

TRIED & TESTED

# CROSSFIT

Cassie White discovers the difference between being fit and being CrossFit

**WHAT IS IT?** With more than 300 “boxes” (as the gyms are known) around Australia, CrossFit is a high-intensity fitness program that focuses on functional strength and conditioning. Every group workout of the day (WOD) is different – to keep challenging your body – and can be tailored to all fitness levels. Sessions include Olympic weightlifting, rowing, rope climbs, chin-ups, push-ups, kettlebell exercises and core work. Beginners do a short induction to learn the correct techniques before their first WOD.

**HOW MUCH?** Cost is \$55 per week for unlimited sessions at CrossFit Sydney.

**THE VERDICT?** I’d heard the stories about CrossFit so I entered the box



10 kettlebell swings and 10 kettlebell squats – each done twice.

By round two, all form was out the window as I started to fatigue. Halfway through round three, it was clear I wasn’t as fit as I thought. But that’s sort of the point, says Andrew Cattermole, CrossFit Sydney’s owner and head trainer. “It challenges you to change your approach



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with some trepidation. And what I stepped into was literally a box: no air-conditioning, TVs, or elliptical machines; instead, I’m in a shed, sparse, except for rowing machines, kettlebells and weights. Clearly, this place meant business.

I am reasonably fit, so after completing the induction with a decent-enough hang of things, I felt good. On the whiteboard, my first WOD read: four rounds of 27 box jumps, 20 burpees and 11 dumbbell hang cleans (a full-body movement involving a squat, jump and raised weights). “No sweat,” I thought. Wrong. Within five minutes I couldn’t do anything but sweat – and we hadn’t even finished the warm-up: a 200m run,

to health and fitness by focusing on strength and conditioning development, rather than weight loss,” he explains.

By round three there were long, exhausted pauses between each jump onto the 50cm-high box; the floor was smudged with sweat from my burpees; and the 5kg dumbbells felt like 50kg. It had become one hell of a hot box.

I struggled through my final round after the others finished. But rather than sit on the sidelines, they stood beside me, spurring me on until I finished the final set. After a fist bump from the guys, I collapsed. But we weren’t done yet. Next up was a solid core workout, then, finally, we’d finished.

Each section was short, but intense, and worked muscles I didn’t know existed. But I could see why CrossFit disciples keep going back for more. The feeling of finishing was a proud one: I’d survived.

**FIND OUT MORE:** For more information on CrossFit Sydney, visit [www.crossfitsydney.com.au](http://www.crossfitsydney.com.au), or visit [map.crossfit.com](http://map.crossfit.com) to find a box in your area.

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