra" (in Class 24).

Those businesses are also interested in protecting their brands—or they should be.

But there are hundreds and hundreds of people who are constantly using XFit or X-Fit as shorthand to try to get unwitting consumers in the door and then train them in some aerobics-like class with 5-lb. mauve-colored dumbbells. You will not find squatting virtuosity in there. I guarantee it. Our affiliates are genuinely concerned and refer these matters to us.

So now what?

What You Can Do to Protect CrossFit

I don't need to give a dissertation on what constitutes a "confusingly similar" use under the Lanham Act for readers here, and I don't need to delve into the finer points of "sight, sound and commercial impression." What I want to do is go in a slightly different direction.

I want us to move beyond XFIT—or X-Fit— so that we make it an instantly recognizable non-use and thus a non-threat to our affiliates. Let me explain.

We are growing to a point where we need to educate everyone, starting with our own affiliates, members, trainers, clients, and wider community, as well as the entire fitness public, that XFit or X-Fit is an immediate indication that whatever is happening behind that glass is most definitely not CrossFit. I won't denigrate what it actually is; it's sufficient to say that it isn't CrossFit. Where there is XFIT or X-Fit, there is no virtuosity, there is no community, there is no CrossFit.

Mike Workentin



Show your love for CrossFit by avoiding “Xfit” or “X-Fit” when writing texts, tweets and Facebook posts.

This also means that as a community, we must enforce our own identity. I know in the world of texts, 160-character tweets and quick social-media posts, it's trendy and cool to abbreviate everything (LOL!). There is also the fact that we all see the signs for “PED XING” or “RR XING” when we drive, so evidently the Federal Highway Administration recognizes the shorthand “X” for “cross,” but publicly we have to clean that up.

No more affiliates posting about “XFit” or referring to what we do by that moniker.

If it doesn't have a capital C and F with “ross” and “it” seriatim in Class 41, it is a fake, a fraud. It's someone else's mark. It's not the real deal.

CrossFit: that's the real deal.

We also should understand that we can't prevent businesses from registering XFit in other classes. And it's already happening. Companies are filing trademarks in the U.S. and around the world using XFit, CrossFit and every other possible combination in different trademark classes to sell their products—nutritional supplements and energy bars and drinks and equipment ... and on and on and on. Laws—all different around the world—do not allow us to prevent their filing trademarks where we have no intention of using the mark in those classes ourselves.

So, my fellow lovers of Fran and Helen, the best defense for us is an aggressive education of our community and the world. We are CrossFit, registered trademark, a unique brand of fitness services. We are a community of people dedicated to fitness through hard work and empiricism, all delivered via a network of like-minded professional trainers. And we sure as hell know how to have good time doing it.

Xfit, Crossfitness, cross-fit, X-Fitness and all the other names in all the other trademark classes are not CrossFit.

Spread the word, my friends. Police each other. Let the world know what CrossFit really is: we make people better. We're the folks who created the Sport of Fitness.

And quit Facebooking and texting about “Xfit.” You're giving the bad guys ammunition to use against us. There will always be thieves and idiots, but we need to avoid doing them any favors by providing them with loaded guns to take shots at us.

About the Author

Dale Saran is CrossFit's general counsel. The CrossFit Trademark Team are the Defenders of the Faithful.

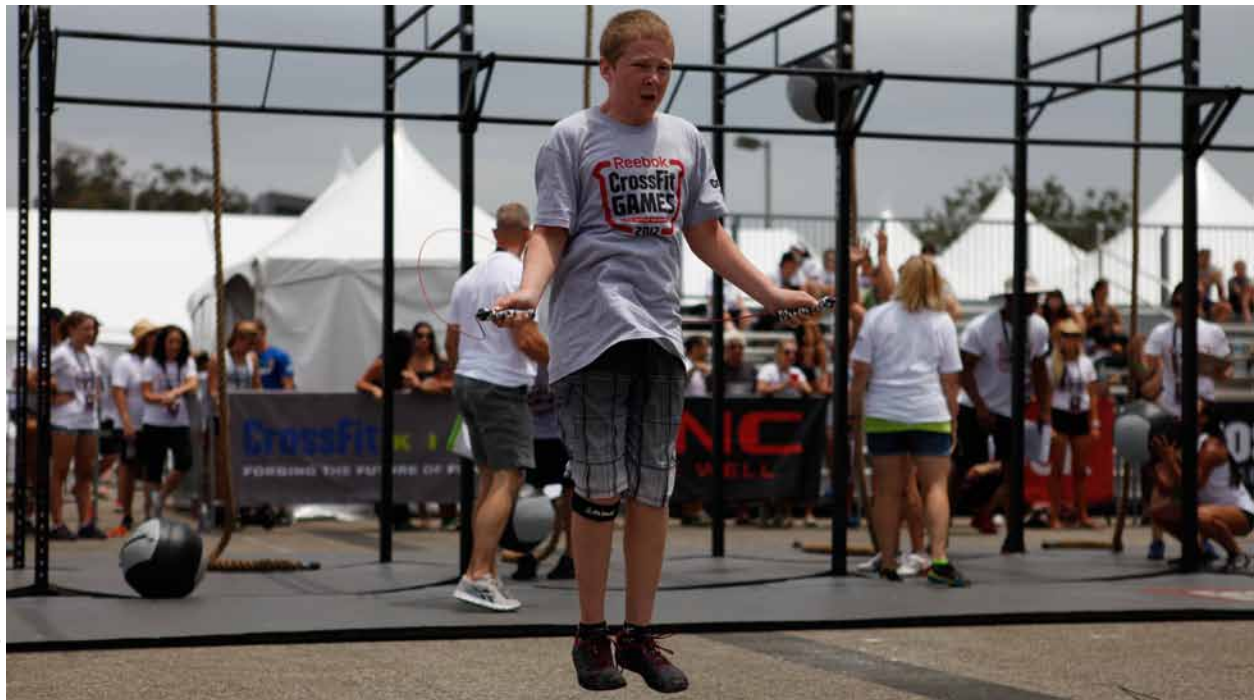
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

CrossFit Teens: The Healthiest in the World

The CrossFit Kids Gauntlet at the Games proved that having fun with fitness is a very good thing for North American youth. Emily Beers reports.

By Emily Beers

August 2012



All images: Staff/CrossFit Journal

On more than one occasion, British comedian Ricky Gervais has joked about overweight people and the so-called “obesity epidemic.”

Politically incorrect and blatantly offensive, Gervais purposely provokes.

“Leprosy is a disease. Obesity is not . . . What’s the disease? Everything tastes good?”

Whether Gervais’ humor makes you nod and laugh or whether it stings and offends, he gets you thinking about a politically incorrect subject: the concept of obesity as a disease.

Then as soon as you turn to the world and see hundreds upon thousands of overweight children waddling around—especially in North America—it's suddenly hard not to consider fatness some sort of epidemic.

However, in July at the Home Depot Center, a group of teenagers helped prove to the world that the disease is beatable, preventable even.

These teens are not your pizza-pocket-eating, weed-smoking, obsessive video-game-playing television addicts. Instead, these kids get excited when they see salmon and vegetables, and they get their high when they head to the gym after school to hit a grueling workout.

For this group of adolescents, playing video games is a rarity, and if they do watch TV, they do Tabata burpees during commercial breaks.

These teens are part of the first generation of CrossFit Kids to graduate into the world.

CrossFit Kids audio: [.m4a](#)



Where would you be if you had started CrossFit at 15?

Kids of the Gauntlet

Duncan Martin from Ramona, Calif., was one of 18 teenagers who qualified for the Gauntlet event at the CrossFit Games, a competition for CrossFitters 13 to 18. Martin is the youngest son of Jeff and Mikki Lee Martin, founders of the CrossFit Kids program.

"I've been CrossFitting for nine years," says the 14-year-old, who couldn't be more excited to be competing at the CrossFit Games, just meters away from his childhood idols, men like Jason Khalipa and Chris Spealler.

"I like competing, but the most fun is being around your friends. It's fun to have friends in CrossFit from all over."

—Duncan Martin

Duncan is sitting in the stands with three other boys who will be competing against him. The first of three workouts is about to be announced. All four teenage boys are trying to keep their nerves in check as they discuss what the workouts could be.

"I'm not as strong as the other competitors, but I like the agility stuff and the gymnastics movements ... I'm hoping there are handstand walks," Martin says to his rival and friend from Texas, a boy named Nicholas.

The two boys have a friendly rivalry brewing.

"My goal is to beat Duncan," Nicholas says, smiling. "I'm kidding." Both boys let out a laugh.

As much as they like competing against each other, for Martin it's less about beating each other and more about the experience.

"I like competing, but the most fun is being around your friends. It's fun to have friends in CrossFit from all over and to get to see them at different competitions and compete against them," Martin says.



Fourteen-year-old Duncan Martin is one of the original CrossFit Kids, and he's coming for your PRs in a few short years.

Teenage CrossFitters and Self-Esteem

Kelly Brown is the owner of CrossFit Agoge in Colorado. Two of her athletes—Tyler Wallace and Ella Lowenberg—competed at the Home Depot Centre in the Gauntlet competition.

Brown has watched Lowenberg, now 16 years old, transform in the last few years.

"Ella didn't used to be into sports. She was overweight when she started four years ago, and she walked around dragging her heels," Brown said. "Ella went from being the kid that sits in the back and tried to be invisible and disappears to the bathroom when it's time to do rope climbs to the kid that's demonstrating movements," she said.

Lowenberg's mother, Kelly Lowenberg, agrees that fitness has contributed to her daughter's personal growth in the last few years.

"Emotionally, I think she can handle disappointment a bit better, and she has had to get mentally tougher," Lowenberg said.

"It has given her some confidence where she didn't have any before. Where she used to think, 'I don't think I could do that,' now she knows she can if she works hard," she continued.

For Brown, watching kids and teenagers gain self-esteem is one of the most rewarding aspects about coaching adolescents.

"We're looking for the physical gains, but also we're looking to see those intangible gains—their ability to value themselves by what they can do with their bodies instead of what their body looks like," Brown said.

And, of course, when their performances go through the roof, so does their physical health, reflected in fit as opposed to the overweight bodies that characterize so many of their peers.

Lowenberg explains that this is a comforting thing for a parent.

"As a parent, it's awesome because when I go grocery shopping I just see all these poor kids who are overweight and don't exercise. And to know there are healthy kids out there who are doing something ...," she said.

She added: "And it builds so much character beyond the physical health. It builds emotional character. And I think CrossFitters in general are just good people, and that's encouraging for a parent."

CrossFit Next Generation

In the stands next to Duncan and Nicholas is a little 10-year-old, bursting with energy.

"I wish I was competing, but I'm only 10," says the youngster, who started CrossFit when he was just 6 and who today can string five muscle-ups together.

He says CrossFit has helped him in the other sports he plays.

"In basketball, it helps you get faster and stronger than most people. And in baseball, you have more power when you're hitting," he says.



Kids who work out and have fun doing it are an obvious solution to the obesity epidemic.

The 10-year-old, who looks so light and compact that he'd probably fly through the rings, says his favorite workout is Fran. His best time is 4:28 with 27-lb. thrusters.

He may only be 10, but this long-time CrossFitter, whose goal is to compete at the CrossFit Games one day, already understands the importance of pushing himself to the limit. And he embraces the pain.

"I like how it makes you want to throw up," he says with a big grin.

That, of course, is not the goal of the CrossFit Kids program, even if miniature Firebreathers enjoy suffering just like older CrossFit athletes. The true goal of CrossFit Kids, and the Gauntlet, is fun—BIG fun, as in broad, general and inclusive fun.

When young athletes are having fun, everything else follows—fitness, health, self-esteem and, yes, elite performance at some point. But fun comes first. The Gauntlet at the CrossFit Games might have been a showcase for the abilities of some very impressive young CrossFitters, but it's more accurately a showcase of what can happen when you help kids discover the joy of fitness. Once kids are having fun doing squats instead of playing video games, the obesity epidemic will be a thing of the past.



About the Author

*Emily Beers finished a master's degree in journalism at the University of Western Ontario in the spring of 2009. Upon graduation, she worked as a sportswriter at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, where she covered figure skating and short-track speed skating. Currently, she hosts **WOD HOG**, a not-always-PG publication of the CrossFit Vancouver School of Fitness. She ruptured her Achilles tendon in December 2010 and served as the Canada West Regional Media Director while recovering from surgery. Beers also competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games on CrossFit Vancouver's team. She finished third at the 2012 Canada West Regional.*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL KIDS

Mat Attack

Do the work, earn the reward!

By Stephanie Vincent

August 2012



Aimee Lyons

Equipment

- Gym mats (inside play) or chalk to outline boxes (outside play)
- Cones
- Various exercise implements (jump ropes, kettlebells, medicine balls, etc.)

Area

There is no ideal space requirement for this game. The playing area depends on the number of kids and the amount of available space.

Set-Up

A gym mat or cone is used to indicate home base, and others are spaced out around the gym. Place at least one cone or implement per gym mat around the playing area.

There is no set distance between home base and target mats. Assign a movement and rep count to each target mat; if you're using gear at the station, assign reps to be completed with that implement (e.g., kids might perform 20 single-unders if the target is a jump rope).

Rules of Play

Individual kids or teams line up at their respective home bases. On "3, 2, 1 ... Go!" athletes race to any mat and perform the assigned movement and reps on the mat. If played in teams, one athlete per team attacks the mats at a time. They then must return the cone or implement to their home base before attacking another mat. Each returned item scores one point. The game is played for a set amount of time or until the objects are gone. The individual or team with the most points wins.

Notes

For younger children, use a low rep count that is consistent across each mat (e.g., 3 squats, 3 sit-ups, 3 burpees) and limit play to 2 to 3 movements. Higher reps that vary from mat to mat, as well as a larger variety of movements, can be used for older kids.

In lieu of actual objects, sticky notes (with movements and reps written on them) can be placed on mats. The sticky notes would then be returned to home base to score points upon completion of the exercise.

If space is limited, multiple objects can be placed on mats, or additional items can be put out during game play as mats are cleared.



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Improve Your Jumping Ability

Bill Starr offers up an air-superiority program based around squats and calf raises.

By Bill Starr

August 2012



All images: Mike Warkentin/CrossFit Journal

Being able to jump high is a great advantage in so many sports. After watching the NCAA basketball tournament, I am always impressed at how the men soar in the air. They not only climb ridiculously high, but they also seem to have the ability to hit a second gear and shoot up another few inches when they need to.

I also love watching beach and indoor volleyball. How some of those athletes get up way over the net seems impossible, yet they are able to do it time after time. Volleyball and basketball are the two sports that emphasize jumping ability the most—in team sports, that is. Individual sports such as high jumping and long jumping are all about soaring high and long.

At the finish of the snatch, clean, and jerk, the lifter is actually jumping to add more power into the bar and to give him time to move under it.

However, we only get to see those field events a few times a year. On the other hand, we get to appreciate basketball and volleyball quite often. Should you live in Southern California or in Hawaii, you can watch as much

beach volleyball as you like, especially in and around Santa Monica and Venice. I lived in both of those places and spent a lot of time on the beach playing volleyball. That's when I really began to appreciate those athletes capable of almost touching the sky.

Yet being able to jump high is also a great advantage in many other sports, although it's seldom talked about. How about the wide receiver in football who can out-jump his defender—a huge advantage. Same idea in soccer. The player who can climb up higher has the edge over his opponents when heading a ball. In baseball, the infielder or outfielder who can leap really high will be able to make catches of line drives and balls up against the wall much better than those who do not have that ability.

Tennis? You bet. That's one reason tall players excel in the sport. They're able to go up and strike the ball easier than shorter ones. And certainly lacrosse belongs on the list of sports where being able to have a strong vertical jump is a plus. Jumping is useful to figure skaters because it allows them time to make another movement when they're off the ice, and the same applies for gymnasts. In fact, it's an essential attribute for success in that sport.



Might as well jump! It's an asset in most sports.

In a great many sports, the benefit of being able to jump high is often quite subtle. Take a javelin thrower. At the end of his run-up, he propels himself upward and forward to give the javelin a final, strong thrust. A swimmer doesn't leap upward, although he does, in fact, leap horizontally when he comes off the blocks or makes a turn during the race, so it's the same muscle groups providing the power.

Finally, I need to mention the Olympic lifts. When I was competing, the best snatchers and clean and jerkers were also the athletes with the highest vertical leap. All those lifts rely on an explosive finish, and that is provided by the muscle groups that lift you off the platform. At the finish of the snatch, clean, and jerk, the lifter is actually jumping to add more power into the bar and to give him time to move under it.

