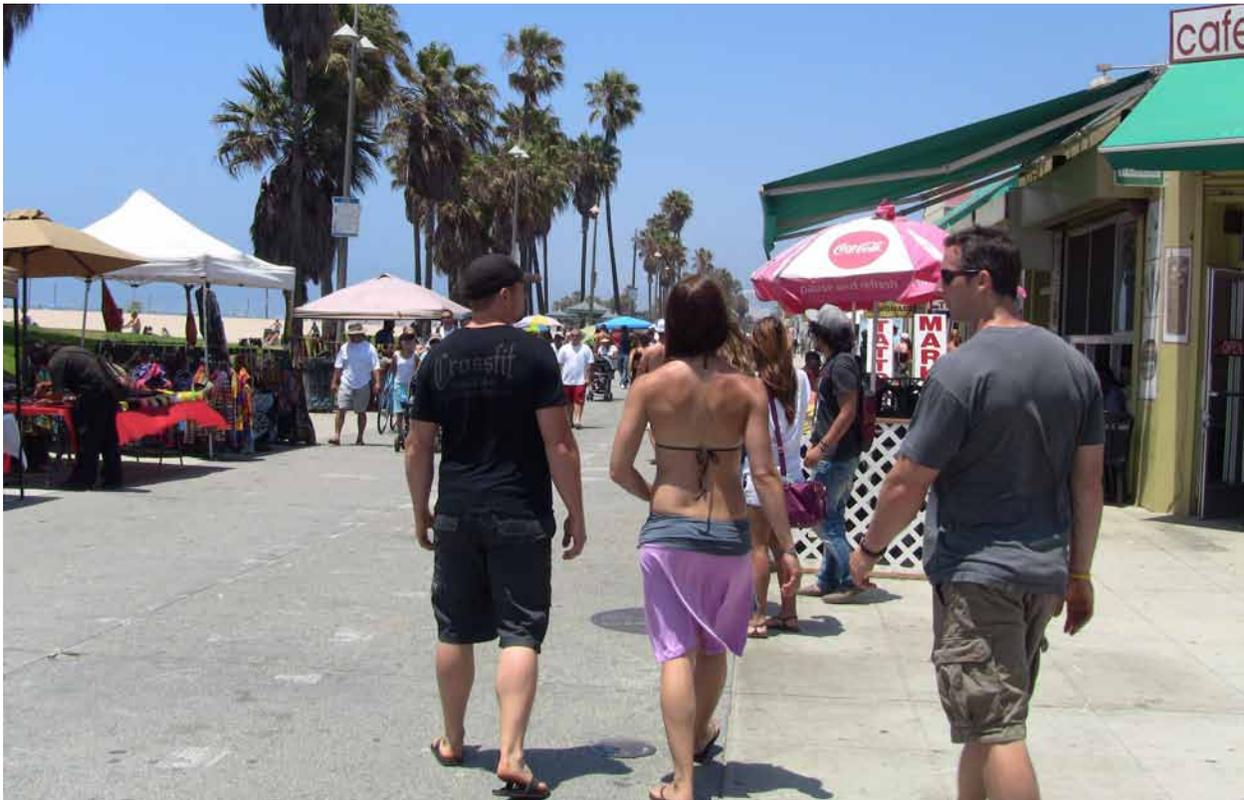

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When Murph Met Cindy

Emily Beers explains why CrossFitters are happier dating their own kind.

By **Emily Beers** CrossFit Vancouver

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All images: CrossFit Vancouver and Jen Broxterman

It all began when I started training a new client.

Attractive, charming, irresistibly bratty—he was the guy most girls are shamefully attracted to. He’s the guy girls pretend they don’t like, and while some of us successfully manage to avoid the pain these men cause, others are not so lucky. And although my client was a former pro lacrosse player and snowboarder, he had dedicated the last 10 years of his life to partying and getting girls as opposed to his fitness.

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Bradleah and Mike Dahlman got married in Mexico while competing in the Reebok CrossFit Games Open.

Never having had trouble attracting a girl in his life, this CrossFit newbie was immediately intrigued, and offended, by the way CrossFit women think. It seemed he might have finally entered a world where, unless he started drinking the CrossFit Kool-Aid and added some load to his back squat, he might not be able to get the girl.

