

the

Crossfit

 JOURNAL

December 2005



Routine of the Day

February 19, 2001

Routine 010219

Row 4000 meters @ a 2 min 500 meter pace
Within the next 16 mins hang clean 50% of your body weight 21 times

Row 2000 meters @ a 2 min 500 meter pace
Within the next 8 mins hang clean 50% of your body weight 18 times

Row 1000 meters @ a 2min 500 meter pace
Within the next 4 mins hang clean 50% of your body weight 15 times

Row 500 meters @ a 2 min 500 meter pace
Within the next 2 mins hang clean 50% of your body weight 12 times

There's no rest here other than the time allowed for the hang clean.
Not everyone can make the numbers, do what you can safely, effectively.

Today's link is an article by Dr. Steven Seiler, a noted researcher, and renowned rowing coach.

The article is called "The Time Course of Training Adaptations."

It is recommended that you read and reread the article until you fully understand it.

The physiology that Dr. Seiler details contains the very reason endurance

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- Greg Glassman

On November 15th, 1999, astronomers sent a powerful radio transmission toward a star cluster 25,000 light-years away in hopes of someday communicating with extraterrestrial intelligence. If lucky, a response could come back in 50,000 years.

On February 10th, 2001, Lauren and I first published our simple, distinctive workouts on the Internet in hopes of someday communicating with intelligent life in the fitness world. The experiment has proven to be a stunning success, with a comparatively rapid return, and it gave birth to a community that is revolutionizing fitness and training.

This month we want to share our thoughts on the growth and development of CrossFit and share our dreams and commitments as stewards and servants of the CrossFit community.

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Inside-Out Breathing: Getting the Air You Need

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- Terry Laughlin

Cartwheel - An In-Depth Discussion

- Roger Harrell

The cartwheel is a foundational movement critical for gymnastics development. For non-gymnasts as well, practicing cartwheels develops kinesthetic awareness and flexibility, as well as strength and stability in hand support. Learning a cartwheel can be difficult for some, but the progressions below can be used by anyone, including the young and the not so young, to work toward a cartwheel.

Definitions

A "right" cartwheel begins with the right leg forward, with the right hand the first to contact the ground. A "left" cartwheel leads with left the foot, with the left hand contacting the ground first. (Note that a "right" cartwheel is a left-twisting skill. A left twist is one in which the left shoulder travels backward relative to the body in motion.)

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Cartwheel - An In-Depth Discussion

~ Roger Harrell ~

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First Drill

This drill teaches the basic movement of a cartwheel and helps mitigate many common beginners' mistakes. Place a folded panel mat or other stable object in the tumbling area. Stand in a straddle at the end of the panel mat and place both hands on the panel mat. Jump from one foot to the other, keeping weight on your hands. As you feel more comfortable, kick the jump higher and pass through a straddled handstand. Ensure that your shoulders remain open and your head stays neutral throughout this exercise.



Second Drill

At the end of the panel mat, begin in a lunge so that the line of your movement will be perpendicular to the panel mat and the foot closest to the panel mat is forward. Perform a cartwheel over the panel mat. This drill gives visual cues for hand and foot placement. It also makes the overall motion easier by giving you a higher platform to stand up from. Be sure to practice both right and left cartwheels. One side will feel more comfortable and natural, but it is important to be competent on both sides.



Side Cartwheel

Start this drill by standing in a straddle with your hips and shoulders in line with your intended travel direction. Lift both arms above your head. Turn your hands inward so that if you were to bring them together your thumbs and index fingers would form a diamond. Your feet should be turned out slightly. Execute a cartwheel by first bending your lead leg. Then, while reaching for the floor, kick your trailing leg as your lead leg leaves the ground. Do not swing, circle or otherwise flail your trailing arm; simply reach into the cartwheel. All of the power of the initiation comes from your legs. As the cartwheel completes, do not lift your hands off the floor; instead, push the floor away from your hands. This is an important distinction for the development of a powerful and functional cartwheel.



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Once your side cartwheel is consistent you can perform a series of side cartwheels across the floor. Bend your knees and pass through a wide stance partial squat in between each cartwheel to maximize turn-over and speed. As you develop competence, you will be able to accelerate across the floor.

Lunge-to-Lunge Cartwheel

Start this drill in a forward lunge so that your hips and shoulders are perpendicular to your intended travel direction. Your arms should begin this drill extended overhead and positioned by your ears, with your shoulders completely open. Hands will again be turned in as they were for the side cartwheel. Kick into the cartwheel while reaching forward.

