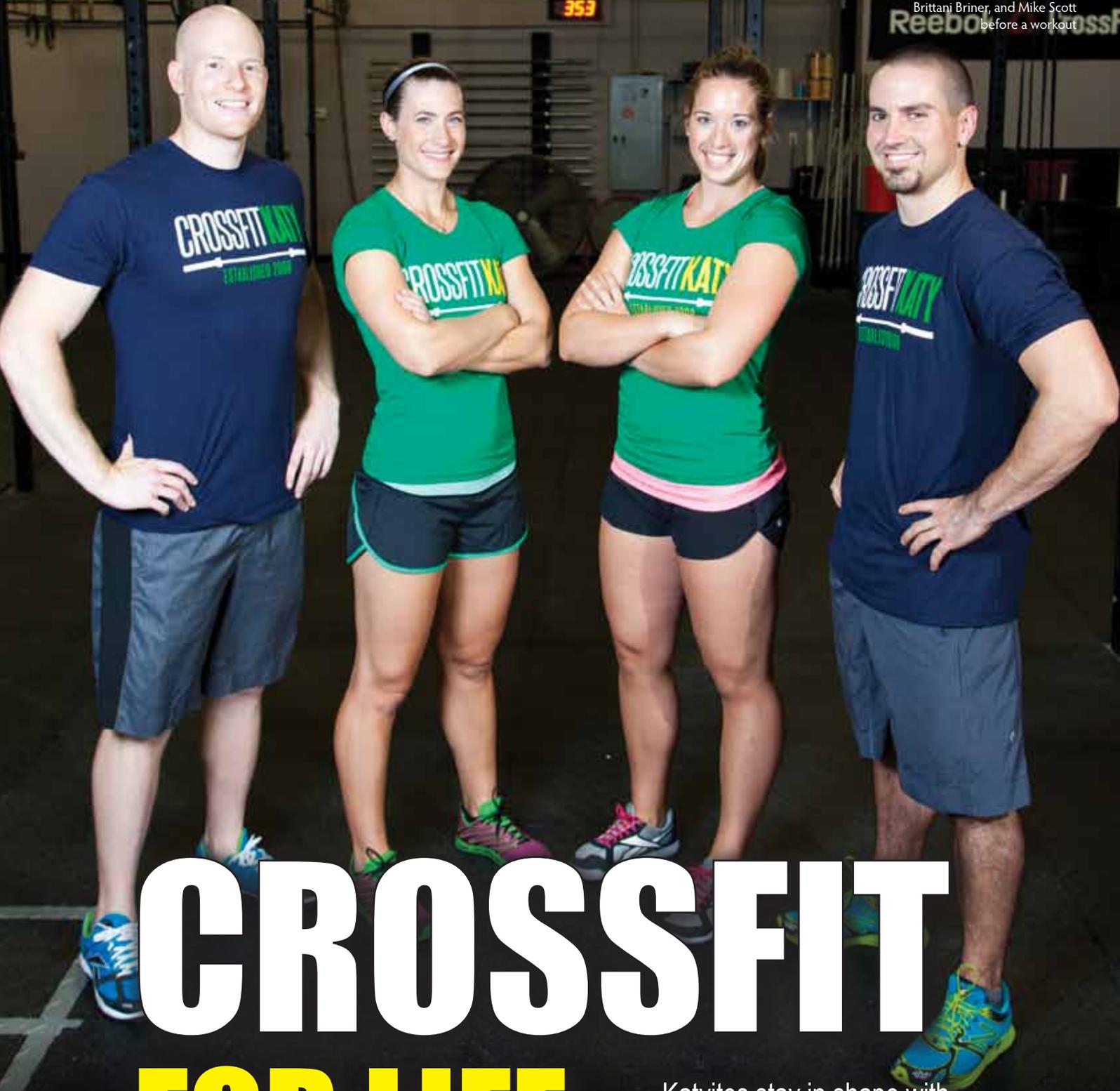


CrossFit Katy owner Neal Kay and trainers Leah Goldstein, Brittani Briner, and Mike Scott before a workout



