



"mess you up"

THE *CrossFit Journal*

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The Garage Gym

How To Get Kicked Out Of Your Gym In Ten Days Or Less!

Day 1

Bring your own music – use a boom box – and turn it up to inspiration levels and start working out. AC-DC's "Thunderstruck" should do the trick.

Day 2

Set up a circuit like one of the typical CrossFit "Workouts of the Day" and put a sign up at each station advising others that this equipment is reserved for accurate timing of your effort.

Day 3

While practicing the Olympic lifts drop a max load from overhead. This may do it right here.

Day 4

Find a twenty-inch platform and perform box jumps. Try three sets of two minutes of max jumps. Bizarrely, this one irks the shit out of most gym management.

Day 5

Take a pair of dumbbells out into the parking lot to do walking lunges. You may be accused of theft.

Day 6

Bring several powerlifting buddies to do some super heavy deadlifts. Don't forget to grunt, scream, and use chalk!

Day 7

If the gym has support poles climb them. If not find something to climb; sling a rope over a beam or rafters, attach some climbing holds to the wall and use them. You won't get to the climbing part if you need to attach anything. You may get stopped at the door coming in with a twenty-five foot coil of two-inch rope.

Day 8

Workout with your shirt off. If you don't get a reaction have your girlfriend or wife take hers off.

Day 9

Walk on your hands, or do handstand push-ups or some other basic gymnastics stuff.

Day 10

If you've gotten this far, this one is the clincher. Record your efforts by writing them on the wall.

If after day ten you are still allowed in, you belong to a great gym. Let us know where it is; we'll feature it on our site. If you're asked to leave before or during this experiment it's time to clean out the garage!

The Need

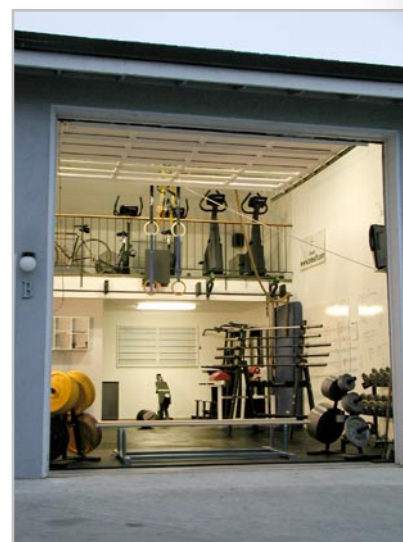
The ideal gym would be located close to home or work, well equipped, clean, and manned by knowledgeable helpful staff. Our ideal gym would also not be overly crowded yet available to friends and family that we'd like to workout with. An ideal gym would be supportive of hard-core fitness, a la CrossFit. As long as we're dreaming it might also play only the music that we want to hear.

Many of us are blessed with gyms we love dearly. If that's your situation, great! For the rest of us our gyms are very different. Often the drive to the gym is 20-30 minutes coming and going, the music is worse than annoying, the staff are less than worthless, the place is packed with selectorized equipment for which we've no use and the few pieces of equipment that you want to use are in near constant use.

Commute, parking, filth, rust, crowding, music, staff, and members each can make what for us is an essential activity difficult or impossible. The "Spa" (big tip-off) in our neighborhood has over the years banned Olympic lifting, all jumping, plyometrics, walking lunges -believe it or not- and has as a matter of policy fostered an antagonistic attitude to serious training. No grunting, sweating, yelling, or dropping weights allowed. Our experience is not unique.

In part the problem is one of business model. Your average neighborhood health club or gym is predicated on a low to minimum wage, skillless staff supervising hapless members. The idea is to fill the space with machines, staff it with high school kids and let "Muscle and Fitness" provide the technical guidance. The predominant model in commercial facilities is the bodybuilding model: all machines and isolation work. Machines and isolation movements require little or no knowledgeable instruction or coaching whereas serious strength and conditioning requires less equipment and considerable expertise on the part of coaches. You can see this in the National Strength and Conditioning Association's, landmark Essentials of Strength and Conditioning where schematics of a university strength and conditioning facility and a commercial health club are shown. The schematics speak volumes. You'll notice that the commercial facility is littered with equipment whereas the university strength and conditioning facility is sparse by comparison.

At CrossFit we routinely receive email from athletes complaining that their gym doesn't have bumper plates, training/practice plates, rings, parallel bars, climbing ropes, plyo boxes, or some other piece or gear essential to our practice. The solution to this dilemma has been solved by many of these same clients: building a garage gym.



Now, when you look at the sea of worthless machines that makes up a commercial facility, the idea of developing a garage gym may seem daunting. Just remember, we're building a strength and conditioning gym, not a bodybuilding gym. We wouldn't keep 99% of the equipment at your Gold's gym if it were given to us.

The Cure

Here's the great news. You can build, rather inexpensively, a world-class strength and conditioning facility in your garage! At the CrossFit facility in Santa Cruz, California, we've picked up every piece of equipment critical to forging world-class athleticism, and many of our clients have the same stuff at home. Our facility is in fact little more than an oversized high ceiling garage. There's no piece of equipment that we need but don't have, not one. The same is true of our clients who've built their own facilities. They've got exactly what they need.

