

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

February 2011

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THE CrossFit JOURNAL

CrossFit Strength Training

Louie Simmons explains the finer points of the training principles he employs at the legendary Westside Barbell in Columbus, Ohio.

By Louie Simmons

February 2011



Staff/CrossFit Journal

While experts like Tudor O. Bompa, Y.V. Verkhoshansky and others call for a yearly or multi-year plan, they were concentrating on training for an Olympic competition, which occurs every four years. Westside speed-strength cycles, or waves, are integrated throughout the yearly plan as absolute strength building on max-effort day, hypertrophy work, and on the dynamic day for speed strength, using the repetition method on small exercises. There are countless sports but only three methods of strength training, as mentioned above.

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Westside breaks training into three-week waves. After three weeks, you will not gain strength or speed using the same method. The goal of training is adaptation, but just at the time adaptation occurs, a poor training result can interfere with training. This is known as accommodation, a biology law that states a decrease in training effects will occur.

To eliminate accommodation, the three-week pendulum wave must be used. The percentages of a one-rep max and the volume must change. Major exercise must rotate. Squat, bench, clean, snatch and jerk exercises must change. Accommodating resistance methods must change via the use of chains, bands and lightened methods. Inside that, the amount of accommodating resistance must also change. This means more or less chains, more or less bands, or more or less weight reduced in the bottom by the lightened method. When squatting and benching, you can change the stance and grip, respectively.

Westside lifters always box squat for all training. On Friday (dynamic-effort day), we do multiple sets of squats at a predetermined weight. The rest between sets should be kept at 60 seconds. This will keep fitness at a high level—a must for the CrossFit society. The percent will vary from 50 to 55 to 60 in a three-week wave.

In a recent *CrossFit Journal* video, [Louie Simmons on the Conjugate System: Part 1](#), I spoke about using percentages from 75 to 80 to 85 on dynamic day. Those are used when calculating your weight off a box-squat record only. When calculating off a contest squat record, the percentages are 50 to 60 to 65.

On the fourth week, the percent will rotate back to 50, but this time the amount of chain or band resistance is changed, or a back squat is changed to a front squat or an overhead squat. All of us have an absolute max to determine the weight to use.

Table 1: Different training loads at 50 percent 1RM.

Max	Percent (%)	Weight (pounds)
500 back squat	50	250
350 front squat	50	175
250 overhead squat	50	125

This will change the total volume at the same percentage, which prevents accommodation, as mentioned earlier. The percent is the same, the bar speed is the same, but the volume is changed considerably. This is essential. Finish with two or three exercises for squatting.



By changing resistance, stance, bars, grip and more, you can prevent training plateaus.

Staff/CrossFit Journal

For bench speed strength, the dynamic method is used on the weekend. The development of force (force = mass x acceleration) is the purpose of this workout. Nine or more sets of 3 reps are performed very explosively, with 60 seconds of rest between sets. This is interval training, just like speed squatting: a predetermined amount work with a predetermined amount of rest. Always use bands or chains on the bar, and use three grips: index finger touching the smooth part of the bar for 3 sets, 2 inches out from there for 3 sets, and little finger touching the power ring for 3 sets. All three grips heavily involve the triceps. They are the most important bench muscles. Lats and upper back follow after triceps.

Table 2: 200-lb. max bench for nine-week wave.

Week	Percentage	Weight	Reps	Amount of chains or bands
1	50	100 lb.	12x3	40 lb. chains
2	50	100 lb.	12x3	40 lb. chains
3	50	100 lb.	12x3	40 lb. chains
4	50	100 lb.	12x3	80 lb. chains
5	50	100 lb.	12x3	80 lb. chains
6	50	100 lb.	12x3	80 lb. chains
7	50	100 lb.	12x3	85 lb. bands
8	50	100 lb.	12x3	85 lb. bands
9	50	100 lb.	12x3	85 lb. bands

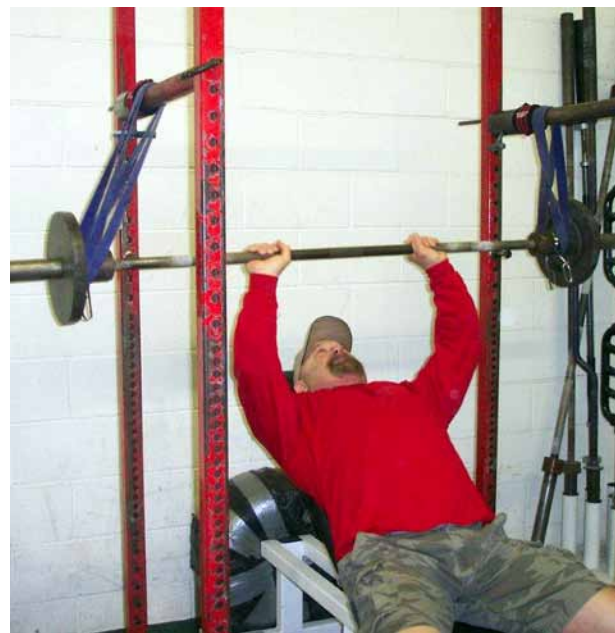
Speed Pulls

Speed pulls are done immediately after speed squats, on dynamic-effort day. You must pick one: power clean or power snatch or sumo or conventional deadlift. The percentage for clean and snatch will be 65-75 for 6-12 sets of 2 reps. Always pause the second rep. Keep the rest between sets to 60 seconds. The deadlift percentages should range between 60 and 70. The squat and deadlift sets should only take 30 minutes including warm-ups. After squat and deadlift speed work, choose from glute/ham raises, reverse hyper machine or back raises. Use two per workout. You can substitute sled pulls or push a sled for 6-8 trips of 60 yards. Always stretch after all workouts.

**Table 3:
Speed-squat workout for a 400-lb. max squat.**

Week	Percentage	Weight	Reps	Bands
1	50	200 lb.	12x2	70 lb.
2	55	220 lb.	12x2	70 lb.
3	60	240 lb.	10x2	70 lb.
4	50	200 lb.	12x2	140 lb.
5	55	220 lb.	12x2	140 lb.
6	60	240 lb.	10x2	140 lb.
7	50	200 lb.	12x2	140 lb. plus 40 lb. chains
8	55	220 lb.	12x2	140 lb. plus 40 lb. chains
9	60	240 lb.	10x2	140 lb. plus 40 lb. chains

After squatting, do pulls.



Courtesy of Westside Barbell

Simmons demonstrates the "lightened method" for changing the dynamics of an exercise.

Courtesy of Westside Barbell



Supplemental exercises are based on an analysis of the lifter and are designed to eliminate weaknesses.

Table 4: Speed pulls for a 500-lb. max.

Week	Percentage	Weight	Reps	Bands
Sumo Pulls				
1	55	275 lb.	12x2	170 lb.
2	55	275 lb.	10x2	170 lb.
3	55	275 lb.	8x2	170 lb.
Conventional Pulls				
4	55	275 lb.	12x2	170 lb.
5	55	275 lb.	10x2	170 lb.
6	55	275 lb.	8x2	170 lb.
Extra-Wide Sumo				
7	55	275 lb.	12x2	170 lb.
8	55	275 lb.	10x2	170 lb.
9	55	275 lb.	8x2	170 lb.

Table 5: Power cleans for a 300-lb. max for a nine-week wave.

Week	Percentage	Weight	Reps	Bands/chains
1	70	210 lb.	12x2	Use 40 lb. of bands or chains over bar
2	75	225 lb.	10x2	
3	80	240 lb.	8x2	
4	70	210 lb.	12x2	
5	75	225 lb.	10x2	
6	80	240 lb.	8x2	
7	70	210 lb.	12x2	
8	75	225 lb.	10x2	
9	80	240 lb.	8x2	

Table 6: Workout for a 200-lb. power snatch.

Week	Percentage	Weight	Reps	Bands/chains
1	70	140 lb.	12x2	Use 40 lb. of chains
2	75	150 lb.	10x2	
3	80	160 lb.	8x2	
4	70	140 lb.	12x2	
5	75	150 lb.	10x2	
6	80	160 lb.	8x2	
7	70	140 lb.	12x2	
8	75	150 lb.	10x2	
9	80	160 lb.	8x2	

Max Effort

Explosive squat and deadlift work is performed on Friday, and max-effort work on Monday. Extreme workouts can occur every 72 hours. The same goes for benching or pressing. Speed work for the bench is Sunday, and max-effort day is Wednesday. Let's look at a nine-week speed-strength cycle for the bench, squat and pulling, broken into three three-week pendulum waves.

Max-Effort Day

Any of the following can be done on this day:

1. Floor press to max for 3 reps.
2. Incline press to max for 3 reps.
3. Power-rack lockouts 4 inches off chest for a single.
4. High-rep dumbbells, incline or decline, flat or seated.
5. Ultra-wide max for 6 reps.
6. Seated press for a 3-rep max.
7. Lightened bench with medium bands for a 3-rep max.
8. High-rep dumbbell work, flat or seated.
9. Close-grip max for 6 reps.

Finish with roughly 5 sets of triceps extensions, upper-back work, dumbbell power cleans, lat work, rear- and side-delt work, and hammer curls. Change special exercises when needed. Any workout should last no more than 40 minutes. Constantly rotate speed work and max-effort workouts, and you will make progress for years to come.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Adding bands to a deadlift completely changes the movement.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

On dynamic-effort day, benchers work to move the bar as fast as possible in sets of three.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Laura Phelps-Sweatt, a top-ranked powerlifter, demonstrates yet another way to train the squat.

Pulling on Max-Effort Day Deadlift

1. Bent-over good mornings for a max of 3 reps.
2. Rack pull 2 inches off floor for max 1 rep.
3. Low box squat (close stance) for max 1 rep.
4. Ultra-wide sumo for max 1 rep.
5. Overhead squat for 3-rep max.
6. Power-clean and power-snatch max.
7. Power clean standing on 4-inch box.
8. Front squat on low box for 2-rep max.
9. Power snatch for close grip for a 3-rep max.

Power-Clean and Snatch Max Effort

1. Power clean with bar just below knee.
2. Straight-leg snatch.
3. Arch-back good morning, rising up on toes.
4. Close-grip snatch with straight legs.
5. High pulls with bands over the bar.
6. Push jerk off racks.
7. Power snatch standing on 4-inch box.
8. Power snatch with bar just above knees.
9. Overhead squat with clean or snatch grip.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

You can use rope for this exercise, but chains present an additional challenge.



Box jumps help build the explosive power that complements raw strength.

Special Exercises

1. 45-degree back raise.
2. Inverse curls on glute/ham bench.
3. Back raise.
4. Reverse hyper machine.
5. Concentric squats.
6. Low box squat with a wide stance.
7. Belt squats.
8. Front squat onto foam blocks.
9. Concentric good mornings.
10. Combo clean, squat, press, front squat for 1-3 minutes continuously.
11. Box jumps.
12. Sled pulls.
13. Kettlebell swing, clean and press.

Pick a pull of your choice after the squat workout and speed day, plus 2 or 3 special exercises for lagging muscle groups. On max-effort day, choose one main barbell exercise and add 2 or 3 special exercises.

You cannot have just a block of time during the year to do explosive weight training. It must and can be done during the entire year. A series of training blocks of hypertrophy

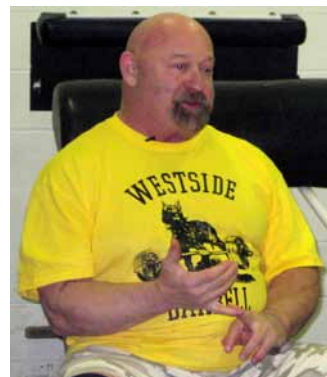
work, speed work and absolute-strength work will lead to detraining when one block expires as a different phase begins.

For more information, look at www.westside-barbell.com for books, DVDs and articles. You can also e-mail or talk to Louie on the phone.

About the Author

Louie Simmons has been involved with powerlifting for over 40 years. Over that time, he's produced world and national powerlifting champions, and he's worked with Olympic gold medalists and professional athletes. Simmons himself is one of only a handful of lifters to total elite in five different weight classes. He has squatted

920 lb. and totaled 2,100 lb. over the age of 50. He's overcome two broken backs and a multitude of torn tendons and muscles, and he's patented several powerlifting machines. On Dec. 5, 2009, he competed at 220 lb. and achieved a 730 squat, 455 bench and 670 deadlift, which made him an elite again. For more info, visit the [Westside Barbell website](http://www.westside-barbell.com).



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Fitness Is ... Purpose and Defense

Greg Glassman asked the question, "What is fitness?" Blair Morrison offers some of his own thoughts to help you discover what fitness means to you.