Be sure that your hands contact the floor separately, one at a time. The line between your wrists and your rear leg should remain as straight as possible. Your cartwheel will finish in the opposite lunge from your start position, and you will be facing the direction that you came from. Your arms will finish by your ears as they were initially.



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In the lunge-to-lunge cartwheel both hands will leave the ground at the same time. This will help to develop a proper round-off. Again, the action is pushing the floor away, not just lifting your hands off the floor.

One-Armed Cartwheel

Practice one-armed cartwheels only after your side and lunge-to-lunge cartwheels are consistent and solid on both left and right sides. There are actually four different ways to do a one-armed cartwheel: A "near-arm" cartwheel will use the lead hand. For example, a right near-arm cartwheel starts with your right leg in front, and only your right hand contacts the ground. A "far-arm" cartwheel uses the trailing hand. For example, a right far-arm cartwheel starts with your right leg forward, and only your left hand contacts the ground. Practice near-arm and far-arm cartwheels on both sides.



Lunge-to-Hollow Cartwheel

Initiate the cartwheel like a lunge-to-lunge cartwheel, but near the end bring your trailing leg down to meet your lead leg. You should finish standing in a hollow position with both feet slightly in front of you and your arms extended overhead. Walking backward out of this skid



Cartwheel Block-Out

Perform a lunge-to-lunge cartwheel but "block" off of the floor by pushing your shoulders upward aggressively as your second hand contacts the floor. This should lift your upper body off the floor before your first foot contacts the floor.

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Round-off

A round-off initiates like a lunge-to-lunge cartwheel, but at inversion your legs will come together and then both hands will block off the floor so that you land standing in a tight hollow position facing the direction you came. You should land with your feet well in front of your body so the motion drives you backward. Falling over backward at the end of your round-off is a good sign. A proper round-off will have an aggressive block as described for the cartwheel block-out. This will propel your upper body upward as your feet snap down.



Dive Cartwheel

Set up folded panel mats or another cushioned barrier and execute cartwheels over the barrier. Your feet will leave the ground well before your hands contact the floor. Both hands will contact the floor simultaneously. The lift will come from swinging your arms upward as you kick your rear leg. As this skill develops, you will find yourself placing your hands on the floor just before your feet land.



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Aerial Cartwheel

An aerial cartwheel is a no-handed cartwheel. Once you find that you just barely need to touch your hands on a dive cartwheel, an aerial cartwheel is within reach. Set up a folded panel mat or other raised platform and place a soft landing mat at the end. Practice aerial cartwheels off the platform to allow for a little more time in the air. An aggressive kick of your rear leg and strong push off your lead leg is necessary to make the aerial. Good hip flexibility and fast legs are required to complete the motion.

A spotter can assist this skill by standing so that the gymnast's back will be to the spotter during the aerial cartwheel. For example, during a left aerial cartwheel the spotter will stand to the left of the gymnast in his line of travel. As the gymnast performs the aerial the spotter will

Common mistakes in learning the cartwheel include:

1. Heels contacting the ground first. This is a result of turning the hips out too much and makes it very difficult to stand up out of the cartwheel. It is important that the toes are the first part of the foot to contact the floor. Your foot will be pointing toward the place you began your cartwheel. Tape lines can be placed on the floor to indicate proper foot and hand placement.

2. Lifting the hands off the floor rather than pushing the floor away. As the hands leave the floor, there should be a distinct push through the shoulders and fingers. If you see a trainee pull her elbows in as she finishes her cartwheel, she is likely lifting her hands rather than pushing the floor away.

3. Kicking the cartwheel around the side. The kick should go straight over the top, with no bend in the torso. A good cartwheel can be done between two mats standing upright about eight inches apart.



4. Reaching down to the floor by closing the shoulder angle. The shoulder angle should be kept open throughout the cartwheel. Reaching down and letting the head come out will negatively impact the alignment of the cartwheel.

end.

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Greg Glassman

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History

The CrossFit.com website was not our idea. In fact, the domain name was registered and held in trust by a friend and client, Mike Bender, ten-time winner of the Toughest Cop Alive competition, who waited patiently for us to come to understand the potential of the Internet and the need for a website.

