

LA S&F[®]

LOS ANGELES SPORTS AND
FITNESS MAGAZINE
SUMMER 2010

SUMMER ENERGY ISSUE

**CrossFit
Endurance
Will Blow
You Away!**

ENDURANCE *TO THE EXTREME*



POWER BROKER

Brian Mackenzie's training plan will reduce your workout time and your race times

By Heidi Creed

Chances are either you do it or you know someone who does it. They have probably tried to con you into joining them on more than one occasion. For a while it was a rather underground movement, limited to private garages, dank studios or even parking lots. But over the past couple of years, you can't escape it – it is everywhere.

The CrossFit craze is reaching epidemic proportions – it's a strength and conditioning program that relies on functional training at high intensity. If you haven't succumbed to the CrossFit temptation yet, how about you try this on for size. We think you'll like it: CrossFit Endurance.

If your beef with the original CrossFit is that it lacks enough cardio to prepare you for your endurance events, feast on this. CrossFit Endurance (CFE), *when followed correctly*, is virtually guaranteed to give you results you never dreamed of, all while giving you more time in your life back.



Gone are the days of two-plus hour runs or six-hour block sessions. With this program you can safely train for an Ironman or ultra marathon on less than eight hours a week, so imagine what you can do if *all* you want to do is a marathon or less. All you have to be willing to give is, well, everything you've got for the Workout of the Day (WOD) for four (to no more than six) days a week. You will be taxed, you will be sore, but also true to CrossFit form, you will reduce the chances for over-use injuries and burnout, and you *will* see measurable results *fast*.

How Does CrossFit Endurance Work?

For starters, throw away your tired mileage logs. It's time your training program grows up. Prepare for a highly varied and anything but predictable regimen that will work you through movements to build your strength and power, and ultimately – and seemingly unconventionally – your endurance without running more than 13 miles.

"Your aerobic activity changes very little after 10 kilometers, so it makes no sense to focus on this training once you've proven you can use oxygen effectively," says the CrossFit Endurance concept architect, Brian Mackenzie, 35, of Newport Beach.

"So why are you still getting sore? It's a lack in strength and conditioning. Running alone won't get you strong. You can beat yourself up with long, slow training, then follow it up with hours upon hours to recover. Or you can do real strength conditioning and be sore for a much shorter amount of time," adds Mackenzie.

The basic premise behind CFE is stamina replaces endurance by performing short, interval-oriented high intensity workouts that call for all-out motor recruitment. One of the hardest workouts, for example, that will earn you those 13-or-so miles calls for doing 4 x 5K repeats while trying to keep the splits within two to three minutes of each other.

It should be clear from the beginning that these are not supplemental workouts. Everything that is prescribed on the CrossFit (crossfit.com) and CrossFit Endurance (crossfitendurance.com) web sites are all the training that is required. There is no sneaking in extra mileage, you cardio junkie you. That totally defeats the purpose of what you're trying to accomplish here.

Starting slowly is the best way, but generally your training calendar will *eventually* look like this: you will do one WOD from the main CrossFit site, *plus* the CrossFit Endurance WOD for your specific sport. The CFE web site has a WOD every day for four disciplines: running, cycling, swimming, and rowing.

Since the whole CrossFit platform is based on efficient, high-quality workouts, your *two* WODs should rarely take more than an hour *combined* to complete (there are certainly exceptions!). Note that due to their intensity, it is recommended to



Photo by Chris Bishow



Photo by Chris Bishow

not do both in the same session, recovering at least three hours because “this [bleep] is intense and not to be messed with,” says Mackenzie.

“Nothing that is easy gets you anything good, and if you believe it does, you are doing the wrong program.” Or put another way: you’re simply not working hard enough. Focusing on recovery will ensure your output quality remains high, thus rewarding you with maximum results.

How Do I Start?

In the beginning you will just start with the main CrossFit WOD, taking as much recovery time as you need. It could take you up to a month to adapt to this type of strength conditioning, so be patient. Shoot for one day on, one day off; then two days on, one day off; then the prescribed three days on, one day off.

A typical workout may include an extraordinary amount of say, sit-ups, push-ups, pull-ups, and squats – all for time. Or maybe just a handful of heavy clean-and-jerk reps. Again, the beauty of these workouts is their variation and the subsequent functional fitness you are training your body for.

Once you feel confident that your body can take on more demands without excessive soreness and fatigue, you will follow the same work-to-rest ratio of progression, but you’ll be adding the CrossFit Endurance WOD. It will look like this: one day CrossFit WOD plus the CFE WOD in the same day, then take one day off; two days CrossFit plus CFE, one day off; three days CrossFit plus CFE, one day off.

Get Busy

“If mediocrity and slow and steady is for you, than this is not,” says Mackenzie. “But the rest of the performance junkies have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”

Mackenzie is speaking from personal experience. Before he developed the CFE program, he was an Ironman triathlete and regularly trained 20-30 hours per week, claiming he always felt taxed and was never getting faster. Then he trained for the Western States Endurance Run 100-mile event using a totally different approach. The CFE approach.

“I never trained more than six and a half hours a week, and 36 miles was my biggest running week,” he says, “and I showed up feeling totally confident.” Sure, Mackenzie may fall in to the “genetically gifted” category, as these results aren’t entirely typical for the entire population. But what is typical, whatever your background, is a significant increase in speed and strength – and more time in your day.

If you like to see results, thrive on getting worked to the core in your workouts, and are open to completely changing your way of thinking, then what are you waiting for? If you don’t become a believer after putting this program to a legitimate test, then you always have those mileage logs to fall back on. How’s that for inspiration? <<

Brian Mackenzie owns Anaerobic Inc, a CrossFit affiliate in Rancho Santa Margarita.