CROSSFIT

FOR LIFE

Katyites stay in shape with this constantly varied, high-intensity workout program

Written by Shetye Cypher | Photography by Jason Lehecka

When walking into a CrossFit gym, you'll notice no-frills workout equipment like rubberized weights that can be thrown or dropped and a grown-up jungle gym system of bars. A large whiteboard covered in names and numbers often adorns the wall of the small, bare-bones space. People are sweaty and exhausted. One of the newest fitness crazes, CrossFit is cropping up all around town and has Katyites noticing results.

Outside Your Comfort Zone

In the mid-1990s, Greg Glassman opened the first CrossFit gym using a combination of gymnastics, barbell strength training, kettlebells, running, and interval training with mostly military personnel, police officers, and firefighters.

Neal Kay, who owns CrossFit Katy, says the fitness program began gaining ground around 2007 and jumped in popularity after the movie *300*, which featured actors who had trained using CrossFit.

CrossFit makes good on all of the hype, with most participants seeing positive fitness results after a few months.

Katyite Brett Morrison has been attending CrossFit sessions since last October and has seen great results. "Prior to that, I competed in the MS 150 and the Houston Half Marathon," he shares. "Since joining CrossFit, I have become stronger and more flexible. I also became a faster runner without a traditional running program and I completed a second MS 150 with zero muscle soreness. The first one left me sore for a week! CrossFit is never boring like a long run or bike ride."

Not Your Typical Workout

CrossFit workouts vary daily. A workout of the day (WOD) is programmed for each day using a variety of skills and movements. A tabata is a version of a workout where eight rounds of 20 seconds of intensity are followed by 10 seconds of rest. "Basically, the best of gymnastics, barbells, Olympic lifting, kettlebell work, and running is combined for

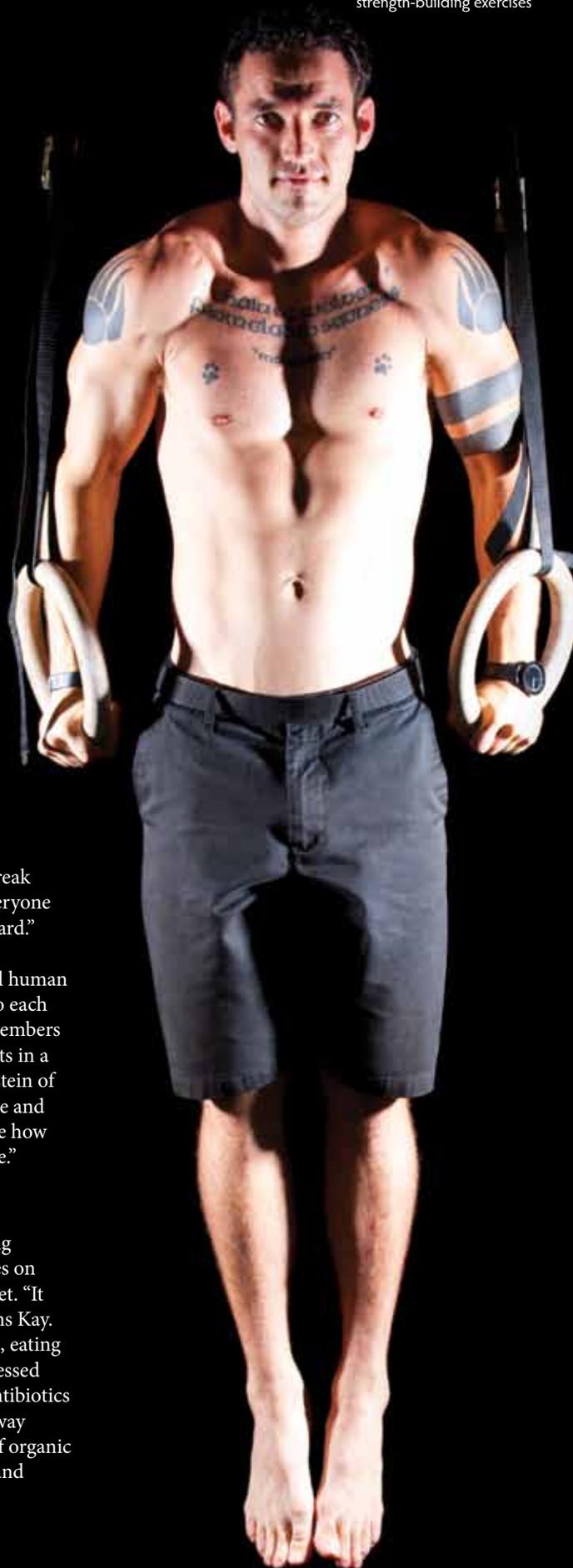
maximum results," says LeRoy Gardner, co-owner and trainer at CrossFit Elevate in Katy.