It was Ben Elizer, another CrossFit client and Silicon Valley software developer, who in the later part of 1999 first proposed a CrossFit website. Ben's software firm KnowWare, now defunct, had done technical work for many of the better-known dot-com startups and had the connections, contacts, and experience needed to secure venture capital and take a startup public.

KnowWare put together a series of meetings with artists, programmers, developers, and investors to plan the launch of CrossFit.com. The proposed business model was to produce a high-tech feature-packed website with venture capital, go public, and then figure out how to make money from it. The line was "Get eyes, then monetize."

The developers knew how to build a site, draw people to a site, and get investors, and we knew how to make monsters of men. None of us could quite figure out how we'd make money, and that was OK with all of us, but our perceptions of how to best draw people to a fitness concept ultimately diverged. The dot-com experts, the developers, believed that an expensive website and investor-funded giveaways would carry us to an IPO. They'd done it before. We thought that uniquely effective programming delivered daily via a "Workout of the Day" or "WOD" would do the trick.

When we explained that we thought our workouts were so effective that

if we were to post one every day, someone would eventually find them, try them, have great results, and come back and tell friends, the dot-comers laughed heartily and condescendingly chortled, "Ahhhh, the old grassroots approach!" (They also loved the "ring" of "Workout of the Day.")

We worked and planned, discussed and argued with our development/management team for months about the visions for CrossFit.com while working toward the first phase of funding. Then, in the second week of March, 2000, the NASDAQ began a freefall heralding one of the greatest market collapses in U.S. history. The plans for CrossFit.com evaporated as quickly as the fortunes and dreams of so many investors.

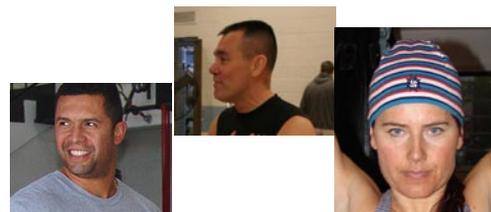
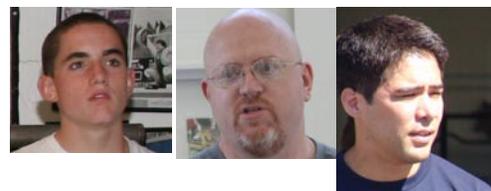
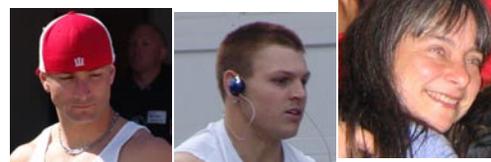
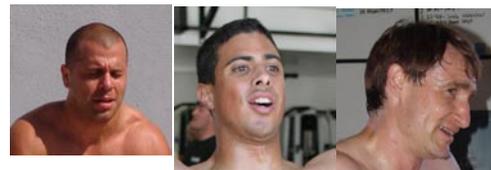
Frankly, while sorry for our newfound friends' financial ruin, we were quite relieved. For the rest of the year we got back on task with trying to get kicked out of one more commercial gym.

Relieved but still intrigued, we couldn't put to rest the idea of sharing our fitness programming with the world. We were haunted by the notion that if our programming were indeed as effective as we thought it, the Internet might provide the opportunity to prove as much by allowing us to inexpensively and powerfully give the kernel of our work—our workouts—a global test and distribution.

Today

On February 10th, 2001, CrossFit.com went live with a single ugly page featuring our first workout on a blue background and white font that we only months later learned printed as a blank page.

Five years later, without a penny



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spent on advertising, marketing, or promotion, CrossFit.com has over 75,000 regular unique visitors from around the world, over 1 million visits so far this year, and over a terabyte of data delivered monthly.

In the last year alone CrossFit has appeared in the magazines Law and Order, Outside, Grappling, and Skiing. Last month Men's Journal listed CrossFit at number 4 among the "50 Greatest Health and Fitness Websites" and is wrapping up a feature story about CrossFit for its February 2006 issue.

There are currently 49 CrossFit affiliates; last year at this time there were seven. Our "cyber community," whatever that is, spawns sub-communities that sweat, laugh, and cry together—in the flesh. Formal and informal, temporary and enduring, planned and impromptu, these participant-driven gatherings of CrossFitters have the potential to revolutionize the fitness industry.

Our claim to being a peerless developer of fitness has gone unchallenged in 5 years of "put-up, challenge the standard, or shut-up" WOD postings, and has been tested thoroughly and impartially in police and military clinical trials in the U.S. and Canada.