By Blair Morrison CrossFit Anywhere

February 2011



Photos: Staff/CrossFit Journal

What is fitness?

That question is one of the foundations of the CrossFit program, and asking it will make you question just about everything you know about training. In answering it, Greg Glassman created a new way of training and a new way of thinking about health and human performance. He also got people thinking and answering the question for themselves.

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In this multi-part series, CrossFit Games competitor Blair Morrison talks about what fitness is to him.

Protecting Yourself

Defense.

Typically, I think of fitness as a way to achieve ability in different facets of life. I want to be strong so the loads life asks me to bear seem lighter. I want endurance so that I can enjoy activity longer without tiring. I want to be agile so I feel balanced and coordinated in any situation, be it crossing the street or climbing a wall.

The other day I met a man at the gym who related a story that reminded me getting fit isn't purely about being "able." This is something I always tend to forget, but it's such an integral part of why fitness can be so valuable.

When he was 19 (he's now 41) this guy was a weightlifter. He did clean and jerk, snatch, deadlift, squat, bench press, etc. Now he mainly does machine weights, dumbbell curls and other bodybuilding-style movements. This is because just before his 20th birthday, he fell 7 meters from scaffolding onto the concrete sidewalk below. In an admittedly ill-advised attempt to brace the fall, he landed on his feet and tried to catch himself in a squat. He did it but shattered his right tibia and fibula in the process.

Doctors performed a series of surgeries to repair the damage, including inserting massive metal plates and bolts to secure his lower leg (I saw the scars—wow). After a year in a cast, he started to rehab, only to discover that his Achilles tendon had been so traumatized by the experience that it had remained shortened from the shock of the impact. Now his right leg is shorter than his left, he has a slightly noticeable limp, and has had to redefine what a functional-training program means to him.

Not so bad, when one considers what the surgeon told him in post-op. Apparently, the musculature he had developed during his teenage years of training had largely held the broken bones in place during the accident. He was told that most cases with such an extensive a break pattern fragment so badly that the individual loses any real functional use of his lower leg, but that he would likely return to a level completely compatible with daily life.

Furthermore, this man's body had somehow absorbed the impact that would have ordinarily traveled up to his spine and even into his neck. According to the doctor, it was practically miraculous given the nature and angle of his fall that this man had suffered no structural back damage whatsoever.



Fitter individuals are better prepared for life, and they usually bounce back faster when an injury occurs.

Stories like this abound. I know of very fit individuals who have been thrown from their motorcycles (wearing helmets), their bodies breaking through trees but only emerging with minor injuries. Their physicians explained this as a combination of luck and physical resilience, the latter partially due to the protection and stability their muscles provided.

**Fitness isn't always offensive.
As much as I focus on
training for ability and
achievement, the reality
is that I'm just as actively
training for protection.**

I heard a story a while back about an individual who contracted a rare blood infection that attacks the lungs and was minutes from being put on a ventilator but eventually rebounded, went his entire hospital stay without needing insulin, and emerged without any permanent lung damage. According to the blood and pulmonary specialists, his diet and his training had respectively and independently saved his life.

The moral here is that fitness isn't always offensive. As much as I focus on training for ability and achievement, the reality is that I'm just as actively training for protection. Sometimes, in the immortal words of Forrest Gump, shit happens. The better prepared your body is to handle it, the less damage it will do.

Why Am I Doing This?

Purpose—know yours.

"They say that there's nothing but circular motion in the inanimate universe around us, but the straight line is the badge of man, the straight line of a geometrical abstraction that makes roads, rails and bridges, the straight line that cuts the curving aimlessness of nature by a purposeful motion from a start to an end." —Ayn Rand

Training without purpose is like feeding coal to an engine that will never leave the station. Sessions cannot be strings of circles dropping like zeroes behind us. They have to be straight lines of motion toward a goal, each day leading to the next and to a single growing sum. Without purpose, fitness is an endless spiral of repetition and pseudo-accomplishment for which we have no measure.

A little while back, some friends of mine posted a discussion on their page regarding the advantages/disadvantages of different types of motivation when it comes to exercise. The consensus was that external support, though convenient and effective, could not match intrinsic motivation



CrossFit workouts are hard. So why do you do them?



For some athletes, competing in the CrossFit Games is the goal. For others, it's increased strength, endurance or power. What's your goal?

in either power or longevity. Eventually, you have to push your limit for your own reasons. This speaks to the importance of having a purpose beyond the workout, some goal to which you can anchor your motivation.

When a WOD started to grind or when I felt that familiar discomfort and doubt creeping in, I asked myself why I was there.

Just before the end of the [post by Adam Hesch](#), I was struck by a rhetorical question posed by one of the editors, something he would ask himself during a session when he felt like throwing in the towel: why am I here? It jumped out at me for its simplicity. It's a question that gets lost amidst the confusing blend of treadmills, sweat and stress that fuel typical workouts, but it is fundamental to knowing one's purpose in the gym.

So I tried it. When a WOD started to grind or when I felt that familiar discomfort and doubt creeping in, I asked myself why I was there. For what purpose was I putting myself through whatever it was I was putting myself through?

Interestingly, the answer changed depending on the day, my mood, the difficulty of the routine or any number of variables. Often, "I'm here for my health, personal strength and longevity" was enough to keep me going. Sometimes, it was "to see what I'm capable of." Other times "the 2010 Games" was the only thing that struck the right chord.

While my answers to this question varied based on circumstance, some consistencies should be noted. First, purpose is necessary to effort. What if I was in the middle of a grueling workout and asked that question but had no answer? Most likely, I'd either call it a day or slink through the rest of the workout without passion or intent. Knowing what drives us inspires our effort and is therefore fundamental to success. It's the psychological Teflon that keeps us from cracking under the inevitable pressure of failure and pain.



Fitness: it's worth the work.

Second, purpose doesn't have to be singular. People are complicated and tend to have multiple goals. Rather than becoming paralyzed by the task of choosing one among many, pursue them all. What you lose in focus, you'll make up in enthusiasm. Eventually, the less important goals will sift themselves out, leaving just those that are vital.

In all of this, it's important to remember that goals will vary from person to person, so don't look to adopt another's purpose or expect others to adopt yours. It's unlikely that my mother would derive much satisfaction from adopting the training frequency and intensity of an Olympic sprinter, or that an undersized adolescent would see much benefit from following the exercise and nutrition program designed for post-op hip rehabilitation. People who advocate too strongly for one method of training have typically fallen prey to the passionate blindness of their own success. Remember, what drives one forward may hold others back. Be certain your fitness suits your purpose.



About the Author

Blair Morrison is 28 years old. He was born and raised in Sacramento, Calif., where his family still lives. He received his undergraduate history degree from Princeton University and his master's degree at Universiteit Leiden, the Sorbonne and Oxford. Formerly a personal trainer from Balance Gym in Washington, D.C., Blair placed seventh in the 2009 CrossFit Games and 23rd in 2010. He now owns and operates CrossFit Anywhere out of Sacramento. He is dedicated to the pursuit of physical challenges and the mental fortitude that comes from the ability to overcome them.



Courtesy of Blair Morrison

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Colombians Learn How to Live Primitive—the CrossFit Way

CrossFit Bogotá owner Geoffrey Tudisco and his staff have expanded their training business to include a nutrition company and an athletic-equipment manufacturer.

By Geoffrey Tudisco

February 2011



Photos: Courtesy of Live Primitive: CrossFit Bogotá

In September 2008, I, a former finance guy, decided to leave the world of Wall Street behind and move from the capital of the world to the capital of Colombia to open CrossFit Bogotá. You might recall the famous [Hecho en CrossFit](#) photo featured on the CrossFit main site back on March 11, 2009, which instantly gained CrossFit Bogotá notoriety within the CrossFit nation. And “Hecho en CrossFit” has a whole new look—a primitive one.

Fast-forward to today. CrossFit Bogotá has become a national sensation leading a fitness revolution. Now operating under the brand name Live Primitive: CrossFit Bogotá, I and my coaches—Doug Oberbeck, Tomas Henao, Alejo Guarin and new member Josh Schmitt (originally of Chicago's CrossFit Atlas)—have plans underway



Getting gear to South America proved challenging and forced Geoffrey Tudisco to start thinking outside the box.

for three more CrossFit affiliates in Colombia. Late in January, Live Primitive: CrossFit Barranquilla began classes in a park while searching for a permanent home, while Live Primitive: CrossFit Cali started classes on Jan. 17. Live Primitive: CrossFit Medellín is on tap for late February 2011 in a temporary location, with a new facility slated for opening in March.

It was clear that big things were in store when Nike and Gatorade sponsored the 2010 CrossFit Games' Central/South America Regional, which CrossFit Bogotá organized. The affiliate saw its athletes place first and second among the men, and second among the women. Now, as Live Primitive begins to expand, it has attracted sponsorships from Reebok, thanks to the regional distributor joining the CrossFit nation, and Easyfly, a regional airline carrier.

Live Primitive is a collective of CrossFit Level 1 coaches—managed by my company to simplify logistics—who are determined to provide Colombians with access to functional training methods and nutritional education. At this time there are two full-time coaches, myself and Doug, and several assistant coaches, like Alejo and Tomas, and a handful of intern coaches who are Level 1 trainers looking to coach for a couple of months while traveling through the region.

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As Live Primitive expands beyond its flagship CrossFit Bogotá location, it plans to set up a rotation for head coaches that will allow them to change their environment every month or so and coach in a different city. This strategy benefits both coaches and clients. Coaches can gain more experience by dealing with a wider variety of clients, their issues and how to help solve them, and clients can learn more through exposure to coaches who have different specialties, different cues and styles, leading to faster improvements.

From the coach's perspective, the rotation provides a means by which they can live and work while traveling. Part of Live Primitive's model is to convert houses into CrossFit facilities. Because the box is a house, Live Primitive renovates a portion of the space into a multi-bedroom apartment for coaches to use while on rotation, thus eliminating living expenses for coaches and reducing commuting time and cost to zero. But best of all, coaches enjoy a full-time chef who cooks CrossFit-friendly meals throughout the day for both clients and coaches.

Colombians, We Give You Dried Meat and Fruit

The genesis for having a full-time chef started at CrossFit Bogotá, which serves as Live Primitive's laboratory to test new concepts in Colombia.

The Colombian diet is high in bad carbohydrates like *arepas*, *empanadas*, beans, *gaseosas* (sodas) and fruit juices with added sugar, and bad fats, like *chicharrón* (fried pork rinds), and vegetable and corn oils. Needless to say, these are not foods ideal for CrossFit. So out of necessity, I bought a few food dehydrators online and had them shipped down to Colombia to produce healthy snack options.

The idea of drying meat to make beef jerky was foreign to the people at CrossFit Bogotá, and many had preconceived notions that it would be disgusting. On the other hand, they were familiar with dried fruit but had never tried it. As the first batch of beef jerky and dried pineapples, apples, strawberries, bananas and pears was ready, I snacked on them regularly. Initially, I was met with skepticism when I explained how beef jerky, dried fruits and nuts make for a balanced, healthy snack when you cannot eat fresh food.

"What are you eating? Looks disgusting." And, "Why wouldn't you just eat fresh pineapple?" were common comments. But after coaxing people into trying a sample, the reaction was unanimous: "Wow! I want more!"

Initially, I was met with skepticism when I explained how beef jerky, dried fruits and nuts make for a balanced, healthy snack when you cannot eat fresh food.

These three products formed the foundation for what would become Live Primitive's Caveman Gourmet business. Over the coming months, demand for beef jerky, in particular, far outstripped supply. People started explaining that when they took their snacks out during a meeting, all their colleagues asked, "What is that?" and "Can I try some?" The result: unhappy CrossFitters returning to CrossFit Bogotá with empty bags to buy more to keep for themselves.



A few imported food dehydrators gave Colombians a chance to try out a more traditional CrossFit diet.

The revolution had begun in Colombia. New concepts were being presented and embraced in the pursuit of improved fitness. But questions persisted, and it was apparent more work was required to help clients change their eating habits.

The next phase began when I renovated a portion of the box as a two-bedroom apartment and moved in. I started preparing an omelet, along with a fresh-fruit smoothie, for myself daily; all my clients saw me eating. Immediately questions came about the recipes: Why was I eating so many eggs? What was in the smoothie? My clients were green with envy, and it only got worse once Doug began cooking at the gym, too.

Doug and I explained nutrition basics to our clients, but it was clear many wouldn't overcome their inertia without some help. However, with both Doug and I competing in



Having a full-time chef at a CrossFit affiliate makes sense, doesn't it?

the Central/South America Regional qualifier, neither of us had time to focus on identifying how to further help clients with their nutrition. Following the Games, I made the commitment to help educate clients about proper diet and decided it was time to take Caveman Gourmet to the next level.