And although few athletes and coaches recognize the fact, those lifts will help improve anyone's vertical leaping ability. Bill March, the great champion in the '60s, was an exception leaper. The strength he built from heavy lifting gave him enough upward thrust that he could dunk a basketball at a height of 5 foot 9. It was said that Paul Anderson could also perform that feat when he weighed 350 lb., although I never saw it myself and question some of Paul's accomplishments. I also know what I could do. At the same height as Paul and Bill, I could dunk a slightly deflated volleyball. My hands were too small to hold a basketball. Because of my weight training, I was able to go from just being able to get off the floor enough for a jump shot to where I could extend my hand up over the rim of the basket.

Wrestling doesn't require a strong vertical jump, nor do running, table tennis, golf and bowling. But just about every other sport does, and the best thing about the whole deal is that it only takes a couple of exercises to help improve leaping ability: basically, a full squat and calf raises. If an athlete knows how to do the Olympic lifts and the equipment to do them is available, these movements are very useful as well. March, for example, never bothered with calf raises, other than to hold that position in an isometric contraction in the power rack every so often. His jumping prowess came from doing the Olympic lifts and back squats.

Jumping: The Benefits

I never had any trouble convincing most coaches of the value of a stronger vertical leap, but there were always some who believed their athletes were getting sufficient



Bill Starr says squats and calf raises are the keys to improving your leaping ability.

leg work during practices and didn't need any specific exercises to aid them. A soccer coach at Johns Hopkins told me that he didn't think his team needed to squat with heavy weights or hit the calf machine twice a week as I had recommended in my strength program.

I explained that while it's true running does help make the legs and calves stronger, those groups can best be strengthened with specific exercises. Then the athletes will not only be able to jump higher, but they will also be able to run faster. Coaches are often skeptical but end up being believers if their athletes are willing to put in the time and effort in the weight room. I know it works because I've seen sterling examples of it throughout my coaching career.

Whenever I talk or write about this topic, a basketball player from the University of Hawaii always pops in my mind. Unfortunately, I have forgotten his name—a forgivable sin because it was 37 years ago. But I can still picture him, a 6-foot-3 guard who got little playing time in his first year, mostly because we happened to have a very talented team. They had gone to the National Invitation Tournament (NIT) that year, and to add to the young athlete's woes, Rick Pitino, an assistant coach, had gone out and recruited two highly regarded guards.

The young athlete approached me after the season had ended and asked if there was anything he could do when he went home in the summer to improve his chances of getting more playing time next year. I had already started the basketball team on the Big Three—flat bench, power clean and back squat—but hadn't really had the time with them to add in any other exercises. And I had just talked the basketball coaches into buying a calf-raise machine for the university weight room.



No calf-raise machine at the gym? Improvise with a 2 x 4 and a barbell.

I told him to do the Big Three and really work hard on the squats and to always put them first at every workout, and I gave him a set and rep formula to use during the summer that always brings dividends. Then I showed him how I wanted him to do calf raises, what sets and reps to do, and how often. For him, that was three times a week. Really, really strong calves are the key to improving the vertical jump. He was a very good athlete, as almost all basketball players are, and he mastered the form on all the exercises before he left the island for the summer.

When he came back for the fall semester, the coaches put the members of the team through a series of tests, one of the most important being the vertical leap. And the hundred-yard dash was tested as well. After the tests, he came in to see me, and he was grinning—for good reason. He had improved his vertical leap by four inches and cut two seconds off his hundred-yard dash. He also dunked the basketball for good measure, something he had never been able to do before, and it delighted his teammates and the coaches for he was a personable young man.

Because he could now jump considerably higher, he was able to rebound successfully against taller players and get his jump shot off much easier as well. And the overall strength he gained helped him do battle with larger and heavier opponents. Coach Pitino told me that the improvement in his leaping ability had not just made him a better player physically, but it had also made him more confident. Although he didn't gain a starting position, he did become the regular sixth man on a team that went to the NIT again.

A four-inch increase is excellent but not exceptional. It's typical for anyone who does the necessary exercises consistently and really leans into them. Both full squats and calf raises have to be attacked. Staying in the comfort zone simply doesn't get the job done. While I do understand that most of the great leapers in sports are naturally gifted in terms of having the right kind of attachments in their lower legs, I also know this skill can be greatly improved by any athlete who is willing to put in the time and effort. Those who are able to leap high naturally seldom do much in the way of trying to improve their ability to jump even higher. It's usually the marginal players—like the University of Hawaii guard—who understand the value of being able to jump higher and decide to lay down the sweat in the weight room.

Deep Squats!

The routine for improving the ability to jump higher is very simple. It consists of squats and two forms of calf raises. The squats can either be done as front squats or back squats, and both seated calf raises and standing calf raises will work. The difficult part of the deal is that the athlete must apply himself 100 percent at every session. Except for the light day, the legs and calves should be sore the day after you work them—not so sore that you have trouble walking, but rather sore enough for you to know they were definitely worked hard.

**This is why I really like
front squats: You absolutely
have to go low.**

Although the program is uncomplicated, there are several points to be aware of in order to achieve the desired benefits. The most important in regards to squatting is you must go very low. Not low as in a powerlifting squat, which means just breaking parallel, but rock-bottom low. The lower you go in a squat, the more muscles come into play, such as the quads, adductors, abductors, hamstrings, glutes and all those that make up the powerful hips.

This is why I really like front squats: You absolutely have to go low in that version of squatting. If you try to cut them off, you end up making the exercise much more difficult, and it also places a great deal of stress on your wrists and elbows as you try and keep the bar secured across your frontal deltoids. Front squats require a lot of flexibility in your shoulders and elbows, so if that is a big problem, don't worry about doing them. Back squats work just as well if you go low.

Many taller athletes that I train have difficulty going low when they first start squatting. But that changes if they keep trying to go a bit lower each time they squat, and the repetitions and heavier and heavier weights eventually allow them to go deep with every rep. It's usually just a matter of stretching out the attachments in the rear of the lower leg.



Squat as deep as you can for best results. As flexibility improves, so will your maximum depth.

For those who are struggling to go low enough, I have them do this: set the pins in a power rack at a position slightly lower than you normally go when you squat. Start out with a relatively light weight. Squeeze under the bar, get set, then stand up with it. Lower it all the way back down to the pins, reset, and do another rep. Make sure you come to a dead stop at the bottom. If you rebound the bar off the pins, it will not help your cause. When you're able to knock out all your desired reps at that pin position, lower them even more, And so on and so forth until you're hitting a deep position.

Once an athlete has learned correct form and had time to build a solid foundation of strength in the squat, I have him do the routine below.

Monday is the heavy day: 5 sets of 5 to limit, with a back-off set of 8 to 10 reps. Wednesday is the light day: 5 sets of 5 with about 20 percent less than what was used for the final set on Monday. Until the athlete gets really strong on this lift, I use this method to determine how much he should handle on his final set on the light day: whatever poundage was used for the third set on the heavy day will be his fifth set on the light day. No back-off set on the light day.

I don't believe in pushing an athlete to complete failure. If he can't recover from a workout, he's not going to make progress.

Friday is the medium day, and the set and rep formula is changed a bit, with the athlete doing 2 sets of 5 followed by 3 sets of 3. That final set of 3 will be at least 5 lb. more than what was used on the final work set on Monday. Then a back-off set of 8 to 10. While this may seem like I'm abusing the medium day by having the athlete handle more weight on it than he did on the heavy day, I'm not. The overall workload is less on Friday, and with two days of rest before the next heavy day, it's a perfect set-up day.

Early on, when everything seems to be clicking, most can use 10 lb. more on Friday than they did on Monday. But when the numbers start climbing higher and higher and start approaching the 400-lb. mark, a 5-lb. increase will be more reasonable. The back-off sets should be with roughly 50 lb. less than what was used for the final set that day. But this varies from one athlete to another. The back-off set shouldn't be a walk in the park, but it shouldn't be extremely hard, either. The idea is to handle a sufficient amount of weight so as to increase the workload, yet not so heavy that it totally fatigues the lifter. I don't believe in pushing an athlete to complete failure. If he can't recover from a workout, he's not going to make progress.

I've had some athletes who could use 50 lb. less than their top triple and knock out 10 easy reps, while others needed to lower their back-off sets down to 100 lb. less than they just did for 5 or 3 reps.

To finish explaining the program, at the next heavy day, the weight you will use for your final set of 5 will be the same amount that you used for your last set of 3 on Friday. Move the numbers up steadily in this fashion and you will soon be handling a great deal of iron. To make this more clear, I'll lay out a sample squat program for two weeks.

Week 1

Monday (heavy): 135 x 5, 225 x 5, 275 x 5, 295 x 5, 315 x 5, back-off 265 x 10

Wednesday (light): 135 x 5, 185 x 5, 225 x 5, 255 x 5, 275 x 5 (no back-off)

Friday (medium): 135 x 5, 225 x 5, 275 x 3, 305 x 3, 325 x 3, back-off 275 x 10

Week 2

Monday: 135 x 5, 225 x 5, 275 x 5, 300 x 5, 325 x 5, back-off 275 x 10

Wednesday: 135 x 5, 185 x 5, 225 x 5, 260 x 5, 275 x 5 (no back-off)

Friday: 135 x 5, 225 x 5, 285 x 3, 315 x 3, 335 x 3, back-off 285 x 10

As the triples improve, so do the numbers for the light and heavy days. It's an ideal formula to improve intensity and expand the overall workload in a synergetic fashion.

Calves: Make 'Em Burn

Now for the calves. In order to strengthen the calves completely, you need to do two forms of calf raises—standing and seated. Here's why: the calf consists of two muscle groups: gastrocnemius and soleus. The gastrocnemius is the one most people associate with the calf and is the larger and more prominent of the two. It has an inner and outer head and, when developed, highlights the back of the lower leg. The gastrocnemius originates above the knee at the condyles of the femur and extends downward to help form the Achilles tendon.

The soleus is smaller and lies directly behind the gastrocnemius. While not as well known as its close neighbor, the soleus is equally as important in terms of calf development and strength. It originates just below the knee at the posterior surfaces of the tibia and fibula, the two bones of the lower leg. It extends downward and becomes a part of the Achilles tendon as well.

The two muscles work in concert with one another, not independently. They form a functional unit called the "triceps surae." In order to maintain proportionate strength between the two groups and ensure optimal strength development, both have to be worked, and they have to be worked in a slightly different manner because of their places of origin. Because the gastrocnemius begins above the knee, it is only exercised effectively when calf raises are done with the knees locked. In contrast, the soleus is only worked when the knees are bent due to the fact that it originates below the knee.

This means you need to do both standing and seated calf raises if you want the best results for your efforts. There are several ways to do this. You can alternate them at the same workout or on different days. At the end of the week, you should have given each form of calf raises equal attention.



Cheating by bending the knees in a calf raise (top) is an error. Keep the legs straight to target the gastrocnemius and get the best results.

The program I use for calves I learned at the old Muscle Beach Gym in Santa Monica, Calif., by watching some top-flight bodybuilders train. They would do 6 sets of 30 and only rest long enough to stretch out their calves before jumping right back on the machine and doing their next set. I tried that and couldn't walk right for a week, so I modified it for my athletes to 1 lighter warm-up set followed by 3 work sets at the same weight, all for 30 reps.

The work sets have to be just that because the calves are weight-bearing muscles and they have to be brutalized to get them bigger and stronger. The amount of resistance used depends on the athlete, but the rule of thumb is the same for everyone. When you get to 20 reps, your calves should be screaming for mercy. Ignore them and knock out 10 more reps. That's how you break them out of their complacency and make them stronger.

Form is very important on these. Each up and down movement must be done smoothly, not herky-jerky. And you want to do a full range motion, finishing high on your toes and lowering your heels as far as you can on every rep. And no jamming or rebounding out of the bottom, as this can be harmful to your knees and ankles.

The biggest mistake most make on the standing calf raises is they start bending their knees when the reps get really hard.

The biggest mistake most make on the standing calf raises is they start bending their knees when the reps get really hard. When an athlete does that he's not making his gastrocnemius do most of the work. It's transferred to the other groups that make up the leg. I've watched idiots use all the plates in the stack and add more on top of the machine until they have 500 lb. to move. What they end up doing is what looks like a quarter squat. It may be helping their quads, but it isn't doing anything positive for their calves.

I've seen athletes cheat on the seated calf machine as well. They would pull on the handles when the going got tough instead of making the soleus do the work. Force the target muscles to do all of the work, even if it hurts. That kind of pain is a good thing in strength training.

Be sure to stretch out your calves after every set. Don't wait until you've gone through your entire calf workout to stretch them. If you really hit them hard, it's a good idea to stretch them again at the end of your session and again later on that night. This helps minimize soreness and cuts down on the risk of injuring your calves the next day.

If you plan on doing any running that day, do it before you work your calves, never after.

I also like to alter foot placement on the 3 work sets: toes straight ahead, turned inward, and turned outward. It's not much of a difference but that small adaptation does help in overall calf development.

Calves for the CrossFit Gym

What if there are no machines available?

I didn't come across either type of calf machine until I had been weight training for six years. I did standing calf raises by placing a bar on my back just as I would when squatting, placing my toes on a piece 2 x 4 and doing my reps. It takes time to learn the balance, but it can be done. Later on, when I had a power rack at my disposal, I would do them in that same manner and used the uprights to help me balance the weight.

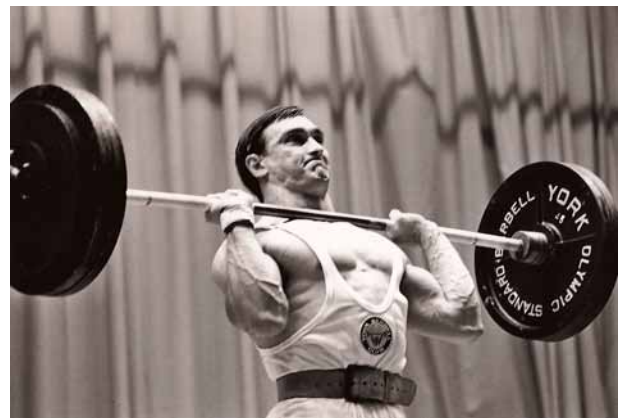
For seated calves, I would sit in a chair, place towels or a pillow across my thighs, then stack weight on that and proceed to do my reps. Because there's a definite limit of how much weight can be used on either of these, the reps have to be much higher. Just go until you know for certain that you have hit them hard, and you'll get results.

How often should calves be exercised directly? The answer depends on what the athlete is trying to accomplish. Those who rely heavily on their calves, as in basketball and volleyball, can benefit from working them three times a week in the off-season and a couple of times a week during the season. In most of the other sports, twice a week in the off-season and once a week during the season is enough to get and keep them strong.

Many of my athletes liked to do their calf raises on a separate day from when they did their other weight work so that they could put more energy into them. When you do calf raises as a part of your regular workout, make sure to do them at the end of the session. If you do them early in your routine, they will have an adverse effect on any other exercise that involves the calves. And there are a lot of them.

Improve the numbers on your squats and calves by 40 percent and you will be able to jump considerably higher.

That's not a guess. That's a guarantee.



body forster

About the Author

*Bill Starr coached at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, the 1970 Olympic Weightlifting World Championship in Columbus, Ohio, and the 1975 World Powerlifting Championships in Birmingham, England. He was selected as head coach of the 1969 team that competed in the Tournament of Americas in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where the United States won the team title, making him the first active lifter to be head coach of an international Olympic weightlifting team. Starr is the author of the books **The Strongest Shall Survive: Strength Training for Football** and **Defying Gravity**, which can be found at [The Aasgaard Company Bookstore](#).*

THE CrossFit LIFE

CrossFit Is Not for Everyone

Despite its growing popularity, CrossFit is not for everyone. You have to have a thing for suffering—and its rewards. Craig Nelson explains.

By Craig Nelson

August 2012



A recent article in the *CrossFit Journal* titled “CrossFit Is for Everyone,” documented the inspiring efforts of Chris Knapman, who, in spite of significant cognitive and physical limitations, is an active (and even competitive) CrossFitter. There are many other stories of amputees, stroke patients, cancer patients, paraplegics—the list goes on—who participate meaningfully in CrossFit.

While I unreservedly applaud the efforts of these courageous souls, I must disagree—CrossFit is not for everyone.