CrossFit is growing like a weed. It's that old grassroots approach.

Listening to you

The idea of fitness programming based on constant variance of functional exercises executed at high intensity came from us. All the following innovations came directly from our clients:

- Getting our own facility
- CrossFit Journal
- Seminars and certifications

- Website
- Registering the CrossFit.com domain name
- Videos and DVDs
- CrossFit store
- T-shirts
- Blog format for the website
- Affiliate program
- Message board
- Moderation of the message board
- CrossFit FAQ
- CrossFit Live

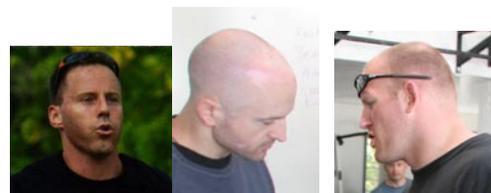
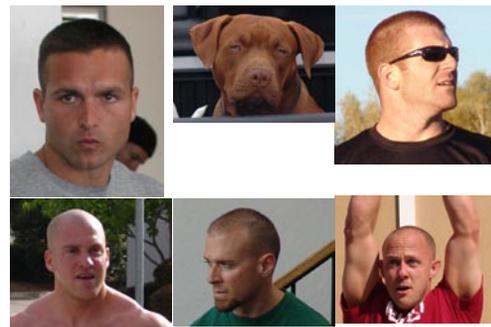
Everything that has followed the initial spark of the programming concept has been a direct response to the repeated demands, requests, and pleadings of people who do CrossFit. It is also CrossFitters who will continuously develop and refine the CrossFit model as we continue our commitment to making co-developers of the best coaches, trainers, athletes, and thinkers in fitness. We are an open-source fitness program.

As stewards of this community we are committed to providing improved infrastructure, tools, and services to support CrossFitters everywhere.

Infrastructure

Keeping the site up is paramount. Our cumulative downtime in five years of operation is less than several hours. CrossFit.com has survived floods, roof leaks, and power outages when hosted in our garage and company and equipment failures when hosted professionally. With unusual luck and the dedication of tireless friends, and while hopscotching from one server to another (six moves so far), we've not missed a workout in five years. The other constant has been increased traffic on the site.

In April of 2003 we unveiled a redesign of CrossFit.com. The remodel featured a professional design, new message board, and



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weblog architecture powered by Moveable Type. Brian Mulvaney had been goading us toward the blog format for over a year. It was Brian's persistence on the subject of blogging that led us to the view that websites with dynamic front-page content that formed community would thrive while others would be relegated to billboard status.

It was the blogging structure and spirit of the new site that excited the need for more and better media. Larger photos and more and better videos, have proven themselves to be powerful community building and fitness driving tools.

This summer we put CrossFit.com in the hands of professional IT care. Jim Roe, our new IT guy, is a veteran of high-traffic mission-critical site management. We are, for the first time, not just maintaining a website but also planning and building infrastructure for future growth and traffic.

As well as accommodating more traffic, building bigger machines with bigger, faster pipes gives us sufficient economy of scale to reduce costs for affiliates to produce high-bit-rate media.

Moveable Type upgrades and plugins are going to enable us to e-mail the WOD and allow everyone to post their comments to the WOD blog via e-mail. We have a long list of fixes and modifications slated in 2006 for the Moveable Type interface.

Two other additions to the site are scheduled for early 2006. First is the new CrossFit message board. Lynne Pitts will be moving us from our current slow and overloaded Discus message board to vBulletin in a move that will support a more robust and feature-packed platform. The move from Discus to vBulletin is as big a step as moving from the first board to Discus was. Lynne

continues to be a CrossFit pillar.

Also slated for early 2006 is the CrossFit Fitness Wiki. The CrossFit community includes scores of subject matter experts whose authority is nearly matched by the color and power of their expression. In our Wiki, authority, authenticity, and color will be valued over comprehensiveness and breadth. Expect articles like "Defense from the Front Seat of a Car," "Fitness Advantages of Single-Speed Bikes," "The .308 Rifle," "The Overhead Squat for Core Strength", and "Freezing to Death." The CrossFit wiki will be a prominent place to showcase and develop articles worthy of permanent and very public display.