So in mid-September, a new face arrived to greet clients with a smile from behind the long kitchen bar and to prepare them healthy meals after their grueling workouts.

Introducing Viela

In September, as people returned from a summer of excess consumption, questions began pouring in about what to eat, and about when CrossFit Bogotá would start serving food out of its kitchen (read: when I would start sharing my omelets and smoothies). So in mid-September, a new face arrived to greet clients with a smile from behind the

long kitchen bar and to prepare them healthy meals after their grueling workouts or to help them recover from their hangovers before a workout.

That new face was Viela, a young cook I brought on to serve breakfast and smoothies based on recipes I and other coaches have used. After a week of training, Viela was ready to start cooking.

Beginning at 6:30 a.m. every day, clients and visitors can recover from their ass-kicking with fresh meals made in-house. Clients welcomed the service with open arms, exchanging *arepas* and breakfast cereals for fresh-fruit smoothies, omelets, scrambled eggs, chocolate milk, fruits and snacks. They can relax in a comfortable environment with friends, refuel and start their day off right.

But all was not well at CrossFit Bogotá. The afternoon clientele started claiming inequity—that the morning classes were being favored by being able to buy breakfast. The afternoon clan demanded dinners. Many of them said that after their workouts they had little desire or energy to cook something, so they would end up ordering *domicilio* (delivery), which in Bogotá consists of pizza, fried chicken and fast food. It became obvious that to help clients gain better results, dinners would have to be added to the menu. So what started as a small service to help the early birds save some time in the morning before heading to work soon became a full-fledged food-service operation.

Some examples of the daily dinners include:

- Pecan-and-pineapple chicken stir-fry with vegetables.
- Grouper with a tomato coconut-milk puree and plantains.
- Grilled beef tenderloin with sautéed vegetables and plantains.
- Lime Dijon mustard chicken with broccoli.
- Grilled chicken breast served on a bed of shredded spinach.

The idea is to use everyday ingredients instead of exotic spices that may only be used once to help educate through example how easy it is to prepare fresh, healthy meals at home. While some clients have taken the initiative to cook at home the recipes distributed at CrossFit Bogotá, many prefer the convenience of eating at the box. Today, nearly a third of the clients eat either breakfast or dinner at the box daily, and nearly all the clients eat at the box once per week.

The additional revenue brought in by the Caveman Gourmet kitchen has earned it a permanent residency at the box in Bogotá. In only its second full month of

The synergies suggest that the experiment in Bogotá may be a prototype for next-generation CrossFit boxes, which would bring training and nutrition closer together to realize improved overall fitness.

operation, the kitchen is generating enough revenue to cover all food costs, and we can not only pay Viela a salary but also pay her a performance bonus every month.



Dee-lish.

The extra money also means that more can be invested back into the kitchen to buy more appliances to further expand the kitchen's capabilities. The Caveman Gourmet experiment has proven to be such a success that it has spawned a cookbook, which is in the process of being published.

Visiting CrossFitters have commented on the uniqueness of the CrossFit Bogotá location and said that they wished their boxes had in-house food services. The synergies suggest that the experiment in Bogotá may be a prototype for next-generation CrossFit boxes, which would bring training and nutrition closer together to realize improved overall fitness.

The Primitives Hath Arrived

Building on this new service, the Live Primitive brand of CrossFit Bogotá continues to get stronger and gain momentum across the country, feeding the group's desire to expand to other Colombian cities. CrossFit Bogotá is now the country's hottest fitness center, and it continues to gain popularity despite a shortage of available spaces for newcomers.

Upon arriving in Cali for several days of trial classes to validate the market opportunity for Live Primitive's expansion, the Primitives (as we now refer to ourselves) were welcomed by more than 40 people who signed up to join the future location; they had heard of the private CrossFit preview through word-of-mouth. Similar trial classes were/are scheduled for Barranquilla and Medellín to build anticipation. In spite of CrossFit Bogotá's successes, starting a new business in Colombia presented a number of challenges. And the challenges continue to this day.

Bureaucratic processes are mired with inconsistencies and a lack of clear procedures, leading to countless delays. In addition, prices tend to jump when a *gringo* is negotiating with a Colombian national, thereby increasing the cost of doing business. Finding suitable equipment locally has proven impossible or prohibitively expensive. The only option is to order and ship from the United States, a process that can become expensive and time consuming with importation paperwork for an unpredictable customs-clearing process.



Workout and eat. Repeat as necessary.



Live Primitive is now the first and only company in South America manufacturing kettlebells. It already has secured orders from university gyms and commercial gyms that want to introduce kettlebell training.

The lack of available equipment led to the yet another innovation: the introduction of Live Primitive: Athletic Equipment. Kettlebells, for example, are expensive to purchase and can be even more expensive to ship to South America. As the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. So I decided to invest in designing molds to produce kettlebells for CrossFit Bogotá. Live Primitive is now the first and only company in South America manufacturing kettlebells. It already has secured orders from university gyms and commercial gyms that want to introduce kettlebell training.

We recognized growth opportunities and took the initiative to create a thriving business in Colombia. With a stable business, we're hoping to give something back. We held a charity fundraising event on Dec. 12 and we are producing a Women of Live Primitive calendar for 2011, featuring many of Colombia's top models and actresses, who are clients of CrossFit Bogotá. Reebok and Easyfly co-sponsored the fundraiser and are also on board for the calendar. Proceeds from both will be donated to several charities in Colombia that combat children's malnutrition, help children injured in the country's civil war and assist children with autism.

The Primitives are on the move, and Colombians are taking notice. In just two short years, Live Primitive has developed a diversified business model, covering CrossFit training, health food and athletic equipment. Live Primitive is prepared to expand its style of CrossFit across Colombia.



Whether they're in North or South America, CrossFitters are fit, happy people.

About the Author

Geoff Tudisco left Wall Street behind and literally changed his latitude with the idea of bringing CrossFit to Colombia in 2008. Geoff opened [CrossFit Bogotá](#) in January 2009 and has been the head coach at CrossFit Bogotá ever since. He qualified to compete in both the 2009 and 2010 CrossFit Games representing South America. Now, he and his collective of CrossFit Bogotá coaches are in the process of expanding CrossFit's presence in Colombia under the brand Live Primitive, with locations opening in Cali, Barranquilla and Medellín.



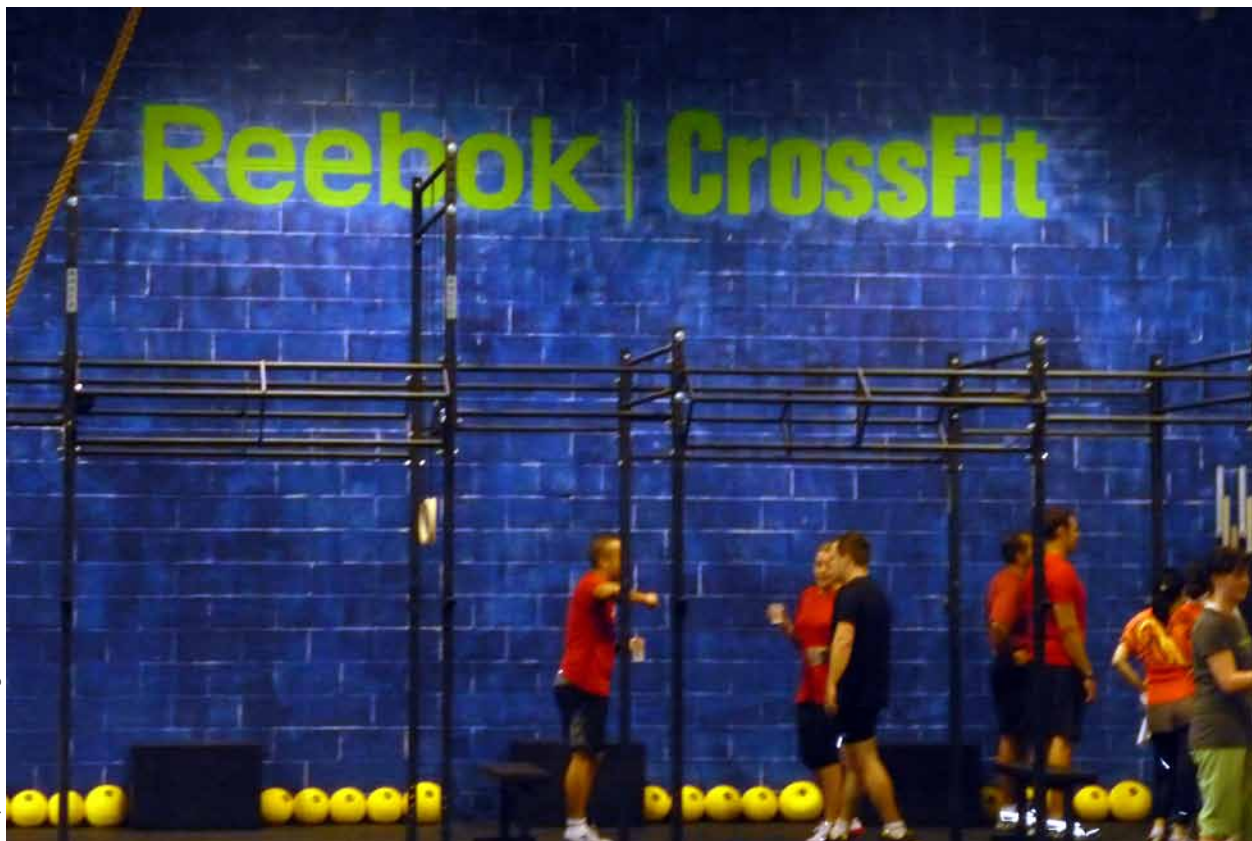
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

If the Shoe Fits ...

Reebok opens a CrossFit box in Massachusetts as the first step in a growing partnership with CrossFit. Kevin Daigle reports.

By Kevin Daigle CrossFit New England

February 2011



All photos: Kevin Daigle

Canton, Mass.—In late 2010, the garage door rolled up and the very first athletes set foot in Reebok's CrossFit box, a brand-new, top-notch facility built right on the campus of Reebok's world headquarters in Canton, Mass.

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The stage was Reebok's annual global marketing meeting, which gathers together its top managers from around the world. The new CrossFit box is a direct result of collaboration between CrossFit Headquarters and Reebok. Reebok CMO Matt O'Toole plans to leverage this experiment to bring CrossFit to all 20,000 of Reebok's employees worldwide. Going forward, the face of Reebok is fitness, and CrossFit is one way that fitness will be created and defined.

"Where it goes from here ... is the same way that CrossFit has gone," O'Toole said. "Once people understand what CrossFit is about and how it can impact your life, I think we're going to start a fire in the Reebok organization."

Having just launched a new box, Reebok set out to expose managers from around the planet to CrossFit, most of them for the first time. Throughout the day, these athletes were bused in from their hotels to hit a WOD. For most, like Maximiliano and Paola from Chile, it was the first time they'd ever heard of CrossFit. Their reflection post-WOD: "We loved it!"

These lucky Reebok employees received top-notch coaching from the likes of Andy Stumpf, E.C. Synkowski, Ben Bergeron, Heather Bergeron, Melissa Ockerby, Jenna Gale and Mat Frankel. Reebok's employees were introduced to the concepts of CrossFit by Stumpf, warmed up with Synkowski, then learned the movements and went over the WOD with Heather Bergeron and the rest of the coaches. After cleaning up some mechanics and learning technique, the employees got to thrash a WOD in a facility most of us only dream about.

Reebok's CrossFit box is indeed stunning. As Coach Greg Glassman put it: "It's epic. There's not a nicer gym anywhere in the world."

The facility is everything you'd want in a box: it's big enough for 20-plus athletes to have private sweat-angel spots on the floor post-WOD, and it features a giant pull-up structure, wall-to-wall rubber flooring, 20 Concept2 rowers, rings, bars, plates, boxes, med balls—all CrossFit's tools. It's a dream facility with a beautiful glass front and plenty of light, and it was built in less than four weeks. Rogue provided all the gear.

The Future

So what's going on? According to Reebok's Mike Kratochwill, this venture is the result of research he did with colleague Chad Whitman to determine the future of fitness.



Reebok's new CrossFit box is equipped with all the tools needed to create fit employees.

"We feel like CrossFit really fits our DNA in terms of workout experience that's based off of community, based off not (just) taking from the community but giving back to the community It's based off making people fit for life," Kratochwill said.

He added: "What we want to do is get back to what our roots are as a fitness and training brand."

The company's goal is to bring CrossFit to Reebok's corporate culture and build community around that culture.