It's not any physical or mental challenges that might disqualify one as a CrossFitter. Rather, there is a more fundamental requirement to participate in CrossFit: an affinity for DIS/GFB. (I've been searching for a better acronym but this is the best I've come up with. Readers are encouraged to offer their own.) The initialism stands for: drenched In sweat/gasping for breath. This, of course, describes the state of being that results from most CrossFit encounters. It turns out that the world is divided into two types of people: those who enjoy the state of DIS/GFB and those who do not. If you are among the latter, sorry, CrossFit is not for you.

Loving DIS/GFB

If you're reading this, you probably don't need me to explain the pleasures of DIS/GFB, but let me offer my own perspective. During any sustained WOD, my thoughts may oscillate from "OK, I can do this" to "Uh oh, I don't think I can do this" to "Please, God, let this be over" and back again. And then the time expires, or I complete my last rep and I'm done. I will then typically collapse onto the floor in a sweaty heap—as a friend put it, "to make the floor smell like effort." In the next few moments, I'm simply concentrating on trying to catch my breath.

Sometime within the next minute, the euphoria of DIS/GFB kicks in. First there is the immense pleasure of not moving followed shortly by the more positive sensations and emotions directly attributable to DIS/GFB. (I'm particularly fond of hot-weather WODs when the condition of projectile sweating is achieved.) In a somewhat attenuated form, this state of being will linger for several hours after the WOD. Maybe this is the same phenomenon that used to be called a "runner's high." Perhaps, but in my experience a CrossFit WOD is far more effective at producing serious DIS/GFB than running.

The pleasures of DIS/GFB are transient. But there is a related, more sustained phenomenon that also comes into play: DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness). These are the achy, sore muscles that appear anywhere from 12 to 48 hours after a workout. This is not to be confused with macroscopic sprains/strains of muscles, tendons and ligaments, which are to be avoided to the extent possible. Technically, DOMS results from injury to the muscle, but it's a good kind of injury. It occurs at an ultra-structural level, involving the contractile fibers themselves. It is the muscles' reaction to an intense and sustained effort. The variety and intensity of CrossFit virtually guarantees that every week you're going to push some muscle group very, very hard, such that DOMS results.



Craig Nelson

TwinTown Crossfitter Brock Harling not quite yet experiencing the bliss of DIS/GFB.

Craig Nelson



Darren Acheson in full DIS/GFB euphoria.

The pleasure of DOMS is a bit more abstract than DIS/GFB. To be enjoyed, DOMS must be experienced through a particular interpretive lens. Think of DOMS as your muscles telling you, "Whoa, OK, we get the idea. There's some serious work going on. We'll retool and be ready the next time."

Do I actually get pleasure from DOMS? Yes, mostly. It can almost be comforting, like a visit from an old friend. "Ah, there you are. I knew you'd be showing up soon." It is in any case a very low grade of pain, one that is not difficult to endure. And it's a pain that is signaling you worked hard and next time you'll be stronger.

The DIS/GFB Divide

As do many gyms, my own box, TwinTown CrossFit, has a promotional video online. This video portrays the "high intensity" aspect of CrossFit in vivid detail, and DIS/GFB is clearly on display—club members are sweating, straining, grimacing, their mouths agape trying to get oxygen. I've shown this video to friends and family, both to explain what I've been doing and to mildly encourage them to give it a try. The reactions are quite varied. Some are intrigued and react positively to the energy of the gym. But many find it off-putting. It seems foreign, alien. They find it preposterous that there might be actual pleasure derived from this experience. My own daughter, after watching the video, concluded, "You're all nuts."

What accounts for these disparate reactions to the prospect of strenuous exercise? Is it a function of will power, discipline, intelligence? I don't think so. Consider this short list of notables who eschew exercise:

"I have never taken any exercise except sleeping and resting." —Mark Twain

"Whenever I feel the urge to exercise, I sit down and wait until the urge passes." —Winston Churchill

"To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise" —Oscar Wilde

"Exercise is bunk. If you are healthy, you don't need it: if you are sick, you should not take it." —Henry Ford

"I believe that the Good Lord gave us a finite number of heartbeats, and I'm damned if I'm going to use up mine running up and down a street." —Neil Armstrong

Twain, Churchill, Wilde, Ford, Armstrong. Hardly a litany of slackers. These were men of enormous talent, energy, accomplishment and discipline. At best they regarded exercise as foolish, and at worst, repellent.

There are undoubtedly multiple reasons why some individuals respond negatively to the idea of exercise. For some it may be as simple as unpleasant memories of junior-high gym class or of doing drills during football practice. But there may be a more basic and fundamental cause for many. A study published in the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* comes to this conclusion:

"A single session of moderate aerobic exercise improves vigor and decreases fatigue among regular exercisers but causes no change in these scores for non-exercisers. Although total mood disturbance improves post-exercise in exercisers and non-exercisers, regular exercisers have approximately twice the effect as non-exercisers. This limited post-exercise mood improvement among non-exercisers may be an important deterrent for persistence with an exercise program."

Exactly. It is certain that if you CrossFit you will regularly experience both DIS/GFB and DOMS. Worse, it will require great effort to achieve those conditions. I cannot imagine subjecting myself to the rigors of CrossFit without experiencing some direct, tangible and immediate pleasure. During my two-block walk from my home to the gym, I regularly experience apprehension, even dread at what awaits. But I know that all I have to do is show up and I'll manage somehow to get through it.

And on my walk home an hour later, I'm simultaneously relaxed and exhilarated, bathed in afterglow of DIS/GFB.



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Future Unknown

Chris Spealler has yet to decide if he will try to qualify for next year's CrossFit Games. Time, he said, is what's holding him back. His wife, meanwhile, wants him to compete again. Andréa Maria Cecil reports.

By Andréa Maria Cecil

August 2012



All images: Staff/CrossFit Journal

About a week after the 2012 Reebok CrossFit Games ended, Sarah Spealler texted her husband's coach, Ben Bergeron. "Let's make a machine! I'll feed him you train him! Yay!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"



The run at Camp Pendleton turned into a painful shuffle when Spealler's calves, quads and hip flexors cramped terribly.

Bergeron, co-owner and head coach at CrossFit New England, replied 15 minutes later: "This is one of the best text(s) I have ever received. We'll tag team him and he won't even know what happened."

Sarah's husband, the iconic Chris Spealler, had said 2012 would be his last CrossFit Games.

But when the couple left California to go home to Utah, Sarah didn't much like the idea.

"I think we both left the Games this year feeling like there was no closure," she explained. "I don't think he's done. He's not done."

Shortly before Sarah texted Bergeron, Spealler had made contact with his coach, too. The two men decided that for the next three months he would follow a similar weight-gain program to the one he adopted in the year after the 2011 Games.

"There's been days when I'm like, 'I'm in.' And there's days when I'm like, 'I don't know.'"

—Chris Spealler

"Ben and I talked and we said if I were going to compete again next year (what I would do) is try to put another 10 lb. on me," Spealler said. "Regardless of whether I was going to do it or not, this is what I would have to do anyway."

After those 90 days, he'll make a decision. Maybe.

"There's been days when I'm like, 'I'm in.' And there's days when I'm like, 'I don't know,'" Spealler said.

"If I do step away, no doubt I will miss it," he said. "When you step away, your work capacity doesn't turn off. It's still there. I think there's a lot of mixed emotions in my head right now. I want to give it a lot of thought."

Toughness Is Speal

As if there weren't enough Spealler fans already, his inspirational performance in May at the South West Regional created many more. For weeks, it seemed like every tweet and Facebook post was about him: the underdog who proved that with enough heart, size doesn't matter. The 5-foot-5, 151-lb. athlete entered the Games—his sixth—with tremendous community support.

"Speal," as CrossFitters know him, had a strong start to the swim-bike-run event that opened this year's four-day competition. Although he lost both his wedding ring and his goggles before the swim even began, halfway through the nearly 7-mile run, he was in third place. Then something happened—something that never has happened before: Spealler cramped so badly that his run turned into a walk, then to a shuffle. The seizing in his calves, quads and hip flexors was so intense it left bruises.

He watched helplessly as competitors blew past him.

And so the man who said he was going to this year's Games not to have fun but to win went from third to third-to-last.

"I was really looking forward to a triathlon. I thought it would be great," Spealler said more than two weeks after the Games ended. "A lot of things happened that were out of my control."

Bergeron said the performance made him "incredibly proud."

**"Things happened that he
had to battle through."**

—Ben Bergeron

It perfectly aligned with one of his favorite sayings: "Toughness is the ability to perform at the upper limits of your talent and skill regardless of the competitive circumstance."

That, Bergeron said, is what Spealler exemplified.

"Things happened that he had to battle through," he explained.

In a blog post published July 31, Bergeron commended Spealler, who has competed in every edition of the CrossFit Games.

"The fact that he was able to finish the final 5K, when every step and every minute was excruciatingly painful, is a (testament) to his focus and determination," Bergeron wrote. "Battling all odds, Chris was able to make it all the way to Sunday's event and give the crowd a show as he hung with the bigger athletes in the heavy chipper (WOD) and the double banger."

Spealler finished this year's Games in 22nd place.

Time and Commitment

When asked what was holding him back from quickly making a decision about next year's Games, Spealler replied with one word: time.

"I put more time and more energy into this year than I ever have," he explained.



Spealler put on 11 lb. in the last year, which helped him hold his own in the heavier events at the Games.

Since last year's Games, Spealler put on as much as 11 lb. on a basic bodybuilding routine designed by Chris Mason, owner of AtLarge Nutrition and a member of Louie Simmons' team for CrossFit Powerlifting seminars.

"He's as committed as anyone I've ever worked with," Mason said. "He's willing to do what he needs to do to get where he needs to get."

When he introduced the weight-gain routine, Mason said he didn't think Spealler would go for it. He was wrong.

**"The fact that he's able to
do what he does (with) a
workload that most people
couldn't maintain, period, to
me is just super impressive."**

—Chris Mason

"When I gave him the program, he didn't blink an eye. I honestly thought he was going to say, 'I can't do that,'" Mason said. "That's impressive. It shows that he's open-minded about new concepts even though he's an advanced athlete in his field, and that's unusual."



Spealler's heart and determination have made him one of the most loved and admired CrossFit athletes in the world.

Afterward, Spealler enlisted Bergeron as his coach and tackled one of his biggest weaknesses: heavy loads at high reps. Spealler improved, Bergeron said, but there's still work to be done.

"It's gotten better, but we will continue to focus on it," he said. "It's never enough."

After three months of a weight-gain routine, Spealler will return to Bergeron's prescription this year as well.

"Last year's program was appropriate," Bergeron said.

But more training means less time with family.

In addition to a wife, 33-year-old Spealler has two young children, an affiliate, a job on CrossFit's Level 1 Seminar Staff that takes him out of town every weekend, and a new blog.

"There's just so much on my plate right now," he said. "It's a huge commitment."

Putting in a 60-plus-hour work week and being a top-level CrossFit athlete make Spealler special, Mason said.

"The fact that he's able to do what he does (with) a workload that most people couldn't maintain, period, to me is just super impressive," he explained. "Plus he's a good role model. He's not a putz."

If he's going to try to qualify for the 2013 Games, Spealler said he wants to be sure he's all-in.

"If I do it, I want to make sure my head and my heart are in it 100 percent," he said.

Since the Utah athlete started CrossFit in the fall of 2006, the sport has been about competition for him.

"It is a big part of my life—the competition side," Spealler said.

His Games training, Sarah noted, creates more work for both of them.

"Time with him is very chopped up during the week," she said.

"He's just talented. And he can hang with any guy out there. It's just a matter of what comes out of the hopper."

—Sarah Spealler

Nonetheless, Sarah might be the biggest proponent of her husband going to the Games again.

"He's just talented. And he can hang with any guy out there. It's just a matter of what comes out of the hopper," she said. "Unless he's completely anciently old and he's getting 100th place or something, then maybe it's like, 'Maybe we should put your shoes up in the closet.'"

Sarah added: "I know, I know he loves it."

With no competitive team in the works at Spealler's box, CrossFit Park City, he would have to compete as an individual once more. That, Sarah said, has elicited some



Spealler proved that heart and determination trump size.

"what-ifs?" What if he doesn't qualify for the Games? What if he finishes outside the top 10? What would the community think? He knows he has to be OK with whatever the outcome might be.

Spealler's chances of qualifying would be just as good as they were at this year's Regional, Bergeron said.

"(The odds) were pretty much stacked against him," he said of the Regional competition characterized by heavy weights. "I think he has as good a chance, if not better. ... It's a long shot for everybody."

With the appropriate weight gain and the appropriate training, Mason said, Spealler could climb the leaderboard at the Games.

"If I was the only person advising him, I'd tell him, 'Get up to 165,'" he said. "He knows, obviously, how to train for CrossFit-style WODs. But I think something different could be done to maintain the size and strength he built and still compete in the CrossFit realm."

"I felt like I had to win the Games to (get) that stamp of approval from the community."

—Chris Spealler

Successful Games competitors need to be of a certain size now to "really, really excel," he said, specifically naming second-place finisher Matt Chan and repeat champ Rich Froning Jr. Chan is 5 foot 10 and 208 lb., while Froning is 5 foot 10 and 195 lb., according to their Games-site profile pages.

If Spealler went from his current 153 lb. to 165 lb. "and got strength commensurate with his weight gain and came in with the same conditioning he's always had," it would be no surprise to see him in the top five, Mason said.

For her part, Sarah said she doesn't know what her husband would do without the Games.

"He said he would go to smaller competitions and still work out. I said, 'Well if you're still going to smaller competitions and still working out, then why not?'"

Stamp of Approval

Each time Spealler stepped onto the competition floor at this year's Games, the crowd roared. Each time the emcee said his name, it roared again. And each time he struggled with a heavy implement and notched another rep, it roared once more.

Spealler took note.

"I can't put into words how much I wish I could thank them in some other way than just saying thank you. It definitely hasn't gone unnoticed."

—Chris Spealler

"I just appreciate it so much," he said. "That's a huge part of what keeps me calm and keeps me focused."

But while there's evidence that his status among CrossFitters is etched in stone, Spealler himself has his doubts.

"I felt like I had to win the Games to (get) that stamp of approval from the community," he said. "It's so awesome that they're still supportive. It takes pressure off me and I just need to do what I need to do."

Every athlete has his worries. Disappointing the CrossFit community is Spealler's, his wife said.

Sarah stresses to him that it wouldn't matter if he placed first or 50th.

"They don't love you any less," she tells him.



No matter where he sits on the leaderboard, the crowd loves Spealler.

Bergeron said he's advised Spealler to try for the 2013 Games if his heart is in it.

"The only thing I've said is that 'If you go back, make sure it's for the right reasons,'" he recounted. "And the right reasons are not to prove something. Your legacy has been cemented."

If Spealler does compete at next year's Games, "I think it's awesome," Bergeron said. "I'm so excited to be his coach again."

Now a friend, he said he supports Spealler no matter his decision.

"He doesn't need to do anything to make me feel good about anything," Bergeron added.

For Spealler, it's important the community knows how much its support over the years has meant to him.

"I don't know if it is going to be my last year or not, but I feel like I didn't get a chance to say goodbye. If 2012 is the last year that I compete in the Games, (I want) the community (to) know that their support is, like, massive. It's just huge how much they've given me," he said.

"I can't put into words how much I wish I could thank them in some other way than just saying thank you. It definitely hasn't gone unnoticed."

On the Games website, Spealler's profile page is subtly different than many of the other athletes. Instead of simply choosing suggested answers, he adds a bit of color that gives insight into his character.

In describing his nutrition, he wrote, "Don't forget the mint shake once a week from Cold Stone... totally necessary."

As for his workout schedule: "Gotta have recovery if you want to have intensity. Gotta have intensity if you want to see results."

But perhaps the most defining sentence comes in his eight-word bio: "Time to chase down the big boys again."



Courtesy of Andréa Maria Cecil

About the Author

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

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Applying CrossFit to Police Recruits

The Kansas City Regional Training Academy introduces CrossFit to a class of recruits, and James Keller says he saw fewer injuries and improved performance.

By James Keller

August 2012



All images: Indy Shield CrossFit

Located at the Kansas City Regional Training Academy in Kansas City, Mo., KCPD CrossFit has a mission to use CrossFit's foundations and principles to enhance the functional fitness and quality of life of our members and to help them be better prepared to handle the physical demands of being a police officer.

1 of 4



Law-enforcement officers never know what they'll face in a day, so constant variation makes CrossFit an ideal training system.

The affiliate—established on Sept. 20, 2010—is a not-for-profit resource for members of the Kansas City Police Department and their families.

Within the department, 18 members have completed the CrossFit Level 1 course; some also completed the Olympic Weightlifting and Mobility and Recovery seminars.