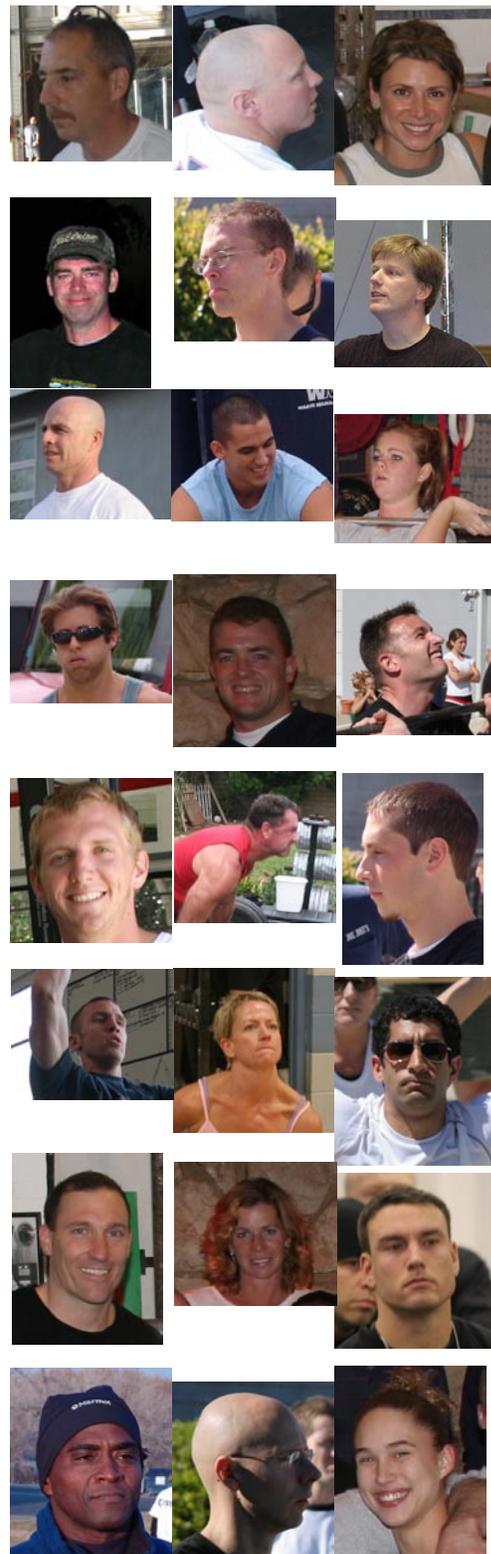
Complicated network

CrossFit.com is at the center of a fitness revolution. The CrossFit website, the CrossFit affiliates, our friends, and our seminars form a complex and efficient network of support, expertise, experience, education, camaraderie, and fun. This network presents a viable challenge to the traditional fitness and training culture and industry.

Thousands have come to CrossFit.com and found a much better way to work out. Most of these same people have found their fellow CrossFitters to be intelligent, engaging, fun, and multidimensional. Through seminars, workouts, e-mails, and phone calls, many, many of us have made new and strong friendships. The hundred or so people involved with the affiliate program are discovering the unmatched satisfaction and excitement found through teaching and sharing fitness with others.

This is indeed a revolution.

end.



Inside-Out Breathing: Getting the Air You Need

— Terry Laughlin —

One of the major differences between swimming and land-based sports is that breathing in the water is a skill, and a fairly advanced one at that. In recent weeks, since opening a new Swim Studio in New Paltz, NY, I've spent many hours teaching in an Endless Pool, where proximity to my students has allowed me to observe the extent to which breathing comfort is essential to their progress and success. This has convinced me that, until breathing becomes routine, effective focus on other aspects of the stroke is impossible. But once students master breathing, other skills follow much more rapidly.

Breathing is such a natural activity that we seldom give it a thought. The only time we even become conscious of it is when we're breathless from exertion or, well, panic. Or, in the case of swimming, sometimes both at once.

There is probably a greater range of breathing skill in swimming than in any other activity. Elite swimmers can breathe effortlessly while maintaining perfect form at maximum exertion and world-record pace. Seasoned open water swimmers can do the same with waves or chop smacking them in the face or a pack of churning swimmers at their elbows. At the other extreme, novices may be unable to experience any comfort so long as any part of their face or head is in the water, and the challenge of getting air can be so all-consuming that they have no presence of mind left to focus on form.

