

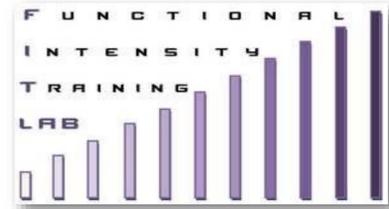


# Why do they do it?

## An exploration of the factors that influence CrossFit™ participation

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[www.k-state.edu/kines/labs/fit.html](http://www.k-state.edu/kines/labs/fit.html)

### INTRODUCTION

- Psychosocial and environment factors influence exercise adherence.
- Multimodal workouts of higher intensity and shorter duration can help individuals overcome the most common barrier to physical activity, time.
- CrossFit™ is high-intensity functional training that incorporates both strength and aerobic based components and contributes toward meeting national physical activity guidelines through trainer-led group exercise.
- Due to constant variation, CrossFit™ allows individuals to find something that they are good at, improve on weaknesses, and learn new skills.

### PURPOSE

**Key factors affecting continued participation in CrossFit™ were explored through interviews and focus groups with trainers/owners and members.**

### METHODS

Participants:

- CrossFit™ trainers/ owners and members (n=64)
- From 6 gyms of different sizes and settings (e.g. military, private, university) in Kansas and Missouri

Participant Information	Key Informant Interviews	Focus Groups (n=6)	Individual Interviews
<b>Number</b>	6 coaches	48 participants	10 participants
<b>Gender</b>	67% male	56% male	50% male
<b>Age</b>	38.5±8.2y	33.7±8.6y	40.5±15.1y
<b>Experience</b>	1-9 years	1-50 months	14-38 months

### METHODS

#### Measures

Qualitative data were collected through 60-minute key informant interviews, 90-minute focus groups, and 15-minute individual interviews.



Questions related to participation were as follows:

- Coaches were asked “What do you feel is most important about CrossFit to your members?”
- CrossFit participants were asked “Why do/have you continue(d) to do CrossFit?”

#### Analysis

Open coding, using Nvivo 10, was used to identify themes within the questions related to participation.

### RESULTS

Examples participant responses are shown below:

- Key Informant Interviews:
  - “It’s a combination of the training approach and the community environment.”
  - “Results. That’s what brought them there in the first place.”
- Focus Groups:
  - “There’s no pattern here. And you are always learning new things...There is always someone there to challenge you.”
  - “There is too much to learn, to master, and that’s the challenge is trying to improve each time improve from your last workout, improve upon a skill, improve upon a lift.”
- Individual Interviews:
  - It’s motivated me to keep a healthy lifestyle, especially during pregnancy. And I can see improvement in strength, overall fitness, and health.”
  - “Positive benefits. 70 mg/dl HDLs doesn’t lie.”

### RESULTS

Four key themes were identified:



Key factors within each of the themes were as follows:

#### Physical benefits:

- Improvements in fitness, strength, technique, posture, and flexibility

#### Health benefits:

- Exercise as prevention, positive lifestyle and diet changes, and decreases in chronic conditions (e.g., high cholesterol, osteoporosis)

#### Social benefits:

- Supportive community with positive attitudes, encouragement, and strong camaraderie

Participants noted that these benefits were not all instantaneous and often required hard work

#### Exercise programming:

- good coaching, challenges, variety, and always having something new to learn.

### CONCLUSIONS

Those who continued to participate in CrossFit™ reported multiple gains in health, fitness, and social support. Factors identified for continued CrossFit™ participation directly addressed common barriers to physical activity. CrossFit™ is a promising type of exercise to help adults meet guidelines and see health-enhancing benefits.