The garage gym tradition is revered and respected. The number of athletes training in garages, barns, and abandoned buildings is legion. Many of these are world dominant in their sport. Some go this route because no other resources are available, but most have chosen the garage-gym realizing it best provides for their needs. The lifting, throwing, jumping, and climbing essential to responsible programming will find no welcome home for you and your friends at 24-Hour Nautilus.



Your garage is begging to become a gym. There is within your garage more than enough space to develop a gym that will rival just about any commercial facility. Yeah, we know, your car and 15 years worth of accumulated junk make current use of that space. What we're talking about here is repurposing your garage from junkyard and auto shelter to a first-rate strength and conditioning facility. Pull the car into the driveway. Cover it if you must. Have a garage sale for the junk of value. You can erect a Rubbermaid storage shed in the back yard for all of your gardening equipment, tools, and other things you want to keep. The rest throw away! If your garage is full of "stuff" that you don't want to keep the easiest solution is to rent a disposal bin. The rental yard will drop the bin off and come back for it and dispose of the contents when you're done. It's easy!

Starting from the Ground Up: Matting

Once the garage is cleared and cleaned the next obvious step is to mat it. Matting is expensive but adds so much to comfort and safety that they are a must. Install in installments, one mat at a time if you need to.



Avoid buying your mats from fitness vendors. You can find 4'X6'X 3/4" "rubber mats exactly like the ones sold by Bigger Faster Stronger (one of our favorite vendors) at your local horse feed and tack store. The same mats are sold by feed and tack stores as horse stall mats. Even if you have to rent a truck and drive two hours out of Manhattan to find a feed and tack store you'll save a bundle by not paying for shipping. The mats are 50-60 pounds apiece and the shipping is outrageous. You'll need one mat for each 24 square feet of garage.

We recommend that you draw your garage to scale on a paper and you'll see how many mats you can lay without cutting and how many you have to cut. Cutting the mats is not easy!! In fact, it's really, really hard. The best approach is to make a template out of brown shopping bag that fits

the space for which you want to cut a mat. Lay the brown bag out on the mat to be cut and trace with white chalk the line you want to cut. Cutting 3/4" rubber matting is best achieved with a utility knife. Use a four-foot steel or aluminum rule to draw your lines and to make the first pass with the knife. It will help to draw your lines approximately 1/4" past what you've measured. Due to the compressibility of the mats this allows for really tight, nice, seams.

Let only about a 1/2" of blade out and from your belly with arms out straight overhead draw the knife towards you along the chalked line. Each cut will only be about 18 inches long and about 1/4 inch deep. So, it will take three passes to get through. Don't cut over

Vendors & Manufacturers

Many of these vendor's websites don't contain all of their products. We recommend that you contact (call) vendors and ask for their current catalog. Your fitness library ought to include catalogs from each vendor.

1. **Iron Mind** (www.ironmind.com)
Iron Mind is our favorite supplier by a long shot. Their equipment will last a lifetime and is a perfect match to the CrossFit minimalist/basics philosophy. The Iron Mind catalog is itself a tribute to the company's integrity and commitment. Iron Mind also publishes Milo, the best journal of strength training in the world.
2. **Bigger, Faster, Stronger (BFS)** (www.biggerfasterstronger.com)
Bigger, Faster, Stronger's equipment is good and reasonably priced. They've typically had trouble fulfilling orders correctly and on time but they are well intentioned and honest. CrossFit has done more business with them than any other vendor.
3. **Concept II** (www.concept2.com)
Concept II makes the Concept II Rowing Ergometer. We can't say enough good things about this company or this piece of "cardio" equipment. Concept II has turned their product into a sport. No one else can make this claim. Where else can you rank your metabolic conditioning against an international pool of world class athletes like you can from their website?
4. **Stairmaster** (www.stairmaster.com)
Stairmaster makes the Gravitron, the perfect tool for developing pull-ups and dips. The Gravitron is perfect but Stairmaster is sloppy in fulfillment. They routinely make promises they can't keep.
5. **Power Systems** (www.power-systems.com)
Power System's prices are rock bottom and their equipment is O.K. The biggest problem with Power Systems is in shipping. We much too often get broken equipment and their welds have been "iffy." We've gotten them to heavily discount broken pieces and then had them fixed. In the end, we'd still do business with them. Often Power Systems is the easy choice for odds and ends and their selection is impressive.
6. **Dynamax** (www.medicineballs.com)
When it comes to medicine balls these guys are the only way to go. The training guide that comes with each medicine ball is absolutely outstanding. These guys understand fitness.
7. **York Barbell Company** (www.yorkbarbell.com)
York Barbell makes beautiful equipment and is the best of the major American equipment manufacturers. Think York, think Lexus.
8. **Ivanko** (www.ivanko.com)
Ivanko's stuff is gorgeous. Their site features articles explaining the engineering behind good bars and plates. Think Ivanko, think Mercedes.
9. **Eleiko** (www.eleikosport.com/company.asp)
Eleiko has no peer in the weightlifting world. Their prices reflect as much. Where budgets are BIG Eleiko's the choice. Think Eleiko, think Rolls Royce.
10. **Sorinex** (<http://www.sorinex.com/default.asp>)
We've not done business with Sorinex yet, but will in the future. The Sorin brothers are highly regarded in the industry and their equipment is gaining rapidly in popularity. Innovative (check out their new glute ham developer) and designed from experience this is excellent equipment.
11. **American Athletic, Inc. (AAI)** (<http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/>)
AAI is our favorite supplier for parallel bars, rings, mats, and other gymnastics equipment. Their equipment is sound and beautiful.
12. **Spieth Anderson** (<http://www.spiethanderson.com/gymnastics/>)
Spieth Anderson is the Eleiko of gymnastics supplies (think Spieth, think Rolls Royce). We just enjoy looking through their catalog. If your budget has no limits, Spieth is your first choice.
13. **Nick Massman** (raahlu@pacbell.net)
Nick is the CrossFit engineer. He made our "ab bench", wall ball target, pull-up bar, rotating-thick handled pull-up bar, and other CrossFit originals. There's nothing Nick can't make, and his stuff is at least as good as IronMind's. For custom applications and one-of-a-kind pieces he's "the man." Nick has been able to take the best equipment and make it better!

