

CrossFit and Home Gym Training

So, who am I?

My name is Lynne Pitts; I've been weight and fitness training for over 20 years. My roots are in bodybuilding-style training: the usual 3 day split of chest/shoulders/tris, back/bi's, and legs. Add a couple days of jogging or biking or stair machine, and that was my early training Good, but not great. From that I moved to competitive powerlifting, and eventually set multi-state, national, and world records. While strong, I wasn't "Fit." Neither, by the way, is your average marathon runner who can't carry two bags of groceries up the stairs! As I researched better and more efficient ways to combine strength, agility, flexibility, and respiratory capacity, I discovered CrossFit. You can check it out at www.crossfit.com. Be sure to download the free .pdf's on What is Fitness and Getting Started with CrossFit.



So, what is CrossFit?

A couple of quotes from the founder, Greg Glassman:

“Our program delivers a fitness that is, by design, broad, general, and inclusive. Our specialty is not specializing. Combat, survival, many sports, and life reward this kind of fitness and, on average, punish the specialist.”

“The CrossFit program is designed for universal scalability making it the perfect application for any committed individual regardless of experience. We've used our same routines for elderly individuals with heart disease and cage fighters one month out from televised bouts. We scale load and intensity; we don't change programs.”

So, to sum up, CrossFit is a fitness program that is based on the idea that doing full body movements, calisthenics, gymnastics, sprinting, some long distance cardio, and Olympic Weightlifting to push your body to its limits in a short amount of time will make you fitter than isolated muscle training and longer workouts. The workouts are varied, random, always challenging, never boring, and will not only develop across-the-spectrum fitness, but mercilessly expose (and improve) your weaknesses.

So, why is CrossFit and home gym training the perfect match?

Setting up any kind of training circuit in a commercial gym is tough. As soon as you get off the bench press to go do your pullups, for example, someone will take over the bench. Or you'll have to wait to get to the pullup bar which is invariably between the cable cross-over stations. At home? No waiting, no equipment snatching.

Oftentimes in commercial gyms, the equipment is in different areas: the "cardio room" has the rowers, bikes, and treadmills; the "free weight room" has the bars, power racks, dumbbells, and benches, and the "machine room" has the Nautilus, cable, plate-loading equipment. So again, for a CrossFit workout which calls for 3 rounds of running 400 meters, repetition deadlifts, and situps, you'll lose time going from area to area, and guaranteed that when you get back to your first station, someone will have nabbed it. At home? You will likely, due to space constraints, have everything close together. And you can move your equipment around as you need.

CrossFit loves the Olympic lifts and all their variants: snatch, power snatch; clean, power clean, clean and jerk, clean and press. Most commercial gyms these days don't allow these lifts because they are "dangerous." As long as you have the space, and ideally some bumper (rubber) plates, you can o-lift to your heart's content in your home gym.

CrossFit loves the power lifts (deadlifts, bench press, squat). Many commercial gyms ban the deadlift because you might (gasp!) use chalk on your hands (chalk is a no-no in the chrome-and-fern world) or (horrors!) set the bar down with a thump. And you can forget squatting in the squat rack; someone will be using it to hold up their mighty 65# curl bar. At home? You're the boss!

CrossFit loves gymnastics and calisthenics. Good luck with those moves in the commercial gym! But for less than \$100, you can get a great set of adjustable gymnastics rings, which are used for ring dips, pullups, body rows, pushups, and mastering the muscle-up (a pullup/dip combo move).

CrossFit loves kettlebells. Tire flipping. Odd lifts and feats of strength. None of these are welcome in your average risk-averse conventional commercial gym. But in your backyard or driveway? No problem!

So, my recommendation is: visit www.CrossFit.com, read all of the material and the message board. Start building your home gym. And have some fun getting into the best shape of your life!