I have been assigned to the regional training academy for five years, working as a physical-training/defensive-tactics instructor for the last four. We consistently have up to two academy recruit classes training at one time. These recruit classes comprise Kansas City entrant police officers, as well as entrant officers from surrounding metropolitan agencies that have sponsored recruits for training at our academy. Recruit classes can range from single digits to upward of 60 people. Academy recruits attend training 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Our applicant pool is diverse, ranging in age from 21 to fiftysomething. Physically, these recruits can range from collegiate athletes with formal training to sedentary people who have had little to no physical training. To determine their fitness level, recruits are given a physical evaluation within the first week. The evaluation is the traditional law-enforcement test: push-ups, sit-ups and a mile-and-a-half run. Like most, our academy is no stranger to injuries during physical training. Depending on the seriousness, these injuries have at times resulted in the dismissal of the recruit, recycling to another class or lost time.

CrossFit has helped to change that.

The fitness evaluation is the traditional law-enforcement test: push-ups, sit-ups and a mile-and-a-half run. Like most, our academy is no stranger to injuries during physical training.

Recruit Training

During the May 7, 2011, CrossFit Law Enforcement Summit in Orange County, Calif., I had multiple ah-ha moments.

CrossFit founder Greg Glassman made several points about law-enforcement physical training that resounded with me:

- Bodybuilding, endurance running or formation runs historically have been the foundation for most law-enforcement physical training.
- Roots in this type of training have been a long-standing tradition with paramilitary organizations and with supervisors who enjoyed running events.
- Recruit officers are typically required to run and move external objects prior to having full range of motion and/or flexibility of the extremities.
- Long, slow distance runs or formation runs typically do more harm than good by causing faster runners to under-gait and slower runners to over-gait.

Trainers noted that some of these points, coupled with diversity in fitness levels among agencies' applicant pools, might contribute to injuries in physical training.

Thus, my goal became to apply the foundations and concepts I learned about at the summit to physical training at the academy. And to avoid injuries.

The timing of the training was crucial.

When I got back to Kansas City, the 144th class of nine recruits was just getting started. My first case study with the 144th Entrant Officer Class was about to begin.

The recruits had an introduction to CrossFit's foundations and principles, an introductory class to its nine functional movements and extensive training on the Zone Diet.

Members of the all-male class ranged in age from 25 to 40. As part of their academy training, they were required to participate in facilitated CrossFit two to three days per week. Some of the applied training concepts included:

- Recruits' physical training program would be strictly CrossFit.
- Limit the first four weeks to include only body-weight movements.
- No facilitated running during the first four weeks.
- Track and monitor progress of recruits' body composition and performance.

The recruits had an introduction to CrossFit's foundations and principles, an introductory class to its nine functional movements and extensive training on the Zone Diet. The idea behind only body-weight movements for the first few weeks was to help improve their range of

motion and flexibility before running and moving with external objects. I started tracking body composition and physical performance by using the body-fat calculator on Zonediet.com.

The Results

More than six months later, the recruits got another physical evaluation.

Every one made notable improvements.

The exit evaluation consisted of push-ups, sit-ups and a 1.5-mile run. Each entrant officer had unlimited time to do as many push-ups as possible while maintaining perfect form. Upon completion of the push-ups, he had to perform as many sit-ups as possible in one minute. For the run, he had to run the mile and a half as fast as he could.

Individual results varied, and average results showed marked improvement:

- Average increase in push-ups: 16.2.
- Greatest increase in push-ups for one individual: 27.
- Average increase in sit-ups: 13.5.
- Greatest increase in sit-ups for one individual: 24.
- Average decrease in 1.5-mile run time: 1:46.
- Greatest improvement in 1.5-mile run time for one individual: 3:53.



For many new recruits, it can help to limit training to body-weight movements for an introductory period.

Also notable were the changes in body composition in just six months:

- Total percentage of body-fat lost: 58 percent.
- Total weight lost: 145 lb.
- Average weight lost per recruit: 16.1 lb.
- Average fat loss: 6.4 percent.
- Greatest amount of body fat lost by one individual: 9 percent.
- Greatest amount of weight loss by one individual: 29 lb.



Jim Strahle/Kansas City Missouri Police Department

More importantly, there were no injuries to class members that that resulted in dismissal, recycling or lost time.

Needless to say, I'm pleased with the results. More importantly, there were no injuries to class members that resulted in dismissal, recycling or lost time.

I'm confident all the class recruits are leaving the academy in the best shape of their lives, ready to handle the physical demands required of being a police officer. They have also learned a lifestyle they can apply throughout their careers, and one that will hopefully contribute to longevity and quality of life during retirement.

It truly was a rewarding experience to see the transition the recruits made from their civilian lives to that of police officers. I'm proud of each and every one of them and their commitment to attain excellence. They are to be commended for a job well done.



About the Author

Jim Keller is a 15-year veteran of the Kansas City Police Department in Missouri. He is a Level 1 CrossFit trainer assigned as a physical-training and defensive-tactics instructor and CrossFit training facilitator at the Kansas City Regional Training Academy, where he has worked in that capacity for the last five years. Prior assignments include the Target Oriented Policing Squad, Tactical Response Team III, Housing Authority Footbeat and various patrol assignments. He is an ACCT Trainer with the National Law Enforcement Training Center and a U.S. Army veteran. Keller lives in Kansas City with his wife, Lori, and their three children, Madeline, Megan and Samuel. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family, outdoor activities and home-remodeling projects.

THE **CrossFit***kitchen*

K I D S

Sweet Cheeks Headquarters



POTATO TREES

by Shirley Brown and Alyssa Dazet
Sweet Cheeks Headquarters

overview

Palm trees, pine trees, whatever kind of trees you want—just make them and eat them. These trees are made with quality ingredients and can be eaten by both kids and parents.

serves 2

ingredients

- 1 medium-sized sweet potato
- 1 green bell pepper
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- Coconut oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

directions

1. Slice sweet potato length-wise into wedges, leaving a little skin (trunk) on each piece.
2. In a large frying pan, heat coconut oil on medium heat. Add sweet-potato wedges and cook for approximately 15 minutes, until potatoes are soft. Season with salt and pepper.
3. While potatoes are cooking, chop tomatoes in half and slice green pepper length-wise into four pieces. Remove seeds and slice width-wise into small slices.
4. Sauté green peppers in the same pan as potatoes to give a sun-kissed look.
5. Plate your trees as you like: potatoes become the trunks, peppers become the leaves, and tomatoes become the fruit.
6. Serve and enjoy.



THE CrossFit LIFE

Is CrossFit Superficial or Spiritual?

For most people, CrossFit is more than trying to look good in a bathing suit.

Doug Germano explains.

By Doug Germano

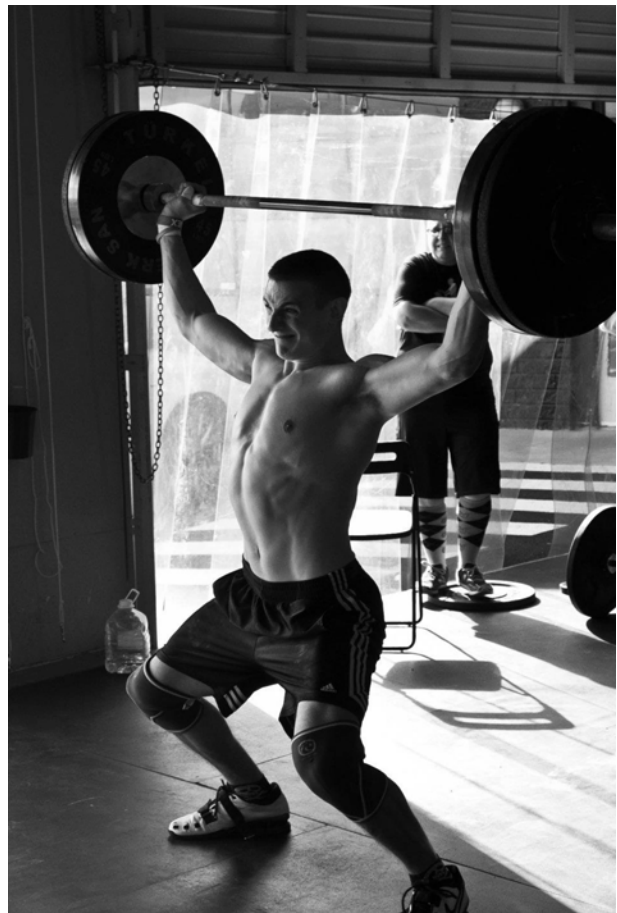
August 2012

I was telling my girlfriend last night why I couldn't spend too much time with a certain group of people because they were too superficial. She looked back at me with a befuddled look on her face and said, "But all you do is CrossFit! That's superficial. You just do it to get big and build up your body."

I do love to lift big weights, and I've been gaining weight for a while now, but still, I was baffled. I couldn't even respond. I just spat out some flustered words and came off as an asshole.

To claim that my relationship with CrossFit is superficial blew my mind. I realized that even though my girlfriend is supportive of me and my passion for CrossFit, she doesn't really understand why I do it. She has come to the gym for a WOD, she's very supportive of the way I eat, and she's never complained once about all the early mornings I've woken her up to head out to the gym. She's even come out and watched me compete and has cooked me some delicious Paleo food. Despite all this, I've never really delved into the reasons why I love CrossFit.

I am incredibly passionate about CrossFit. When I received my Level 1 certificate, I realized that CrossFit is a very layered sport. It's not as simple as some other sports where an individual can just understand the rules and start playing. There is so much more to CrossFit. I compare it to "seeing the glitch in the matrix" (CrossFit being the matrix).



All images Courtesy Doug Germano

What I mean by this is that for years I was just doing WODs, puking on occasion, getting my workout in and trying to be a healthier person. But after years of indulging in the 21st-century phenomena that is the sport of CrossFit, I feel as though I have finally seen the glitch in the matrix. There is beauty to successful programming, finding a near-perfect macronutrient breakdown, going beyond perceived limits and completing tasks you once considered only for the Herculean.

I used to be extremely overweight. I was obese, couldn't perform a push-up and couldn't run 800 meters without stopping. I will never forget the day I tried to do a push-up with all the other high-school freshmen and could not move. That moment will be forever with me.

I've been doing CrossFit since March 2008 and haven't really looked back. I would say I am definitely beyond looking for results of fitness at this point. I am fit. I may sound confident of myself, but I am fit. I love human movement and I love pushing myself to my limits. Fitness as a hedge against sickness is such a simple but amazing idea. I wish more people understood the beauty in this succinct but astonishing idea. It truly calls everyone to treat themselves as athletes, as this is the way to be the healthiest. Every step an individual takes toward treating himself or herself as an athlete is a step away from illness and health issues.

At this point in my athletic career, I compete. I compete in CrossFit like I've never competed in anything. I push my body harder, further and faster. I love giving my all, and I love winning. Going beyond an old record is sacred to me. That moment, that split second that is entirely focused, entirely intense, the moment where I am wholly committed to the task directly in front of me, that is the moment I live for.



When an athlete pursues performance, the reflection in the mirror is only a fringe benefit.

That is the moment I dream about. That is the moment that motivates me as I wake up in the morning and stick to the program. It's why I'm committed, and it's why I hear people whispering that I'm overtraining. It is who I am. It is myself at my best. That moment of sheer pain, complete effort, going out on a limb and going for it—that's where I find virtue. Why? For a simple reason. Now I can perform hundreds of push-ups in a given workout, sometimes while wearing a weighted vest. The men I now compete against who tell me I'm a great athlete, who tell me what I do is legitimate, used to be intimidating. They used to be the men I looked to for inspiration. But now I am simply among them. CrossFit is a venue that has released a passion in me that nothing else could.

The sun cannot rise early enough for me to get out of bed and get in a workout. At the deepest center of myself, I love breaking limits. The moment of truth when a lift or PR is missed or taken is why I am a CrossFit athlete. Even if only it's only a 1-lb. or one-second PR, a victory beyond previous limitation is a sacred and deeply spiritual occasion. That moment is half of why I train. The other half is the better moment: the moment when even though I put out absolute 100 percent effort, another athlete beats me. In this instance I know I have hard work to do back in the gym. And thus, winning or losing, I'll be CrossFitting for years to come.

I'm not jumping out of bed before the sun rises to go make my muscles pretty for the mirror (or whatever else is considered superficial within the traditional fitness industry). I train to better myself: physically, mentally, emotionally and to an extent spiritually. When I'm in the middle of a WOD, it's a moment in time with no inhibitions, no distractions, no self-consciousness, just a cultivation of my core identity and humanity. I feel then that my personality is exhibited through what I am doing. That moment of fusion between being and doing is as close to a spiritual experience as I've come to know. This moment is when I am at my best. For me, this experience happens through my participation in CrossFit.

In the end, CrossFit has taught me that whatever it is you were born to do, do it to the fullest. Find what it is that you have an unquenchable thirst to pursue, then pursue it to such an exaggerated degree that you find, if only for a brief moment, who you are in the fullest and deepest sense possible.



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

"These Things I Know for Sure"

E.M. Burton shares nutrition tips learned as her family's in-house expert.

By E.M. Burton

August 2012



All images: E.M. Burton

At the L.A. Fitness Expo in January, an astounding claim was made by the presenter of *CrossFit Kids Eat This!*, a short film on nutrition for children.

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"If your kid is gonna CrossFit," ran the introductory comments, "these are 10 things you need to know about food."

Then came the assertion of knowledge and its claim to certainty.

Who would make such an outrageous statement?

I would.

What do parents of CrossFitting kids need to know to support their child's fitness?

On-the-Job Training

I should start at the beginning. I'm not a nutritionist. I'm not a doctor, nor a scientist. I'm not a chef and don't sell food. I have, however, been navigating the issues of nutrition for optimized performance for quite some time. One could say that I am a somewhat "reluctant autodidact" on the matter. I don't tell anyone what to eat, but every day for the last five years I have determined what goes into the mouth of another, less experienced human being. Five years ago, I took on a trainee: my small child.

I'm only partly joking because sometimes it helps to think of our relationship this way, and I remind myself of my role when I slip up, as we all do. As soon as you have children, you have to start training them in how to eat for the performance of their life, no matter what that might be.

Twenty minutes in length, *CrossFit Kids Eat This!* comprises 10 videos, each on one aspect of nutrition that will concern parents of CrossFitting children. CrossFit Kids ran the video in a continuous loop at its presentation space at the 2011 and 2012 Los Angeles events, and at the Arnold Sports Festival in March 2011.

"What are the most important considerations in nutrition for children—active and otherwise—and how do you communicate that to them, let alone their parents ... ?" ran the hopeful brief I set down for myself. What do parents of CrossFitting kids need to know to support their child's fitness?

In the planning stages, I assumed a generic viewer who would have no knowledge of the subject matter; the audience would be generalist, trade-show attendees, and it would include children. Brevity would be essential. In order not to forget something critical, I imagined what I would say to aliens about the care and feeding of a human child and narrowed the list to 10 things the aliens, knowing absolutely nothing about human nutrition, would need to know for sure. Expo visitors might have seen some of the following: *On Proportion*; *Fat, Good*; *Water*; *Fish Oil*; *A Little Goes a Long Way*; *Protein*; *ABCs of Vegetables*; *Fruit Salad*; *What Are You Reading?*; and *On Sugar*. The videos prominently featured food that can be thought of as "functional."

The videos were all shot on the same day and edited the next. They could have been called "30-minute films" because each was shot in 30 minutes and edited in 30 minutes. The pacing was designed for screening at a trade show. In general, however, they fit nicely into the theme of my Kitchen Disaster Films series. All kitchens are potential disaster zones. To a child, that aspect of kitchens, and food prep in general, can be exciting and scary all at the same time—in the way that all disaster zones are simultaneously forbidding and enthralling.



As with fitness, the best way to get your children to eat well is to lead by example.



The face of real food.

To capture a child's attention, I used all the bells and whistles: stop-frame animation and variable speeds, a wee bit too much Ken Burns effect, the "chalk and talk" didactic method I picked up in school, simple letters on a black background (sometimes animated). Nothing was made to be pretty. It's good-food prep, metaphorical warts and all. The fingerprints might disturb some cooking-show producers, but I think kids can handle it; they love the beautiful and the ugly in things in equal measure. The "hand ballet" that goes on when you compress a lot of meal-prep time into mere seconds of video might be mildly entertaining, as well. Because parents make the majority of decisions concerning a child's diet, the films also had to appeal to adults.

