

# CrossFit

*Flagstaff*  
Forging Elite Fitness

*Flagstaff, Arizona*

## Athlete of the Month

She sneaks in at 6 am most mornings, always cheerful and smiling no matter how cold and dark it is and recently has been setting the time and/or weights the next few classes strive to beat. That's right, this month's athlete is Nikki Cooley!



### How long have you been doing CrossFit?

I believe I started Crossfit in late April/early May 2011, which was after my daughter turned 8 months old, and I completed a 10 day river trip.

### Why did you start CrossFit?

I was always an active person throughout my life starting with early morning runs enforced by my elders, then shepherding up to 30 miles/day, hiking and then river guiding for over 12 years. Then turned 27 and my metabolism slowed way down, and then a life-changing event occurred that led me to reduce the number of river trips I was doing. Then my husband and I became pregnant with our daughter and although I didn't gain that much weight, post-pregnancy I began to feel sluggish, restless and unsatisfied. Growing up in a family that mandated strict early morning runs and constant physical work around the home, I needed an exercise regime that was set, challenging and rewarding. I disliked going to a regular gym because I was the only one who held me accountable and no one to cheer me on, plus the wafts of perfume/cologne and folks admiring themselves in the mirror was getting old. I needed a challenge, I needed me to push myself every time I went to workout and that is why I started CrossFit.

### Who introduced you to CrossFit?

In the spring of 2011, I started one of the best jobs I've ever had at NAU, working on a climate change project with Jane Marks who was the lead. We were at George Washington University in DC having cocktails after the first day of a conference and we were chatting about our day when we began discussing exercise.



## ISSUE 14, APRIL 2013

### Upcoming Events

Sat-Sun May 18-19

CrossFit Kettlebell Trainer Course

Hammer CrossFit

Fri-Sun, May 31-June 2nd

South West Regional

Utah Olympic Oval

Salt Lake City, Utah

Sat. June 22<sup>nd</sup>

East Valley Open III

East Valley CrossFit

Sat.-Sun. June 29-30<sup>th</sup>

CrossFit Olympic Lifting Trainer Course

CrossFit Flagstaff

She then happened to mention this place in Flagstaff where she worked out with a variety of people that included elite athletes, EMTs, doctors, students, etc., and that they were all into this crazy, intense workout. Jane called them WODs and of course, I had no idea what she was talking about. What Jane was telling me sounded intense and instead for gladiators but strangely enough I was intrigued and I made a decision to try it when she mentioned the free Saturdays. So the very next Free Saturday I was there and I was so scared and intimidated and I felt like the first time I rowed my own boat down the canyon and faced Crystal Rapid (as you can see I use my river experience for analogies a lot). As Robin Moore puts, "You've passed the yellow markers, there's no turning back," and I remember Cullen was the trainer. I can't remember the workout but I remember sweating, huffing and puffing, and wondering why I did this to myself, but Cullen was there cheering and encouraging me on and that meant the world to me.

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There were 15 or so other folks in the class but I liked the fact that I didn't feel alone or out of place, and I liked the WOD, that's what got me hooked. I signed up for intro classes the very next business day and that was that. Thanks to Jane Marks for introducing me to a whole new world of pain and rewards!

**What do you enjoy most about CrossFit?**

CrossFit has been amazing all around but what I enjoy the most is the supportive atmosphere of the gym. It is very competitive but not to the point where people make you feel inferior to them. People push you to do your best. People *want* you to do your best because they truly believe you can even if you don't. No matter your skill level, you are on an equal platform with everyone. This gym has all shapes, sizes, ages and skill levels but yet we all support each other as if we were training for the Olympics. I have never felt anything other than supported, encouraged and respected and because of that I choose to CrossFit.

**What is your favorite workout?**

This should be no surprise to some trainers and my husband, but my favorite workout is any WOD that does not involve running. Perhaps it's because of my upbringing but running terrifies me. I'll do it but I prefer to lift heavy weights and since I've gotten the hang of snatches, I really love that movement. And I love deadlifts! That said, I have made a promise to myself to work on getting better at running.

**You are a mom, a wife, an athlete, and you work full-time. How do you balance everything and still find time for yourself?**

Being the oldest of seven kids, I have learned to multi-task and do what needs to be done. Having said that, it is absolutely tough to be all of the above alone but I could not do it without my husband Craig. In the Navajo way, we strive to achieve balance and harmony in our daily lives and Craig helps me do that. He supports my work, my friends and family and my hobbies. CrossFit was one of the best things I've ever taken on that has helped me achieve that balance because I sweat out any frustrations and stress. I feel so darn good after a 6am workout (lately I've been coming at all times) and I'm ready for the day.

