How to find THE PERFECT CROSSFIT BOX FOR YOU

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Every CrossFit “box” (aka gym) is independently owned and operated. While all CrossFit boxes operate under CrossFit Inc., each one is free to run their business as they like. This is really cool because each box you visit will be unique and personal. However, this also means that some boxes operate under higher standards than others. With CrossFit becoming so popular, you definitely need to do your research before selecting where you train. In this e-book, we highlight some of the key considerations to choosing the perfect CrossFit box for you!

**AFFILIATION**

First, click below to find a CrossFit near you and double check that the boxes you look into are certified CrossFit Affiliates:

[map.crossfit.com](http://map.crossfit.com)

Also find out how long they have been affiliated. Newer affiliates are often-times just as great as the tried-and-true boxes, but how long they have been established can make a difference in the quality of coaching and overall experience. CrossFit boxes are springing up everywhere, so you will undoubtedly run into many new ones. You should consider all of the factors in this article to make sure they will live up to your expectations. Excellent coaches are opening up new boxes every day (literally!), but affiliates that have been around a while may be a more stable choice. CrossFit Rockwall has been an affiliate since August 2007. We are among the first 3% of affiliates who opened!

Read on for ten things you can’t overlook when searching for a CrossFit box…

1. Coaches
2. Intro Program
3. Programming
4. Community
5. Facility & Equipment
6. Support
7. Classes
8. Special Populations
9. Price vs. Value
10. You
The coaching staff is the most important part of selecting where you train. An amazing coach training out of their garage is head and shoulders above a sub-standard trainer working out of a state-of-the-art facility. The topic of good coaching is far too extensive to cover completely, but here are a few things to look for:

- **Certifications** – The coaches should hold a wide variety of certifications and pursue continuing education each year.

- **Experience** – The coaching staff should have experience with all levels and all types of athletes. Most importantly, they should understand how to safely scale workouts for beginners.

- **Personality** – It’s important to get along with and respect your coaches. They should also respect you!

The six Coaches at CrossFit Rockwall have a total of 32 certifications, through various organizations. All of our coaches continue their education each year by learning new skills and techniques, and attending a variety of seminars and certifications. We have a required 6 week in-house Coaching 101 program before our coaches even begin to help with classes through an additional 30-hour Intern Course. All of our coaches are certified through CrossFit and the American Heart Association.

Keep reading for two crucial aspects that can make or break your CrossFit experience...

**Questions to Consider:**

**Certifications**
- How long have they been certified?
- How many certs do they have?
- Do they have a wide variety of certs?
- Do they have certs outside of CrossFit?
- Do they pursue new education and certifications every year?

**Experience**
- How long have they been coaching?
- Have they gone through any coaching programs?
- Do they have experience with a variety of ability levels?
- Can they safely scale a CrossFit workout for a beginner?

**Personality**
- Are they friendly and approachable?
- Do they care about each athlete?
- Will they go out of their way to make your CrossFit experience the best it can be?
Good CrossFit boxes have a comprehensive “on-ramp”, “fundamentals”, or “elements” program that is designed to teach you the basic movements of CrossFit in a controlled environment. This program should make you feel safe and confident before entering the regular classes. It is **vital that you learn proper mechanics** before increasing the intensity of your workouts. Without a good foundation, you are much more likely to be injured or get burned out.

We have spent years improving and perfecting our Elements course based on feedback from new athletes. We limit our class size to only four athletes to ensure new clients receive plenty of attention & coaching. **Make sure that the place you train values technique and consistency before intensity.**

Exercise programming is an important part of your CrossFit experience. While “WODs” (workout of the day) can sometimes seem random due to the large variety of movements in CrossFit, they should not be! **A good program requires a large amount of planning and experience.**

One of the biggest mistakes we see with programming is daily “beatdowns”. If the box is programming grueling 20+ minute workouts every day of the week, they may not know much about getting results. Some of the most effective training takes place in the 8-12 minute range. Workouts don’t always need to be long. In fact, they should rarely be over 20 minutes.

There should also be a well-designed lifting program in place for all athletes. Look at their past programming and see if the lifting cycle is consistent and well organized. Good programs address all ability and skill levels and continue to challenge you over time.

Very few people understand the intricacies of effective and safe programming for all levels of athletes. We are very lucky to have Woody programming for CrossFit Rockwall; he has extensive experience and knowledge on many different training methodologies and strength programs. He spends hours each week carefully programming our strength cycles, skill work, and daily workouts.

**Questions to Consider:**

**Intro Program**
- Is there an introductory program for new clients?
- How long is the program?
- What is covered in the course?
- Who coaches it?
- What is the size of the class?
- What is the coach to client ratio?

**Programming**
- Is there a 4-week plan, a 3-month plan, and a 6-month (or longer) overview?
- Is there an intelligent lifting program in place for both beginner & advanced lifters?
- How long do their workouts usually last?
- Is there an intermediate and beginner version of each workout? Or, are you expected to know how to scale it yourself?
- Does the box celebrate puking after workouts? Puking and extreme soreness can actually be a set-back in your training and results.
One of the best things about working out at a CrossFit box is the community. People cheer each other on, push each other, and care about each other at CrossFit. Can you feel that when you visit a prospective box? Each box will have their own culture, and you should feel comfortable there. We have some of the best people training at CrossFit Rockwall; and you will find other boxes with equally amazing athletes. Make sure that the culture of the box fits your personality.

All boxes run their classes differently, so try out or observe a class or two to see if the culture of the box is something you will enjoy. Take note of the questions to the right when you visit each box.