It's worthy of note; by showing pictures of real, whole food at the L.A. Fitness Expo, we were the aliens. The majority of presenters at California's largest fitness event were focused on bodybuilding and not about functionality. Dan Edelman described this phenomenon in [his write-up](#) of the event. Bodybuilding is all about visuality, about the physical changes manifested in the body; this is self-evident in the expressly stated goal of improving "physique." At CrossFit, we don't build bodies, we build capacity; for a lot of people that's a completely alien concept.

Educating Kids Through Parents

Aliens in need of information aside, the issue is critical. What parents know or don't know translates into what we do and how and what we feed our children. All kids need excellent nutrition, but for those who want to be physically fit, proper nutrition is even more critical. Navigating the information available can be a significant challenge for most people. And that's just the conscious stuff.

Parents—all adults—transfer all kinds of knowledge or ways of understanding the world onto children, whether or not they are aware of it.

There is nobody, however, who can tell you definitively, "Eat these and not these foods and you will be in perfect health." You have to establish a way of eating that is based on everything you've considered critically.

Barring obvious socioeconomic barriers such as poverty, often the only barrier to a child having access to good nutrition is the parents' lack of access to information, lack of ability to process that information or laziness. All these barriers must be overcome. Food is one of the most significant in the hierarchy of human needs; learning how and what you feed your child is one of the most important parenting skills, and you're going to have to deal with it sooner or later. Dealing with it sooner will be easier and less costly considering the tremendous costs of lost opportunities: ill health and disease.

Learning how and what you feed your child is one of the most important parenting skills.

If you try to prioritize the issues of food for children, you will face the fact that the field of nutrition is massive and often produces confusing or conflicting information. Enter "children's nutrition" into the search string at the National Institute of Health's database and it will yield over 10,000 articles. These concern, among other things, programs in schools, aspects of nutrition in Bangladesh, nutrition in orphans, children who can remember what they just ate, the contexts in which children live and eat, relationships to physical activity, parents' lifestyles ... and so on.

If you did, in fact, read the database contents, and everything else you could get your hands on, you could synthesize the data points down to a single common denominator: "Eat a balanced diet and get regular exercise."

One of the tenets of nutrition science continues to be one of "balance," so you have to consider that as a high priority. In practice this means eating from a wide variety of foods and balancing your hormonal levels through the composition of macronutrient-balanced meals and snacks.

For example, the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases suggests that a healthy diet is one that "emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products; may include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts; (and) is low in saturated fats, trans fat, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars" (1).

**Whatever bad food habit you
and your family have that you
all just cannot give up is likely
the very thing you should.**

CrossFit's World Class Fitness in 100 Words is now legendary in the CrossFit community, and this is likely because it is still the most elegant description one can find of a way to eat: Eat meat and vegetables, nuts and seeds, some fruit, little starch, and no sugar. Keep intake to levels that will support exercise but not body fat.

Once you've established a pattern of eating in a child that also considers joy and pleasure, you've laid the groundwork for a lifetime of superior health.

Metabolic syndrome is the single most important health concern facing North Americans today, with millions of people in the West suffering its ill effects. We know scientifically, however, that normalizing your blood-sugar levels ameliorates it: eating in such a way as to maintain blood sugar within an acceptable range delivers measurable benefits in fitness and overall health. This is the same for everyone, not just for athletes with goals to improve their performance.

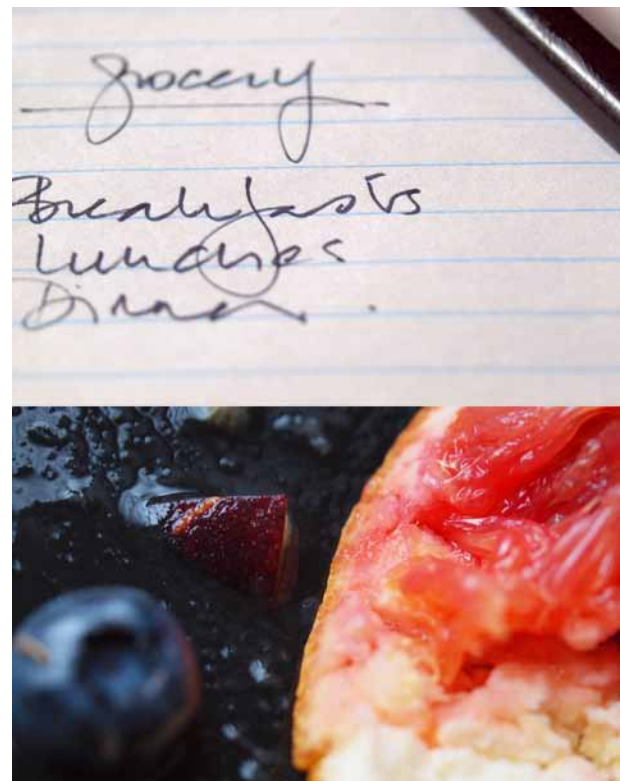
How You Eat

Each individual should establish a pattern of eating that comprises a balanced ratio of fat, carbohydrate and protein every single time he or she sidles up to the trough. Balancing hormone levels and reducing inflammation by eating in this way—and not through medication—significantly increases margins in the standard, measurable markers of health and fitness. That is what should be thought of as baseline health.

Once the baseline is established, an individual's diet can then be tweaked to achieve personal goals. Rather than thinking of one's fuel supply in terms of either quality or quantity, it should be thought of as both. Achieve ongoing balanced blood-sugar levels, then combine issues of quality into the mix. Whether the individual is an athlete in your box or your CrossFitting child, it is perhaps helpful to think of this as a practice of everyday life. What this also means is that, in order of magnitude, how you eat is more important than what you eat. Unless you have deadly food allergies, what you eat will be for the most part determined by your culture, your belief systems and your habits.

The CrossFit community's oft-repeated phrase "you're just one meal away" from being in the Zone—referring to the hormonal balance you can maintain through eating food in certain proportions—is more powerful a concept than many realize. It also signifies that it's never too late to start. Wrap your head around what balanced meals look like and you've changed the way you eat forever.

On Proportion: [.mov](#) [.wmv](#) [.mp4](#)



Every meal is an opportunity for better health.

What to Do

If parents of CrossFitting Kids ask you for advice on nutrition, here are a few tips we learned during the process that can help them establish a practice of eating well:

1. Lead by example—Learn what comprises a balance of fat, protein and carbohydrates based on ratios established by the scientific community, and serve them. Let your kids see that you eat this way—the patterns are critical—at the same time demonstrating what balanced meals and snacks look like.
2. Timing is everything—Feed young kids five to eight meals and snacks per day. It's important to note that while I serve my child properly proportioned meals, she takes what she wants from them. I put it in front of her; she chooses what and how much to eat. When she reaches adulthood, she will have established a pattern of eating and she will know what comprises a proper meal or snack.
3. Automate—Think of food shopping, prep, planning and even some cooking on rest days from workouts. This is most likely easier for parents who are also doing the WODs. Once you start to realize that much of your life is actually quite well organized on the three-days-on, one-day-off CrossFit rhythm, having and eating good food is just easier to deal with in general. Using rest days in this way makes sense in terms of food storage, whether you are responsible for others or live by yourself and can focus solely on your own training goals (I am so envious).

Get good with notions like portable food. Get good at prepping it, packing it and toting it. Redefine what "leftovers" are and rethink what "breakfast" means. Until the mainstream catches up, you are not going to find healthy, balanced nutritious meals in too many places outside your own kitchen.
4. Admit imperfection—Cheat small. As a general rule of thumb for child-rearing in general, don't do something once unless you are prepared to repeat it 15,000 times. We have "Candy Day" on Saturday so, clearly, I am prepared to have it until the end of time. Perhaps the purest of readers will recoil at this, but I can easily quantify the sugar in two pieces of candy and live with it. The forbidden-fruit argument doesn't fly; Saturday is Candy Day. But if you're going to cheat, do it small and get back on track. This is part of life. At the same time, teach your children that sugar is as deadly an addictive substance as cigarettes, and they'll get it.

5. Stay open minded—Whatever bad food habit you and your family have that you all just cannot give up is likely the very thing you should. Kids will eat what's in front of them; they will not starve themselves. They likely can't go for very long at all if they're CrossFitting. Withhold the Ding Dongs in favor of real food. Don't think, "My kid will never go for that." There is always opportunity for your children to surprise you.
6. Know your food fingerprint—For families who are doing well but want to do better, consider investing some time in knowing your own food fingerprint. We human beings have so much DNA in common, yet our bodies are subtly different from one another. Consider in this context these comments from two rather different sources. Physician William Osler (1849-1919) noted, "Variability is the law of life, and as no two faces are the same, so no two bodies are alike, and no two individuals react alike and behave alike under the abnormal conditions which we know as disease" (2). The other is from Hippocrates (460-370 BCE): "Let food be thy medicine, and medicine thy food."

In order to embody these notions, you have to know yourself very well. In adults, you must moderate and balance your diet and go through the process of understanding if you have any sensitivities to food substances. Only then can you begin to tweak your diet with a view to enhancing your performance. Every single person owes it to himself or herself to figure out a personal food fingerprint. The human condition is such that good nutrition is foundational to our entire lives. Food either makes or breaks you.

7. Change is good. Good changes take time—For older children and other 70-year-olds for whom poor nutritional habits have become entrenched, recognize that real change is built on incremental growth. Good things take time, so play the long game. For those who feel overwhelmed at the prospect of changing ingrained bad habits, I grant you change is sometimes difficult. Consider that feeding a child is a very different enterprise than feeding yourself. You are free to make decisions with respect to your own care and feeding, but your children are not. They don't have the agency, means and support to make food choices, to buy food, and to prepare, cook or serve it. Remember, you're one meal away.



Yes, children will eat this.

Start with: water. Every day. Fish oil. Every day. Eat protein, at every meal, and eat it in balance with favorable carbs and favorable fat. Increase valuable foods (these would be high on the Aggregate Nutritional Density Index and "functional foods") and decrease those high on the Glycemic Index.

Choose Wisely

In my experience, there are a great many people who will tell you what you should and should not put in your child's mouth, but you are the only person who will be making that decision. Remember that how we eat, what we eat and how we prepare it are all learned behaviors: what our parents fed to us is what we learn of feeding ourselves.

How great would it be if young athletes reached adulthood and realized they've had optimal nutrition for the performance of their entire lives?

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About the Author

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THE CrossFit JOURNAL

A “Lucky” Olympian

After an accident left her without the use of her legs, Chile’s Francisca Mardones discovered wheelchair tennis. And the rest of the world discovered her. Andréa Maria Cecil reports.

By Andréa Maria Cecil

August 2012



Francisca Ibarra

When Francisca Mardones was 5, she dreamed of being an Olympian.

Her wish would be granted. But not in the vein of her childhood imagination.

Fate, it seems, had slightly different plans.

By the time the Chilean graduated from high school, she had played multiple sports: basketball, track and field, volleyball. In other words, she didn’t become a specialist.

“I realized I never focused on one sport,” Mardones said. “I was not good enough to go to the Olympics.”

So she went off to Santiago to study hotel administration at INACAP, a nonprofit private corporation that is Chile’s largest educational institution. After college, in 1999, she got a job as an administrator for a group of luxury villas in the Caribbean. The year went down in the history books as a record-setting one in the Atlantic hurricane season, with five storms reaching Category 4 strength. Hurricane Lenny was one of them. In November, the storm made its way toward the island of Culebra, where Mardones was working. Culebra, owned by Puerto Rico, is part of the Spanish Virgin Islands.

As the boss, Mardones was tasked with going door-to-door, warning tourists of the impending threat and advising them to return to their countries as soon as possible.

But the rain had started and the 155-mile-per-hour winds were approaching. As Mardones went to leave one villa to go to the next, she slipped. She fell about 14 feet into a ravine.

"As soon as I fell, I knew the situation was serious," she wrote in an email in Spanish. "But however I had to do it, I needed to get out of there because I could lose my life."

Mardones couldn't move her legs. So with her arms, she dragged herself nearly 330 feet to a bunker. Her body got cold. The pain became excruciating.

"I could barely breathe," she recalled.

For two days, Mardones remained alone in the bunker.

"I thought I was going to die and that the world was going to end," she said. "I'd never heard those sounds of a hurricane. It was like the sky was falling in pieces."

"As soon as I fell, I knew the situation was serious."

—Francisca Mardones

After the storm passed, the villas' employees found her.

Mardones returned to Chile only to spend the next year in the hospital for countless surgeries.

"Doctors gave me lots of medicine to try to control the pain, but it didn't work," she remembered.

Mardones had lost the use of her legs. She spent the next four years in rehab. While there, she was approached with a curious question: "Do you want to play tennis?"

"I thought it was a joke," she said.

Her response: "How can I play tennis? I can't walk. I can't run."

The answer: "In a wheelchair."

"So I go to the court and start to practice," Mardones said. "Then I said, 'OK, that's the option I have. I'm going to take it.'"

That was six years ago.

Today, the 34-year-old has qualified for the Paralympic Games in London in wheelchair tennis. She is ranked No. 26 in the world.

"My dream came true," Mardones said.

"I thought I was going to die and that the world was going to end."

—Francisca Mardones

And Then There Was CrossFit

Through mutual friends, Mardones met Ricardo Tagle, head coach at CrossFit XF in Vitacura, Chile.

Six months later, in February 2011, she was at the box.

"I love CrossFit. For me, it's like being in a war," Mardones said. "It taught me to not quit and ... (that) everything can change in the last minute. You can control your mind and you can control your body."

Before CrossFit, her training comprised an oft-repeated routine that involved machines and focused on one muscle group per workout.



CrossFit has given Mardones more power on the tennis court and improved her reaction time.

"Every day was the same," Mardones explained. "Every time I went to the gym, I (got) injured. I wanted to find something different. I tried CrossFit and I never injured myself again."

**"I love CrossFit. For me,
it's like being in a war."
—Francisca Mardones**

The difference is evident on the court.

"My arms are much more powerful," she said. "My upper body, too. I have much more control. I have better reaction (time) and power. I feel really good now."

Mardones trains five days a week at CrossFit XF; six days a week, she practices her sport, which is identical to able-bodied tennis except the ball may bounce twice.

"What definitely helps Francisca the most is that we're able to realize a training method that's safe, effective and efficient," Tagle wrote in Spanish in an email. "We follow the 80/20

rule: 80 percent of the results we obtain with 20 percent of the resources. And in that, CrossFit offers many tools. That balance that's found in mixing motor components in high-intensity intervals makes it so Francisca doesn't waste her time and offers her satisfactory results."

Tagle divides Mardones' programming into three phases:

1. Strength training
2. Met-con
3. Core strengthening

For strength, Mardones does such exercises as the bench press and shoulder press. Tagle's goal is to ensure Mardones—unlike other professional tennis players—maintains muscular balance in both arms.

**"It gave her the mental
fortitude that a
champion needs."
—Ricardo Tagle**

During met-cons, Mardones sometimes leaves her wheelchair for pull-ups on the rings or bar, as well as dips and push-ups; other times, she does interval sprints.

The core strengthening is important to keep Mardones' back strong and to improve performance in her sport, Tagle said.

"Most of the time, I do the same thing as everyone else," Mardones said of the workouts at CrossFit XF.

"Ricardo always asks me for more than the others. I love that," she said. "I like the way he trains me. It has been one of the most important things to me because I really feel ... not disabled, only different."

An Olympian At Last

On June 16, Mardones updated her Facebook status in Spanish:



Cristóbal Sánchez

***CrossFit gave Mardones the physical and mental strength
she needed to realize her Olympic dreams.***

"Yesterday I finished playing my tournaments. It went very well. I'm very happy with the level of tennis I've reached. Now all that's left is to wait until Monday, the day on which the official list of players going to London is published. Only three days left before I know if my lifelong dream will become a reality!"

And so it did.

"God wants my dream to come true, but in a different way. Now I understand it."

—Francisca Mardones

Mardones left Aug. 20 for London. Six gold medals are up for grabs in as many events Sept. 1 to 8 at Eton Manor.

When asked how she felt about her Olympic qualification, Mardones had trouble putting emotions into words.

"Wow, I didn't believe it," she said. "I'm a really lucky person."

CrossFit, Tagle said, brought out the best in Mardones.

"It gave her the mental fortitude that a champion needs," he said. "It showed her to stay focused in the face of important mental and physical challenges and, of course, it showed her how to be unyielding."

Tagle continued: "Francisca is an inspiration for all CrossFit XF members. Watching her train is amazing."

In England, Mardones said she simply wants to absorb the moment.

"I'm lucky because I don't have the pressure to win a medal," she said. "I'm going to enjoy it, however I play. It's making me feel relaxed."

