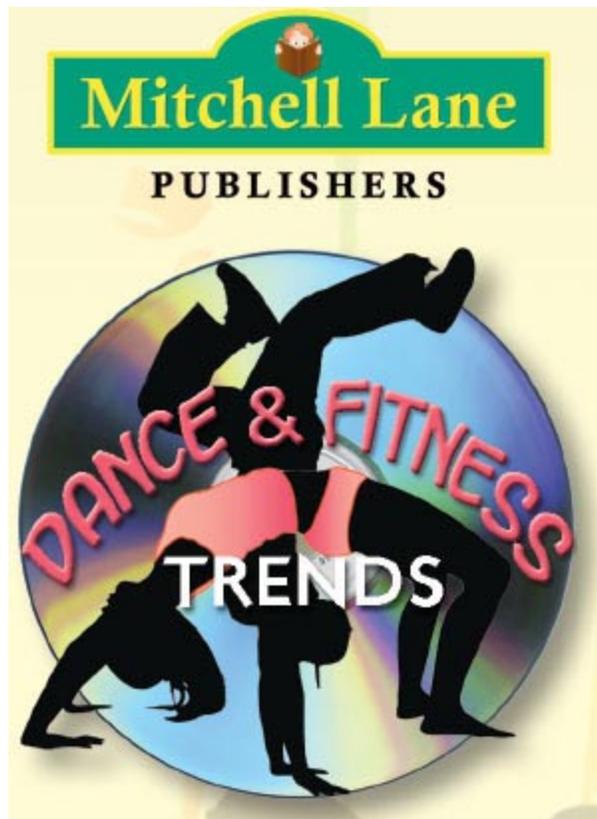




The World of CROSSFIT



Pete
DiPrimio



African Dance Trends
Get Fit with Video Workouts
Line Dances Around the World
Trends in Hip-Hop Dance
Trends in Martial Arts
The World of CrossFit
Yoga Fitness
Zumba Fitness

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Contents

Introduction

Chapter One

 Hurting So Good

 WODs to Try

Chapter Two

The Beginning

 Rhabdomyolysis

Chapter Three

 Kids' Way

 The Paleo Diet

Chapter Four

 No Shortcuts

 How to Pick a Box

Chapter Five

 Focus and Passion

 CrossFit Games

Where to Get Started

Timeline

Further Reading

 Books

 On the Internet

 Works Consulted

Glossary of Exercises

Introduction



CrossFit has a clown for a mascot, but it's no joke.

CrossFit emphasizes back-to-the-basics training with constantly changing routines called Workouts of the Day (WODs in CrossFit talk). The philosophy of CrossFit is that you can get in better shape with short, intense workouts. You just need some clothes and shoes to work out in, and a willingness to push yourself harder than you thought possible.

Does it work?

"I'd never had muscles," says Lee Stewart, a certified CrossFit instructor and forty-something mother of four from Indiana. "With CrossFit, I got them. My husband Jim said, 'You've never looked like an athlete. Now, you do.'"

CrossFit works for athletes (triathlon competitors often use it as part of their training) and for those who just want to stay in shape.

CrossFit is for people of all ages. CrossFit gyms (called “boxes”) can have members ranging from four years old to older than seventy. The workout emphasizes “functional movement,” which means working the muscle in a way you would in real life-building muscle while doing something with that muscle.

“I could do bicep curls until I’m blue in the face,” says Indianapolis television anchor and fitness enthusiast Lauren Lowrey, “but when I’m using my biceps in real life, I’m never just standing there curling my arms. Usually, I’m using my biceps to lift a piece of furniture and move it. In those situations, I’m using my lower body while stabilizing my core and dealing with a racing heart.”

CrossFit training for kids is not the same as it is for adults. The focus is less on intensity and more on fun and fundamentals.

“We’ll often coach them to do their best work, but not their fastest, hardest work,” Jenna Innis Tieman says. She co-owns Hoosier CrossFit in Bloomington, Indiana. “Kids tend to cut corners and get sloppy in competitive situations. We want to help them learn how to move well, and then move well fast.” Forget no pain, no gain, at least when it comes to motivating teenagers. So how do CrossFit instructors get them to stay with it? By understanding “how to push their buttons,” Lee Stewart says. She should know. She trained both of her teenage sons.

“It has to be fun and they have to learn the proper movements,” she says.

“You’re coaching with a mental intensity to it that can be unpleasant. It’s like, ‘Oh my God, this is going to suck!’ You have to push yourself every time. Kids don’t always want that.”