the cement or on any surface you don't want to ruin. We recommend a sheet of plywood under the mats you are cutting.

This is one chore where a friend is almost essential. You'll want help loading and unloading the mats and measuring, cutting, and fitting them. They are only 50 pounds or so but couldn't be more awkward. They feel like they weigh 300 pounds a piece by the end of the day. This chore requires patience.

Don't even think about using a skill saw or other power saw. The resulting fire and smoke will take hours to clear and that's from a six inch cut. We've seen first timers make near perfect cuts around poles and corners using just a utility knife. Careful work and positioning of the mats will minimize seams and gaps. We use a twenty-five pound plate to slide into the mat's edges to cram them together shrinking gaps before laying the next mat. This is the hardest part of the garage gym.

Bare Minimum: Weights & Pull-up Bar

You want to get an Olympic weight set. These have the rotating sleeves



and accept plates with the 2" holes. You'll never regret buying a quality bar. It will set you back several hundred dollars but provide a lifetime of service. Bigger Faster Stronger and IronMind are our favorite vendors and Ivanko, Eleiko, and York are our favorite manufacturers. You may want to think about Bigger Faster Stronger's (www.biggerfasterstronger.com) "Aluma-lite" and "Ultra-lite" bars if your gym is going to be used by women, seniors, or children. These bars weigh 15 and 30 pounds respectively. We have and use both. A standard Olympic Bar is 45 pounds. If you are going to be working out with buddies you are going to want two Olympic bars. As far as plates go we highly recommend that you go with solid rubber composition plates. These plates are safer and quieter than steel and even regular bumper plates. If we were outfitting our facility again we'd go all rubber and almost no steel. The only steel we need is 2 ½ pound plates. Bigger Faster Stronger has non-composition rubber and plastic five and ten pound plates. The rubber composition plates are made by both Hampton and York and come in 25-20-15-and 10 kg weights. The rubber plates cost more but the noise reduction alone makes them worth the money.



You'll want an Olympic Bar and Olympic Bumper Plate holder. It's annoying and unsafe leaving this equipment on the floor. The bar holders that hold the bars on end take up little space. If your plates are all full-sized bumper or rubber composition plates make sure your rack is designed to hold Olympic bumper plates. These plates are all 18 inches in diameter. We've made this mistake in ordering racks. We don't have a preferred vendor for these items.

Dumbbells are not *absolutely* essential, but we wouldn't be happy without them. Our favorite is the Durabell Dumbbell made by Hampton and carried by York Barbell Company. They are super durable, rubber coated, and won't come apart and drop plates in your mouth. Best of all they store in vertical racks that take up little room. This is a great dumbbell and racking system at a great price. We paid a lot more for a lot less, unfortunately. Where

budgets and space are tight you want to consider IronMind's "Olympic-Style Husky Handle Dumbbell Bars." These Dumbbells have to be seen and handled to be believed. They take Olympic plates and are thick handled (2 inches). You'll never outgrow these monsters. People's jaws drop when they see them.

You need a place to perform pull-ups and dips. The temptation is to go with one of the many freestanding pull-up and dip towers. They are cheap and adequate to the task but flimsy and take up valuable floor space. In our garage gym we place a premium on floor space. Power Systems makes a wall mounted pull-up bar and dip bar. We've had trouble with equipment coming damaged from Power Systems but these items are very sturdy and ultimately Power Systems made good on the damage. You can also have wall mounted pull-up and dip bars made by a local welder.

We had Nick Massman (raahlu@pacbell.net) build CrossFit a pull-up bar and mounting brackets that is twenty feet long. We also commissioned Nick to design and fabricate a thick handled (2" diameter) revolving pull-up bar. This monster will take someone with thirty pull-ups and bust them down to five reps. The load on the hands and forearms is amazing.