Breathing is unquestionably the most fundamental of all swimming skills. If you can learn to do it nearly as well and automatically in the water as on land, it helps calm and focus you to work on skills. It also provides the aerobic capacity to swim long distances and fuels the power you need to swim at maximum speeds. Finally, swimmers

who master aquatic breath control can use breathing skills effectively to relax, to improve their ability to concentrate and deepen self-awareness while working on skills, and to recover more fully and completely from any level of exertion. Since you have no choice but to breathe while swimming, why not choose to become a true master of aquatic breath control?



Bad air out, good air in

For most folks, the most instinctive way to breathe is to pay attention to the inhale but for the exhale to be an afterthought. In swimming, as well as other activities that involve enough exertion to lead to breathlessness, it should really be the opposite. Focus on the exhale; let the inhale take care of itself.

Here's why: Each time we take a breath, the air that goes into our lungs is about 21 percent oxygen and the barest trace carbon dioxide. The air we exhale is about 14 percent oxygen and nearly 6 percent carbon dioxide. What this means is that, when we feel "out of breath" it doesn't mean we're suffering a lack of oxygen, since we consume only about one third of the oxygen we take in. That breathless feeling is actually caused by an increase in the level of carbon dioxide in the bloodstream. Thus, to maintain a sense

of relaxation and comfort, you should focus mainly on exhaling fully, because that will clear more accumulated carbon dioxide. You can heighten your awareness of the distinction between inhale-focus and exhale-focus through a series of exercises we might call "inside-out breathing." You can do this while sitting comfortably at your computer as you read this:

1. Start by actively and emphatically drawing air into your lungs. Exhale by simply releasing it, rather than actively pushing it out. You can do both through your nose. Repeat five or six such breaths.
2. Switch emphasis by actively pushing air out. You can heighten awareness for this change by practicing a breathing exercise, known as pranayama, drawn from yoga. As you exhale, constrict your throat slightly to produce a rushing sound, loud enough to be heard by someone across the room. As you do, you'll be more conscious of the air passing through your throat than through your nostrils. Repeat 8 to 10 such breaths.
3. Finally, continue your exhale-focused breathing, but consciously shift to making each inhale as passive as possible. See how much of your lungs can you refill simply as a response to the "vacuum" you created with your exhale before needing to switch over to a more active inhale. Repeat until you notice an increase in your ability to refill passively.

Practice breathing focus

The next time you go swimming, I suggest you put your primary focus on breathing, and specifically on using your exhale as a way to both regulate and control effort. Try the following two

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Inside Out Breathing: Getting the Air You Need

—Terry Laughlin—

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sets of progressions.

1. Swim some easy 25-yard repeats. On these 25s, let your need for air entirely dictate the speed and rhythm of your stroke. If it helps, count off your exhales and inhales by one thousands (one-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, etc.) For your rest interval between 25s, take several deep, slow cleansing breaths. When you can repeat 25s with a sufficient sense of ease that you need only three cleansing breaths before starting the next, you can progress to 50-yard repeats.

2. Swim a series of three sets of repeats, with each set lasting 6 to 10 minutes. Choose any repeat distance from 25 to 200 yards. Rest for three (for shorter repeats) to six (for longer repeats) deep, slow breaths between repeats in each set, and for an additional 1 to 2 minutes between sets. Breathe every two to three strokes (not cycles) throughout.

- Swim the first round at a moderate pace, perhaps 65% effort. Maintain consistent effort throughout the set, or increase your speed slightly every few minutes. Put most of your focus on exhaling steadily, beginning as soon as you complete the inhale. As you progress through the set, consciously make the inhale more and more passive.

- Swim the second round at about 75% effort. Support the increased effort purely by increasing the force with which you exhale. Your goal is to gradually feel that a more emphatic exhale, rather than more muscular effort, is providing all the energy needed to support your increased speed.

- Swim the third round faster yet, at perhaps 85% effort. On this round, increase the force of your exhale as needed, but this time put a bit more

focus on finishing each exhale—just as your mouth clears the water—with about 20% more force. Feel as if you're blowing the water away from your mouth, making it easier to get your next breath. Continue to focus on a goal of inhaling passively. Certainly you'll gulp more air more quickly, but work on how completely you can make it occur purely as a result of emptying your lungs.

This article is excerpted from Getting Air, a special e-book to be published by Total Immersion in December. For more suggestions on swimming sets that focus on breathing skills, visit www.totalimmersion.net/mag-pl.html.

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If you have any questions or comments send them to feedback@crossfit.com.

Your input will be greatly appreciated and every email will be answered.

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