

Fitness Trend: CrossFit

What they say? CrossFit is a strength and conditioning program centered on developing a “fitness, that is, by design broad, general, and inclusive.” CrossFit incorporates elements of Olympic weightlifting, gymnastics, powerlifting, and endurance training to help people improve on ten aspects of fitness: cardiovascular and respiratory endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, agility, balance, and accuracy. The CrossFit website posts workouts daily that can be completed by anyone, only the weights and completion time are varied by the individual. These workouts can be done nearly anywhere but CrossFit is encouraged to be practiced in one of its affiliated gyms.



What others say? CrossFit has developed a bit of a debate in the strength and conditioning field. Most agree that any trend that gets people working out in a positive way is a good one. However, many will argue that CrossFit is not the best program to follow if one wants to be the best athlete they can, or achieve their greatest fitness levels. CrossFit’s goal is centered on helping someone become more “competent” in many areas of fitness. This usually means that one will not become great in any particular aspect. The daily workouts seem to be random and often do not show any form of progressive overloading, the basic principle behind strength training. Random programming can often hinder the progress made from one workout. For example, one workout may require you to squat near your personal best, then the next workout requires a long timed run, then you might not squat again for another two weeks. The long run will disrupt your ability to recover from the squat workout, and since you will not squat again for awhile you have no way to build upon the progress you may have made. Others cite that their timed workouts and high repetition volume often lead to a breakdown in form and thus an increased risk for injury.

Bottom line: CrossFit can help an average person become a better athlete, like many strength programs, although it probably will not make you the best athlete on the field or in the gym. If you have a specific training goal, such as increased strength or size or an increase in lean body mass, then CrossFit is not the best program for you. In this case, you want to specialize your training for your goals. If you enjoy working out just for the sake of working out and are looking for a new challenge, then CrossFit might be for you.