A year ago, Mardones almost beat the world's No. 2 player. She lost in the third set. The culprit, she said, was the pressure.

"Now it's totally different," Mardones said. "Now I know everything can happen. I'm really excited about that."

She added: "To win a medal would be the most incredible finale—like a movie."

When she returns from London, Mardones already has plans to compete in three tournaments in the States—and stop in at CrossFit affiliates along the way to prepare.

"If I show up at your CrossFit one day, please help me train," said the jet setter.

Looking back on her childhood dream, Mardones says she now sees the grand plan.

"Maybe it was my destiny. The accident that I had—bad things happened to me. But now I can understand what happened to me, and I feel good because that's my destiny and God wants my dream to come true, but in a different way," she said. "Now I understand it. I'm so happy with that."

Links

FranciscaMardones.cl

Twitter: [@Fran_Mardones](https://twitter.com/Fran_Mardones)

[ITF Tennis profile](#)



Courtesy of Andréa Maria Cecil

About the Author

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

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Kate Foster: Tiny but Huge

Kate Foster fights cancer and wins. Now she wants your help.
Emily Beers reports.

By Emily Beers

August 2012



Sevan Matossian

The goal of the CrossFit Games is to find the fittest man and woman on Earth.

But when Kate Foster took the microphone and addressed the crowd at the Home Depot Center on July 14, it became clear that CrossFit is about something so much bigger than that.

1 of 4

The 13-year-old, who was diagnosed with leukemia last year, proudly marched to center stage at the Home Depot Center. A hush came over the crowd as the tiny girl with a prosthetic leg talked confidently in front of thousands of people about the importance of CrossFit for Hope, of donating to help children with cancer.

The physical stature of the 13-year-old might have been tiny, but her smile, her confidence and the command in her voice were anything but.

"3, 2, 1 ... Go!" Foster declared, as she officially opened a fresh year of CrossFit for Hope fundraising.

Kate in 2011

Kate, a competitive gymnast and a long-time avid CrossFitter, was diagnosed with cancer in the spring of 2011.



Sevan Matossian

Kate was a CrossFitter before she was diagnosed with cancer, and doctors believe her good health and strength are what helped her survive.

"May 20, 2011," said Kate, who remembers the exact moment she was diagnosed. "And I had a bone-marrow transplant on Oct. 12. And it's sort of all gone from there."

**"Her heart got her through it.
She has the heart of a giant."**

—Lynn Foster

Kate's dad, Lynn Foster, also remembers the feeling he had when he found out his daughter had leukemia. Needless to say, it was devastating.

"Kids don't deserve to be sick. They're so innocent. And especially when it's something that can take your life. It really hits home that they're so helpless," Lynn said.

Helpless is how Lynn felt for most of 2011. Helpless, but hopeful. In fact, despite the fact that the odds were against his daughter's recovery, he never for a moment believed she wouldn't make it through.

"Her heart got her through it. She has the heart of a giant," he said. "And I can count on one hand the amount of times she broke down and started crying, through all the rounds of chemo, from the time she was diagnosed to when she had her leg amputated."

He added: "She's a strong-willed girl, and you don't tell her no because she'll find a way to show you she can."

The Fosters and CrossFit

Physically, Kate believes CrossFit is the reason she's still alive.

"The doctor said had I not been a gymnast and a CrossFitter and in such good shape, I would have died. Period," she said.

And for the whole Foster family, their CrossFit community is what helped them through the year emotionally.

Kate spent a lot of time at UW Madison Children's Hospital through her sickness, and the Fosters didn't have any family in the area.

"So our family became the gym. They were the people who took care of us. Anything we needed, they just took care of us," Lynn said.

Kate, who is once again CrossFitting at CrossFit Rockford and is also hoping to get back into gymnastics soon, credits CrossFit as having helped her emotional as well as her physical recovery.

“I’ve got one leg, so people are like, ‘You can’t do this.’ I’ll show you I can.”

—Kate Foster

“CrossFit and gymnastics—they have been the things that have been pushing me through this,” Kate said.

“Once I’m done with this, I can go back to that. It’s what has kept me going,” she added.

April 2, 2012

Kate sat by the phone, waiting patiently for the most important call of her life.

“There’s a six-month mark after the bone-marrow transplant, where you have to wait and see if the transplant worked. We called it ‘house arrest’ because I couldn’t leave my house because of all the germs,” Kate said.

“The sixth-month mark actually fell on my birthday. We were at home; we knew the phone call was coming, so every time the phone rang I was kind of tensed up, ready to hear the worst or the best,” she continued.

And finally, the phone call came.

“I was so excited. They told me I was good to go,” she said.

Since Kate was told the magic words in April, she hasn’t wasted any time making the most of her young life. Within one month, she was back in the gym, refusing to miss out on life, refusing to give in to what others expect of her.



CrossFit Rockford

Kate returned to the gym as soon as she could after her bone-marrow transplant, eager to get back to doing what she loves.



Where others see tragedy, Kate sees an opportunity to help other children.

"I've got one leg, so people are like, 'You can't do this.' I'll show you I can," Kate said.

"She just appreciates life so much." said Lynn, who is completely inspired by his daughter's wisdom and maturity.

"Her purpose is to show people you don't need to sit on the couch and be a dead ass."

—Lynn Foster

"She was in the discussion when we had to make the decision to amputate her leg. And she got the fact that it was her leg or her life. For her to comprehend that at 12 years old, it's amazing for a kid that age to be able to get that," he said.

A Silver Lining

It's hard to imagine accepting the fact that you're a 13-year-old cancer survivor who's missing a leg, but Kate has managed to not just accept her situation but also find a silver lining through her struggle.

Even Lynn has found a way to accept his daughter's fate.

"Who knows why all of this happened? But you can't second-guess it. And one thing we've gotten out of it is that this is her purpose now. Her purpose is to show people you don't need to sit on the couch and be a dead ass," he said.

Kate added: "I remember one day I was in the hospital, and I said to my mom, 'I know this is such a horrible thing to have, but I never would have gotten to do this many things if I hadn't gone through this.'"

One of the things Kate got to do while at the Home Depot Center was meet her favorite CrossFitter, Camille Leblanc-Bazinet.

"She signed my shirt. I was so excited. It was just kind of amazing. You hear stories about these people, but you never think you're actually going to get to meet them," Kate said, grinning from ear-to-ear.

"It kind of just feels like it's not real. This is too good to be true," she said.

As Kate reminded the teary CrossFit Games crowd at the Home Depot Center, CrossFit for Hope was a huge success in its inaugural campaign, but the fight isn't over. To help Kate and other children like her, visit Hope.CrossFit.com.



About the Author

*Emily Beers finished a master's degree in journalism at the University of Western Ontario in the spring of 2009. Upon graduation, she worked as a sportswriter at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, where she covered figure skating and short-track speed skating. Currently, she hosts **WOD HOG**, a not-always-PG publication of the CrossFit Vancouver School of Fitness. She ruptured her Achilles tendon in December 2010 and served as the Canada West Regional Media Director while recovering from surgery. Beers also competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games on CrossFit Vancouver's team. She finished third at the 2012 Canada West Regional.*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL KIDS

Cues Vs. Cute

Kids cues should be fun, but they need to be precise and effective. Mikki Lee Martin explains.

By Mikki Lee Martin

August 2012



Michael Brian

"Awesome, awesome, awesome! You rock!"

In the CrossFit Kids program at CrossFit Brand X, we hear a lot of cheerleading for our kids. Just this month, 7-year-old Hannah got double-unders and 14-year-old Nick performed a freestanding handstand after losing 50 lb. The kids work incredibly hard and have earned our support. But that kind of encouragement has to be balanced with actual coaching; ultimately, we are trainers and we should spend the vast majority of our time training kids to move well.

1 of 4

Anyone who has attended the CrossFit Kids Trainer Course knows that we suggest the use of the “criticism sandwich”: something positive, something to work on, and something positive. After all, one of the major goals of the program is to pair fitness and fun, so the atmosphere must stay upbeat.

As in everything we do and say, there always exists the possibility of over-interpretation or of the takeaway being slightly different from what we intended. As with the classic “telephone game,” slight modifications to our words can change our meaning after several people have filtered the original statement through their personal lenses. Although some of the most creative ideas are born in this way, less-than-optimal interpretations can also result.



***Want full hip extension on top of the box?
Try “Stand like a superhero.”***

The meat of the criticism sandwich is the movement cue. It is no secret that the success of a CrossFit trainer lies in the ability to effectively communicate optimal movement to clients. This is particularly true when training kids. How we cue children matters every bit as much as the use of positive language. Kids cues must convey exactly what we want to see from the child and be conceptually accessible to a variety of children. Cues must also contain something children can easily remember and want to imitate.

We found that with the expansion of Brand X's CrossFit Kids program to include preschool and preteen classes, the need for more age-specific cues has also increased. So we are constantly using and testing new cues. Proportionally, few of these cues make the final cut. Often, a cue sounds great to us until we see how various children respond to it. Sometimes we find two cues that work and so offer both, allowing the kids to choose the cue they relate to and understand best.

Everyone has heard cute stories of how young children interpret things in a very literal sense. If you want them to use their imagination, you generally have to tell them to do just that by prefacing a cue with “imagine.” When it comes to instruction, kids will do exactly what you say. If a child has a wide base in the squat and you say, “Move your feet closer together,” do not be surprised if those feet end up being right smack next to each other simply because you said the words “feet” and “together” in the same sentence.

Here are a few cueing points of performance:

- The power of your demonstration should never be underestimated. Kids will copy your movement, energy and enthusiasm to the best of their ability.
- Kids should focus on one cue at a time.
- Caution must be used in checking cues for possible inappropriate double meanings.
- A good cue causes several good things to happen simultaneously.
- A good cue allows a new client to begin moving safely with the class inside of five minutes.
- A good cue conveys the essence of a concept in the simplest terms.
- The best coaching is mostly cueing with a dash of well-placed cheerleading.

Danell Marks



In order from left: angry gorilla (deadlift), hold up the sky (press), stand like a superhero (squat or box jump).

The following is a list of a few of the kids cues with which we have found consistent understanding and successful movement:

- **Angry gorilla**—Setup position for the deadlift.
- **Fly a rocket or a butterfly with your hands**—Straight arms up at eye level or above and together to maintain a good lumbar position while moving through the squat.
- **Hold the sky up**—Overhead position for the press.
- **I don't know**—Shoulders-to-ears shrug in triple extension of the clean.
- **Press the sky up, it is very heavy**—Bar path for the press.
- **Monkey hangs and swings**—Bar play and grip strength.
- **Squish a bug, trap a bug**—For anything requiring heels down or stomps.
- **Stand like a superhero**—For open hips at the top of the squat or top of a box jump.
- **Stink bug**—Handstand push-up progressions from box.

You might think that the more clever and creative a cue, the more effective it is, but really, the key is simplicity that ignites recognition and fosters retention within the age group you are working with.

At CrossFit Kids headquarters, vetting new cues is a process: a few kids are taken out of class during the 5- to 10-minute focus work period by a senior trainer who runs them through the new cue and looks for comprehension and consequent movement. This is done with five to eight kids at a time in all of the appropriate age groups. It is repeated for each group to check retention, and usually the new cue is seen by over 100 kids before a decision is made to add it into our programming. Once the cue is added, the staff reviews it as a group after another four- to six-week focus cycle. Bear in mind that good cues should work with the vast majority of your clients. Bad cues are usually quite obvious right away and hardly ever make it to the focus work stage.

The following cues failed to hold up under scrutiny:

- **Elephant's trunk**—To maintain good back position in the squat (kids and preschoolers interpreted the trunk as a bendy water hose).
- **Feel the steel**—A general cue for deadlifting (really inappropriate for teens).
- **Flat back**—For correct lumbar curve while deadlifting (an adult cue that kids from 5 to 10 do not get at all).
- **Show your armpits**—For a strong barbell position in the overhead squat (another adult cue that had kids showing their armpits but while turning to check out their neighbors).

We asked some CrossFit Kids who have been CrossFitting for at least three years which cues were most memorable, and it came as no surprise that the stickiest cues for most of the kids were ones they found fun. This is in keeping with our goal to pair fitness and fun.

Finally, CrossFit Kids trainers should pay careful attention to their repertoire of cues. What may have worked so well for a group of kids may not work as well as that cohort matriculates up and new kids enter class. Always be on the lookout for new cues, whether discovered in the heat of the moment during class or picked up from other CrossFit Kids programs. That said, as excited as you might be to unveil a cue that is new and colorful and seemingly fun, take the time to test it among small groups of kids to ensure that it is indeed as effective as it first appears.

Our mission here is to optimize our time with these kids so we can succeed at making them better movers. Our chief aim? Pairing fun with fitness. But rather than cheerleading to give the appearance of fun, let's make sure our coaching is effective and enjoyable for the kids. One way we can do this is by being sure the criticism sandwich not only goes down well but also provides fuel for good movement.



Michael Brian

The best kids cues get instant results and are also the ones kids find fun. Be creative!

About the Author

Mikki Lee Martin is Director of Youth Programs for CrossFit Headquarters and, along with her husband Jeff, runs CrossFit Brand X in Ramona, Calif. In addition to numerous CrossFit qualifications, she is an ISSA-certified Youth Fitness Trainer, a first-degree kenpo karate black belt, and a KMNTC-certified krav maga instructor. With the opening of Brand X Martial Arts in 1999, Mikki began training teens and children in krav maga and kenpo karate. She has been integral in the practical development of the CrossFit Kids methodology in terms of programming, class structure and course curriculum. She and Jeff developed and maintain the CrossFitKids.com website, and she designed and published CrossFit Kids magazine from December 2005 to December 2010, when it was incorporated into the *CrossFit Journal*.

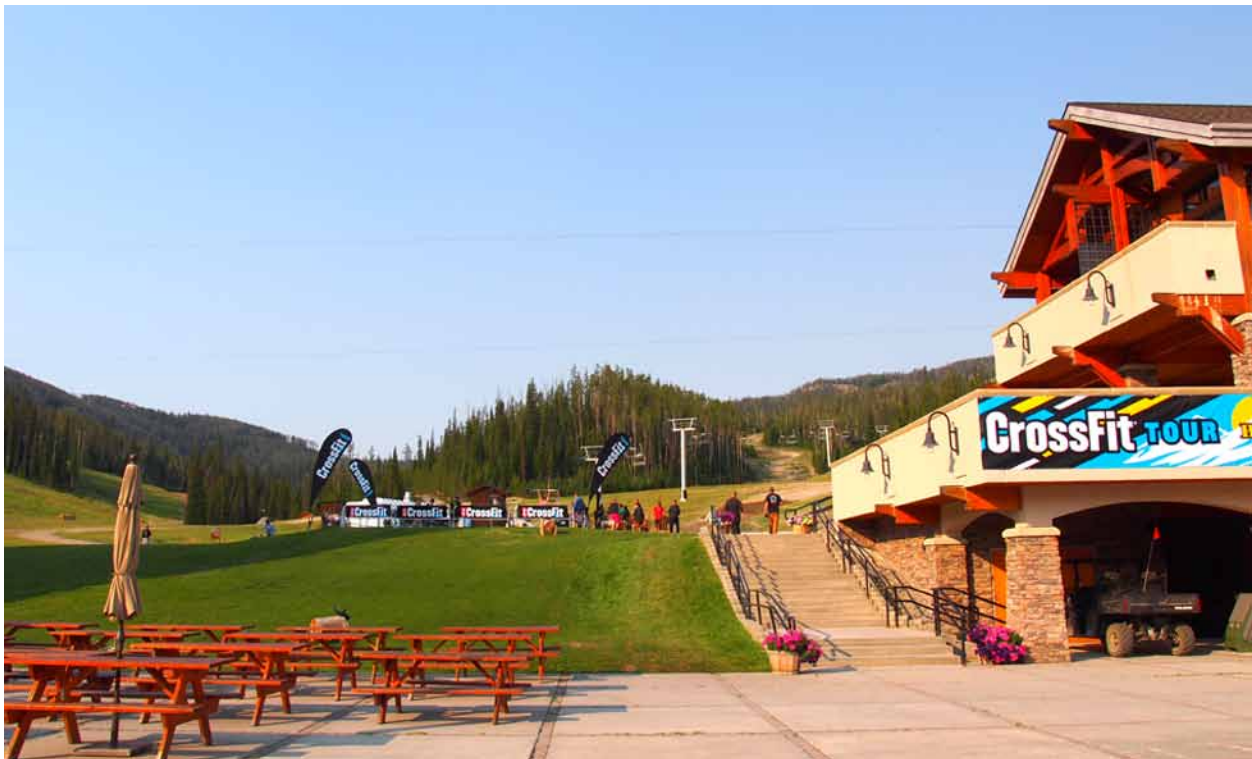
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Big Sky Bonding

CrossFitters assemble to hear Coach Glassman speak and relax in Montana's natural playground.