"(Reebok's) goal is the same as what CrossFit's goal is: we want to bring a workout experience and a better quality of life to people," Kratochwill said.

It's impressive: a global corporation adopting for its employees the principles and methodology CrossFitters have so thoroughly embraced. And not only is Reebok



Your office gym is probably less cool than this.

applying CrossFit ideals to its workforce, but it's also adopting the no-bullshit, prove-it-with-hard-numbers, never-say-die-attitude as part of its business model.

On top of that, Reebok is committed to bringing CrossFit to the world outside the United States on a scale previously unimaginable. Full details are still unavailable, but Jimi Letchford, head of business development for CrossFit, says Reebok will be looking to move CrossFit into 12 key countries where there is currently no significant CrossFit presence to speak of.

Reebok is also in alignment with CrossFit on philanthropic fronts such as Amazing Grace and will be aiding the community in furthering those endeavors.

So what does this mean for the CrossFit community at large and for affiliates? Well, a lot actually. First of all, expect Reebok to develop some gear for the community. O'Toole said CrossFitters will be working with Reebok's experts to create shoes and apparel specifically designed for the rigors of CrossFit. Letchford said affiliates can expect a high level of positive, professional, CrossFit-driven marketing to take place on Reebok's end to the enormous benefit of the individual affiliates around the globe.

And why Reebok? Reebok actually spent two years studying CrossFit, and the company gets the program. There was a plan in place at Reebok that was an exact fit for CrossFit's values, which, of course, were at the core of Coach Glassman's concern. There's also an earnest effort on the part of Reebok to immerse itself in the CrossFit culture, which is why this partnership will be synergistic.

Through this pairing, Coach Glassman believes CrossFit will gain international business clout and know-how that couldn't possibly be attained otherwise. The examples he

gave were India and Russia, where Reebok has around 1,500 and 1,000 stores, respectively. CrossFit currently doesn't have a large presence in those areas, but Reebok clearly has the necessary acumen and could help forge new inroads there.

And what does Reebok get out of this? To be at the forefront of changing how people think, love and move. CrossFit's reputation for elite fitness and edginess is what's going to authenticate Reebok's commitment to the fitness world.

"They're going to elevate us; that is, accelerate our growth ... and we're going to authenticate them," Glassman said.

When asked of the ultimate goal for this alliance, Coach Glassman was clear:

"We have a destiny. This is going to get us there quicker."



About the Author



*Kevin Daigle is a 29-year-old football player and coach turned CrossFitter from Dracut, Mass. He trains at CrossFit New England under the tutelage of Ben and Heather Bergeron and competed in the 2010 New England Sectional and the Northeast Regional. Kevin was a roving reporter for the **CrossFit Journal** at the 2010 CrossFit Games and runs the blog [Daigle Breathes Fire](#).*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Left Out in the Cold

One loyal CrossFitter has a bad experience at an affiliate and issues a call to action to others: Be passionate about every athlete.

By CrossFit Mom

February 2011



Dear CrossFit affiliates,

Ignore my husband's rolling eyes when I say this: I don't ask for much.

I'm the typical, overlooked, mainstream, voting American mom of boys who spends too much time folding socks and serving as head chef and chief accountant at our humble abode. But I have a secret: last year I discovered CrossFit.

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I'll spare you the clichéd anecdotes we've all found in unraveling our self-esteem under an Olympic bar and finding, slowly, a hidden tiger aching to load more weight and heave till limbs quake. I may be 20 years older than most of the chiseled hunks and muscled divas who frequent the daily WOD movies and *CrossFit Journal* entries, but I've unleashed the addiction to get stronger each day despite the bleeding blisters and failed attempts of the day before.

My frustration is this: as an at-home CrossFitter (we live in the boonies), I needed help learning the Olympic lifts. Despite the fact that my husband lost his job six months ago and we're sapping our savings trying to find work and keep our house, I begged and pleaded for the money to do a beginners' class at a (somewhat) local affiliate. Something about my newly found rock-hard abs, flab-less rump, and increased bedroom interest enticed my husband's hesitant permission, and off I went, scared stiff, to embarrass myself in front of other out-of-shape, middle-aged hopefuls looking for a ray of hope to reclaim their youthful dreams of strength and sex appeal.

But it sucked!



Are you motivating each and every athlete each and every day?

Wanting More

I didn't expect someone to hold my hand when I went to the affiliate. I went knowing I wasn't going to find Globo Gym-style sales pitches telling me I could look 20 again in six months of personal training. I thought the place would be filled with other hopeless CrossFit addicts who savored their PRs and slim-lined muscles as much as I do. But it wasn't at all!

The lukewarm enthusiasm was heartbreaking. The "lesson" for each session was haphazard and scrambled at the last few moments before the class started. I paid for the classes, learned some techniques on Oly lifts, and was dismissed at the end of the last class with a price sheet and a mention of the affiliate's very limited class schedule. I asked about offering more time slots. I tried to ask about nutrition and homing in on the Zone Diet. There was nothing but sidetracked, lackluster attention paid to me and the other hopefuls. What gives?

The trainers not only spared us the sales pitch but also left out their willingness to have us join them altogether. It was subliminally clear that they were not there to help other pilgrims along their journey to the CrossFit Holy Land but were simply doing this whole CrossFit-affiliate-gym thing on the side of their "real job" and personal interests.

**I would have ... driven
my bicycle uphill both
ways in a blizzard to make
it to the CrossFit gym
for a little support.**

Not once were we asked what our goals were. Not once were we asked why we were there. Some kudos were given for finishing a workout, but we received little motivation to come back or assurance that the trainers wanted to share the journey with us as we achieved our goals. Was I expecting too much?

Now let me also say this: it's a given that working with the public is a true pain in the ass. I have no doubt as to the validity of the shenanigans and droning, high-maintenance client demands you hear trainers allude to on the affiliate blogs. But I'm not one of those people.

And despite my personal economic hardship within my own family, I would have sold my soul to the devil to come up with the money and driven my bicycle uphill both ways in a blizzard to make it to the CrossFit gym for a little support, to talk with other CrossFit Games hopefuls, and to pump out some more personal PRs that I never would have thought possible.

I wouldn't have demanded attention. I wouldn't have badgered anyone for his or her time. I would have cheered other aging prospects and admired the virility of youth all around me. I would have arrived on time, done the WOD, maybe asked a question or two, sweated and puked with the others, and high-fived the cute, tall one on the way out. But I never got the chance, and for the sake of principle, I never will because I refuse to go back.

I believe in the American religion of capitalism. My husband is a small-business owner, and despite the loss of his job (his business burned down), he is slowly and successfully rebuilding because of his excellent customer service. He excels because people seek him out for his attention to their needs. He rarely advertises. He is successful because he genuinely likes to help people and knows how to treat paying customers. Is that so much to ask of a CrossFit affiliate?

It drives me to ask: What is the purpose of the CrossFit affiliate? Is it just an avenue for other CrossFit addicts to make a little money at something they like to do? Or is it to function as something more?

Online I watch endless CrossFit videos from other gyms showcasing the camaraderie that's fostered in driving people to push to their maximum and empower themselves to succeed when they thought they couldn't. There's so much more to it than lifting heavy weights: it's a quest to prove to yourself that you *can* do the unimaginable. Shouldn't that be at the crux of the reasoning behind opening an affiliate?

Well, I had hoped it would be and was sadly disappointed. The two owners were nice. I don't mean to disparage them. Truth be said, I'm sure they are fueling their own personal passion for CrossFit on the side of their "real jobs" and can only do the best they can do. There are, sadly, only 24 hours in a day.



Passionate athletes need passionate trainers. Are you putting everything you have into the athlete-trainer relationship?

Yet there was a gaping hole in the “feel” of it all. Aren’t all CrossFitters wild-eyed tongue-waggers who will fill your ears with their latest PRs on hang power snatches and double-unders in between swapping post-workout nutrition recipes? Read the *CrossFit Journal* comments and the passion is palpable. Yet walking into this affiliate, I was treated like someone walking into my kitchen after 9 p.m. and asking me for a meal when I’ve been battling screaming kids, a disorganized husband and a half-possessed dog. Find fuel elsewhere!

Pursue Virtuosity

So my question is this: who is at fault? Who’s approaching this the wrong way? I’m humble. I can admit when I’m wrong. My husband can tell me without fear of being shot if I’m expecting too much (well, three weeks out of the month anyway). Was I asking too much to hope for a little camaraderie at the CrossFit gym with other Zone Diet zealots? Was I wrong in thinking they would have at least asked why I was there and addressed how they could help me achieve my goals? Was I being too girly or needy in thinking they’d want to see me come back? After all, it is a business.

Will I ever go back? No. I couldn’t give them money and reward them for their lack of professionalism, interest in helping others or enthusiasm. If my family can get back up on our feet financially, I may go to one of the other CrossFit gyms (an hour away) and try another affiliate. Until then, I will continue my less-effective attempts at home. I am consistently stopped by friends who ask how I’ve managed to get into such great shape, and though I have turned several of them on to CrossFit, I wish I could get them to a close affiliate with trainers who could help them more.

To be fair, this was only one affiliate over the duration of four weeks. Was it a fluke? A misinterpretation? I may never know, but what I do know is that the box was cold and unwelcoming. The result? A missed opportunity for them and for me. I love CrossFit too much to let it slide. Too many people across this planet are busting their tails to improve themselves and others. What are you doing, affiliates, to make sure this isn’t happening in your box?

My purpose in writing is to send a wake-up call to the other affiliates:

Why are you open? What is your purpose? Are you helping people reach their CrossFit dream? If not, why not?

Again, I’m a very small person, always overlooked and never respected. I’m used to being unimportant to everyone unless I am heavily laden with a homemade hot dinner. I’m OK with that. But in the CrossFit world, I am more! I am just as eager as you are to be strong and to conquer another PR, regardless of how pathetic it is compared to yours. And I would have paid dearly to bleed a little beside someone else just as nuts.

So next time the middle-aged housewife comes in with a dream in her eye and a baby-belly bulge left to tackle, don’t overlook her. She might just be your best fighter in the bunch!

3, 2, 1... Go!



About the Author

The author is a 5-foot-nothing, 105-lb CrossFit mom of two CrossFit boys. She’s currently addicted to Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, NCAA football, and the gut-wrenching quest of the 7-minute mile and 135-lb. deadlift. She is currently intensely searching for proof that the Twix bar is in fact a good carb for the Zone Diet.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

It's Not About the Numbers

Jay Rhodes finds something in CrossFit beyond a big deadlift and a great Fran time.

By Jay Rhodes CrossFit Altitude

February 2011



All photos: Gary Hills/www.fizzbucket.com

Through a friend, I first became aware of CrossFit in February 2009 and was immediately welcome to the idea of getting in and out of the gym in well under an hour.

I came from a long history of track and field as a 400-meter runner but had been out of competition for quite some time due to multiple stress fractures in my feet. Not only had I struggled with keeping a level of fitness I was satisfied with, but I also had to find something new because continuing to run would be somewhat akin to beating a dead horse.

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Dabbling Then Dedication

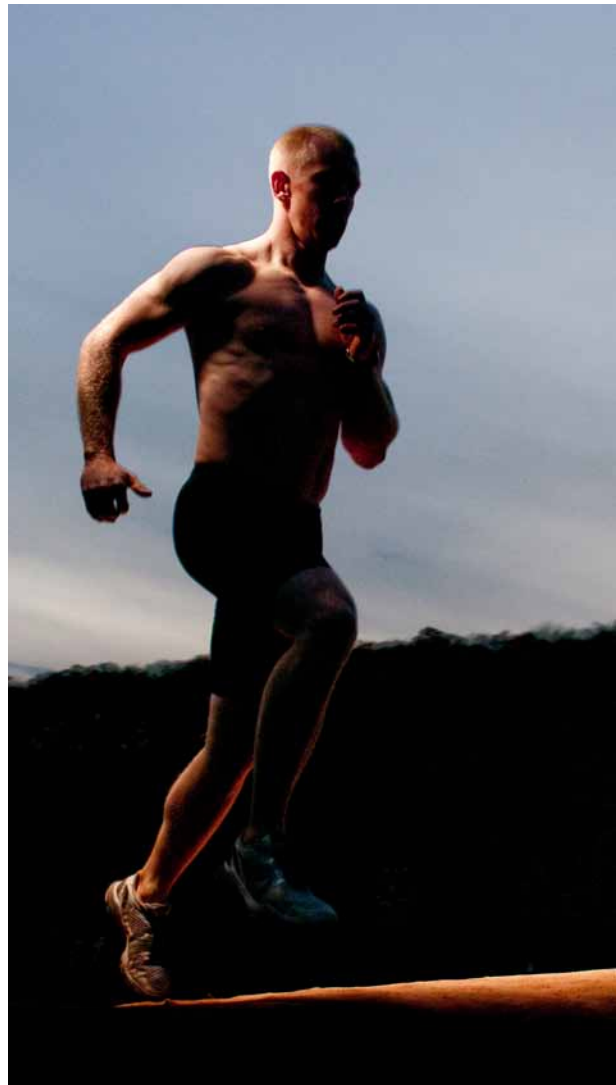
I wasn't quite sure how to follow CrossFit.com, but I managed to find a few workouts I wanted to try. I jumped right into them as RX'd and went as hard as I could. I got my ass handed to me, and I liked it. I hadn't had that feeling of exhaustion since running 400-meter repeats.

