

The Fittest Women on Earth

At the recent CrossFit Games in the US, these incredible Australians showed the world just what they're made of. Here, they share how to train like a girl

By Emma Levett and Jessica Campbell

"It's all or nothing. I'm all in"
- **ELLIE TURNER, 23**

After leaving school and her state netball and basketball days behind, Adelaide-based Ellie turned to CrossFit to provide her with the competitive edge she was missing. She qualified as a physiotherapist in 2019 but decided her place wasn't on the sidelines and threw herself into becoming a full-time CrossFit athlete soon after.

HOW IT STARTED: "I heard about CrossFit in 2017 and watched Tia-Clair Toomey win her first Games that year. Instantly I knew I wanted to do that too. I don't do anything for fun, I have to do it well and

those Games became my lifelong dream. My whole life centred around getting good enough. I loved that I never felt comfortable. There's so many disciplines, it means there's always something to work on. It becomes very addictive."

HOW IT'S GOING: "In training I move from two hours a day up to three or four to get competition ready. I can do anything from swimming, running or biking to weight lifting and conditioning. My body has changed a lot over the last few years. I was recovering from an eating disorder when I found CrossFit and it saved my life

because I've had to double my body weight to succeed. I had to recover to be the best version of myself. Mentally it's altered me too. I'm definitely more confident in who I am as a person and, while it was scary, achieving my dream of reaching the Games has motivated me more than ever to work harder and do even better next year."

60

is the percentage of CrossFit athletes worldwide who are women.

SOURCE: AMERICAN COUNCIL OF EXERCISE

PHOTOGRAPHY: CROSSFIT LLC. @FURYPHOTOGRAPHY AND @INOVTRAINING



KARA'S ADVICE FOR NEWBIES

"It might seem overwhelming... but the reality is that [CrossFit] is designed to be scalable for anyone from age three to 93... Ignore any outside influences, find a gym that has the right vibe - and start turning up!"

"I fuel my body as best as I can"
- **TIA-CLAIR TOOMEY, 28**

Winning the title of CrossFit's Fittest Woman on Earth this year brings Tia's total wins to an historic five in a row. We stalked her YouTube to find out how the CrossFit legend fuels her body during competition training.

BREAKFAST #1: On training days, her first breakfast typically consists of one cup of oatmeal, with 40g of blueberries, a banana and a tablespoon of honey. "This is something I love to eat before [training]. I feel satisfied, and I feel like I have the right amount of energy for my session," she said.

BREAKFAST #2: After her morning cardio session, Tia has a second brekkie: a bagel with avocado and a large egg on one half, and peanut butter and blackberry jam on the other. "If I have two bagels and eggs on both I end up not satisfied," Tia said. "That bit of sweetness with the peanut butter and the jam gives me that satisfaction at the end of my meal."

LUNCH: To power her through her afternoon strength session, Tia has two protein smoothies, whether or not she's hungry. "It just gives me that little bit of extra energy, so I never get to a point where I am feeling depleted," she says. Lunch is usually kidney beans, carrots and tamarind with basmati rice.

DINNER: Tia switches between red meat, white meat and fish for dinner, with leftover rice and veggies. "I'm having a lot more protein in my meal compared to what I've been eating throughout the day, which was predominantly more carbohydrate based," she said. "That allows me to have the right amount of energy, feel really, really good and allows me to fuel my body as best as it possibly can."

"When you show up, great things can happen"
- **KARA SAUNDERS, 31**

This Brisbane-based CrossFit Games veteran has competed nine times and has placed in the top ten in three of those games.

HOW IT STARTED: "CrossFit has been part of my life since my early twenties. A personal trainer introduced me to it, saying he thought I'd find it more mentally stimulating than the gym and he was right! I love the variety and how much opportunity there is for growth. One minute you can be lifting heavy barbells, the next doing some crazy gymnastic rings, then going for a half-marathon run. I get bored easily but this has kept me focused for ten years."

HOW IT'S GOING: "I love the competition part. It's the reward to step out there and demonstrate all your hard work but... it's important that you're getting something from the training too and that you love that part just as much. My training philosophy [is] consistency and continuing to show up. Often the hardest thing is to get up and out there... once you're doing it all, different types of strength, physical and mental, follow." **uh**