Sharing a Cup of Kool-Aid

"What do you mean you'd never date someone who doesn't CrossFit?" he asked me after our second one-on-one session. "That's bullshit. You're so superficial."

"I just don't think I could," I tried to explain. "Hear me out: CrossFit is just too important to me. It's not like this mystery man needs to be a CrossFitter when I meet him, but he damn well better get his ass in here soon enough," I said.

He shook his head, visibly appalled, and asked me if all CrossFit girls felt this way.

Putting the theory to the test, I called a girl over, a petite, lean, classic-looking hot CrossFit girl who was visiting our box from Calgary.

It's not like this mystery man needs to be a CrossFitter when I meet him, but he damn well better get his ass in here soon enough.

"No way. I could never date a non-CrossFitter," she said with unmistakable certainty in her voice.

"You guys are nuts," said my client, shaking his head.

After this, I started brainstorming to find a way to explain to my new client—let's call him The Outsider—why CrossFitters are better off with CrossFitters.

I came up with two concepts that helped both me and my client understand why CrossFitters have healthier relationships when they're with another CrossFitter:

1. Spiritual Compatibility—CrossFit is a lifestyle, not a sport. When we consider CrossFit as a set of beliefs about life shared by all CrossFit members, as opposed to a sport, it's easy to see why we're so compatible.
2. Practical Compatibility—I presented *The Outsider* with relationship evidence, a mini case study if you will, that showed the real-life cause and effect between CrossFitters and the growth of healthy relationships.

Concept 1: Spiritual Compatibility

Imagine, for a second, the following two hypothetical dating scenarios:

Situation 1: A first date between two college varsity athletes. The girl plays on the volleyball team. The guy is a quarterback on the football team. They're sitting down for dinner. Girl says: "You should try volleyball. Seriously, quit football and try out for the university volleyball team." Guy laughs and thinks girl is crazy. When he realizes she is serious, he bolts.

Situation 2: A first date between a CrossFitter and a cyclist. They're sitting down for dinner. Girl says: "You should come try CrossFit. Seriously, it will make your cycling better. Quit wasting your time pretending you're fit and actually become fit." Guy laughs and says he's never going to be interested in CrossFit. Girl bolts.

Situation 1 is arguably absurd. A basketball player doesn't try to convince his swimmer girlfriend to familiarize herself with Spalding and start working on her three-point shot. A figure skater surely doesn't want to convert her hockey-player boyfriend into a master of the triple Lutz.

However, Situation 2 is a familiar place for many CrossFitters. I can personally recount many disappointing dinners with prototypical bodybuilders, weakling triathletes and enthusiastic hikers.

This is why CrossFit isn't really a sport—it's an entire cultural system that creates meaning, a specific set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by most members. This also happens to be one definition of religion.



Loser does the dishes.

Then I arrive at my CrossFit box and am immediately surrounded by people who have chosen to stop making excuses When I see that, I'm immediately turned on.

In our case, instead of belief in a higher power, our beliefs are about taking action, embracing pain, and attacking our shortcomings to better ourselves and ultimately become better, stronger, happier, healthier human beings.

When I've tried to date someone who doesn't CrossFit, I find there is a lot of talk backed up by mediocre-to-pathetic amounts of action. Excuses constantly float around.

"Yeah, I need to get back in shape. Maybe when my schedule clears up a bit, I'll get back into it," says the man of the hour.

Then I arrive at my CrossFit box and am immediately surrounded by people who have chosen to stop making excuses and embrace what they know will make them better. When I see that, I'm immediately turned on, and it becomes hard to go back to the guy who says he's planning on joining a running group in the summer.

Damian Murray, a Ph.D. student at the University of British Columbia and a devout CrossFitter, agrees.

"I have much less patience for girls that routinely make excuses for why they aren't as fit as they'd like to be. Since starting CrossFit, I'm more attracted to girls who have an adventurous streak and are able to acknowledge their fears and act anyway," said Murray, who explained that these are the qualities he usually sees in CrossFit women.

Here's an analogy I presented to The Outsider to help him understand: CrossFit is like being a Christian who will only marry another Christian. An understandable concept, right?

