

live

NORTH SHORE GUIDE TO ACTIVE LIVING



NEWS photo Terry Peters

JAMES Zinck (right) leads a CrossFit workout outside of his fitness centre in Deep Cove while class member **Eric Slopo** follows along. Zinck and partner **Troy Straith** own three locations that specialize in the new training technique which incorporates a variety of fitness elements into high intensity workouts.

The future of fitness

CrossFit philosophy changing the way we workout

Terry Peters

tpeters@nsnews.com

IF fitness trends come in waves there is a tsunami about to hit and its name is CrossFit. Its approach to working out is so radically different from the traditional going to the gym that anyone willing to give it a try should be prepared to be amazed.

This unique system is based on constantly varied high intensity functional movements. That sentence sums up the philosophy but barely scratches

the surface of what CrossFit is. The workouts incorporate a broad spectrum of exercises that include but are not limited to gymnastics, weight lifting and monostructural movements. Gymnastics are described as actions that control your body weight and would include things like pushups, box jumps, pull-ups, squats and ring dips. Weight lifting would be any exercise that moves an external object. Monostructural movements would be activities like running, swimming and rowing.

Nearly twenty years ago Greg Glassman, a former gymnast, was trying to develop a fitness program that would produce the best possible all-round athlete. Drawing from his gymnastics

background and a variety of other fitness disciplines he began combining exercises, creating workouts that were deep in variety, using compound movements that involved multi-joint application, and were performed at higher than normal intensities. From these efforts evolved the CrossFit philosophy. He is quoted as saying "our specialty is not specializing." His approach was to include the ten elements of fitness, (cardiovascular/respiratory endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, speed, power, co-ordination, accuracy, agility and balance) into a series of workouts that would produce the best overall fitness.

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CrossFit website provides Workout of the Day

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From humble beginnings CrossFit has grown to an international fitness movement with thousands of practitioners and new training locations opening up in cities everywhere. The Crossfit.com website is the central hub of the organization with hundreds of relevant articles posted on the site, video clips that demonstrate the exercises, blogs and posts from its participants and the Workout of the Day or WOD. This workout is performed and commented on by an enormous range of daily users.

There is an old expression which states "that which is measured improves" and it is firmly entrenched in the CrossFit method. The athletes record every workout and use that information to gauge their improvements and help determine the areas they need to work on.

Two years ago Troy Straith and James Zinck, partners in West Vancouver's Evolution Martial Arts, began visiting a downtown CrossFit studio to improve their own fitness level. What they experienced would eventually modify their own business.

Fast forward to today and now they have grown to three locations, the original West Vancouver site in Lower Caulfeild, another school in North Vancouver in Deep Cove that was formerly Clarke Family Martial Arts and the new Vancouver location situated in Yaletown. In each of these locations CrossFit has made big gains in enrollment.

"We saw what it did for our own fitness and believed it would be a good thing to bring into our business," says Straith. "In January we began teaching CrossFit classes in all three locations under the banner of CrossFit BC and quickly saw it was attracting people who wanted to take their fitness to a higher level. After only a couple of months we had over 100

people enrolled."

The CrossFit workouts involve a high intensity approach that sees participants using compound movements in an ever-changing variety of combinations.

"It is the intensity that will get you to your fitness goal faster" says Zinck. "We encourage our athletes to work out at as high an intensity as they can manage. First we teach them the techniques then we help them increase the loads they work with."

Straith notes, "people have been amazed at how quickly they have made gains in their performance."

The CrossFit workout is based on constantly changing elements so there is no standard workout.

"We have a basic warm-up that everyone does before the class begins, then there is the actual warm-up that is always changing and is followed by an instructional portion focusing on a specific technique which could be improving a deadlift or a handstand or any number of different movements, then it is time for the Workout of the Day," explains Straith.

Operating three locations means there are a number of instructors working to cover their classes, which begin early in the morning and run through into the evening.

"We have 13 instructors who have all gone through the CrossFit Instructors course program and several more who are working towards their certification" says Zinck.

The interesting aspect of their training methods is that the workouts can be scaled for a wide range of fitness levels.

"The system is scalable which allows for people of different fitness capacities to work out side by side and each be challenged to their own limit. We have clients in their mid-teens all the way up to their seventies," says Straith.

"This embodies the future of personal fitness; challenging workouts that are intense, efficient, measurable and recordable."

If you have found yourself floundering around in a sea of fitness products, CrossFit may be the lifeline to a new approach and the way to new levels of fitness. As Straith suggests,

"just leave your ego at the door and come inside for a workout that will help you reach the best shape of your life."

For more information call 604-683-2446, send an e-mail to info@Crossfitbc.com or check out their website at www.crossfitbc.com.



CROSSFIT instructor Troy Straith takes his class for a warm-up walk with weights held over their heads.