There's another angle to pull-ups and dips. We have in our facility two Starmaster Gravitrons (www.stairmaster.com/commercial/products/strength/gravitron/index.html). They have proven indispensable to developing pull-ups and dips in individuals not strong enough for either the pull-up or the dip. The pull-up and dip are unsurpassed in developing functional upper body strength and are formidable obstacles for most women and seniors. For them the Gravitron is indispensable. If you can't do a pull-ups or dip you need a Gravitron. If you already have pull-ups and dips the Gravitron is still a great tool to work additional reps when spent or for warm-up. The newer Gravitron allows for lowering of the carriage and provides a station for unassisted pull-up and dips. Though far from cheap they have been indispensable to CrossFit's practice. Some of our friends have found remanufactured Gravitrons for nearly half of the new price. Search the Internet for used Gravitrons.

If you only had a bar and a place to do pull-ups you *could* do an acceptable variant of the CrossFit Program. With this minimal amount of equipment you could do deadlifts, squats, push-press, push-ups, cleans, and pull-ups. In fact the minimalist/low-budget

approach to our program is to do deadlifts and Tabata Squats on day one, push-press and push-ups day two, and cleans and pull-ups day three and rest day four. Repeat. In minimalist/low-budget mode we derive our metabolic conditioning from running and jumping rope. You could get amazing results on this regimen. Our desire here, though, is to lay plans for a world-class strength and conditioning facility in your home. Let's proceed with the rest of our design.

The Benches and Racks

Now we want to get some "furniture". You will need to have a flat bench, squat racks, and "portable power racks". Iron Mind is the first choice for these critical pieces.

Squat racks are the next most important piece of equipment after your Olympic bar and pull-up bar. The Iron Mind (www.ironmind.com) squat racks are called "Vulcan Racks." They weigh only 50 pounds yet can support 1,500 safely. They are adjustable from 37.5 – 64" making them ideal for squatting and pressing, bench or standing. The more we use these racks the more we like them. They are used at the U.S. Olympic Training Center as well as at CrossFit. IronMind also makes dipping handles that transform the Vulcan Racks into a reasonably stable dipping platform.

The Iron Mind flat bench ("Five Star Flat Bench") is built to last forever. This all steel bench is the perfect bench for bench press though we've found it handy for dozens of other uses from step-ups to reaching our pull-up bar. We've seen cheaper (\$280 with shipping) but not stronger benches.

Iron Mind's "Pillars of Power" are in a sense portable power racks. These bombproof racks – they will support 4,000 pounds – are a perfect tool for self-spotting bench press and squats as well as an excellent loading platform for numerous exercises. Spotting is always a dilemma when working out alone. The Pillars of Power are actually a better spotter than a workout partner for the bench press and squat.

The beauty of the Vulcan Racks, Five Star Flat Bench, and Pillars of Power is that they are professional grade equipment in use by hard-core lifters world wide, can be tucked away to fit in the smallest of spaces, and are perfectly portable. You are not compromising with this stuff. Programs with multi-million dollar budgets and acres of space are using this same gear. We're talking about some of the best training equipment available at any price!

Our Favorite Piece of "Cardio" Equipment

A jump rope, good bike, running shoes, and the Concept II Rower. That's the CrossFit cardio equipment list. Let's take a look at the rower.

Our favorite piece of equipment for metabolic conditioning ("cardio") is the Concept II Rower. The effect of rowing has to be experienced to be believed. Many of our world champion fighters are terrified of the rower! Often a good thousand-meter effort leaves an impact on the body that lasts for days. The claim of a complete or whole body exercise is often made and seldom true. Rowing is as complete as any single exercise can be. As for



But, I'm Broke!

If your budget is seriously limited here are some ideas:

1. Start with an Olympic bar and some rubber composition plates and a pull-up bar. That's enough to get started. You can find retailers in your area with what you need so that you can avoid shipping costs. They're substantial!
2. Make what you can. If you've the skill or know someone with the talents much of our equipment can be fabricated for less.
3. Shop around. Buy used. Gym equipment goes for pennies on the dollar at garage sales and in the classified section of your local paper. Make a habit of checking in with used sporting good stores, the classifieds, and the internet for used equipment.
4. You can mat your garage one mat at a time.
5. Allocate a monthly budget for the project and be patient.
6. Ultimately, be resourceful. If you want a gym nothing can stop you.

the Concept II Rower itself, they are cheap (\$800) and virtually indestructible and essentially maintenance free. We've seen Concept II Rowers that have been in daily commercial use for years and years without any maintenance.

Concept II has an outstanding website (www.concept2.com) where rowers post their times at varying distances grouped by age, gender, and weight. The pool of athletes is deep enough that the posted times legitimately reflect a world ranking. This is possible because the Concept II Rower (C2) is a common and valuable tool of internationally competitive rowers. Concept II has turned their product into an international sport. We don't know of any other product that can make a similar claim.