Concept 2: Practical Compatibility (The Laws of Attraction)

Let's be honest: attraction matters. If you don't want to jump the person you're with 95 percent of the time you're around them, then what's the point?

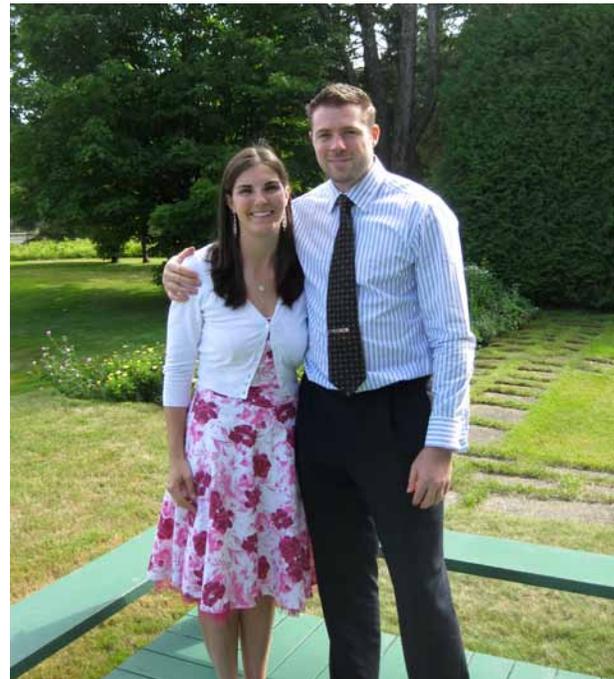
In my recent CrossFit Radio documentary ([Episode 164](#)), I explained that men who perform functional movements at high intensity are more likely to get laid. Simply put, after surveying 50-plus CrossFit women from around Canada and the United States, I discovered that CrossFit men are more desirable to women.

We heard Julie Collens, from CrossFit Milwaukee, explain why.

"You kind of want somebody who can throw you around—that's a functional movement," said Collens, who went on to say that men who can do a four-foot box jump become "worship worthy" to her.

And we heard from 27-year-old Lindsay McCardle, from CrossFit Zone in Victoria, B.C. When she began CrossFit, she was dating a professional golfer, but the more fit she became, the less attracted she was to the golfer, and soon her relationship disintegrated.

"Even though he was a pro golfer, he definitely was not (fit), and the longer we dated, the more and more that became obvious," said McCardle, who is now dating Lucas Parker, who won the Canada West Regional in May and qualified for the CrossFit Games.



***CrossFit couple Jen Broxterman and Dave Henry
of CrossFit London.***



Dahlmann will be competing in the Reebok CrossFit Games Affiliate Cup alongside her husband.

And we heard from Rhea Borkowitz-Stewart of Vancouver, B.C.

"I would never date any soft men Prior to CrossFit, I was definitely more lenient as far as my standards, but it's totally changed everything. And it makes the pool smaller because it's harder to find a man who is ripped," she said.

She added: "I've already checked out everyone at CrossFit Vancouver. I'm going to have to lurk at the other gyms around B.C. just to find some a beast of a man."

And it turns out these "beasts of men" are also more attracted to female CrossFitters.

Parker is a man with a posterior-chain fetish, something only a CrossFitter might truly appreciate.

"Now, I have much more trouble being attracted to a girl that is soft," said Murray.

Similarly, Parker is a man with a posterior-chain fetish, something only a CrossFitter might truly appreciate.

"A good set of glutes is a glorious gift from God," he said.

Twenty-three-year-old John Gillis, from Kelowna, B.C., agrees.

"I'm an 'if a girls squats' kind of guy," said Gillis.

And Dave Kitchen, owner of Pure Athletics in North Vancouver, B.C., explains that skinny fat is no longer attractive.

"I now am more attracted to a woman who has some muscle. I would rather have a girl who is larger and more fit than a skinny fat girl, who only looks good in her clothes that hold it all together," he said.

Gift-Giving

Gift-giving in relationships often causes stress. From a missed anniversary to an inadequate birthday present, tensions often rise between couples when it comes to showing their love and affection through the act of giving a gift.

When Murph ... (continued)

Jen Broxterman is the girlfriend of Dave Henry, owner of CrossFit London, in London, Ont.