Though I loved the workouts, I was pretty inconsistent with the frequency. By the time summer came around, I had gotten myself into respectable shape—the kind that would probably allow me to be competitive at most affiliates—but I took my foot off the gas and decided to play golf and drink beer for a few months. It seemed easy to get away from the workouts at the time. My idea of fun was not compatible with waking up on a Sunday morning to hit a WOD. I really had no idea of what CrossFit was all about. All I knew was there were a bunch of workouts with names that you were supposed to do as fast as you could.

Fast-forward to October 2009. I had started to work out again, albeit inconsistently and with no real direction. I wasn't sure I'd be able to get back into it the way I was before summer. It was homecoming weekend at my university, and parties were everywhere. My parents were planning to visit but had to cancel at the last minute. My dad had gotten sick. It sounded like it was probably the flu or something. It wasn't.

He had somehow contracted a serious blood infection, and abscesses had formed and woven around his spine. I spent the next few weeks back and forth between London and Kingston, Ont., to visit him in the hospital. To this day, I still find it hard to comprehend how close he was to dying. He wouldn't let that happen. At the time, I don't think either one of us considered it an option.

There was one point when he did not move for nearly four days, terrified that the slightest movement could put pressure on his spinal cord and leave him paralyzed. After sitting there in a hospital chair holding the hand of the guy who had taught me to play sports and nearly everything else, and with him immobilized and in severe pain, I made a decision that I would do my best to get absolutely everything I could out of my body. I had proof that it could be gone in a second. After all, he was in better shape than he'd been in over 10 years. He was never a gym guy but had recently taken a liking to cycling and was going for 20 kilometers nearly every day.



A one-time track athlete, Rhodes found new challenges in CrossFit workouts.

From then on the workouts were easy. Actually, maybe "easy" is not the right word. They were hard as hell, but it didn't matter. Compared to the pain my father was in, what I had to deal with was inconsequential. I was willing to accept whatever pain was associated with pushing the physical limits of my body. I welcomed it. My hands were constantly torn up, and I was sore all the time, but I didn't skip a day. Of course, there were days when I didn't want to do it—probably the majority of them, in fact. But that was no longer an option for me.



Despite seeing great personal numbers, Rhodes discovered CrossFit is less about PRs and more about people.

New Goals, New Mentality

Fast-forward again to October 2010. My dad is doing much better. His mobility may never quite be the same, but he's around, and that's what matters. Experiences like the one we went through usually end up bringing you closer in the end anyway. I've been able to see a softer, more emotional side of him that I never knew as well.

For me, after one year of training, the strength numbers are up, the met-con numbers are down, and I've done some pretty extraordinary physical things that I would have never expected a year ago. But that's not what it's about. I've hit some pretty respectable times among the CrossFit community and have a realistic goal to qualify for the 2011 CrossFit Games, but that's not what it's about either.



Helping others believe in themselves has become a passion for the author.

In January 2010 I became a trainer and began helping others. That's what CrossFit is about. Sending my dad video of my WODs to motivate him for his rehab, the client weeks away from the operating table who six months later was pain-free and crushing workouts, the couple who lost a combined 30 percent body fat and gained unparalleled confidence, the e-mails and messages I get almost daily from people asking about CrossFit and how to get started or how to improve their nutrition—that's what it's about. When you push someone to their limit and they realize right before your eyes that they can accomplish something they didn't think was possible, that's what it's about. It's not about your Fran time, Fight Gone Bad score or how much you can clean and jerk. Outside of competition, the actual numbers are almost irrelevant.

CrossFit has absolutely changed my life. I've never known of a community of such kind, driven and humble people. If you want a day pass to a Globo Gym, it will cost you upward of \$15. If you want to try CrossFit, all you have to do is ask. You'll probably even get some special attention and coaching that first day. If you're on the road traveling, CrossFit gym owners are normally more than willing to save a spot for you if you give them a heads up. At competitions, there is no trash talking but rather mutual respect because the competitors know what one another go through on a daily basis to get there.

In the gym, day in and day out, ordinary people are doing extraordinary things. Every day we get an opportunity to go in and get better, to do something we've never done before. Personally, I am not satisfied with doing something I did last week. This is what CrossFit has become to me and why I am so obsessed with it. After all, there are much worse obsessions than chasing elite fitness and helping others achieve their goals.

The other day I woke up very early and was unable to turn my brain off. For some reason this story was all I could think about. Some of it is admittedly hard to talk about, but I figured it's a story worth sharing.

If you have taken the time to read this, please leave your thoughts.



About the author

Jay Rhodes is a high-school physical-education, biology and special-education teacher, as well as a Crossfit Level 1 trainer at [Crossfit Altitude](#) in Burlington, Ont. He holds degrees in kinesiology and education from the University of Western Ontario, where he also captained the track-and-field team for two years. He is a former eight-time provincial champion in track and field and holds a 400-meter personal best of 48.9 seconds. Jay grew up in Kingston but now lives in Stoney Creek with his girlfriend Lacey, who is a former gymnast and now avid Crossfitter, as well as their Boston terrier/French bulldog mix Harley.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Volume Training for “Goats”

Brian Wilson explains how increased time and reps—not frequency—have helped eliminate weaknesses in athletes at Potomac CrossFit.

By **Brian Wilson** Potomac CrossFit

February 2011



Photos courtesy of Nicole Bedard Photography

“Fitness is defined as increased work capacity over broad time and modal domains.”

—Greg Glassman

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Much has been said about muscular endurance, modal capacity and training weaknesses in CrossFit. What I'd like to cover here is just one tool that might help athletes and coaches quickly improve a distinct weakness.

This training technique—called volume training—has been used in various forms; it is characterized by specific and repetitive training for a weakness.

It could be fielding ground balls with a backhand technique in baseball, shooting free throws in basketball, or pressing to handstand in gymnastics. The goal is to develop **proprioception** and endurance—defined as the ability to reproduce a movement many times over or at length—in that specific modal capacity.

The inspiration for this method came from my time in the Marine Corps and is a bastardized version of the **Recon Ron Pull-Up Program**, which the Marines have used for years to prepare prospective officer candidate school enrollees for the pull-up portion of their physical-fitness test. Volume training is similar to the Recon Ron Pull-Up Program but increases time and reps while decreasing frequency of training.

This training method is designed to allow the athlete to practice the movement with near-perfect form, not to create a significant metabolic-conditioning response.

Volume training can be performed for any human movement, but at Potomac CrossFit we have found that upper-body gymnastics movements (e.g., handstand push-ups, pull-ups, ring dips, push-ups, muscle-ups) see the greatest relative improvement with this method.

However, any uncommon movement or modal weakness can be improved with volume training, including front levers, back levers, planches, pistols, double-unders, GHD sit-ups, rope climbs, etc.



Camille Leblanc-Bazin's outstanding performances in the muscle-up/snatch WOD and handstand push-up/clean WOD during the 2010 Games gave her a huge bump in the standings.

A key concept to remember is the athlete should work at a sub-maximal effort. This training method is designed to allow the athlete to practice the movement with near-perfect form, not to create a significant metabolic-conditioning response.

By working on modalities in which the CrossFit athlete is weak, we can improve those to a degree that when reintroduced in a traditional CrossFit WOD, he or she will generate an improvement in metabolic capacity because the athlete can repeat the movement many times, and quickly, without reaching complete muscular failure.

I believe this principle is critical to understanding CrossFit programming in general and the reasoning behind volume training specifically.

Programming Volume Training

There are infinite varieties of time, reps and modal domains one can use volume training to improve. First, let us look at a common weakness among CrossFitters: the handstand push-up. We will look at a baseline template to improve that weakness and ways to measure progress and results.

**As the athlete progresses,
our trainers have found
that making the movement
more difficult trumps
additional reps.**

At Potomac CrossFit, we have found the greatest benefit from volume training is after a strength workout. If performed on the same day as a met-con, volume training should be done before the main workout, with careful attention paid to the total reps performed that are pushes, pulls, etc.

Volume training should be prescribed for athletes who have trained regularly for several months or years but still have one or two modalities that need improvement. While this plan might be of use for beginners, we have found the official [CrossFit Warm-Up](#) to be best for beginners.

It's important to have athletes test their single-set max of whatever movement(s) you will focus on. However, you and the athlete will be able to determine progress quickly from session to session, as shown below.

As a general rule, Potomac CrossFit prescribes 20-minute volume-training sessions twice per week for the average CrossFit athlete, with reps performed every minute on the minute. The goal is to work sub-maximally (not reaching muscle failure) and maintain a difference of no more than 2 reps from the first set to the last set.

A typical progression from the first to the fifth session for handstand push-ups can be seen in Table 1 below.

The athlete's goal is to continue to progress in total number of reps completed per session, while still not going beyond 2 in the difference between Minute 1 and Minute 20.

For athletes with above-average recovery abilities, Potomac CrossFit has added one extra volume-training session per week. Again, pay attention to how the athlete is recovering and how the sessions match up with the athlete's other workouts.

As the athlete progresses, our trainers have found that making the movement more difficult trumps additional reps. Timing will vary depending on the athlete. Qualitatively, we determine if the athlete is now capable within the modal capacity. If so, we next want the athlete to become dominant.

For CrossFit Games athletes, the importance of not only having no weaknesses but being strong in the movements that many are weak in has been a key to success each year.

Examples of the transition from capable to dominant are:

- Handstand push-ups on parallettes or rings.
- Weighted ring dips.
- Weighted muscle-ups.
- Weighted pull-ups.

On the other end of the spectrum, we can use volume training for athletes who don't have their first rep. For this we first use isometric and then eccentric movements

Minute	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Total
Reps	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23
Reps	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	32
Reps	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	38
Reps	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	43
Reps	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	50

Table 1: A five-session volume-training log for handstand push-ups.

within the volume-training template. An athlete who cannot perform a pull-up would use a flexed-arm hang of 3-10 seconds per minute and then progress to 1-3 pull-up negatives until achieving the first pull-up. Then the athlete would use a mix of pull-ups and pull-up negatives during the sessions.

Take care not to overtrain eccentric movements! Doing so can increase the risk of rhabdomyolysis for a newer athlete (or even an experienced athlete who is new to this training methodology).

(For additional info about minimizing the risk of rhabdo, please read [The Truth About Rhabdo](#) by Dr. Mike Ray, published Jan. 4, 2010, in the *CrossFit Journal*.)



Rich Froning Jr.'s significant lead going into the last event at the 2010 Games was erased by his lack of ability in the rope climb.

Time and Benefits

While the idea of shortening or lengthening these sessions makes sense to us based on our observations, the adage "if ain't broke, don't fix it" has been our guiding precept. So we've stuck with the 20-minute sessions.

Volume training has worked wonders for our athletes, including a lot of folks with significant "goats" that we've otherwise been unable to fix.

We would love feedback from the CrossFit community with respect to tweaks on this model.

Some of our athletes have tried to incorporate two deficiencies within one volume-training session, and we've seen both successes and failures within that model.

There also is a significant psychological benefit in volume training. Athletes do not, as a general rule, want to work on what they are bad at. But show them quick progress ... and they'll be itching to get back to the gym to get another rep, and another.

We've found that combining upper-body and lower-body movements does not seem to diminish progress within the template. So combinations such as handstand push-ups and box jumps, pull-ups and pistols, and ring dips and kettlebell swings have worked fine.

However, combining two upper-body movements seems to diminish progress in both movements. The guidance we give: stick to one movement most of the time. If you want to do an upper-body/lower-body volume-training couplet, that's fine. Just make sure you still are seeing progress in your top-priority movement(s).

Benefits of volume training for a coach or box:

- Easy to scale to individuals, so it can be performed as part of a warm-up or “cash out.”
- Significant rest each minute means athletes can cycle through equipment or space.
- Can be done in a group setting or individually.
- Easy to measure improvement. Progress is what your clients pay you for!
- Easy to supervise while other activities are going on in the gym.

