



Crossfit for Skiers

You've probably heard of it by now. Gyms are popping everywhere and fans swear by it. But what is Crossfit? And why does it make your pre-season training more efficient?



Crossfit mimics how we move in everyday life. Humans use multiple muscles to move; we engage our quads, hamstrings, glutes, calves, and core to walk, pick up groceries, and get off the couch, even to get out of bed. How often do you find yourself bicep curling the milk to put it away or attempt to move your furniture laying on your back pushing with your legs? Crossfit is about creating usable strength, not just glamour muscles.

Crossfit is an all-out, holy-crap-I-can't-go-any-harder work out. Variety is the name of the game, with anything from plyometrics (explosive movements that increase speed and power), to weightlifting, to running. It will challenge your stamina, strength, and stability, leaving you sweating in a matter of minutes. This may sound like hell, but it's not—it's fun. By using a time component in every workout, one day you might race the clock to finish the workout in the shortest amount of time, and the next day try to complete as many rounds

as possible in 20 minutes, but either way, it's a race to the finish line. The competitive environment makes every workout a game, like racing your friends to the bottom of the chair, or logging your vert throughout the day. Plus, most workouts take less than half an hour.

Crossfit is a perfect way to get in shape for the upcoming season. Many workouts feature specific lifts like squats and dead-lifts, which are key exercises to make you a stronger skier. Glutes, hamstrings, and quads are three of the most important muscles in a skier's body. Learning how to squat and dead lift correctly will not only help you get down the mountain faster, but is essential to injury prevention too! Nothing ruins a season like a blown knee, and many torn ACLs are due to muscle imbalances such as over-developed quads and under-developed hamstrings. Properly executed squats and dead lifts eliminate these imbalances and keep you on the hill.

While many skiers in the gym already strive to keep their legs strong, skiing is a full-body activity. Core and arm strength are just as necessary. Skiing requires strength, agility, and uses

short bursts of energy. When it comes to maneuvering through glades, pole planting on high angle terrain or making sure you're not collapsing at the waist when ripping through moguls, every ounce of muscle in your body is working.

Sure, you need some endurance on the hill to ski bell to bell, but not the same kind of endurance you need to run a marathon. You also need strength, but unless you're crushing gates like Bode, you don't need a 400 lb. squat. Many professional athletes work out for hours on end; Olympic medalist Lindsay Vonn works out 8 hours a day to get ready for ski season! But with Crossfit, you don't have to. By creating high intensity workouts that incorporate strength, cardio, and agility into one 20 minute session, you're training your body across multiple planes. For example, many people follow the "one hour of cardio, one hour of weights" model. Instead of taking breaks in between each set, then running at a moderate pace on the treadmill for an hour, take no breaks. If you do all of the sets unbroken I bet your heart rate will be higher than it is on the treadmill.

Setting yourself up for a successful winter season does take some work, so why not make it fun? Grab a buddy (or two) and race through box jumps and burpees, deadlifts or 200 m. sprints. Your heart may feel like it's going to explode in the hot, September sun, but just think of the cool, blower pow you'll be slashing first tracks through when you're the first one to the top of the boot pack.

The bottom line? Crossfit focuses on making you the best athlete you can be, without hours of training. The week is no longer divided into cardio days or strength days, or trying to figure out how to get a two hour session in at the gym. Crossfit incorporates it all into short, 1 hour sessions. All you need is a willingness to work hard. Doesn't that sound better than spending two hours in the gym, alternating leg extensions and bicep curls then limping into the lodge after the first day of the season with fried legs and a tight back?

Pip Hunt is a professional skier, writer, and personal trainer in Salt Lake City, UT. She is a level-one certified Crossfit trainer, currently works with private and group clients at SLC Crossfit, runs a Crossfit specific dryland class in the fall, and coaches the Alta-Bird Freeride team both on snow and off. When she's not on the snow or at the gym, Pip trail runs, mountain bikes, reads, and cooks delectable, nutritious meals.

Check out her blog at www.adventuresofpip.com for fitness stories and healthy recipes.