**Your husband, Craig, also trains at CrossFit Flagstaff. You have said that he joined because of you. Did you pressure him into it, or did your enthusiasm just spill over until he couldn't help but join?**

I was into CrossFit a little over a year when Craig made the decision to give CrossFit a try because, as he says "You made me go sooner than I



would've and also because you wouldn't shut up about it." In essence yes, I encouraged him with my enthusiasm that CrossFit would be the same whether he went now or later and I remember always saying that I felt so good even when I was tired and so sore. He has always been a very fit person but we have both wanted an exercise regime to fit our lifestyles and busy schedules for a long time. I just happened to start sooner than he did. Of course, he loves it now and we talk about our successes and goals, and it just a wonderful part of our lives that we share.

**What are your future goals?**

I have a daily goal to be stronger, fitter and happier than the day before. My daily goal includes learning and respecting people at my job, the gym or people I encounter everyday. Specifically to CrossFit, I really would like to get better at running, consistent rope climbs and pull-ups, and a heavy snatch (over 110lbs). If CrossFit continues to challenge me, then I will always have goals to set.

**Do you follow the Paleo or Zone diets, and if so what are your favorite cheat foods?**

Currently, I do not follow any specific diets BUT I do have to say that I have been eating way better since I've begun CrossFit. I never ate terribly but just didn't have enough greens in my diet until I became pregnant and I was diagnosed with borderline gestational diabetes. So Craig helped me keep a food diary and we ate tons of veggies. I cut down on my processed sweets and carb intake and it made a huge difference to my health. Now I eat kale or spinach and other veggies and lots of fresh fruit every day but I do admit, I want to go a step further and that would be to try the nutrition challenge. I am just afraid to take the next step because it is the unknown and I don't know how it is going to make me feel initially.

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## A Science of Sorts

by Lindsay Wagner

**Disclaimer:** I believe that food is medicine and can assist in the healing of most ailments. I have been experimenting with food for a little over 5 years. Don't take my words for fact. These results are my experience. Yours will be different. Use my experience to develop experiments of your own. There is no magic pill that is going to provide you with epic health and fitness. It is your job to figure out what fuel works for your body and what the best way to burn it is. Enjoy the journey.

### Hydrate-

Up until about a month ago I would maybe get a quart of water in my body a day. That quart usually was consumed during or right after a workout. I often felt puffy, like my body was keeping all the water it could possibly hold. I recently came across several articles talking about hydrating in the morning before anything else going into your stomach. I didn't see any real risk in trying this, so I started drinking 2 quarts of water immediately upon rising. The first week was hell. I felt like I was going to puke for about an hour after and I had to pee every 5 minutes until about 10 am. Everything changed the second week. The puffy feeling disappeared. I woke up craving the water, and it went down easy. I now feel hydrated throughout the day and don't need to chug water in the middle of workouts. I would highly recommend trying this. Proper hydration levels optimize body function.

### Eat-

Do you come to the gym without eating a pre-workout meal? Do you leave the gym and wait hours before you eat? Do you feel like crap? It is really important to provide your body with the nutrients that it needs before a workout and even more importantly within a half hour after the workout. I have been playing with macronutrient combinations for the past month. I have found that I perform best with a meal consisting of carbohydrates, fat, and protein about 1.5 to 2 hours before the workout.

I generally try and make this a balanced 3-block meal. I keep these meals very simple and clean. The go-to combination has been blueberries, avocado and turkey.

The post-workout meal happens immediately after the workout at the gym. Through trial and error I have come to the conclusion that carbohydrates and protein are all that is necessary for me after a workout. Fat is a little slow to digest, and causes a bit of pain in the process. I have been using a paleo recovery powder that is made from sweet potatoes and egg protein. It is definitely an acquired taste. I would suggest relying on whole food if possible. You can bake sweet potatoes and apples and puree them into a sauce. Put that mixture into a Ziploc bag and when you finish your workout just bite a corner off and squeeze. Chicken goes well with this mixture.

### Cook-

The latest kitchen concoction is a meat crust quiche. The basic idea is as follows. Experiment with what you have and I bet it will turn out awesome.