The important theme to remember here is the idea of building modal capacity vs. improving conditioning.

“One consequence of a warm-up like this is that bigger numbers of pull-ups, push-ups, sit-ups, and other calisthenic movements will ensue. Before anyone gets 25 pull-ups, three sets of 10 will have to be a breeze,” Greg Glassman wrote.

The CrossFit Warm-Up is a wonderful tool to build modal capacity in gymnastics movements. However, nearly every athlete we have trained has had some issue that just doesn't seem to get better. If we see continued stasis in one or more modalities while others improve, shifting our focus to improve those capacities is what's required if the athlete wants to improve both modal capacity and conditioning.

There also is a significant psychological benefit in volume training. Athletes do not, as a general rule, want to work on what they are bad at. But show them quick progress, even if it's just one more rep than they did the last session, and they'll be itching to get back to the gym to get another rep, and another.

Surprising Side Effects

At Potomac CrossFit, we had an unexpected benefit of incorporating volume training into some of our programming. Since the time we opened, we've had athletes who have been injured (most of them outside the gym, with the majority of them injured through jogging and golf). I was responsible for giving these athletes online programming and had them come into the gym when they could to perform the WODs I had programmed specifically for them.

While these athletes saw some progress, several things held them up:

- I did a bad job of clearly showing the athlete he or she was improving, which the volume-training format does.
- I was cycling through too many movements in an attempt to keep it interesting rather than focusing on weaknesses.
- Their bodies were spending significant amounts on the healing process, limiting their ability to build strength, coordination, etc.

As a result, I had a significant number of injured athletes stop training with me.



Athletes dealing with injuries are some of the best candidates for volume training.

But once my fellow coaches and I read the *CrossFit Journal's* [Working Wounded](#) article through the lens of volume training and implemented a program built around it, we saw significant progress in athletes' modal abilities and excitement about training again even while severely injured.

**“The greatest improvement
in your overall fitness will
come from going headlong
at your weaknesses.”**

—Greg Glassman

We now have a significant number of athletes who not only are surviving injuries (stress fractures, severely pulled hamstrings, bulging discs, labrum tears, broken wrists) but are also thriving within our “Working Wounded” class, which we offer three times per week.

During these classes we do a warm-up, barbell/dumbbell max effort and volume training. A typical series of classes for an athlete with one usable leg is:

Day 1

3-3-3-3 seated dumbbell presses

Ring-dip volume training

Day 2:

3-3-3-3 suitcase deadlifts

Pistol volume training

Day 3:

3-3-3-3 bench presses

Pull-up volume training

By seeing significant gains in gymnastic movements each week, athletes are energized and excited about the training they can do instead of disappointed about not being able to participate in the WOD. Most of them want to stay in the Working Wounded class longer than necessary because they want to be able to crush their non-injured fellow athletes in upper-body gymnastics movements.

A significant number of athletes continue to make progress on their “goats” by simply hitting movements frequently enough to make progress, but not so frequently that they get overuse injuries. However, either psychologically or physically, there is a large swath of athletes who need tools to make measurable progress on their “goats,” improve their fitness and stick with a fitness program.

I hope volume training can be that tool for your box.



About the Author



*Brian Wilson is a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. He holds a mechanical-engineering degree from the U.S. Naval Academy and is a student at St. John's College Graduate Institute in Annapolis, Md. He is co-owner of [Potomac CrossFit](#). He doesn't have a Facebook account, and his favorite movie is **Fletch**.*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Left-Coast Westside

Mark Bell explains how he uses Westside Barbell methods at Super Training Gym in Sacramento, Calif.

By Mark Bell Super Training

February 2011



Photos courtesy of Mark Bell/Super Training

The road paved by Louie Simmons and his elite lifters gives me confidence that his program works. Why do I feel it works? How about 20 800-lb. deadlifters!

The Russians used to do a lot of testing on their weightlifters, and Lou adapted a lot of those principles. Now he has his own testing ground at Westside Barbell. Through science, math and lots of trial and error, Lou has come up with the Westside Barbell Method. Time and time again, this method has not just worked for Lou and his lifters, but it has also worked for thousands of athletes all over the world. My gym, Super Training, was started in 2006, and this is the method we have used from Day 1.

Beginning in 2004, I trained at Westside for a little more than a year. Simply put, if you're not at Westside, it's hard to know exactly what Louie is working on next, so there is some variation between what we do at Super Training and what they do at Westside Barbell, but we utilize all the general Westside ideas. As Lou says, "Our results justify our methods." I also use lifter feedback and trial and error to figure out what will work best for Super Training. The program we use consists of three different methods: repetition, dynamic and max effort.



***The best methods are the ones that produce the best results.
Numbers don't lie.***

Repetition: Be Jacked

This method uses higher reps and moderate weights to promote bigger muscles. Remember, a bigger muscle will create better leverages. That's something to think about for all you fat guys who don't even look like you work out. More often than not, a bigger muscle is a stronger muscle.

**The repetition method
also gives you a chance to
strengthen where you are
weak and allows you to train
the smaller muscle groups.**

The repetition method also gives you a chance to strengthen where you are weak and allows you to train the smaller muscle groups. It's used in every workout after the main dynamic or max-effort methods are completed. Also known as the "bodybuilding method," it includes a lot of standard bodybuilding protocols, such as 3-4 sets of 8-12 reps. You can also implement supersets at this stage of the workout.

Work on getting a pump. There, I said it. Pump. Seriously, bodybuilders know how to build muscle like no other athlete on Earth, so why not employ some of their methods to slap on some muscle?

Dynamic Effort: Be Fast

This day is devoted to three concepts: bar speed, form and conditioning. Bar speed is key. Start with about 50 percent of your one-rep max and move the weights fast. Move the bar with violence. Try to exert as much force as possible on every rep. Bands and chains are often added to the bar to give you more optimal weights that will allow you to generate more force. Ingrain great form. Perfect practice makes perfect. Work on your conditioning through high volume and short rest intervals: 8-12 sets of 2-3 reps with 60-120 seconds of rest.

Remember, it's important to go up in weight about half the time after your speed work is done. If you used 250 lb. plus a green band for 8 sets of 2, then go ahead and take about 3 or 4 more heavy sets. Try 275, 300, then 315. These

heavier sets will really test your courage and strength as you try to keep your form in a fatigued state. On top of that, it's just fun!

You will have one day a week devoted to training fast. This is known as dynamic-effort training, speed training or force training. This day is designed to refine your form and make your body produce as much force as possible. Because you're teaching your body to produce force and explode, either bands or chains will help give you optimal weight to accelerate. The use of bands and chains is referred to as "accommodating resistance."

In addition, this day can be devoted to higher volume and conditioning. I suggest being in a group of 3-5 lifters and going one person after the next. Rest periods can be as short as 1 minute and, if you're out of shape or doing heavier sets, you can use up to 3 minutes. The weights on this day will normally start out at around 50 percent. Raw lifters may be up in the 70 percent range. But again, focus on bar speed and not bar weight.

How do you know if you're too slow? If the weight slows down during any part of the concentric phase, then it may be too heavy.

How do you know if you're too slow? If the weight slows down during any part of the concentric phase, then it may be too heavy. If you have to lower the weight super slowly, then the weight may be too heavy. Your eccentric phase (lowering of the bar) should be 1-3 seconds. Your concentric (raising of the bar) should be 1-2 seconds. You'll notice top lifters standing up with massive weights up to 1,000 lb. faster than you can get up off a couch. That's explosive power at its best.



Mark Bell recommends his Sling Shot as a way to protect the shoulders while benching.

Some notes:

- On a lower-body day, some type of box squat is used every week. You may use 2- or 3-week waves for the weights and the bar.
- On speed bench, some type of bench is always used; i.e., floor press, board press, regular bench.
- On lower-body day, the outfit needed is typically a pair of Chuck Taylor shoes, a belt and a pair of power-lifting briefs. It's my belief that even raw lifters should use briefs from time to time. This will allow you to overload the squat and keep the hips supported.
- For upper-body speed bench, a pair of wrist wraps and a Sling Shot is a good idea. It's not like I'm saying you have to buy my shoulder-stabilizing Sling Shot. It's simply a recommendation. Seriously, though, the Sling Shot will allow you to add more volume, use more weight and keep your shoulders and chest from feeling destroyed.



Using chains and bands will change the dynamics of the lift and make you work for every inch.

Max Effort: Be Strong

Lift the heaviest weights possible for a 1- to 3-rep max. Some newer lifters may want to hold back on this a bit as they adapt to the new training methods and exercises. Switch up exercises every week or every other week and max out. Select exercise variations of the squat, bench and deadlift. Warm up with low reps so you don't burn yourself out. Record your max and try to beat it. Get back to the same exercise every 4-6 weeks.

Make small jumps in weight as you get near your max. Doing extra sets is better than missing weights. The best lifters in the gym very rarely miss. This may mean that they're only going to 95 percent or so. However, this can still make you stronger as it builds confidence for you. It also teaches your body what it's like to make big lifts instead of miss them. Stronger lifters will oftentimes make better choices with how they pick their attempts. Choose wisely.

How We Roll at Super Training

Tuesday—Max-effort squat/deadlift. This day has more of an emphasis on deadlifts. At Super Training, we simply rotate the max-effort work as in the quick example on Page 5. You'll see that even our speed deads might be done on our max-effort day. Remember, there is more than one

way to skin a cat. If a deadlift is not performed as the main movement, it may be used as an assistance movement for reps or speed.

SAMPLE MAX-EFFORT LOWER-BODY MOVEMENTS

- Box squat with various heights and barbells. I like using the cambered bar and safety bar on these days on a parallel or slightly below-parallel box.
- Good mornings. My favorite variety is chain-suspended good mornings with chains on the bar, so the barbell is resting in the chains and also has chains on the end of the barbell for added resistance. I like to do them from different heights, ranging from lining the bar up with my groin and lining it up with my sternum while it's resting in the chains.
- Deadlifts—conventional, sumo, reverse band, off mats or off the rack. You can also deadlift while standing on mats to create a greater range of motion. My favorite deadlifts are with chains, standing on mats and reverse band.

Thursday—Max-effort bench. The focus here is to go to a 1-rep max for some type of bench-press-like movement. I'm a fan of doing floor presses. Donnie Thompson suggests you get a small mat to lie on while doing floor presses so the shoulder blades don't grind on such a hard surface.

Don't get caught up with the number crunching too much. You're not a nerdy accountant. Lift weights and ask questions later.

Keep in mind, you will switch exercises every week. I like doing floor press against bands or chains as well. Other exercises I like are reverse-band bench and reverse-band bench in the Sling Shot. Nine-hundred-pound bencher Dave Hoff of Westside Barbell is the person who recommended he reverse-band bench to me.

SAMPLE 3-WEEK BREAKDOWN OF MAX-EFFORT EXERCISES

Week 1: Low box squat to a max set of 1-3 reps. Follow this up with 6-8 sets of 1 or 2 reps of speed deadlifts. You will use 50 to 70 percent of your max pulling against bands or chains. Don't get caught up with the number crunching too much. You're not a nerdy accountant. Lift weights and ask questions later.

Week 2: Reverse-band deadlift followed by raw squats, 4 sets of 4-6 reps, or reduce the weight and perform 3 sets of 5 reps on the reverse-band deads.

Week 3: Suspended good mornings—followed by crying—then finish up with a little bit of death. Warning: It is better to blow out a hammy than it is to blow out an O-ring.



Louie Simmons, Mark Bell and some of the Westside crew.

Saturday—Dynamic-effort squat/deadlift. This day is focused more on the squat. I enjoy the fantastic feeling of doing 3-week waves. I'll also use 2-week waves from time to time as well. I don't get all crazy about the percentages, but a good rule is to use about 50 percent as a starting place for Week 1—give or take 5-10 percent.

A wave might look like this if you squat 500 lb. and increase the bar weight by about 3-5 percent each week:

Week 1: 250 lb. (50 percent) plus a green band for 10 sets of 2.

Week 2: 275 lb. (55 percent) plus a green band for 8 sets of 2, working up in weight to a heavy double.

Week 3: 300 lb. (60 percent) plus a green band for 6 sets of 2, then work up using singles. Go to 90 percent and do not miss!

SAMPLE MAX-EFFORT UPPER-BODY MOVEMENTS

- Floor press. My two favorites are against bands or chains.
- Board press. One, two or three boards.
- Sling Shot bench, with or without reverse bands.
- Bench against bands or chains.
- A full-range regular bench press can be used, but we do not do this at Super Training.

It is a common practice to do 8-10 sets of 1-2 reps on speed deadlifts after dynamic squats. The percents would normally be about 60-80 percent, depending on how fast you can move the weights.