The console on the C2 is our favorite on any "cardio" equipment. On this rower we can easily program any interval pattern we want like the Tabata interval (20 seconds of work followed by 10 seconds of rest, repeated 8 times). The C2 console allows us to row for time or distance and gives projected times and distances making targeted efforts easier. It's unbelievable to us that this flexibility is unique to this equipment.

The Concept II Rower stores on end and in this position takes up less space than most other common pieces of "cardio" equipment. Only running and jumping rope require equipment (shoes & rope) that stow away as compactly as this rower.

Gymnastics and Climbing Equipment

Because gymnasts have an extraordinary strength to weight ratio, unrivaled torso/upper body strength, and can express this strength in a multitude of planes, CrossFit makes regular use of skills and drills that develop this capacity. Other than the pull-up bar and dipping platform already mentioned we have parallettes (short parallel bars) and still rings.

Our parallettes came from AAI (<http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/parallel.htm>) and are marketed as "low parallel bars". AAI's "low parallel bars" cost \$844.00. They are adjustable from 14-20" wide, stand 16" high and are 8' long. While unwieldy and somewhat large this is one piece of equipment you'll never outgrow. Presses to handstand, handstands, push-ups, pirouettes, L-holds, V-holds, ... the list of exercises that can be learned on these is extensive. This is an ideal place to develop upper body strength, abdominal strength, agility, balance, coordination, and accuracy.

Space and budget may not allow for the commercial bars, so here are plans for homemade parallettes. Made from PVC these bars will allow for much of what you can do on the bigger set. From the Drills and Skills site: <http://www.drillsandskills.com/skills/cond/> Incidentally, this is one of our favorite sites. The Skills and Drills Page will keep you motivated and challenged for decades.

We strung a pair of still rings from our vaulted ceiling. You may not have the great luxury of a 15-20 foot ceiling. That doesn't mean you can't take advantage of the incomparable upper body strength that can be developed on the rings. You can get a pair of rings and straps from Professional Athletics (PA). PA carries Norbert's wood rings and straps for about \$125. <http://www.gymnastics-equipment.com/rings.html>.

We've seen these rings hung over a wall or beam mounted pull-up bar allowing for muscle-ups (pulling yourself from a hang below the rings to a support above and dipping to full extension) and dips. The difference in difficulty between bar dips and ring dips is a source of unending entertainment. That's all we'll say about that.

Ordering the CrossFit Journal

The CrossFit Journal is an electronically distributed magazine (emailed e-zine) published monthly by www.crossfit.com chronicling a proven method of achieving elite fitness.

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Please include name, address and email address. If e-mailing presents a problem for you we can fax the journal to you every month. If you have any questions or comments send them to feedback@crossfit.com. Your input will be greatly appreciated and every email will be answered.

As for the muscle-up, you just think you've got good upper body strength until you've actually done one. The muscle-up combines the world's nastiest pull-up with the hardest dip. The muscle-up is a functional movement that enables you, once you've mastered it, to surmount any object on which you can get a finger hold. This is potentially a life saving skill. We'll cover the muscle-up in great detail in a later issue, but let it suffice to say for now that the muscle-up is an indispensable tool for developing stupefying upper body strength. Learn the muscle-up; you can't without rings. Finally, the wooden rings and strap assembly hung over your pull-up bar is the ideal solution as to where to do dips.

We also use landing mats from AAI (<http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/mats.htm>) for stretching and to cushion a possible fall from the parallel bars, rings, or rope climb. Our favorite mat is 3.5' X 6' X 4".

Rope Climb is an extraordinary exercise yet requires a tall ceiling. Some of our

friends have strung a rope in a tree in their yard. If you had a garage with exposed rafters you could string a shorter rope and start from seated and make multiple trips up and down for great effect. Our rope came from AAI (<http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/>), but it was expensive. AAI's ropes are absolutely beautiful (http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/training_accessories.htm), come in custom lengths and are booted or braided/knotted at the end to prevent unraveling. AAI Climbing Ropes also come with mounting hardware. They have several styles including one with braided knots every 12" to assist the beginner.

You won't find a better rope than AAI's, but you can put together a Climbing Rope at a fraction of the cost. One of our friends bought a length of 1 ½ " twisted manila rope, ran an eye bolt through a beam and passed the rope through the eye and tied a knot in the end to keep it from coming through. If monitored regularly for wear and fraying this is perfectly safe. The floor end needs to be knotted or "whipped" to keep from unraveling. This is not a pretty solution, but there's no compromise in function with this approach.

The Climbing Rope may or may not be an option in your gym, but there are several other climbing options that are possible in any space. Climbing Holds, Campus Boards, and Peg Boards are wickedly effective, functional, and fun. We've limited experience with this stuff, but it is our next frontier.

We've plans to fill our walls with climbing holds. This is cheap, beautiful, takes no useable space and is functional. You could put hundreds of these up in your garage. Search Google (www.google.com) for "Climbing Holds." Here are several we are considering:

<http://www.metoliusclimbing.com/megapacks.asp>

<http://www.juggernet.com/prodsvs.htm>

<http://www.shopslms.com/climbingholds.html>.

They mount to plywood and the plywood mounts to your walls. The vendors will supply all the hardware and instructions for installation. This is a must for a garage gym in our opinion.

