Effect of Previous Organized Sport Experience on Improvements from, Adherence to, and Enjoyment of CrossFit
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ABSTRACT
Youth sport participation can positively predict adult physical activity. In young adults, fitness gains help motivate exercise behaviors and enjoyment facilitates sport participation. CrossFit (CF), a high-intensity group-based exercise program that has recently surged in popularity, offers a competitive, community environment.

PURPOSE: To determine if past youth sport experience differentially affected adherence to, fitness improvements from, and enjoyment of CF.

METHODS: Data were from a 12-month program evaluation at a university CF gym with assessments at baseline, 2-, 6-, and 12-months. The 88 participants enrolled at baseline were ages 18-66 (M=33.8±9.94), 52.8% female, and 89.8% white; all but two had some college education. Participation was tracked over time. Strength was assessed at each point through 1-rep max squat, press, and deadlift, which were summed for a “CrossFit Total” (CFT). At baseline and 6-months, participants rated how they felt at the moment about doing CF from 1 (not at all) to 10 (enjoy it). At 2-months, participants indicated their past sport participation as none, through 8th grade, in grades 9-12, or both. Using SPSS, one-way ANOVAs with sport participation as the independent variable were used to examine between-group differences for each outcome variable.

RESULTS: Fifteen participants (17%) dropped out of CF after baseline, eight (9.1%) after two-months, four (4.5%) after six-months, and six (6.8%) discontinued the study but continued CF. Changes in CFT ranged from -20 to 146 lbs (M=33.8±14.5), and changes in enjoyment ranged from -5 to +6 (M=0.1±1.7). No significant differences were found between sport participation groups for changes in CF, f(3,25)=0.774, p=.45.

CONCLUSIONS
Unlike previous research, youth sport participation did not predict continued participation in CF, changes in strength, or changes in enjoyment.

Although a group exercise program, CF also has aspects of sports (e.g., affiliation, challenge, competition) and thus may be able to address multiple exercise motivations, regardless of previous sport participation.

Future research could compare different group exercise programs and how people from different backgrounds adhere to, succeed in, and enjoy those programs.

References