

## CrossFit: Is it the new cult of fitness?

Written by Caroline Suhadolnik, Daily Vidette Fitness Columnist  
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Lately, a new sport has been getting a lot of hype. Sometimes it's referred to as a cult, other times it's criticized for being "too intense," and, most of the time, people say it's just a fad. Whatever you want to call it, you better get used to seeing the name — CrossFit.

Dubbed "the sport of fitness," CrossFit has exploded across the world since its founding by Greg Glassman in 1995. ESPN has aired The CrossFit Games (where the fittest man and woman in the world are crowned), Bob Harper has his team on The Biggest Loser perform CrossFit workouts, and affiliates are constantly being opened around the world.

Two years ago, my sister introduced me to my first CrossFit workout. After whining, griping, complaining, and some YouTube watching, I was hooked. I found my new hobby.

In short, CrossFit — hence the name — is a type of training that is constantly varied and incorporates everything from rowing to gymnastics to Olympic Lifts (basically anything but machines). The purpose of CrossFit is to enhance competence in random physical challenges, just like what we must face in real life.

Everybody is referred to as an athlete, no matter what your age or fitness level. Unlike a typical gym, you won't see any ellipticals, seated curl machines, or leg presses; compound movements are the basis of CrossFit and the athletes are the machines. The workouts are random and can last from three minutes to 45 minutes.

Knee socks and minimalist shoes are the norm, mirrors usually aren't hung, large digital timers are on the walls, and there are all shapes and sizes of people present. The glory of CrossFit is that any age and skill level is welcome; every single exercise and workout is adjustable to fit you.

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A lot of people misconceive this — they see the recommended workouts on CrossFit.com and don't realize that these are for the elite and people who have been training for a long time. If you look further, there are recommendations for modifying the workout.

I always hear that CrossFit sets you up for injury because it's so intense and the movements are "dangerous," but then I read articles about a person having a heart attack during a marathon. Does that mean running is too dangerous?

Again, it all comes back to scaling to your level and allowing yourself to be coached by someone knowledgeable. CrossFit also really pushes your mobility in the form of active stretching before and after each workout to avoid and prevent injuries.

One of the most important aspects of CrossFit that I love is that results are based on your performance, not on how you look or how much you weigh. Scales and mirrors aren't seen in these gyms because if you do the work and eat well, your body will become healthy. You don't need a scale to tell you that.

Instead of a 90-day workout regimen to prepare you for a trip to the beach, CrossFit prepares you for life, physically and mentally. Don't get me wrong, the workouts are demanding, but you get pushed to a new level. After having a good and challenging workout, my whole day seems easy and conquerable.

I believe CrossFit will be around for years to come and will continue to change people's lives. Whether you think CrossFit is just a craze or a cult of obsessive workout fiends, you might be proven wrong; just ask any of the people from one of the 3,400 CrossFit gyms around the world.

*Questions or comments to Caroline's column can be sent to: [dvcjsuhad@exchange.ilstu.edu](mailto:dvcjsuhad@exchange.ilstu.edu).*

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