Campus Boarding is great exercise. Metolius (<http://www.metoliusclimbing.com/>) explains the history (http://www.metoliusclimbing.com/howto_campusboards.htm) and details of campus boarding and gives plans (http://www.metoliusclimbing.com/howto_designcampus.htm) for constructing and installing a campus board and sells the equipment. We don't know of a better site or source for campus boarding. CrossFit plans to install a campus board within the next few months. Again, great functional exercise, doesn't take from otherwise useable space, and FUN!

Peg Boards can be used to develop great back and arm strength. Here are the best we've found on the net: http://bisinc.com/lgi_old/pegboard.ihtml & <http://www.wolverinesports.com/fitness15.html>. Again, we've plans to install Peg Boards on our walls soon. This is our favorite alternative to the Climbing Rope. This is, perhaps, a limited option with a low ceiling.

As a note, weight training generally lacks in pulling movements compared to pushing movements. This is why we place such an emphasis on gymnastics and climbing in our program. The Climbing Rope, Campus Board, Climbing Holds, and Peg Board all give great work emphasizing the back and arms as well as the hands and forearms. These apparatus are invaluable to rounding out your program.

Trunk Development Equipment

CrossFit's trunk work comes primarily from hip/back extensions and sit-ups performed on a Glute-Ham Developer and abdominal work done on our "Ab Bench" and "Ab Mat." The rest of our trunk work is calisthenics movements that, of course, require no equipment.

Our Glute-Ham Developer (GHD) came from Power Systems (www.power-systems.com). It came late, broken, poorly welded and to this day wobbles a little like a bad table that needs a match book under one of the legs. Though a mess, we had it fixed,



and Power Systems gave us a refund large enough to forgive the shoddy workmanship, and most of the frustration. Many of our friends have gone with the Bigger Faster Stronger GHD. It's just "O.K." We're not convinced we've seen the best of the GHD's on the market. If we were to replace ours we'd go with Sorinex (<http://www.sorinex.com/default.asp>). Here is our next GHD: <http://www.sorinex.com/Products2.htm>.

The science behind both the "ab mat" and the "ab bench" are perfectly brilliant. Koch, Blom, and Jacob are responsible for the research and understanding behind these products. You can read about and order the ab mat from <http://www.abmat.com/intro.htm>. This article is a must read! Order fulfillment has been troublesome to say the least but none of our friends have been ripped off. It just feels like it waiting months for your mat to arrive. This is one of the best \$30 investments you can make. Some of our friends have made their own after giving up on delivery.

The "ab bench" (<http://shop.store.yahoo.com/homegym/abbenrevbyfr.html>) incorporates the same science. We paid \$300 for our ab bench and we were heartbroken when we saw the quality of the product. It's fairly cheesy. The price has fallen to \$169, which is a lot better, but we put Nick Massman (raahlu@pacbell.net) on the task and we got a much, much better ab-bench with an improved design. Nick's version of the ab-bench is something we are proud of; the original is a "piece."



Miscellaneous Basics

Plyometrics boxes are a simple and wickedly effective tool for both explosive/power training and metabolic conditioning. Timed box jumping is high intensity functional exercise and a regular feature in CrossFit's Workout of the Day. We have a full set of plyometrics boxes from BFS (www.biggerfasterstronger.com) but use the 20" box almost exclusively. We use the 10" box for "box squats" both weighted and free. We recommend getting the 20" box, its booster, and the 10" box. This gives you an excellent jumping box at three heights (the booster provides both a two and four inch boost depending on its orientation) and a box for box squats.



The two-arm Kettlebell swing is a great exercise and for that we purchased Pavel Tsatsouline's Kettlebell set from Dragon Door Enterprises (<http://www.dragondoormap10.html>). The set includes a 36, 53, and 72-pound Kettlebell. With the exception of the two-armed swing most of the Kettlebell exercises have been more novelty than productive. Additionally, most of the exercises featured on Pavel's videotape can be equally or better facilitated with dumbbells than the Kettlebell. Still, we recommend getting a set. The competitions have been a blast. We'll frequently pit two athletes against one another to see who can keep swinging the big one overhead for the best time.

It may seem trite to cover, but there's something to jump ropes. Our favorite jump rope came from Power Systems (www.power-systems.com). The rope is marketed as the "Superope" (http://www.power-systems.com/2002/search/group_name.asp?sku_group=35408?gp=gp). The Superope is billed as their fastest and most durable. Well, our Superope wore and broke after a year but the rope was so fast that it was worth replacing even if it wore out at five times the rate it did. There are two general trends in the design of jumping ropes: heavy and fast. After years of experimentation with both, we've come down squarely on the side of the fast rope, and this one is lightening fast!

We have in our facility several Dynamax Medicine Balls (<http://www.medicineballs.com/>). The Dynamax ball is a soft, low bounce ball. Dynamax's claims about the advantages of a less lively ball are proven the instant the ball bounces off your face, and it's a certainty that given enough exposure this is going to happen. The manual that comes with the Dynamax ball is one of the best publications accompanying any fitness product.