She still remembers the first gift Henry gave her. They had been dating for a couple of months. It was her 25th birthday. It was wrapped in athletic tape. Broxterman tore it open feverishly and discovered a shiny callous brush.

If a callous brush is Henry's idea of a birthday present for his girlfriend, then it's probably a blessing he is dating another CrossFitter.

Communication

Miscommunications are often cited as being the leading cause of the death of a relationship. How many times has an intended compliment been misinterpreted as a dig? These kinds of situations arise significantly less when your partner is on the same page as you.

When Broxterman and Henry were in the early stages of dating, Broxterman had a hard time reading Henry, a man who wasn't always open and expressive about his feelings toward her. She was unsure whether Henry was truly into her or not. But he soon busted out his first verbal compliment.

Henry's uncharacteristic compliment might have offended a non-CrossFit woman, or at the very least left her to wonder what the intentions of his comment were, but Broxterman knew it was Henry's way of letting her know of his undeniable attraction to her.

His compliment: "Jen, you have a badass hamstring line."

Sex

They say sex doesn't make a relationship, but it certainly can break it.

The question I put to Craig Patterson, owner of CrossFit Vancouver, was this: "How is sex with a CrossFitter better than with a non-CrossFitter?"

His eyes lit up.

"I can make my girlfriend orgasm five times a night ... 10 if I haven't seen her in a while," said Patterson.

Final Reflections

Whether due to spiritual compatibility, a shared way of thinking, compatibility in gift giving and communication or just plain old primal attraction and great hard-bodied sex, CrossFit couples just seem happier to me.



Functional movements performed at high intensity can sometimes be enjoyable.

Broxterman, a registered dietician and founder of NutritionRX, says she loves how closely linked she is with both Henry and CrossFit.

"It's amazing to see Dave and I bring our two small businesses together and create an awesome package Working closely with your partner definitely has its challenges, but it's cool to see how much we both have helped each other grow," she said.

**"You know, CrossFit girls
are actually pretty hot."**

—The Outsider

I would argue that CrossFit plays an integral role in this growth, both for the individual and the couple. One trend I've noticed since being a CrossFit coach is that when a newbie who is in a relationship walks through the door, one of two things usually happens: either the newbie brings his or her significant other into the box within the first month or two and CrossFit becomes a shared hobby and passion for them, or the relationship with the non-CrossFitting partner disintegrates rapidly once he or she starts CrossFit.

If the relationship ends, what happens next is that I soon discover from my recently single client that his or her relationship had been poisonous in the first place and a blessing to have ended.

From this, I can only assume that CrossFit gives you the power and courage to leave bad situations and look for better ones.

I had a conversation with The Outsider the other day, my charming client who was at that point 14 weeks into CrossFit.

"You know," he said, "CrossFit girls are actually pretty hot."

Ladies and gentlemen, we might just have acquired yet another cult member.



About the Author

Emily Beers finished a master's degree in journalism at the University of Western Ontario in the spring of 2009. Upon graduation, she worked as a sportswriter at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, where she covered figure skating and short-track speed skating. Currently, she hosts Bathroom Graffiti, a not-always-PG publication of the CrossFit Vancouver School of Fitness.

As an athlete and CrossFitter, Beers started out as a gymnast, competing to the national level. After growing too tall for gymnastics, she played NCAA Division 1 basketball for the University of Idaho, then returned home and played for the University of British Columbia. After three years of playing basketball, she started rowing, competing at the varsity level at the University of Western Ontario for two years. While trying to make the National Rowing Team in 2009, she discovered CrossFit and became utterly addicted. Soon, CrossFit was meant to be a way to cross-train for rowing but became her greatest passion. She moved back to Vancouver in September 2009 and found CrossFit Vancouver, where she now both trains and works as an apprentice coach.

In her first season competing in CrossFit she won the B.C. Sectional competition in 2010. Regionals were less kind to her, but that's only made her more determined to get to the Games. She ruptured her Achilles tendon in December 2010 and served as the Canada West Regional media director while recovering from Achilles surgery. She'll be competing in the 2011 CrossFit Games on the CrossFit Vancouver Affiliate Cup team.