

## Tia-Clair Toomey: CrossFit and the Olympics



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In 2015, after barely two years practising the sport, Tia-Clair Toomey stunned the CrossFit world (and herself) by taking 2<sup>nd</sup> place in her rookie year at the 2015 CrossFit Games. Proving it was no one-off, the former track athlete went on to repeat her success with a second place in the 2016 Games, officially earning herself the title of two-time 'Second fittest woman on earth'.

And if that wasn't impressive enough, Tia achieved the impressive feat of competing in the CrossFit Games AND the Rio Olympics in the same year, representing Australia in Weightlifting less than two years taking up the sport.

Super-humble considering her major achievements, Tia took time out of her prep for this year's upcoming CrossFit Games to chat training, lifting and the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

**You have a background in track running and had set your sights on representing Australia in it – how did CrossFit come about?**

My Fiancé, Shane, suggested I do some CrossFit classes to improve my fitness and help build a solid baseline for my track events.

### **However, you weren't really convinced by CrossFit initially, were you?**

Yes, I first tried it in November 2012 for one session and didn't find it enjoyable at all. Then I went with Shane again in February 2013, where Shane recommended I sign up for a month – then I had no option but to go to the classes. After a month, I began realising I wanted to improve on everything I wasn't good at and I could see an improvement in my running.



*Photo Credit: Xendurance*

### **Did any of the CrossFit moves take any getting used to at first?**

I struggled with a lot of movements; I was so used to ordinary gym movements that finding the timing of each [CrossFit] movement was quite challenging, but that's what I enjoyed. I was also very weak in the upper body as I'd never required upper body strength for my running.

Before CrossFit I would just go to the gym and do core exercises, deadlifts, 90-degree squats, pull-ups and lat pull downs. [In the beginning] I did find it hard to grasp what each of the CrossFit movements' names were, but over time I got better!

### **Amazingly you also did an 85kg clean & jerk in your first CrossFit comp – wow!**

It was my very first individual comp and as it was the first event, I didn't have any expectations of myself and I just went for it. It was such a rewarding feeling to accomplish an 85kg clean and jerk, but I think it was because of all the adrenaline I had built up – I just fed off that.

### **Did this lead to a conversation about making the Australian Olympic weightlifting squad?**

The Olympics was definitely mentioned when Shane and I first met Miles Wydall (Australian national weightlifting coach), however, I never believed him as I didn't think it was possible for someone to make the Olympics after being in the sport for only 2 years. However, weightlifting was something I wanted to improve on so we met on a regular basis so he could educate and coach Shane and myself, and I began to realise just how possible making the Olympics was.

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### **You didn't enjoy your first CrossFit Regionals and gave up competing. What put you off?**

I was just a bit disappointed in my Performance at the 2014 Regionals. I didn't execute the workouts the way I should have, which made me very upset with myself as Shane and my friends had come down to support me, and I felt like I had let them down.

### **What led you to come back to CrossFit?**

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It was after [WOD] 15.3 (muscle-ups, wall balls and double-unders) – I finished that workout and something just flicked a switch in my head that gave me determination to go back and do better than 2014.

**You credited your 2015 CrossFit Games success to your lifting. Do you find the sports complement each other?**

Of course! I felt like I just got a lot stronger [through weightlifting] which helped me throughout the CrossFit Competitions.

**Working on both CrossFit and weightlifting intensively, how do you ensure you recover so quickly?** It comes down to programming correctly to ensure your body is working and still recovering, and also [it comes down to] nutrition. I make sure I eat whole foods and fuel my body with the right nutrients. I don't have a specific routine, however; I just listen to my body.



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**As a rookie coming into the 2015 CrossFit Games, did you come with any expectation to place?**

My goal was to not come last! I didn't have any expectation, I was just so happy to be there. When I came 2nd I couldn't believe I was so lucky and I felt like it was a reward to my team for helping me out so much along the way.

### **Going into the 2016 CrossFit Games, did you feel the pressure of your 2015 success?**

I just wanted to prove to myself I deserved to be in the podium. I was very nervous because I didn't want people to think I had flocked 2015.

### **Within 18 months of weightlifting, you competed at the Rio Olympics! How was your Olympic experience?**

It was surreal! I will never forget the Olympics and I was so happy that I'd achieved such a long-term goal. Everything I did to achieve this was well worth the sacrifices.

### **Are your eyes now on the 2018 Commonwealth Games next year?**

I would love **LOVE** to compete in the Commonwealth Games and I will be training for that as soon as I get back from the [CrossFit] Games.

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### **Do you have a favourite lift?**

Not really, I love both the Snatch and the Clean and Jerk because both lifts require a different element of difficulty.

### **Right now, what does a typical week of training look like for you?**

It changes on a weekly basis as it always depends on how the body feels. But a general outline

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would be:

### *Monday*

Morning- Track session

Afternoon - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

### *Tuesday*

Morning - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

Afternoon - Swim session

### *Wednesday*

Morning - Track session

Afternoon - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

### *Thursday*

Morning - Endurance session

Afternoon - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

### *Friday*

Morning - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

Afternoon - Swim session

### *Saturday*

Morning - Track session

Afternoon - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

### *Sunday*

Morning - Endurance session

Afternoon - Gym session involving weightlifting, gymnastics skill & strength and metcons (workouts)

### **Do you get nervous before you compete?**

I always get nervous, always have and always will. I believe nerves are good for competition.

I enjoy breathing and a little bit of meditation [before competing] to calm myself and focus on what I need to do throughout the workouts.



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### **What are your favourite pieces of kit for CrossFit and lifting?**

I love my [Reebok Legacy Lifters](#), [Schiek Belt](#), [Rehband Knee Sleeves](#) and my [Rogue Wrist Wraps](#).

### **Do you have any sponsors that support you?**

I am very fortunate to work with:

- [Reebok](#) (clothing company)
- [Rogue](#) (Equipment Company)
- [Rehband](#) (Recovery/Support Gear)
- [Xendurance](#) (Supplement Company)
- [Jaw](#) (Hand Protection Company)
- The Running Lab (Running Program)
- WODProof (Video App Company)
- [RXD Repair](#) (Recovery Company)

### **What are your goals for the remainder of 2017?**

My goals are:

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- To be selected for the 58kg category weightlifter for the 2018 Commonwealth Games; and
- To do my best at the 2017 CrossFit Games and enjoy every minute of it.

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### **What does the split between your CrossFit WOD training and strength weightlifting look like?**

I would have a few strength components throughout my gym session to focus on my 'strength weightlifting' and then a couple of Metcon/conditioning workouts.

When I'm focusing on strength development, I'm not only focusing on lifting heavy weight to develop strength but also a bit of barbell skill – for example, muscle snatch or snatch balance etc to improve techniques. However, when I'm focusing on 'wod training' I'm getting my heart rate up and focusing on my conditioning.

### **If you had to pick one discipline, which would you choose?**

I could never really pick one discipline because I know I would probably get bored of doing the same thing over and over again – that's why I enjoy CrossFit because there's so much variety and I'm able to cover a vast majority of fitness domains.

Tia trains out of the gym she owns, [Crossfit Gladstone](#), but you can also follow her adventures in CrossFit and weightlifting via her social media channels, [www.instagram.com/tiaclair1](http://www.instagram.com/tiaclair1) and [www.twitter.com/tiatoomey](http://www.twitter.com/tiatoomey) or via her website, [www.tiaclair.com](http://www.tiaclair.com)

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