We have two unique applications for medicine ball training. The first is "wall ball." Wall ball is essentially a deep front squat-push-press/throw with a rapid recycle time. Nick Massman (raahlu@pacbell.net) made a steel backboard for this drill.

In addition to the “wall-ball” drill we use the medicine ball to teach the power clean and squat clean. This has been an extraordinarily effective drill to that end.

Miscellaneous Luxury Items

This brings us to our last piece of strength and conditioning equipment, Probotics “Just Jump or Run“. KBA Coaching (<http://www.kbacoach.com/index.html>) carries the “Just Jump or Run”. The “Just Jump or Run” (<http://www.kbacoach.com/justjumporrn.html>) is an electronic device that tests vertical jump, reaction time, sprint time, and anaerobic fade. We had a lot of fun with this for a while, but we don’t use it much anymore, and I’m not sure if it was worth the \$500 we paid for it.



As aids to instruction we’ve some specialized equipment that while being very useful for an instructional environment may have limited applicability for a home gym. Our facility has a 15-foot ceiling from which we’ve attached a block and tackle assembly from Harken (<http://www.harken.com>) with a 4:1 purchase. We use this with both heavy-duty leather padded ankle straps and a “Delta No-Tangle Harness Vest Style” from Sala (651.388.8282). The ankle straps (from Power Systems) we use to spot and assist handstand push-ups and presses on the rings and parallel bars and the harness we use to assist the muscle-up. If you’ve the ceiling height, budget, and commitment these items are of enormous benefit.

CrossFit also has a Sony digital video camera. Whether in a professional coaching environment or working out by yourself in the garage you can’t see what it is that you are doing right or wrong without video. Eventually in your training this becomes more necessity than luxury especially for the Olympic lifts and gymnastics movements. It’s cool.

You’ll need a stopwatch for your workouts. Our favorite comes from www.stopwatches.com and is the Seiko S052 Interval Timing Stopwatch (<http://www.bodytronics.com/mcart/index.cgi?&task=show&cat=Seiko+Stopwatches>). This watch will time intervals of any work time, rest time, and total interval count you choose. This is a gem of a watch for the Tabata Interval. This great watch chimes a countdown for the work interval and the rest interval distinct from the end and beginning of the work and rest interval so that it can be used hands free and without looking at the watch to time your interval training efforts. Once you’ve used this watch other timing methods seem difficult.

We’ll mention here in the name of completeness that we also have at CrossFit two StairMaster Stairclimbers and two StairMaster stationary bikes. They’re fun, good diversion, but not critical.

Finishing

We recommend that you finish your garage in ¾” plywood. Lag bolted securely to the studs the plywood becomes the perfect surface for mounting anything you want or need. If you finish most the wall space with plywood you can cover your walls with climbing holds and have perfect flexibility for mounting your pull-up bar, dip bars, campus board, peg board, etc. The look is also appealing and shows your pride in what you’ve built.

We’ve mounted sheets of marker boards on the CrossFit gym walls for use with dry erase markers. You can buy 4’ X 8’ sheets of marker board for about \$15 per sheet from most lumberyards. We record achievements for various efforts on these boards. This can provide a very public display of your accomplishments and in turn becomes a wonderful source of motivation. We didn’t know when we affixed these boards just how important they’d become. Now we couldn’t be without them. Neither should you. Take our word for it.



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We have a wall mounted monitor, satellite TV and music, and a full rack of audio-visual gear at CrossFit. Whether you're blasting your favorite tunes, keeping an eye on the stock ticker before leaving for work, or running IronMind's Bulgarian Training Hall Olympic Lifting Videotape as background motivation the total effect of an AV system is fantastic. We make extensive use of our system for entertainment, motivation, and instruction.

Every garage gym should have a library and there's no better way to seed your fitness library (other than with the CrossFit Journal, of course) than with Milo. Milo is billed as "a journal for serious strength athletes." Milo is incredible. Randall Strossen, the owner of IronMind will live forever in fitness lore for publishing Milo. Milo is honest, gritty, homegrown, and one of a very few legitimate journals in the fitness world. We wouldn't trade a single issue of Milo for all the popular fitness magazines in the world. You'll also want to get catalogs from the vendors we've mentioned here for your shelf. They are collectively a fine source of motivation and ideas. In a future edition we will make recommendations for material to flesh out your fitness library.

The final touch (in reality you'll never finish, which is cool) is artwork. Throw your favorite sport or athlete into "google" (www.google.com) along with the words "poster" and you'll be likely to find a poster that will be both entertaining and inspirational. If you don't know where to start just put "sport posters" into google and start surfing. You'll find more than you've time to look at.

“Look What You’ve Done”

Don't let the fact that your garage is only 400 square feet or so deter you. CrossFit's gym is approximately 1,200 square feet and we routinely operate with three trainers and three to six athletes at one time. The typical garage is perfectly sized for an elite strength and conditioning program servicing a family or individual and friends. In truth, some of our friends have built their gyms in less than 200 square feet!