By E.M. Burton

August 2012



All images: E.M. Burton

For the second year in a row, CrossFitters gathered in Big Sky, Mont., to relax, meet new friends, spend time with old ones, and just generally hang out and do what we do naturally—with a heavy emphasis on nature.

In fact, I can't imagine a more ideal spot for the final stop on the 2012 CrossFit Tour than Big Sky, where everybody took it outside. From throwdowns at the Rogue platform and bungee-trampoline jumping to beer-and-burpees in the party tent, there was something to do outdoors for just about everyone.



CrossFit founder and CEO Greg Glassman speaking about the future of CrossFit.

Previously, the Tour touched down in Australia in February, Texas in March, and Denmark in May before the big show at the CrossFit Games in July in California. Following the intense and exciting spectacle of the Games, the Montana event was characterized by an atmosphere that was decidedly greener and a pace that was slower.

The highlight, of course, was the chance to interact with other CrossFitters and hear CrossFit founder and CEO Greg Glassman speak about the future.

On Friday, Aug. 10, the welcome reception from 4 to 11 p.m. officially kicked off the last stop of the Tour for 2012, welcoming subject-matter experts, affiliate owners, CrossFit staff, and athletes from all over, including two-time Games champ Rich Froning Jr. and Dan Bailey. While temperatures had been unseasonably high that afternoon, the big sky opened up, and rain cooled things off quite a bit.

The next morning, CrossFit founder and CEO Greg Glassman gave an inspirational speech and took questions from the crowd.

Coach Glassman Speaks

Following Saturday's buffet-style breakfast, Coach Glassman addressed the gathered crowd.

"In these troubled times," Coach said, speaking specifically to the affiliates and referring to the economic challenges we all face, "what you are doing is nothing short of health and wealth creation. Anything that creates health and wealth is so priceless that no one should own it."

The relationship that CrossFit Inc. has with affiliate owners is unusual in the business world, which is likely why CrossFit has garnered so much attention from those at *Forbes* magazine, as well as would-be purchasers. People can generally recognize quality, and most want in on a good thing if they can get a piece of it. Coach described the relationship CrossFit has with the affiliates as "a covenant," adding, "It's not for sale—at any price. And staff and I are here to safeguard it."

To a rapt and well-fed audience, he explained that the plan for growing wealth for your children and future generations includes being a good trainer, shooting for excellence and embracing virtuosity.

"A trainer trains and doesn't do anything else, (with) knowledge, experience, talent, skill and commitment," Coach Glassman explained. For the video, click [here](#).

Coach also talked about selling shirts and gear as part of the pleasure of owning a gym but not a critical part of the business model.

"We sold shirts," Glassman said. "Why? It was just part of the community. It was part of who we were. They said foul things that shocked people; they were cool. That's a part of the whole thing. Let's leave the supplements and the power bars and the apparel as a critical part of your revenue, let's leave them to another gym model. Now I'm not going to tell you not to do those things. I'm just telling you I'd never do them."

Speaking of cool shirts, Coach was sporting a special T of his own at the event, with "Unbuyable" emblazoned across the chest and the most sinister looking, Reebok-CrossFit-shoe-wearing Pukie ever seen on the back. The message was awesome, funny and profound all at once: He's got your back. You want this guy in your corner.

Wanting to be in the service of others is at the core of what CrossFit is.

Always one to share, Coach explained CrossFit's trade secret.

"It's our review criteria on the essays (for affiliation). The No. 1 plus is, 'I want to make this a better world and extend this benefit to others,'" he said.

Wanting to be in the service of others is at the core of what CrossFit is, and the long-term goal now for Coach Glassman and CrossFit is to finish the acquisition of the entire company and then protect it forever.

"I'm going to get (CrossFit) out of everyone's reach—forever," Glassman said. "It's too important. It's too important. The temptations to get hold of this thing are incredible."



Coach Glassman's new shirt, with "Unbuyable" across the front, sent a clear message to would-be purchasers of CrossFit.

He added: "It's too precious for the marketplace."

He doesn't need a partner, Coach explained; he needs the affiliates to be successful. For himself, his children, his staff and their children, and the affiliates and their children, successful affiliates are all that is needed. The CrossFit Games exist simply to promote the interests of CrossFit affiliates to the larger world, and the Games themselves exist only because of the volunteer spirit of people like Bill and Caity Henniger and many others.

For those curious about CrossFit's initiatives—the SAT-prep program, building schools in Kenya, preventing infant drowning, and fighting catastrophic children's illnesses—Coach explained that the projects are part of a program that now goes beyond squatting and doing Fran.

"It's who we are to care about those things. It's part of our identity. It needs no explanation," he said.

He added: "It's a brand statement. It lets the whole world know who you are. ... When you realize, 'I can make a difference in Africa,' ... you come to realize how easy it is to make a difference at home."

Just by being who we are, we all represent the CrossFit brand. According to Glassman, "We can make a positive difference anywhere we go. If the affiliates are there, it's a better place because of it."

Athletes, coaches and HQ staff all made new connections, strengthened practices and old friendships, and just generally had an awesome time.

He continued: "Ask the people who run this place. They'll tell you. Ask the vendors in the shops. They've seen it. The kids who run the events here, they all know it: 'CrossFitters are good people.' They ask us, 'Who are you? What is this CrossFit?' I'm so proud to tell (them), 'It's the affiliates. Talk to them, they'll tell you who they are.'"

"The thing that we have, no one can take away from us."

The CrossFit Community

Fired up by coach's words, the crowd had a plethora of outdoor activities to partake in, both on and off-site. CrossFitters enjoyed golf, fly fishing, whitewater rafting, twin ziplining, a high ropes course, skeet shooting and paintball, all while generally enjoying each other's company.



A few brave athletes faced off in a vicious beer-and-burpees WOD.

The Reebok barbecue dinner on Saturday evening began at 6 p.m. and featured a wide variety of healthy local fare, including bison and venison. At 7:30, the first Rich Froning/Dan Bailey Challenge WOD went down, where the 2011 and 2012 Games champ and 2011 Open champ challenged teams of two. I missed the stunning Perseid meteor shower because I was too focused on the Team Kettlebell Snatch challenge and beer-and-burpees competition, which was overseen by Dave Castro.

Athletes, coaches and HQ staff all made new connections, strengthened practices and old friendships, and just generally had an awesome time. Family, friends, fitness and fun were general themes of the event that closed out the 2012 Tour schedule and came as a holiday at the end of the CrossFit competition season.

For the Hennigers of Rogue Fitness, who brought the equipment for the WODs and regular throwdowns, it was a chance to relax.

"It's really nice. With the Games just over, this is a bit of a vacation, a relaxing time to hang out with people who are normally going at full speed," Bill said. He and Caity—who won the CrossFit Games in 2008—joined Rory and Angela McKernan for some fly fishing. Bill caught three fish.

It's funny to note that those who don't CrossFit can profile us. I met a man staying at the hotel for business. He and a friend had been out golfing, and they approached the CrossFit tent for a beer. The bartender, however, turned them away, explaining, "Yeah, you're not CrossFit." The poor fellow took it to heart, interestingly enough, and rather than get angry, he decided he was going to start CrossFitting when he returned home.

Cathy Iverson, an interior designer and athlete from CrossFit Sisu in Minneapolis, Minn., appreciated the sense of having something in common with everyone at the Tour event. The "commonality that all of us have here is what's important," she said.

"It doesn't matter what level you're at. We're all the same. Whether you're very experienced or you're two weeks into the gym, it doesn't matter," she said.

I mentioned how I appreciated the family-oriented nature of the gathering, and Iverson trumped me a bit by telling me she brought 17 of her family members with her. Her 78-year-old mother was in attendance and, while she isn't currently CrossFitting, she is curious to try it out.

Iverson's son, Jeffery, is new to CrossFit, and she appreciates the incredible opportunity CrossFit gives him.

"I haven't seen anything else give to my son what CrossFit gives him. I'm at a point in my life, where it's not about me and my generation anymore. It's about future generations and the potential these guys have," she explained.

The family arrived a week before the official gathering and did hikes, went up in the chairlift, took a lot of pictures and met people. The natural setting was something Iverson most enjoyed about this stop in the Tour.

"Big Sky offers such a healthy environment that I think it's a natural thing for CrossFitters," she pointed out. The family did a 13-mile hike on Thursday, and Iverson said that "without CrossFit, we might not have been able to do it."

Indeed, the Tram to the Top of Lone Peak broke down on one "expedition," and CrossFitters in attendance had to hike the rest of the way.

Iverson also appreciated the chance to meet and talk to Coach Glassman, and she fought back tears while watching her young son thank Coach before Saturday's dinner, shake his hand and talk to him about the future.

**"This is part of
being members of this
community. ... This is too
important to miss, really."
—Meghann Holloway**

Megan and Paul Southern, owners of CrossFit Pleasanton, appreciated the gathering as downtime with good friends.

"It's way more intimate," Paul explained. "You get to just hang out. You might see Coach at the Games, but you're not going to get to hang out and talk to him there. Same thing with Coach B (Mike Burgener) and all these other fantastic people here. This is just such a concentration of personalities with a wealth of talent and great people."



3-2-1 ... Human slingshot!

Megan noted that while Big Sky is an awesome place for children, "We didn't bring our kids with us this time, so we actually got to take a nap after the workout. ... This is a great venue to bring your kids, but without them this year we had a chance to connect more and hang out with other affiliates."

Meghann Holloway and Jenn Mayotte, Level 1 trainers at Arenal Fitness in Pikesville, Md., and aspiring affiliate owners, travelled from the East Coast to Big Sky for the astounding natural surroundings and to be surrounded by so many passionate CrossFitters. Having seen the video from last year's gathering, they "just knew that it was somewhere they wanted to be."

The opportunity to be in the presence of so many CrossFitters at once was something they didn't want to miss despite busy schedules.

"This is part of being members of this community," Holloway said. "We're both trainers, we both work two full-time jobs, we're both really busy, but this is too important to miss, really."

They, too, appreciated interaction with Coach Glassman and hearing what he had to say about the future and the importance of the affiliate community. They're at a turning point in their lives—a point many affiliate owners know well—and they're taking a risk by changing their lives and entering into affiliation. They took great comfort in hearing Coach Glassman say that nothing for the affiliates will change, one way or another.



CrossFitters threw down under the Montana sky with stars Dan Bailey (left) and Rich Froning Jr.

Chris Collinson is a Level 1 trainer at his daughter and son-in-law's box, Yellowstone CrossFit, and he also teaches in the aviation program at Rocky Mountain College. Big Sky is his backyard, and when so many CrossFitters come your way, you want to be there. He worked out early, took in Coach Glassman's breakfast talk, fished all afternoon and enjoyed some quiet time. Collinson came to last year's gathering, and he said he just loves meeting everyone. He started CrossFitting four years ago.

"I knew I had to get my Level 1, and I remain continually impressed with staff and the (seminar) trainers."

Baker Leavitt, owner of 2POOD Performance Apparel and Kill Cliff sports recovery drink, loves to attend CrossFit events. Leavitt was at the Fort Worth Tour stop, which he feels was totally different from the atmosphere at Big Sky.

"Fort Worth was more of a party. There were a lot more people there, perhaps because Big Sky is a little bit harder to get to."

Leavitt appreciated the more intimate nature of the Big Sky stop, and he noted that "people were spread out a lot more at the Fort Worth stop. Many people stayed 10-20 miles from the venue. This is a little more intimate with everyone in the same place."

He of course enjoyed hearing Coach speak in the morning over breakfast.

"He really spelled out for us a lot of the things that make CrossFit great," Leavitt said.

Glenn Perra, co-owner of CrossFit Relentless, CrossFit Ironworks and CrossFit 033 in Connecticut, concurred and said that Coach's words were "reassuring" and "straight from the heart."

Leavitt especially liked meeting affiliate owners from the Montana area and admired the pioneer spirit of people who would arrive here at this landscape and think, "Hell, yeah, let's build a house here!"

Notably, GNC just picked up Kill Cliff, Leavitt's beverage, and by the end of August it will be available in over 1,000 stores. Leavitt's been looking for ways to give back to the CrossFit community and thinks the best way to demonstrate his gratitude for the support of his businesses over the years is to contribute to CrossFit's building of another school in Africa. He's already working with HQ staffers toward that goal.

"The degrees of separation are so minute in this community ... CrossFit bends the universe."

Indeed, it seems that it does.

For info on the CrossFit Tour, visit Tour.CrossFit.com.



About the Author

*E.M. Burton is a **CrossFit Journal** staff writer.*

THE CrossFit LIFE

From Tragedy to Triumph

Patrick Whaley's life almost ended when he was assaulted, robbed and shot in the chest. Thanks to hard work, an ingenious invention and CrossFit, Whaley is still alive and stronger than ever.

By Patrick Whaley

August 2012



Courtesy of Patrick Whaley

When I was a little kid I was really skinny. As a way to build up muscle, I would carry around extra books in my book bag. I started thinking, "What if I could have normal clothing be weighted, heavier than the average clothing?" I did some sketches, which evolved into a prototype and then a patent. It morphed into TITIN (formerly OmegaWear), a form-fitting compression shirt with flexible gel inserts.



Courtesy of Patrick Whaley

A 9mm round tore through Whaley's lung and liver and grazed a major artery before exiting his back.

In college, I took the money I made from a paid internship and sunk it into this project.

But in 2009, I nearly lost everything. I was a student at Georgia Tech University, and on May 4, 2009, I was assaulted, robbed and ultimately shot in the chest during an armed robbery in downtown Atlanta. Three masked assailants approached me from the back and robbed me at gunpoint. When I refused to get into their vehicle, one of the guys pulled the trigger and I heard the click of the safety. With his second attempt, I was able to deflect the barrel of his gun from my face, but I had no time to get away. As an Eagle Scout, I knew remaining calm was vital for my survival, but as I called 911, I noticed the other two victims and all the assailants had fled the scene, leaving me for dead in a pool of my own blood. Not a great ending to my first day in my new apartment.

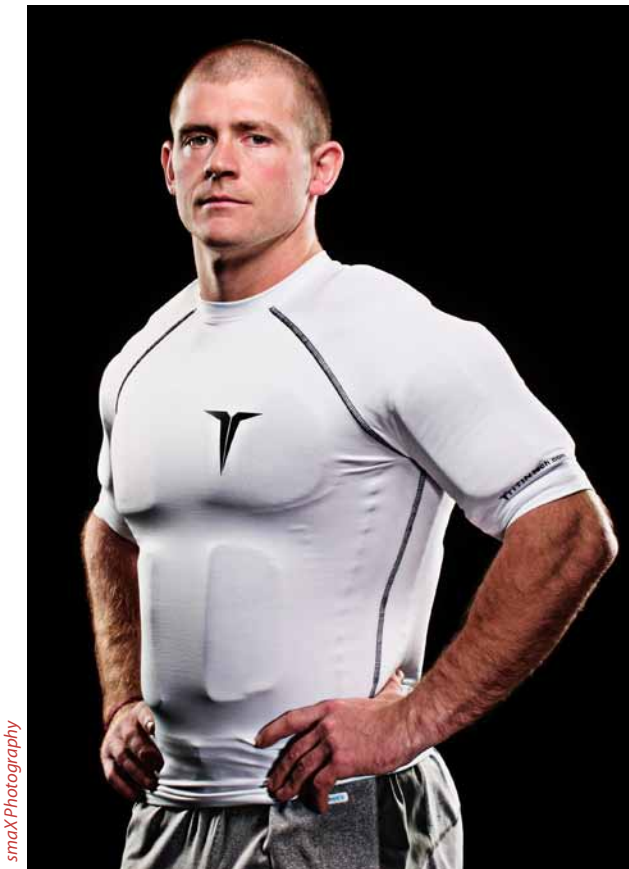
At this time, I was an active amateur bodybuilder, weighing about 220 lb. at 6 foot 4. I felt invincible. From the time I began playing football as a middle-school student, I was consumed with building muscle, staying physically fit and eating healthy. I remember my high-school swimming coach warned against drinking soda, so from that day forward I drank only water. As

an award-winning high-school swimmer, I worked out for four to five hours per day both aquatically and with additional workouts in the weight room.

