
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

You Were Saying ... With J.T. Scott

J.T. Scott on staying present, qualifying for the CrossFit Games and clothing the homeless.

By E.M. Burton

February 2012



Journal Menu by Evan Saint Clair

The *CrossFit Journal* is pleased to present the third in a series of profiles designed to help you get to know some of the best people in our community.

1 of 4

J.T. Scott

I first heard about CrossFit from ... an old fraternity brother who blogged his WODs every day on Facebook, Leon Chang. He convinced me to get started and helped me find a trainer. Now he owns his own affiliate too: [CrossFit Elysium](#) in San Diego.

My first CrossFit workout was ... heavily scaled. I was a totally deconditioned individual, overweight by 100 lb. We did skill work on my (abominable) squat, followed by 15-12-9 KB swings (25 lb.), box jumps (18 inches) and burpees. I literally could not get out of bed without assistance for the two days that followed.

My favorite workout is ... Christine is a benchmark I revisit more often than some others. I don't really get emotionally attached to WODs, though; I just want to get better, and there's plenty of room for improvement.

The person I would most like to WOD with is ... no one in particular. I like (working out) with people who are nice, supportive, focused on their own work and accepting of everyone's scaling. That describes most CrossFitters I've met, thankfully.

When I was growing up, I wanted to be ... a wise old man. I've got a long way to go.

When I grow up, I want to be ... strong and fast enough to beat my athletes and qualify for my own CrossFit Games team. It's an honor to work with such incredible athletes, and they continue to push my own training forward, too.



Bradford Lowery

One way to be a firebreather ...

The most rewarding thing about training people is ... changing lives, building confidence and strength, and showing people that the impossible is achievable. If people can come to realize that they have the strength and capability to shape the world according to their will through their choices, I feel like I've done my job.

My favorite movie character is ... Robert Redford as Martin Bishop in *Sneakers*. It's a classic movie—prescient and ahead of its time.

The greatest challenge in coaching is ... finding the right way to communicate with every athlete.

The movement I find hardest to teach is ... muscle-ups. I still haven't found a magic pill to help people get there.

The thing I find funniest about CrossFit is ... it has to be the fashion. The CrossFitter fetishes for either compression sleeves and board shorts or knee socks and booty shorts are hilarious to me. I get it, and I share in my athletes' joy when they are thrilled to WOD shirtless and show off their new cut bodies, but I also find it endlessly funny.

My secret identity is ... I'm in the circus—I'm a fire-eating, stilt-walking acrobat and object manipulator. It's not so secret when you're in a movie, though: [Life on Fire](#) is being released soon. Not many people know I'm also a 1,000-hour licensed massage therapist.

The thing I value most is ... a gentle sense of humor and the ability to be present in each moment. When I find those in people, I treasure them.

My motto is ... consistency, integrity and transparency. These are the three principles that we operate on as a business, and we evaluate every decision as to how it relates to those principles. Personally, my highest choice and guiding principle is simply, "Love."

The most outrageous thing I've seen someone do during a WOD is ... probably unfit for print—even in the *CrossFit Journal*! It involved superhuman levels of determination, victory in a competition environment and copious amounts of bodily fluids. I am forever in awe of that athlete, though.

The place I'd most like to visit is ... I've been all over the world, but my home is Black Rock City. I like going back to work and play at Burning Man each year because it's a reminder that we can and do create our world together, every day—and an inspiration for what we can create when we do so consciously. Of course, last year tickets sold out ... so I'm changing my answer: Burning Man sucks. Don't go.

The CrossFit trainer/coach I most admire is ... my business partner Eric (Siegel) is my rock. We have developed an incredible working relationship at CrossFit Fenway, and I admire his ability to coach four classes a day, train, and manage both the endless volume of email communications and the day-to-day interactions of personalities in the box. When you've got a staff of trainers, a Games competition team and 250 members, it takes a gifted character to keep everyone's head above water and still train hard enough to be a Games-caliber athlete.

The non-CF person I most admire is ... my partner Chandra is the kindest, most inspirational person I could ever hope to share my life with. Every day I am awed and inspired by the ways she loves and lives in the world.

The thing I have the most patience for is ... fear. Every person enters the box carrying their own fear, and it is part of my job to help them set that fear aside and live in the present moment of this hour of training. If they can set it down so completely that they don't pick it up again when they leave, that's even better.

The thing I have the least patience for is ... oh boy. That's hard. I strive to have patience for everything. Incompetence in a supposed professional chaps my ass, though, as does terrible customer service. I have little tolerance for it.

When I have a challenging athlete on my hands, I ... take another breath and try another way to reach them. It's not their fault that I haven't found the right way to communicate with them yet.

A favorite book is ... *Cryptonomicon* by Neal Stephenson. (It's) maybe the best book I've ever read.



Bradford Lowery

When he's not running his CrossFit affiliate, Scott is in the circus. No, really.

The soundtrack in my box ... is very trainer-dependent. Stacey loves country, Erika can't get enough Adele and Kelly Clarkson, Eric plays the Clash, and Joe brings that classic CrossFit blend of rappers (Young Money, DJ Khaled, Wiz) and the genre most accurately labeled as "angry white-boy music." I, of course, play only quality tunes—namely bootie-shaking mash-ups of pop hits.



Scott, trying to pick his favorite cheesy dance movies.

My most guilty pleasure is ... I'm too old to feel guilty about them. But man, I've got some silly ones—like cheesy dance movies. Fortunately I've got a lot of years of practice at looking silly, so it feels pretty natural.

A dream location for a CrossFit box would be ... we're one block away from Fenway Park—I already have my dream location! Though next on my list would definitely include boxes on the premises of every major baseball and football stadium, in partnership with their teams: CrossFit Wrigley, CrossFit Patriot Place, CrossFit Comiskey, CrossFit Lambeau, CrossFit Coliseum, CrossFit Candlestick ... even CrossFit Veterans. (Eagles fans are brutally abrasive, but I bet they'd make great CrossFitters.) Oh yeah, and I am gonna make CrossFit Aruba happen one day ...

I'm really looking forward to ... tomorrow.

My favorite coaching cue is ... "Shut the car door first." Imagine you've got an armful of groceries and you need to shut the door. Bump your ass back without tipping your chest forward. For squats, especially front and overhead, it's a way to fix a few common faults by getting the weight started back in the heels while preventing excessive forward inclination of the chest—and people remember it!

The most inspiring person/athlete I've ever worked with is ... I can't possibly answer that. They're all amazing in their own ways, and I'm glad to have the honor of continuing to get to know them more each and every day.

If I could have only one CrossFit T-shirt, it would be ... a freaking miracle. I swear those things are breeding in my closet. They're more prolific than rabbits. No person needs that many shirts. There are lots of homeless in Boston wearing tough-guy T-shirts thanks to this phenomenon and my tendency to donate clothing frequently.

J.T. Scott is an affiliate owner who trains out of his box, [CrossFit Fenway](#), as well as [CrossFit Somerville](#). We are all lucky to meet some real firebreathers hanging out with CrossFitters, but Scott is an actual fire-eater.