A typical hour at CrossFit is comprised of a mix and match of different types of movements. "The movements are set to a certain time scheme or a certain number of rounds," explains Kay. "The goal is to get those done as fast as possible or get as much work done in a set amount of time. There is a 10-minute warm-up, and then we go over the movements and scale everybody with weight. Sometimes, we do a strength workout before the metabolic conditioning part. Then, we break off and do the rep scheme. Everyone records their results on the board."

Workouts are based on natural human movements that are adapted to each member's fitness level. "The members also record all of their workouts in a book," says trainer Leah Goldstein of CrossFit Katy. "It's measureable and observable results. One can see how they have progressed over time."

The CrossFit Culture

Along with offering demanding workouts, CrossFit also focuses on the importance of a healthy diet. "It can become a lifestyle," explains Kay. "We follow the paleolithic diet, eating like a caveman with non-processed foods, no hormones and no antibiotics added to your meat, staying away from grains, and eating a lot of organic meat, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds."



According to Gardner, in as little as two weeks many people have lost inches and pounds and feel more energetic during the day. Most can easily run a 5K, deadlift heavy objects, and perform bodyweight exercises. "More broadly, the benefits are in cardio-respiratory endurance, strength, mobility, balance, and agility," says Gardner. "They can achieve healthy blood work, mitigate lifestyle issues associated with a sedentary lifestyle, and change external aesthetic appearances. There is no finish line, and there is both a competition with yourself and, if you choose, a competition against others."

Training for Life

Anna Briner has been a CrossFit member for over three years and is hooked. She has since gotten her husband and two daughters hooked on the high-intensity workouts, too. When she first started in February 2009, she began dropping pant sizes almost immediately. She dropped from a size 12 to a size eight within the first few months. "I was sore all the time, but it was worth it," shares Briner. "I like being fit and being able to chase my grandchildren. My husband is off of his medications and lost 35 to 40 pounds. I honestly love the camaraderie. It's an extended family; we all encourage each other."

Despite the challenging workouts, every age and ability can participate in CrossFit. You don't have to already be in shape to start the program. All that's required is motivation and dedication. "It's hard, but it's effective," Briner says. "Just drop your pride at the door. Everybody starts at the same place." KM

KATY CROSSFIT GYMS

Behemoth CrossFit
24746 Saddlespur Ln.
832-867-3535

CrossFit V3
1420 Katy Flewellen Dr.
281-392-0089

CrossFit Elevate
3750 S. Mason Rd.
281-761-7877

NHB CrossFit
414 W. Grand Pkwy. S.,
#197
832-524-4390

CrossFit Katy
1315 W. Grand Pkwy. S.,
Ste. 110A
281-827-2668

* Many local gyms offer a trial class for beginners on Saturdays. Please call to verify class times and schedules.



SHETYE CYPHER is a freelance writer who has enjoyed living in Katy with her family intermittently since 1976. She is also the journalism teacher and publications advisor at Mayde Creek High School.

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