I'm not a fan of de-loading or any such word, so I simply start the next cycle over with a lighter load in the 50 percent range. What do you need to de-load from? Why is everyone always crying about being hurt? Pain is part of this sport, so train for pain. Train your pain tolerance, and please stop being a big fat baby. Remember this: no brain, no pain. Stop thinking about it so much and just lift. I don't want to hear how you missed the lift because your knees came in. The truth is you missed the weight because you have the hip strength of 90-year-old grandma. You know the kind. They use walkers with tennis balls under the front. I'm just as guilty as the next guy in terms of making excuses, but remember that the road to nowhere is paved with excuses.

Sunday—Dynamic-effort bench. I use a variety of bars, bands and chains. The set and rep scheme is normally 8-10 sets of 3 reps with about 50 percent of max. On occasion, I will do 6 sets of 5 reps or 6-8 sets of 4. The main

focus is explosive power and keeping your form the same throughout most of the sets and reps. The best lifters make their last few reps look the same as their first few.

Typically, I use the mastodon bar or the fat bar on speed day. Every few workouts, I'll do a floor press for the speed sets. I prefer to do at least 2-week waves, but sometimes I end up wave-less. I feel it's important to lift and work with my team as much as possible. So if I come in and Big Roy wants to use straight weight for the day, I'll hop in on that. You'll get a better workout by training with other guys rather than following some stupid spreadsheet. I have made this mistake more than once.

I like using the bamboo bar with kettlebells after I do my speed work. I use the bar nearly every week with 3-5 sets of 10-15 reps. This bar is just insane, and I feel it keeps me injury free and strong.

Wrap It Up

Remember to always follow up these main-event exercises with assistance work. Choose exercises that will build and strengthen the muscles involved in the bench, squat and deadlift. This is also a great time to work on weak areas.



No big deal. It's just part of Mark Bell's life.

Do your homework and buy products that will help you to become as strong as possible. Hop on the Internet and start looking up information on Louie Simmons and Westside Barbell. Buy Louie Simmons' book, *The Westside Barbell Book of Methods*. Many of the bands, chains and barbells mentioned in this article can be purchased from Louie at the [Westside Barbell website](#).

Give this program a shot. Don't just try it out for a week and say it doesn't work. Give it at least a month. Take time to learn your trade and understand the program. Above all else, realize that the best lifters train hard, and you need to as well, no matter what program you follow. Surround yourself with the best and most positive people you can. One rotten egg can make the whole room stink. At Super Training we roll with this motto: "Either you're in or you're in the way."

This article was originally published in the January/February 2011 issue of Power magazine.



In the near future, Louie Simmons will be using Mark Bell to teach CrossFit Powerlifting seminars, where participants can learn all about Westside Barbell Methods. For more information, please visit the [Specialty Seminars](#) section of CrossFit.com.



About the Author

Mark Bell is also formally known as JackAss from [Elitefts.com](#) or Smelly from the film **Bigger, Stronger, Faster**. He is the father of two and owner of [Super Training Gym](#) in Sacramento, Calif, an outfit that consists of 20 competitive powerlifters. He is the inventor of the [Sling Shot](#), a supportive upper-body device to help improve the bench press and push-up. Mark and his wife Andee also own and operate the magazine [Power](#). As a professional powerlifter, Bell's best lifts are a 1025 squat, 854 bench and 739 deadlift. He has the highest total ever done in the state of California (2551) and holds world and American records in the USPF. He's the Southern Powerlifting state chairman and will be conducting Louie Simmons' Powerlifting seminars for CrossFit in 2011.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Fitness Is ... Outside

Greg Glassman asked the question, "What is fitness?" Blair Morrison offers some of his own thoughts to help you discover what fitness means to you.

By Blair Morrison CrossFit Anywhere

February 2011



Myles Jeffers

What is fitness?

That question is one of the foundations of the CrossFit program, and asking it will make you question just about everything you know about training. In answering it, Greg Glassman created a new way of training and a new way of thinking about health and human performance. He also got people thinking and answering the question for themselves.

In this multi-part series, CrossFit Games competitor Blair Morrison talks about what fitness is to him.

1 of 4



Zachary Podhorzer

Training for Life

Go find fitness.

Outside.

If there's one thing I've learned during this trans-national adventure of mine, it's that there is nothing like training out in the open. Urban environment or rural environment, city street or barren trail ... get outside and train without walls.

Some might argue that cities, by their very nature, don't lend themselves to physical exploration. They're lazy. Some say the countryside encourages accessibility, freedom of movement and an exploratory eagerness that cities do not. Maybe it's not our environment that cultivates these characteristics in us, but we who find them in it. There are no objects in nature whose equivalent can't be found in a city if you're looking with open eyes. Mountains are nature's staircases, and trees are her climbing walls. Carrying a bag of cement is the same as shouldering a fallen limb, and lifting a stone is, well, you get the picture.

How capable are you of engaging and mastering challenges in an unpredictable physical world?

The point is that just because most of us live in cities doesn't mean we are bereft of outdoor fitness potential. Usually it just means we're addicted to air conditioning and the comfort of what's habitually easy. But I digress.

The main objective is not to argue the pros and cons of the urban/rural life but to highlight the importance of forging a connection with our surroundings—wherever they may be. That, more than anything, is what fitness boils down to in my opinion: How capable are you of engaging and mastering challenges in an unpredictable physical world?

Answering this question in the current climate isn't so easy for many of us. After all, a great challenge in someone's physical world could be changing the filter in the coffee



Sean Leonard

The great outdoors provides more tests of fitness than any gym ever could. Go out and find those tests.

machine. Most people proudly spend every ounce of their energy avoiding physical challenges, as though that were the rightful culmination of the experiment known as modern civilization. Here we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors so that we no longer have to stand. Let us, for the sake of my sanity, disregard this perverted idea of evolution as the purest form of rationalized lethargy and, instead, engage with a world where physical challenges must be overcome by individuals whether they like it or not.

**I pity the man who
does endless pull-ups
but never gets to see
anything above the bar.**

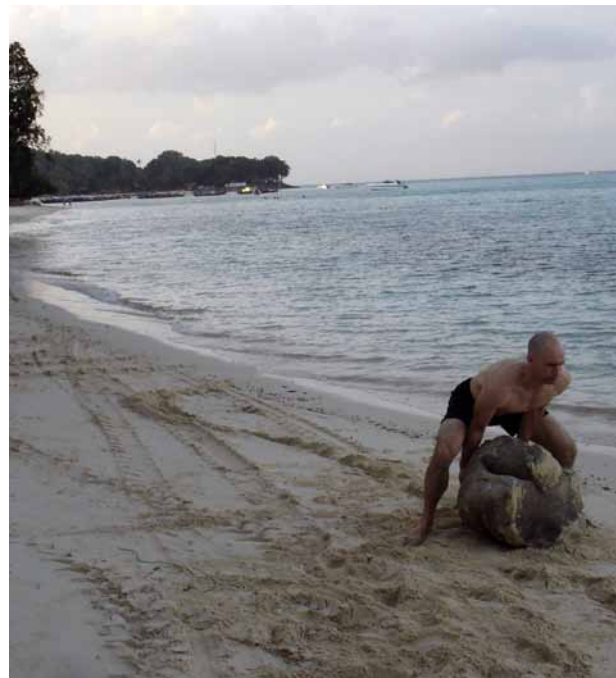


Carrie Bray/Jim Bray

What then?

First, there's the problem of gyms: people measuring their fitness by a standard that has no practical authenticity. Gyms are a simulation of reality—a very valuable simulation, I grant you, but a simulation nonetheless. They plug the gaps when the weather is bad, help to build bases of strength and conditioning for athletes and the deconditioned, and assist in training specific movements that must be practiced again and again to perfect form and technique (rehab/sport). These are all great uses, and if this is how you see your gym, I have no objection. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people view their gym as a fitness mecca, the only place where their quest for beauty, strength and discipline can endure and be validated.

The image of a dog chasing its tail comes screaming to mind. In reality, gyms are a crutch on which we lean too heavily and quickly become dependent upon. Largely, this is because they are controlled environments and are grossly convenient. They're also expensive, sterile and largely devoid of practical usefulness once you leave. Globo Gyms, CrossFit gyms—every kind of gym is merely a tool with which we build fitness for a life outside their doors, a life filled with broken elevators, dead car batteries



John King

***Few real-world objects have handles.
How will you move the objects in your path?***

Aaron Winning



Mike Jones

If it's heavy, you should move it, because one day you might have to.

and the occasional evasive maneuver. That life is variable, it's non-linear, and it rarely comes with chrome-plated barbells. If you never train strength, speed, agility, balance, power, accuracy, etc. in the environments for which they are necessary, what good are they?

Life, as it were, happens everywhere. Act accordingly.

Beyond the logical reasoning outlined above, there's also this: training outside is a far more satisfying experience. Remember that connectivity I mentioned earlier? It's real, and it only happens when you get out and start interacting with the rest of the physical universe. I cry for the individual who runs 5 miles a day, 5 days a week, and never gets a sunburn. I pity the man who does endless pull-ups but never gets to see anything above the bar. It's the totality of the experience that makes outdoor training different, and it's something you cannot simulate. When you're outside, there's endless sensory input: wind, noise, temperature, visual space, etc. There's constant variation in the tools you use, be it bags, beams, bridges, walls, ropes, hills, cars or people. An environment with this much possibility literally stimulates creativity and breeds confidence in the individual's ability to overcome all things. The more stuff you use and the more tools you touch, the greater the connectivity you create, and the greater the belief in your own ability to master your surroundings. Such is the ultimate brand of fitness.

In short, these thoughts boil down to this: Be it urban or rural, fitness is only as measurable as it can be applied to overcoming challenges in the randomized physical world around us. And, while controlled environments are useful,

even necessary to preparing us for this world, they are not the most critical proving grounds. The extraordinary satisfaction we get after conquering natural obstacles and the totality of the experience in general are proof of this fact.

Don't believe me? That's OK. Keep chasing that tail. I'll be out back whenever you're ready.



About the Author

Blair Morrison is 28 years old. He was born and raised in Sacramento, Calif., where his family still lives. He received his undergraduate history degree from Princeton University and his master's degree at Universiteit Leiden, the Sorbonne and Oxford. Formerly a personal trainer from Balance Gym in Washington, D.C., Blair placed seventh in the 2009 CrossFit Games and 23rd in 2010. He now owns and operates CrossFit Anywhere out of Sacramento. He is dedicated to the pursuit of physical challenges and the mental fortitude that comes from the ability to overcome them.



Courtesy of Blair Morrison

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

World of WODs No. 1: Winnipeg, Canada

Creative CrossFitters create new workouts every day.

Mike Warkentin begins the search for signature workouts from around the world.

By Mike Warkentin

February 2011



All photos courtesy of Mike Warkentin

"I could totally do a pull-up on that branch."

Greg Glassman changed the way CrossFitters view the world. Tree branches became pull-up bars, picnic tables turned into plyo boxes and swing sets seemed like great places to hang a set of rings. And that rock over there? You should probably overhead squat it.

1 of 4



The Terry Fox workout starts and ends here.

Indeed, all the world is a CrossFit gym with the right pair of eyes and a little creativity.

This article is the first in a series where we'll publish some of the best workouts from locales around the world, giving residents and travelers a chance to test their fitness outside the box. If you have a set of landmarks, natural features or outdoor "equipment" suited for a great WOD, please view the submission guidelines on the last page of this article—then send us your workout!

Location: Assiniboine Park: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Address: Corydon Boulevard and Conservatory Drive

Brief: In 1980, amputee [Terry Fox](#) set off on a Cross-Canada Marathon of Hope in support of cancer research. He started in St. John's, Nfld., and was halted 5,373 kilometers later in Thunder Bay, Ont., when the cancer spread to his lungs. He died on June 28, 1981, but his legacy lives on via the Terry Fox Run, a global event that has raised over \$500 million for cancer research. Over 30 years after his death, Fox is widely regarded as one of Canada's greatest national heroes.

This workout is set in the Southwest corner of Assiniboine Park and uses three stations that are part of the memorial Terry Fox Fitness Trail: the dip bars, the vaulting log and the pull-up bars. The stations are about 100 meters apart, and the entire loop is approximately 1.3 kilometers long.

For a map of park and the trail, visit www.assiniboinepark.ca/images/AssinibioneParkMap.jpg. (Note the typo in the URL: "Assinibione.")

Enter the park heading north on Conservatory Drive. Turn right at the first opportunity and park in the conservatory lot. The start of the Terry Fox Fitness Trail is at the wooden hut just south of the parking lot (see Page 1). The workout begins and ends here. Running counterclockwise for about 300 meters, you will arrive at dip bars on your left. Just past the dip bars there will be a diagonal log on your right. About 100 meters further, you will find the pull-up station. The rest of the loop will take you back to the beginning of the trail.

