Why do they do it?
An exploration of the factors that influence CrossFit™ participation
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INTRODUCTION
- Psychosocial and environment factors influence exercise adherence.
- Multimodal workouts of higher intensity and shorter duration can help individuals overcome the most common barrier to physical activity, time.
- CrossFit™ is high-intensity functional training that incorporates both strength and aerobic based components and contributes toward meeting national physical activity guidelines through trainer-led group exercise.
- Due to constant variation, CrossFit™ allows individuals to find something that they are good at, improve on weaknesses, and learn new skills.

METHODS
Qualitative data were collected through 60-minute key informant interviews, 90-minute focus groups, and 15-minute individual interviews.

Questions related to participation were as follows:
• Coaches were asked “What do you feel is most important about CrossFit to your members?”
• CrossFit participants were asked “Why do/have you continue(d) to do CrossFit?”

Analysis
Open coding, using Nvivo 10, was used to identify themes within the questions related to participation.

Four key themes were identified:
- Physical Benefits
  - Improvements in fitness, strength, technique, posture, and flexibility
- Health Benefits
  - Exercise as prevention, positive lifestyle and diet changes, and decreases in chronic conditions (e.g., high cholesterol, osteoporosis)
- Social Benefits
  - Supportive community with positive attitudes, encouragement, and strong camaraderie
- Exercise Programming
  - Good coaching, challenges, variety, and always having something new to learn.

RESULTS
Examples participant responses are shown below:
• Key Informant Interviews:
  ➢ “It’s a combination of the training approach and the community environment.”
  ➢ “Results. That’s what brought them there in the first place.”
• Focus Groups:
  ➢ “There’s no pattern here. And you are always learning new things... There is always someone there to challenge you.”
  ➢ “There is too much to learn, to master, and that’s the challenge is trying to improve each time improve from your last workout, improve upon a skill, improve upon a lift.”
• Individual Interviews:
  ➢ “It’s motivated me to keep a healthy lifestyle, especially during pregnancy. And I can see improvement in strength, overall fitness, and health.”
  ➢ “Positive benefits. 70 mg/dl HDLs doesn’t lie.”

PURPOSE
Key factors affecting continued participation in CrossFit™ were explored through interviews and focus groups with trainers/owners and members.

Participants:
- CrossFit™ trainers/owners and members (n=64)
- From 6 gyms of different sizes and settings (e.g., military, private, university) in Kansas and Missouri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Information</th>
<th>Key Informant Interviews</th>
<th>Focus Groups (n=6)</th>
<th>Individual Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>6 coaches</td>
<td>48 participants</td>
<td>10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>67% male</td>
<td>56% male</td>
<td>50% male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>38.5±8.2y</td>
<td>33.7±8.6y</td>
<td>40.5±15.1y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>1-9 years</td>
<td>1-50 months</td>
<td>14-38 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CONCLUSIONS
Those who continued to participate in CrossFit™ reported multiple gains in health, fitness, and social support. Factors identified for continued CrossFit™ participation directly addressed common barriers to physical activity. CrossFit™ is a promising type of exercise to help adults meet guidelines and see health-enhancing benefits.