It doesn’t matter if your prospective box trains out of a warehouse, a retail location, or in a park. The boxes with the most/best equipment are nice, but make sure you look past the shiny objects.

Owners and coaches should take pride in their facility. Clean floors, equipment, and bathrooms are a big predictor of how much they care, and how much effort they will be willing to put into making your CrossFit experience great. Is there blood and dead skin all over their barbells and pull-up bars? Can you easily find and get to the equipment you need? You should be able to tell right away if things are ship-shape or in complete disarray.

Every box is set-up differently. Some have showers, some don’t. Some have air conditioning and heat, some don’t. Some have walls, some don’t! Go check it out in person to see if you feel comfortable in their environment. The bottom line is, find a place that takes pride in what they have and where you would feel comfortable working out.

CrossFit Rockwall members who visit other affiliates always notice the cleanliness (or lack there-of) of their facilities! They are used to our clean floors, clean equipment, and clean restrooms, and it sticks out like a sore thumb when those things are lacking! Look to the right for some more important things to consider when visiting each box.

Questions to Consider:

**Culture**
- Are their classes well-organized?
- Do classes start and end on time? Or are clients frequently waiting on the coach or previous class?
- Do other members and coaches introduce themselves to you?
- Are there events outside of the box so you can get to know other members?
- Is the box focused on “elite athletes” or “everyday athletes”? Which one are you?

**Facility**
- Is the facility clean and well-organized?
- Are the bathrooms clean?
- Do they have an AED?
- Do they maintain clean and safe equipment?
- Do they oil their rowers and barbells?
- Do they inspect and replace equipment regularly?
CrossFit classes should be similar to having a personal trainer, but without the high cost. This means you should get **amazing coaching EVERY TIME you walk into the box**. You should learn something new and improve every class.

The Coaches at CrossFit Rockwall go out of their way to get to know each athlete personally. We keep track of your max lifts, and know exactly how each person scales movements. We remember if your shoulder has been bothering you, or if you hurt your foot over the weekend. A good coach will make the extra effort to learn about you, remember you, and will prove that they care!

Questions to Consider:

**Ask a Member**
- If you missed class a few days in a row, did the box contact you?
- After you joined, how did they make sure you would be successful?
- Do they ask you about your goals?
- Do they keep track of your attendance and check-in on you if you haven’t been consistent?

**Classes**
- What is the client to coach ratio in the classes?
- What is the average class size?
- Will the coach know how to, and take the time to, scale the workout specifically for you?
- Will the coach remember your max Deadlift, what pull-up band you use, and how you modify certain movements? A good coach will!
- Does the coach greet everyone who comes in for their class?
- Does the coach know where you work, if you have kids, where you went on vacation, and what your favorite (and least favorite) movements are? Hopefully!
8. **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

If you want your entire family to train at CrossFit, check to see if they have a kids or teen class. The adult classes are not always appropriate for teenagers, and definitely not appropriate for kids. **CrossFit Kids and Teens** have programming specific to their needs!

You may also want to consider the average age of the adult members. If you are an older client, make sure the box knows how to appropriately modify workouts for you. **Clients of different ages have different needs**, and you want coaches that understand.

Lastly, if you are pregnant, or considering becoming pregnant, make CERTAIN that they will scale appropriately for you and have experience working with **pre-natal/post-natal clients**. The safety of you and your baby depend on it!

9. **PRICE VS. VALUE**

With so many CrossFit boxes opening, you will find a wide spectrum of prices as well. We urge you to **consider the value** of their service by asking the questions in this article. Decide what the most important aspects of a CrossFit box are for you, and find a box that fits!

10. **YOU!**

The last thing to consider is YOU! **How do you feel when you walk into the box?** How do you feel when you talk to the coaches? How do you feel around the other members? You should feel excited, motivated, comfortable, and safe at your CrossFit box!
If you’re still not sure, we would be happy to help you decide. Whether you are looking for a box in the area, or somewhere else entirely, we would be happy to look into the boxes you are considering and give you our thoughts. When we look into CrossFit boxes, we usually start with their website and look at the coaching staff, introductory course, and programming. We feel that these three things can paint a fairly accurate picture of a CrossFit box. However, you still need to go in person to see their box, meet their coaches, and experience their atmosphere first hand. Let us know if you need help by e-mailing info@crossfitrockwall.com.

GOOD LUCK FINDING THE PERFECT BOX!

About the Author

Mary Woodruff founded CrossFit Rockwall in August of 2007 in her garage and moved into a larger facility shortly after. She has been training with CrossFit since January 2006 and is one of only two Level 2 Certified CrossFit Coaches in the Dallas area. She competed in the first annual CrossFit Games in Aromas, CA in July 2007 and received second place. Mary most recently received 12th place at the 2012 South Central Regionals. After graduating from the University of Florida with a degree in Aerospace Engineering, she moved to Texas and spent two years designing mechanical systems on military aircraft before opening Rockwall’s first CrossFit affiliate and now runs CrossFit Rockwall full time.

- CrossFit Level II Trainer
- USA Weightlifting Sport Performance Coach
- Concept 2 Certified Rowing Instructor
- CrossFit Basic Barbell Certification
- CrossFit Olympic Lifting Certification
- CrossFit Gymnastics Certification
- CrossFit Nutrition Certification
- CrossFit Movement & Mobility Certification
- CrossFit Football Certification
- Pre- and Post-natal Fitness: Physiology, Biomechanics and Programming
- ACE Group Fitness Instructor
- CPR & AED certified through the American Heart Assoc.