Along the way you will pass steam Locomotive CNR 6043, the last one to be in regular service in Canada. It made its final run in the spring of 1960 and is now a permanent fixture in Assiniboine Park.



The highest bar is not level. This is real-world fitness!



The vaulting log.



The dip station.



For additional challenge, place hands higher on the log.

New movement: Side vaults—Place hands on the diagonal log at any height. Jump side-to-side over the log while maintaining contact with the hands. The higher you place your hands, the harder the jump.

WOD: Terry Fox—Winnipeg

Three laps including:

20 dips (each lap)

20 side vaults (each lap)

20 pull-ups (each lap)

Scaling suggestions: Substitute jumping pull-ups or jumping dips as needed. Place your hands lower on the vaulting log as needed. For athletes building gymnastics strength, consider reducing pull-ups/dips from 20 to 10 per round.

Par: 24:00. A good runner with solid gymnastics skills could probably pull this off closer to 20 minutes.

Post times to comments. Bragging rights awarded for completion between Dec. 1 and March 31.

About the Author

Mike Warkentin is the managing editor of the *CrossFit Journal* and the owner of *CrossFit 204*.



Submission Guidelines

Workouts should be set in prominent locations, and they must be on public property that's easily accessible. Please use common sense and keep safety foremost in your mind. Avoid high-traffic locations or very crowded areas where collisions, injuries, police intervention and angry security guards are likely.

In terms of programming, make the WOD challenging but reasonable, and keep in mind the CrossFit tenet of scalability. We want these workouts to be as accessible as possible for as many as possible.

Use CrossFit movements. Creativity is encouraged, but keep in mind the principles of good CrossFit programming. For more information, read the [Level 1 Training Guide](#). Include brief descriptions of any new movements so others will understand how to do them safely and effectively.

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The Terry Fox workout will take you between 20 and 30 minutes ... unless you do it in winter.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

World of WODs No. 2: St. Augustine, Fla.

Creative CrossFitters create new workouts every day. Todd Occhiuto continues the search for signature workouts from around the world.

By **Todd Occhiuto** CrossFit Southside

February 2011



All photos: Aaron Johnson and Kerri Christos

"I could totally do a pull-up on that branch."

Greg Glassman changed the way CrossFitters view the world. Tree branches became pull-up bars, picnic tables turned into plyo boxes, and swing sets seemed like great places to hang a set of rings. And that rock over there? You should probably overhead squat it.

Indeed, all the world is a CrossFit gym with the right pair of eyes and a little creativity.

This article is the second in a series where we'll publish some of the best workouts from locales around the world, giving residents and travelers a chance to test their fitness outside the box. If you have a set of landmarks, natural features or outdoor "equipment" suited for a great WOD, please view the submission guidelines on the last page of this article—then send us your workout!



A 17th-century fort seems like a great place for 21st-century training.

Location: Castillo de San Marcos, St. Augustine, Fla.

Address: Castillo de San Marcos NM, 1 South Castillo Dr.

Brief: St. Augustine, Fla., is the nation's oldest permanent European settlement, dating back to 1565. Located in St. Augustine is the Castillo de San Marcos, which is the city's most historically significant structure and was built by the Spanish between 1672 and 1695. The Castillo de San Marcos has been a strategic military post during various military agreements and political treaties since the beginning of its construction and surprisingly was never taken over by force.



After lunges atop the Town Wall, you'll run back to the palm tree at the beginning of the circuit.

This workout is set in the west field of the Castillo de San Marcos and uses The Town Wall that is located in the middle of the field. There are two stations: one is in the grass for push-ups, and the other is the log Town Wall, used for scaling and wall muscle-ups. The two stations are about 20 meters apart, and the entire course is about 200 meters long.

For a map of the park, visit:

<http://wikimapia.org/#lat=29.897857&lon=81.3111544&z=18&l=0&m=b>



You'll also find a few stairs in your way during the WOD.

Enter the Castillo from US A1A in downtown St. Augustine. From the Castillo's parking lot, enter the park heading northwest. Stay to the left of the fort, walking outside the moat. Walk to the north side of The Town Wall and past the ravine to the palm tree that is in line with the metal drain. The workout begins and ends here.

Running south for about 20 meters—down and through the ravine—you will find the inclined side of The Town Wall. Climb the incline to the top of the wall. Climb down the other side of the wall to perform wall muscle-ups. After performing the final wall muscle-up, lunge east along the top of the wall toward the fort. It is about 50 meters east to the end of the wall. Then run through the opening of the fort wall, following it to the north (left) until you reach the stairs to climb out of the fort and return to the starting place. It is about 120 meters from the end of the wall, through the fort and back to the starting point at the palm tree.

New movement: Wall muscle-up—Place hands on top of log wall. Jump and pull yourself on to the top of the wall. Stand to full extension—open hip—on top of the wall.



The Town Wall must be scaled and presents a great test of your ability to deal with obstacles.



Wall muscle-ups can be scaled by choosing a higher or lower stretch of wall.

WOD: The Fort—St. Augustine

Five rounds of:

20 CrossFit Games-style push-ups (release hands at bottom)

Scale the inclined side of the wall

5 wall muscle-ups

30 lunges

Run through the fort wall opening to the north and up the stairs, then back to the palm tree to begin the next round.

Scaling suggestions: Move down the log wall toward the fort to a lower height for the wall climbs and muscle-ups. Use the lowest edge of the wall for box jumps if wall muscle-ups are not in the cards.

Times: Varied between 12-15 minutes for above-average CrossFitters.

If you are looking for a longer time domain, I would recommend adding more reps to the push-ups and/or wall muscle-ups—maybe 25 push-ups and/or 10 wall muscle-ups.

Post times to comments.

About the Author

Todd Occhiuto is a CrossFit Level 2 trainer who coaches at [CrossFit Southside](#) in Jacksonville, Fla.



Submission Guidelines

Workouts should be set in prominent locations, and they must be on public property that's easily accessible. Please use common sense and keep safety foremost in your mind. Avoid high-traffic locations or very crowded areas where collisions, injuries, police intervention and angry security guards are likely.

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The Fort: your new fitness challenge in St. Augustine, Fla.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

100 Days of Burpees—and Combat

Justin Conelli finds stability in combat through CrossFit Fort Bragg's 100 Day Burpee Challenge.

By Justin Conelli

February 2011



All images courtesy of Justin Conelli

Being deployed is like being in a time machine: days fly by or drag on and are influenced by the ever-changing tide of combat. Your time will undoubtedly be marked by key events that shape your experience, and in war that sometimes means the tragic loss of life. Daily life can be so dynamic you find yourself clutching for any type of routine to return some semblance of normalcy.

1 of 5



In the chaos of Afghanistan, Justin Conelli found a link to the stability of home through CrossFit Fort Bragg's Burpee Challenge.

For a CrossFitter, this will no doubt involve working out, and for me, it involved the CrossFit Fort Bragg 100 Day Burpee Challenge.

I found out my home gym was putting on the burpee challenge and decided I would follow along while I was in Afghanistan. The premise is simple: do one burpee on Day 1, two on Day 2, and so on, until you ultimately complete 100 burpees on Day 100. The rules stated you could break up your daily burpees any way you want, and if you missed a day, the burpees would get carried over to the next day. Additionally, days 25, 50, 75 and 100 would be for time.

I figured it would be a great way to stay in touch with friends at home, as well as to give myself a healthy distraction with which to pass the time. What I could never have anticipated was the life-changing events that would occur during these 100 days. This is my experience.

Battlefield Burpees

Aug. 30, 2010—The official start day of the challenge was Aug. 25. At the time, I was on a mission and hadn't committed to the challenge yet. When I returned to base, I was greeted with a nasty stomach bug brought on by the unfortunate act of drinking some tainted water. Over the course of three days, I lost 12 lb. and along with it whatever work capacity I had left from my training for the CrossFit Games. I was a shell of my former self, and it took all I had to complete the 21-burpee buy-in on Day 6 of the challenge.

Sept. 8—I completed 92 burpees to catch up from being gone on another mission—a small glimpse of things to come.

Sept. 16—We had been out on a mission for days providing security for the Afghan elections. Things were pretty slow, so I decided to knock out some burpees in the field

to lessen the burden when I got back. I had 86 burpees knocked out when I got the first tragic news of the deployment: a fellow brother in arms had been killed in combat. The two of us had just gotten to know each other a few months prior, but we were stationed at the same base, and one of our last conversations was about starting to train in the gym together. He will be missed.

I knocked out the 405 burpees I owed and dedicated myself to finishing the rest of the challenge.

Sept. 26— There's no better warm-up for a workout than 126 burpees. After completing all the reps I again missed due to a mission, I made my attempt at Fight Gone Bad for the FGB5 fundraiser. Lacking all the proper equipment, I did a modified version of the workout, compiling a suspect score of 377, which nonetheless helped raise \$600 for three great causes.

Oct. 8—This ended up being the most important day of the challenge for me. I had been gone for over 10 days on a long mission, and the burpees were piling up. Midway through the mission, I got a call on the radio that another brother in arms had been killed not far from where I was while he attempted to save one of his fallen teammates. Despite the awful news, we continued on our mission for another few days with hardly a chance to reflect on what had happened. As we neared the last day of the operation, tragedy struck again as a teammate of mine was injured in battle when his vehicle rolled over. The two of us had been working together at the time of the accident,



Members of CrossFit Fort Bragg competing in the final workout of the 2010 CrossFit Games Affiliate Cup.



Back home, members of CrossFit Fort Bragg were doing CCT 21/23 to raise money for wounded soldiers.

when suddenly I no longer heard from him. He suffered numerous broken bones and damage to his hip, but thankfully he was able to escape with his life.

When we finally returned to base, everyone was exhausted from the extremely taxing mission. I was certainly in poor spirits, and the thought of doing over 400 burpees to catch up did not exactly sound appealing. The desire to quit was strong, and I could have easily convinced myself of all the reasons why it was OK to do so. But I thought of my teammates who had been injured and killed and all the hard work they put in just to do their jobs, and I decided it would be wrong to quit. I knocked out the 405 burpees I owed and dedicated myself to finishing the rest of the challenge.

Oct. 9—The flurry of injuries and deaths in a short period of time touched many people, both deployed and at home. The coaches at CrossFit Fort Bragg put on a fundraiser in honor of the fallen warriors and donated all the money to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. They devised a workout called “CCT 21/23” in honor of the fallen combat controllers and their respective squadrons. The workout consisted of 50 pull-ups, a 1.5-mile run, 100 push-ups, 100 sit-ups, another 1.5-mile run and 50 more pull-ups—all while wearing a 20-lb. vest. The turnout was spectacular, and CrossFit Fort Bragg was able to raise more than \$2,000 for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. I completed the WOD here in Afghanistan on the same date with a time of 49:06, after knocking out 46 burpees in the warm-up, of course.

Oct. 13—I completed my first timed session, on Day 50, in 2:10.

Oct. 27—In what had become a common occurrence, I had to complete 127 burpees to catch up from being on another mission. I had spent the last two days working with another teammate, then found out he too was wounded in combat. He was evacuated from the battlefield to my base to receive medical treatment, and thankfully I was able to greet him when he arrived. I had thought I was numb to this kind of thing but was shocked once again to see one of my friends injured. Thankfully, he received some good medical care and will be able to make a full recovery in time. That night, I took time to reflect on all the sacrifices and heroics that I’d witnessed in such a short period of time, and how experiences like these put life into perspective.

Nov. 7—I completed my second timed session, on Day 75, in 3:55.

Nov. 25—The Thanksgiving feast over here was surprisingly decent, and I chased it down with 166 burpees to catch up once again.

Dec. 4—The final day of the challenge had arrived. I was a couple of days late due to a mission and knocked out 99 reps to catch up. My last session would be 100 burpees for time, bringing the 5,050-rep challenge to an end. I finished the final set in 5:44.

100-Day Anchor

I could never have predicted all the events that happened in the 100 days it took to complete this challenge. In the end, it turned into something I never thought it would be: an anchor of stability I could count on every day.

But this small sample of time is just a microcosm of what the men and women of the military have experienced throughout the entirety of the war. I am thankful to share company with such a group of brave patriots.



About the Author

Justin Conelli is a special tactics officer in the U.S. Air Force, currently stationed in North Carolina with his lovely wife Elise. They've been members of CrossFit Fort Bragg for over two years, and both competed on the Affiliate Cup team that placed sixth overall at the 2010 CrossFit Games.