1. Turn the oven to 375 degrees.
2. Take about one pound of sausage and press it into the shape of a crust in a pie pan. My favorite is the green chili pork sausage from New Frontiers. You will need 4 sausages if you use a New Frontiers variety.
3. Bake the meat crust for 15 minutes or so. You want the meat to be firm when you press on it.
4. While it is baking, mince 3 or more garlic cloves and half an onion. Throw them in a pan with a bit of oil or fat.
5. Dice 1 medium sweet potato and add it to the onion and garlic. Let it cook for a bit.
6. Add other things that you may have around such as spinach, mushrooms, and peppers.
7. Salt and pepper this mixture. Add other spices if you wish. A suggestion would be paprika or chili powder.
8. Once the mixture is all cooked add it to a bowl and let it cool for a minute or 2 then add 6 eggs and mix.
9. By this time the meat crust should be done. Take it out of the oven and **POUR OFF THE LIQUID THAT HAS ACCUMULATED.**
10. Pour the eggs and goods into the meat crust and put it back in the oven. I would suggest setting the pie pan on a cookie sheet in case you get some egg overflow.
11. Cook it until the middle is firm. Eat.

## Five Reasons Why You Should Deadlift

Article take from MyDailyMoment.com

After the squat, the deadlift is the most effective movement that you can do in the gym. Epitomizing the term "compound movement," it uses nearly every muscle in your entire body, from your traps all the way down to your calves. Bodybuilders, competitive lifters, and many other athletes have long used this movement to build brute strength, pack on muscle mass, and improve their overall athletic performance. Here are five reasons why every trainee, casual or competitive, should be deadlifting:

### 1. The Deadlift Promotes Full Body Muscular Development

While many trainers and trainees alike are quick to simply categorize the deadlift as a "back" movement, it is truly a full-body exercise. At the start, the deadlift brings the hamstrings and quads into play to break the weight from the floor. The lower back is also stimulated from the very beginning and remains tense and contracted to keep the weight moving upward and back. From the middle of the range of motion to lockout, the lats, traps, and rhomboids are heavily engaged to keep the weight in close to the body. Finally, the forearms, biceps, and overall grip strength are taxed to the limit to hold on to heavy weights.

### 2. Building the Biggest Back Possible

While the deadlift brings much more than the lower and upper backs into play, it is truly the best back-builder you can perform. It is indispensable for obtaining that thick look to your back and overall physique that simply screams "powerful." At powerlifting meets, the guys with the biggest deadlifts are almost always sporting the biggest, thickest lats and traps. In bodybuilding shows, the competitors with the most dominating back poses are also usually the ones known to be strong deadlifters. Pull-ups and rows are certainly important, but you will never build the most developed back possible without the deadlift.

### 3. Developing an Iron Grip

Unless you are using lifting straps, the deadlift will develop enormous crushing and pinching grip strength. Your forearms and hands grow in strength and size to accommodate the weights that the rest of your body is handling. This improved grip strength is valuable not only for other weight-training exercises, but for any sport in which you grab, hold, or throw objects or other competitors. Because your hands are the tools for transferring power from the rest of your body to another object, your grip can make or break your overall strength.

### 4. The Deadlift Mimics Real-Life and Sport Situations

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### Who do you admire as an athlete?

I am surrounded by so many athletes everyday but I do love the ladies at CrossFit. They are inspiring because they are beautiful, strong, determined and human. What I mean by that is that I found no one is invincible but rather they take one step at a time to accomplish the goals they set for themselves. These ladies work their butts off during the WODs and they encourage others at the same time. No offense to the men, but as a woman myself I look up to the CrossFit women because we are built differently than men. Specifically, I admire the athlete who gives it all they got and still finds the breath to help others through encouragement.

### What advice do you have for new members or other CrossFitters?

My advice to new and current CrossFitters is to *never* give up on yourself and to keep pushing to the next level. There are days when I feel like giving up but then someone yells encouragement and it makes all the difference in the world. I am at the point where I am not only getting physically stronger but mentally stronger, too. It pays to ask the trainers questions on movements because every small detail you pay attention to, it makes a difference in your movements. The trainers are there to help and they are very good at what they do. CrossFit Flagstaff is not just a gym where you exercise but it's a community that is supportive and inspiring in more than one way. To new members, come on over and try it, you'll love it!

While people are quick to toss around the term "functional strength" with little real meaning, it surely applies to the deadlift. The foremost example of this application to real-life scenarios is in picking things up off the ground, especially heavy objects that require a strong back and grip. Furthermore, nearly every contact sport contains situations such as checking, tackling, and jumping that involve a large, quick transference of energy from the lower body to the upper body or another object.

### 5. A Great Workout for Your Abs

Just as with any exercise that strongly involves the lower back, the deadlift heavily taxes the abdominals and obliques, as well. These muscles tense and tighten during the movement to help keep the lower back contracted in an arched position. If you have never deadlifted before, your first few sessions may very well leave your abs more sore than any targeted abdominal workout you have ever done.

To conclude, every weight trainee should be performing the deadlift regularly. It is one of the best movements for building overall strength and muscle mass, as well as for improving everyday and sport-specific performance. If you are not performing this movement, you are not realizing your full muscle building potential.