It needs to be explained that your home gym doesn't aspire to be as good or complete as a commercial facility; your gym has the potential to be much, much, better. State-of-the-art strength and conditioning technology, like CrossFit, is more readily facilitated in a well-appointed garage than in a Gold's Gym, World's Gym, Family Fitness Center, 24-Hour Nautilus, or Balley's. These chains and gyms like them cannot support elite professional programming; you can.



It bears repeating: the commercial model is predicated on simple movements requiring little or no coaching and inexperienced low-paid staff. This is the only reason bodybuilding practices permeate these facilities. Where lives and livelihoods depend on fitness this model is woefully lacking. The professional strength and conditioning facility requires different equipment, cheaper and less equipment, but professional staff and instruction. CrossFit, through the CrossFit Journal will provide that expertise. We know it can be done; we've done it for thousands through our website.

CrossFit endeavors to lead a revolution in fitness training, a radical departure from the ineffectual, non-functional prevailing bodybuilding model of the commercial gyms and towards the professional strength and conditioning model of the university, pro sports franchise, and military. Your needs, regardless of your current fitness, differ from the professional or elite athlete's by degree not kind. We're waging this revolution in your home. That's the only place it can be won.

If cost is an objection you may consider reevaluating your priorities. If your living room, bedrooms, kitchen, or dining room are well appointed there's no substance to the argument that you cannot afford your own gym, unless your health and fitness are lesser priorities than your leisure and entertainment.

The satisfaction derived from building your own gym and sharing it with your friends is sure to surprise you. Those that have gone this route find that with each modification or additional piece of equipment their enjoyment and pride increase.

Garage Gym Equipment Shopping Checklist

- Mats**
Recommended source: local feed & grain store
- Olympic Bar**
Recommended source: Bigger, Faster, Stronger (BFS) (www.biggerfasterstronger.com)
- Olympic Bumper Plates**
Recommended source: Bigger, Faster, Stronger (BFS) (www.biggerfasterstronger.com)
- Dumbbells**
Recommended source: York Barbell Company (www.yorkbarbell.com)
- Pull-up Bar**
Recommended source: Power Systems (www.power-systems.com)
- Dip Station**
Recommended source: Power Systems (www.power-systems.com)
- Flat Bench**
Recommended source: Iron Mind (www.ironmind.com)
- Squat Racks**
Recommended source: Iron Mind (www.ironmind.com)
- Portable Power Racks**
Recommended source: Iron Mind (www.ironmind.com)
- Rower**
Recommended source: Concept II (www.concept2.com)
- Parallettes**
Recommended source: American Athletic, Inc. (AAI) (<http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/parallel.htm>)
- Still Rings**
Recommended source: American Athletic, Inc. (AAI) (<http://www.gymnastics-equipment.com/rings.html>)
- Landing Mats**
Recommended source: American Athletic, Inc. (AAI) (<http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/mats.htm>)
- Rope**
Recommended source: American Athletic, Inc. (AAI) (http://www.gymnasticproducts.com/training_accessories.htm)
- Climbing Holds**
Recommended source: (various) (<http://www.metoliusclimbing.com/megapacks.asp>;
<http://www.juggernet.com/prodsvs.htm>; <http://www.shopslms.com/climbingholds.html>)
- Campus Board**
Recommended source: Metolius (<http://www.metoliusclimbing.com/>)
- Peg Board**
Recommended source: Wolverine Sports (<http://www.wolverinesports.com/fitness15.html>)
- Glute-Ham Developer**
Recommended source: Sorinex (<http://www.sorinex.com/Products2.htm>)
- Ab Mat**
Recommended source: Abmat (<http://www.abmat.com/intro.htm>)

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(Equip. Checklist, con't.)

- Ab Bench**
Recommended source: Home Gym Warehouse (<http://store.yahoo.com/homegym/homeabbench.html>)
- Plyometrics Boxes**
Recommended source: Bigger, Faster, Stronger (BFS) (www.biggerfasterstronger.com)
- Kettlebells**
Recommended source: Dragon Door Enterprises (<http://www.dragondoor.com/p10.html>)
- Jump Rope**
Recommended source: Power Systems (www.power-systems.com)
- Medicine Balls**
Recommended source: Dynamax Medicine Balls (<http://www.medicineballs.com/>)
- “Just Jump or Run”**
Recommended source: KBA Coaching (<http://www.kbacoach.com/index.html>)
- Block and Tackle**
Recommended source: Harken (<http://www.harken.com>)
- Harness**
Recommended source: Sala (651.388.8282)
- Ankle Straps**
Recommended source: Power Systems (www.power-systems.com)
- Road or Mountain Bike**
Recommended source: n/a
- Digital Video Camera**
Recommended source: n/a
- Stop Watch**
Recommended source: Seiko S052 Interval Timing Stopwatch (<http://www.bodytronics.com/mcart/index.cgi?&task=show&cat=Seiko+Stopwatches>)
- Marker Board**
Recommended source: local lumberyard
- AV System**
Recommended source: n/a
- Fitness library**
Recommended source: n/a
- Inspirational Art Work**
Recommended source: n/a