

# the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

## A CrossFit Grandma

Mary Conover

About 3 1/2 years ago, at the age of 69, I was fretting because I couldn't pick up my 13-pound granddaughter. I figured that in order to get her into my lap, I would have to wait until she could climb there! My police officer son, who keeps fit, strong, and happy with CrossFit, urged me to contact Coach Greg Glassman because he wanted a life-altering best for his mom. That contact and his unspoken confidence that I wasn't "too old" were some of my son's sweetest gifts to me, especially because the gift goes on and on every day!



I strengthened and learned technique, minutes and seconds fell away on my 2K rowing times. But the bonus is that I can now pick up my granddaughter and, now at 4 years old, she weighs a whole lot more!

An aggravating physical "disability" is one of my own youthful making. My terrible "round shouldered" posture is the result of my life-time effort to be shorter and maybe even to hear what's going on down there! This posture, as you can probably visualize, makes it impossible for me to do some things

with perfect form, in that I can't lock my arms straight up. Rather, they angle forward resulting in a not so pretty push press, thruster, or an attempt to swing a weight in an arc. However, I get the job done and it benefits me greatly, even though it isn't perfect.

Other things, such as a simple common cold, or a bout with the flu or the dastardly "shingles," will set an elderly person back more than it would a young person. But one needs to not get discouraged, keep the lungs moving through it all, pick it up, and get back at it or, lucky me, get that call from Coach: "I'm declaring rehab over. Get in here!" Give up? Never!

The elderly obviously don't have the potential reflexes, balance, or strength of a young person. However, CrossFit workouts do improve every one of those functions. I feel strong and, if I concentrate, can even achieve a little straighter posture. My bone density reads "Normal Young" now, and, in a world where few people notice an old lady, I enjoy the genuine acceptance, youthful camaraderie, encouragement, celebration, and love that permeate the CrossFit world.

A couple of weeks later I walked into a world foreign to me. Actually, I paced up and down in front trying to figure out what I was getting myself into as I surreptitiously glanced in the window of a somewhat daunting Brazilian Jiu Jitsu center where Coach Glassman, in those early days, had a little rectangle of CrossFit floor space where he and Lauren worked their magic. I finally made it through the door after Coach noticed me loitering outside! On that day I developed a bond with the Gravitron (with lots of help) and could squat only with poor form, and only to the highest plyometric box. Sit-ups followed the squats, and by the time I had done five sit-ups, I knew that one of the components of my quads had given up... actually failed! My first workout was over! When I informed Coach that I couldn't do one more sit-up, there followed the only time in my now long acquaintance with him, that I found him speechless, if you can imagine that!

I was back the next week. In the days, weeks, and years that followed, my reps and weights increased and, as

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