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## **Cardio Vascular and Respiratory Endurance in CrossFit Kids**

CrossFit recognizes ten general physical skills that can collectively be used to assess the functionality of any fitness regimen. These ten general physical skills, as enumerated by Jim Cawley of Dynamax and adapted by CrossFit, incorporate every aspect of athletic activity, as well as each of the human energy pathways. A comprehensive fitness program addresses each of these and can be deemed successful only to the degree which it offers improvement, while individuals are considered fit in equal measure to their competency in each of these skills. Coach Greg Glassman, the creator of CrossFit, gives us the bottom line regarding the ten general physical skills, "Cardiovascular/respiratory endurance, stamina, strength, power, speed, flexibility, agility, accuracy, balance, and coordination: you're only as good as your weakest link." Coach recognized early on that the conventional definition of fitness was severely lacking. After much observation and shock at how specialized athletes are held up as prime examples of fitness, a more comprehensive approach seemed necessary. In real life (e.g. nature, sport and work) the demand for the elements of physical fitness are never separated. "Segmented training leads to segmented capacity." Therefore a functional fitness program, one which prepares the individual for the rigors of daily life, must collectively enhance each of these areas of fitness. CrossFit was his answer to that dilemma. The first two of the ten general physical skills, cardiovascular/respiratory endurance and stamina, determine the body's ability to gather, process, deliver, store and utilize oxygen. "When cardiovascular endurance is enhanced, the athlete is more efficient in using these energy systems as an avenue for recovery [is provided]" (Sefcik). Measurable changes in the body's ability to successfully perform these processes are achieved through consistent training that incorporates a wide variety of high intensity workouts. This goes beyond the obvious exercise choices like running and rowing. Repetitive, physically taxing movements performed at a rapid

pace create the metabolic reactions necessary to markedly improve these systems. Increased cardiovascular/respiratory endurance and stamina manifest themselves in the ability to maintain elevated levels of activity for increasingly longer periods of time, as well as a more rapid return to pre-exercise breathing and heart rates following exertion. The CrossFit Kids program uses the template of randomized, functional exercises, performed at high intensity. Adjustments are made to accommodate the specific needs and requirements of children and teens. Workouts consist of exercises containing elements drawn from the above enumerated physical skills, while special attention is paid to utilizing progressions for difficult or compound movements, and progressive loading dictated by size, age and consistency in form. Using the above template, CrossFit Kids often perform workouts with a time component, moving quickly from one exercise to the next, thereby creating the intensity necessary to achieve these goals. Highly vigorous exercises like box jumps, tuck jumps, jump rope, sprints, etc. create aerobic and metabolic changes which increase cardiovascular/respiratory endurance and stamina. This positively impacts the body's capacity for exercise and lays the foundation for the remaining general physical skills.

Written by Cyndi Rodi

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