Upon my return to senior classes at Georgia Tech after I was discharged from the ICU, my physical limitations were evident as I struggled to carry my full book bag on campus. However, I was committed to return to my workout schedule, albeit understanding that performing any degree of weight training was not in the cards for me, yet. I was determined to get back into shape, no matter how long it took, but that was easier said than done.

While I was in the midst of extensive physical therapy, it occurred to me to use my weighted shirt to recover my strength. I wore the shirt while I did day-to-day tasks, and it made a big difference. However, I still had a long road to recovery.

In 2011, about two years after the accident, I met Chris Fischer at a local gym, and he introduced me to CrossFit, or what I would later refer to as "pseudo CrossFit." I began my CrossFit training in a traditional gym using yoga mats under the loaded barbell to make up for the fact we did not have bumper plates. We made it work.



CrossFit Games athlete Brandon Phillips, wearing Whaley's weighted shirt.

I soon met another CrossFitter, Rodney McClure, who, after knowing me for less than a week, joined my last-minute trip to Carson, Calif., for the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games. I found myself knee-deep in a crowd of “the best of the best.” As a young entrepreneur, I was financially broke, but with my last dime I rented a vendor booth and began an extraordinary journey with the fittest people on Earth—CrossFitters of all levels. TITIN was featured live on ESPN the second day of the competition as a Canadian equipment distributor came over to demo the product, saying he felt like “Captain America” on camera.

My exposure to CrossFit opened my eyes to a whole new world. Learning more about CrossFit training changed my perspective and improved my focus as it introduced me to an entirely new and exciting fitness regimen filled with seriously dedicated athletes who were completely devoted not only to fitness, but also to living their lives to the fullest while focusing on their health, communities and faith. Those involved in CrossFit training live their lives with genuine integrity, profound ethics and unquestionable morals, and they do so without excuses and regrets. I was then, and shall forever be, absolutely hooked by CrossFit.

Feedback from the CrossFit audience was critical to my research and development of TITIN. Our athlete customers include CrossFit athletes Rich Froning and Brandon Phillips, as well as NFL players Eric Berry and Tim Tebow. The shirt is also used by soldiers in the British Royal Air Force and the Springboks (National Rugby Team of South Africa), along with many collegiate athletes.

CrossFit training has not only become a critical segment of my personal exercise routine, but it has truthfully brought me back to life. I was always devoted to my own physical fitness routine but, for me, experiencing the CrossFit world has provided the specific incentives I needed to hold my head up high once again, the consistent variety I needed to pique my interest, and the results I wanted to prove to myself that I can, and will, exceed my own expectations against all odds.

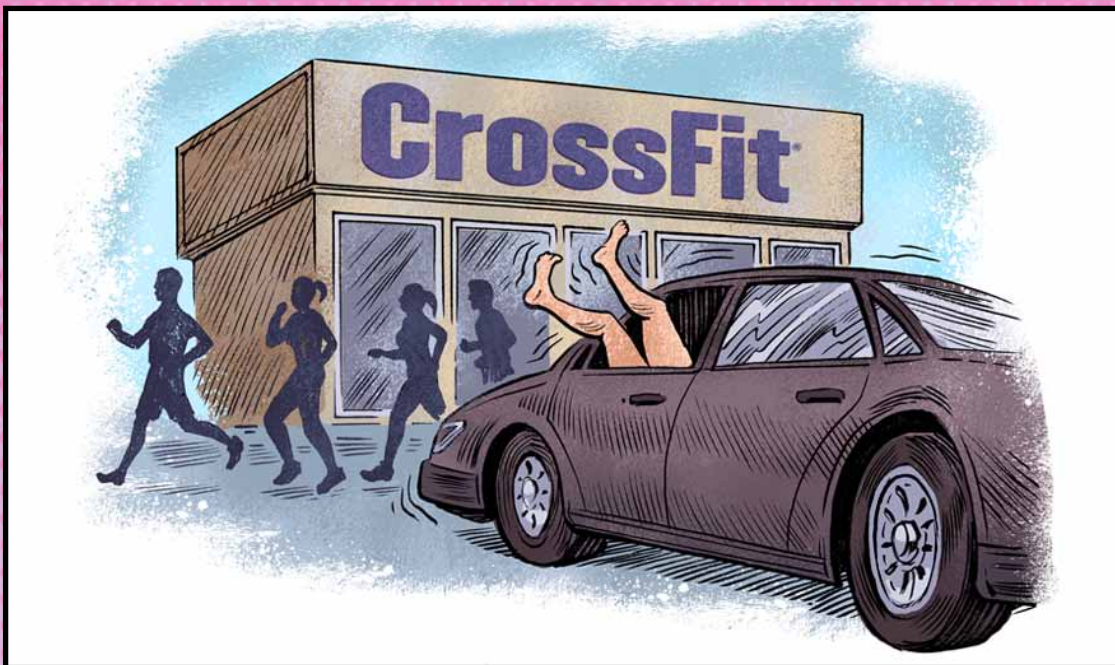
CrossFit improved all aspects of my life: emotionally, physically and mentally. CrossFit has humbled me, motivated me and has made such a positive impact in my life that I believe everyone deserves a chance to benefit from this training regimen. Although I lost a third of my right lung and 70 percent of my blood the day I was shot, CrossFit has given me much more.



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

SURVEY SAYS ... SEX!

ANKA RADAKOVICH CANVASSES THE CROSSFIT COMMUNITY TO FIND OUT ABOUT LIFTING, LUSTING AND LIBIDOS.



All illustrations: Howell Golson

IN THE NAME OF SEXUAL RESEARCH, I HAVE CONDUCTED THE FIRST CROSSFIT SEX SURVEY.

THROBBING REPLIES CAME FROM AROUND THE GLOBE, FROM TASMANIA, SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA, ENGLAND AND MEXICO AND EVEN INCLUDED A CROSSFITTING COWBOY IN NORTH DAKOTA. OVER 200 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED, INCLUDING THOSE WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS STRAIGHT, GAY AND BI, AS WELL AS ONE PERSON WHO SAID, "I'M NOT SURE."

As part of the survey, I wanted to know how doing CrossFit has altered people's sex lives. Almost everyone reported that CrossFit made him or her better in bed. And both men and women said CrossFit has increased their sex drives. One guy said his "went through the roof," turning his "average sex drive" into that of a total horn-dog. "The only problem now," he said "is that my wife finds me annoying."

Very few sex studies have examined the link between exercise and arousal or pleasure. Dr. Cindy Meston, a Ph.D. sex researcher at the University of Texas at Austin, conducted a series of studies that tried to discover a link between sympathetic nervous system (SNS) arousal and sexual response. In [Sympathetic Nervous System Activity and Female Sexual Arousal](#), Meston explains how researchers used intense exercise-bike sessions to drive up SNS activity in their subjects, who were also asked to watch neutral and hardcore-porn films.

While Meston did not find exercise alone produced increased sexual arousal, she found that it certainly seemed to help when erotic stimulation was added to the mix.

"Exercise in the presence of an erotic stimulus somehow prepares the body for sexual arousal," she wrote.

Our lesson? Hit the gym, then put on some porn and get busy.

One CrossFitting couple told me that right after a WOD is when they both feel most like doing it. One day they couldn't wait and started doing it right in their car in the CrossFit

parking lot. A few minutes later, when the next class ran the 400-meter warm-up right past their car, they had to stop what they were doing and duck.

Top Fantasies

When CrossFitters were asked, "What are your top three sexual fantasies?" a few trends emerged.

For men, the No. 1 fantasy was having a threesome. For women, the least favorite fantasy was having a threesome. The second most popular fantasy with both men and women was "sex in public," and the third favorite fantasy equally shared by both men and women was "sex with another CrossFitter." One straight male said he lives to have "sex with two CrossFitter girls while a third girl watches." (The difference between male and female fantasies is that males have more people in theirs.)



According to the survey, what distinguished CrossFitters' sex fantasies from other people's was that CrossFitters incorporated CrossFit into their fantasies. One guy's fantasy went like this: "Someday, I want to own my own CrossFit box and one day after the last evening class of the night, I get approached by two of the hot female clients and propositioned for a reduced membership fee. I then give them some extra personal training."

A 24-year-old female from Ohio confessed that she turned her fantasy into reality, admitting, "I have sex with my coach. I get turned on when he yells at me. No one knows. It's probably the best sex I've ever had." She also reported, "I had my first threesome with a two other CrossFitters. After we were done, we all yelled, 'Time!'"

Other fantasies included "sex on the mat," "sex in the front/back office" and "sex while being completely dominated"—a fantasy that was evenly split between male and female respondents. One 26-year-old lesbian from Hawaii said her sexual fantasies were "Batman and Catwoman." She liked the "damsel-in-distress fantasy where I rescue her and have 'gratified' sex, meaning the girl who gets rescued is gratified, in costume of course."



Luc, 42, owner of Blue Coast CrossFit in Kapolei, Hawaii, says his sex fantasies are, "Sex in a boat or on the ocean, sex on the beach, and sex while three of the Muppets give commentary."

CrossFitters Who Do Other CrossFitters

When asked "Have you ever had sex with a fellow CrossFitter, and how is it different?" one 28-year-old female from Vancouver, B.C. said, "It's different in that as a girl, even if you're looking for crazy, dirty sex, you still want to be respected. And when you're with a CrossFitter, even if it's just sex and nothing more, you know he respects you. He watched you kick his ass in the workout just a couple hours before, so there's no way he doesn't respect you. When you CrossFit together, you see each other in dire situations of struggle. That builds an unmatched respect that carries into the bedroom."

She adds: "Oh, and if you know he's into CrossFit, it immediately makes him more datable and/or bang-able."

A 27-year-old male from Texas whose sexual fantasies included "being bossed around in bed" said, "It's different with CrossFitters. I had sex with a CrossFitter, and she was a sex goddess. So into anything and always into any and every position possible."

Bigger, Badder, Better in Bed

CrossFitters who saw directly improved sex lives from doing CrossFit gave testimonials like they were doing an infomercial.

A 29-year-old female from Boston said, "My wife and I have a sparked sex life. Prior to CrossFit, we were 'too tired.' Or we had a quick, short 5 minutes of sex and then it was over. I was 'too heavy.' Now I'm not too heavy, we are more playful, and we have sex often. We are not embarrassed by our bodies anymore."

A 38-year-old female from Austin, Texas, said, "My level of desire has gone through the roof, and for an already horny woman, this is saying a lot. I never turn my husband down anymore, and besides, he says my hand jobs have greatly improved."

A 31-year-old male from Santa Cruz, Calif., said, "It makes you more daring and adventurous CrossFit changes your attitude. It makes you more confident and outgoing sexually. The increased testosterone production from high intensity training greatly increases sex drive."

A 35 year-old-male from Pittsburgh said, "Once my wife started CrossFitting, the fireworks began to fly. She was much more confident and eager to have sex. We are now back to having sessions," he says, as opposed the pre-CrossFit days when he had to beg.

Luc from Blue Coast CrossFit said, "CrossFit butts are awesome."

The 22-year-old cowboy from South Dakota, who turned a hay barn into a mini CrossFit box, said, "I've always been fit between ranch work, sports and firefighting, but once I discovered CrossFit, I became an animal! It made it easier to throw my girlfriend around. She weighs 100 lb." He also thought that I'd "look better in a cowboy hat and a Daisy Duke top," but that was just his opinion.

Exercise-Induced Orgasms

A recent sex study explored exercise and women's orgasm. The study, conducted by Debby Herbenick and J. Dennis Fortenberry, was published in *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*. Conducted at the University of Indiana (once home to famed sex researcher Alfred Kinsey), the study was one of the

first of its kind to explore exercise-induced orgasms. It found that some women have random orgasms at the gym that were "absent from fantasies." The exercises that got the ladies going were multiple sets of abdominal exercises, including sit-ups. But the ab exercises that triggered the random big O's were reps of knees-to-chest, which gave women phantom "core-gasms." Weightlifting, biking/spinning and climbing poles or ropes also aroused the ladies, just as it did for Garth Algar in *Wayne's World*.

"I felt kinda funny. Like I did when I climbed the rope in gym class."

The results were based on surveys filled out by 124 women who said they had experienced exercise-induced orgasm and 246 women who had experienced exercise-induced sexual pleasure. Twenty percent of the women said they couldn't control their arousal, were not fantasizing or thinking about sex at the time, and felt embarrassed to get so aroused at a gym.



One male respondent of our CrossFit and sex study said, "I have never become aroused at a box, because I am all business there, but I did become aroused filling out this survey."

None of the CrossFitters who responded to this survey reported having orgasms at a box, but one couple said they have orgasms before they go to the box.

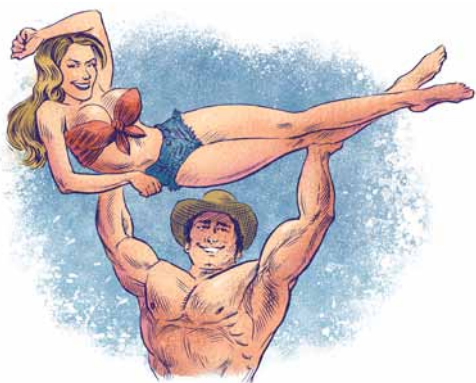
"It's a great warm-up," they said.

A 22-year-old cowboy from North Dakota said he gets aroused at his box.

"Mainly anytime a girl in Spandex shorts does a squat or deadlift and her ass looks amazing and I get dirty thoughts in my head," he said. "But since I was busy working out myself, I didn't get an erection—that would make wall-balls different."

True Sex Confessions of CrossFitters

"I'm male, 40, living in Portland, Ore.," wrote one respondent. "I started doing CrossFit years ago. I also joined the local leather/kink scene a few months after CrossFit. I've always been kinky but never thought I would fit into a community. CrossFit had a profound impact on my sex life."



"At first, the physical changes were noted by partners. I had always been self-conscious of my body. I'm about 5'10" and weighed 135 until I was 30. I now weigh 170 and have noticeable curves, bulges and cut lines. Still thin compared to the CrossFit firebreathers, but much bigger than before. For the first time in my life, a female partner saw me nude and said, 'You have a beautiful body.'"

"As a result of this, I developed confidence to go naked at public play parties. I suddenly realized that I was one of the few males in the kink scene who worked out. I'm a switch, and I was bottoming heavily at this point of my life and spent a lot of time tied to crosses being whipped, kick-boxed, caned and flogged. Now it was all happening in public, to large crowds. I never thought I would be seen naked on a stage in front of 500-plus people at Portland's annual KinkFest event."

"And when I top, I feel ... toppier. Meaner. More masculine. I use my body more as a device, or an impact toy. But I've never had women stroke my abs or ass before and fixate on muscular areas. It is a very nice feeling: I'm used to being the one pawing at a woman like a little boy on Christmas, and it feels good to be a toy for once. I can manipulate women in a manhandling way, consensually tossing them, carrying them, etc. The new strength allows me to access more dominant positions and for longer periods of time. I have literally done it for four or more hours, and it felt like a WOD."

As far as benefits go, the general consensus was that most people seemed delighted at the secondary benefit of CrossFit improving their sex lives while not consciously trying to.

On a personal note, I noticed that after only two months of doing CrossFit, my arm no longer got tired when I "paddled the girl in the pink canoe" or "polished the pole." Many people reported increased "handy" skills.

A 26-year-old male from Dallas, Texas, said, "Before CrossFit, sex was softer. Now that we have put on significant muscle and shed excess fat, sex is more animalistic. Because of this, I've added a new category of porn I look at now, which is 'fitness girls.'"

A 34-year-old female from Kansas says that since doing CrossFit, her sex life is filled with "more playfulness." She lists her top three fantasies as "bondage outdoors," "rough sex," and "wrestling." Wow, CrossFitters know how to party.

Just about everyone polled said their sex life was better.

"Our sex life has become more primal, more animalistic," commented a 34-year-old male. One guy said he got so worked up after a good workout in bed, "that after pulling out I accidentally did the 'money shot' in my own face."

A 26-year-old female said CrossFit has made her a better lover: "I now have a hobby that is a good use of my time, and when I come home after working out, there is a better chance of me getting some afternoon delight."

Women said they felt less self-conscious and more confident about their bodies, and thus more free and "fearless." And every sex study ever done has found that when people are relaxed, have no fear and are excited, sex is the best.

Several people said they "were doing most of the work" before their wives, husbands, boyfriends or girlfriends did CrossFit, and they were relieved to get some help. Many said that the sexual perks of doing "CrossFit were "unexpected," "surprising" and, best of all, "fun."

"CrossFit makes everything better," commented more than one person.

"I feel better naked," said a few more.

But most importantly, noted one husband whose wife now can lift more than he can, "Strong is the new sexy."



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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