CrossFit is a group workout. There are no earphones or iPods or doing your own thing. You know your coaches and other members by name. Coaches cheer you on when you struggle and when you set personal records. Members push and encourage each other. This is a commitment and not a fad, which means you do it several

times a week, every week. Many people keep a journal of their workouts to see how much they've improved.

How hard is CrossFit? Its mascot clown is called Pukie (as in working so hard you get sick) for a reason.

What is that reason?

Is it really for kids?

Let's take a look.

Chapter 1

Hurting So Good

Sarah Hoffman hurt so good. She didn't fear the blood and pain. The goal was so close; the achievement was so personal.

Sarah had one hundred pull-ups to do: eighty-five down, fifteen to go in this Workout of the Day. And if her hands looked like they'd been chewed by an aggressive squirrel, big deal. If she knew things like holding a hair brush would be out of the question for the next week, well, so what?

Quit?

No way.

Music blared loud and fast at Bloomington CrossFit in Indiana. It always did when Carl, a certified CrossFit trainer, ran the high-energy show.

Sarah was a seventeen-year-old senior at Bloomington South High School in the spring of 2013. She was a soccer and track star who hoped that a big finish to her high school track career would earn her a college scholarship. She planned to attend Denison University, a small college near Columbus, Ohio.

She ran the 400 meters for Bloomington South and wanted to break 60 seconds. Her friend Elliott, a hockey and lacrosse player, had shown impressive speed and strength gains with CrossFit. He told Sarah that the increasingly popular system combines weightlifting, gymnastics, body weight exercises, and aerobic exercises like sprints, with some giant tire flipping thrown in. She decided to try it.

It was a big commitment. Sarah would go to 5:00 a.m. CrossFit workouts before school, then to track practice after school. It was tough-and worth it. She ran a 61.9 second 400, then a 61.2, then 60.4.

“Then I got to 60.02, which was the worst,” she says. She had been so close, but didn’t quite break 60 seconds.

Finally, at the Indiana state championships for track, as a member of Bloomington South’s relay team, she ran 400 meters in 59.9 seconds. “CrossFit training really helped,” she says.

But before Sarah reached her goal in track, she was at Bloomington CrossFit, going for one hundred pull-ups.

Sarah couldn’t do unassisted pull-ups, so a strong elastic band was attached to the bar that helped give her a boost. She gripped the bar on the top of a squat rack, stood on the elastic band, and started doing pull-ups along with other WOD participants.

After every minute Carl would shout, “Minute!” Sarah would stop doing pull-ups, get off the rack and do three burpees, then start doing pull-ups again.

“I was pumping out pull-ups no problem at the beginning,” she says, “but after a while my arms started to feel like Jell-O. I had to talk to myself just to keep moving.”

The skin around the palms of her hands began to blister and tear.

“I didn’t realize it until I got to eighty-five pull-ups, and at that point, you have fifteen to go. Why not finish?”

So Sarah did, completing one hundred pull-ups, plus thirty-three burpees, in just over eleven minutes.

Her hands were a mess. Later, after another tough WOD tore up her hands again, her mother made her wear gloves.

“I used the gloves . . . half the time,” Sarah says. “They get in the way a lot, but on bar-heavy days, I know they’re better than bleeding hands.”

Sarah continued doing CrossFit in the summer of 2013 to prepare for her freshman season at Denison. She said the benefits went beyond conditioning.

“CrossFit produces a sense of community,” she says. “There can be friendly competition as far as who can do the most push-ups, but later they’re pushing you to do your best. People are encouraging whether you’re lifting 25 pounds or 125.”



In many ways, Sarah Hoffman was a typical high school senior. But with the help of CrossFit, she was able to reach her athletic goals. More importantly, her success in track helped her to attend the college of her choice.

CrossFit is not for those seeking the easy road to fitness, which might be why one WOD is called “Fight Gone Bad.” WODs can be

so hard that sometimes people throw up (think Pukie the Clown). As your fitness improves, workouts get harder, and satisfaction increases.



In CrossFit, form is as important as effort. California's Margaret Hodel powers through a second round of pull-ups, making sure her chin clears the bar, during a competition honoring fallen US soldiers.

CrossFit WODs sometimes include AMRAPs: As Many Rounds As Possible. So, in a twenty-minute period, you might do as many pull-ups, kettlebell swings, and other exercises as you can.

Some people think this is great. Others think it's asking for injury.

"That's one reason why it can be miserable," Lee Stewart says. "You go as hard as you can. It's all about keeping moving. You can rest when it's over."

And then, for those who can take it, it hurts so good.

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