

## CrossFit 609 offers elite level of fitness

Written by Marjorie Preston

Monday, 30 January 2012 12:04 -

---



OCEAN VIEW – Former police officer Lynn Sooy of Upper Township has been a personal trainer for more than 17 years. She has a home workout center and free memberships at a number of commercial gyms where she teaches. But she comes to CrossFit 609 in Ocean View to train.

“I teach 10 classes a week, but I never lifted and I needed to strength-train,” said Sooy, who attended the Jan. 14 grand opening of CrossFit’s new location on Route 50. She credits owner Joe Pappano with helping her to re-sculpt her body, particularly her arms.

“Nobody else is going to make me do what he makes me do,” she said. “My body has totally changed.”

The CrossFit method, developed in California in the mid-1990s, combines weightlifting, gymnastics, rowing and other techniques to push participants to what the creators call an “elite” level of fitness and power. While it may sound and look daunting – the gym includes 30-foot floor-to-ceiling ropes for scaling, along with squat stands and pull-up structures that almost look like gallows – Pappano said the exercises are “100 percent scalable” to any fitness level.

“From state troopers to stay-at-home moms and corporate professionals, at the end of the day they all have a common goal: getting fit,” said Pappano. “Ninety percent of the effort is getting here.”

Pappano leads every class, from 5:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. While he eschews the boot-camp approach of training in favor of encouragement and motivation, he’s not easy on people. “I’m like a cattle dog, nipping at everybody’s heels, and I hold people accountable,” he said. “If

## CrossFit 609 offers elite level of fitness

Written by Marjorie Preston

Monday, 30 January 2012 12:04 -

---

they're not in the gym for two days, I want to know why. They're paying good money to be here and I'm not letting them waste it."

The former Philadelphian excelled in wrestling and lacrosse as a student, and spent the summers surfing in Ocean City. He discovered CrossFit when he was living in Southern California, and then brought the discipline back to South Jersey. After he was certified, he started training people out of his garage and began to renovate the Ocean View gym last fall.

Sarah Dougherty, of Marmora, who has been working out for 20 years, started training with Pappano four months ago when she decided her exercise routine "wasn't challenging enough." Pappano "pushes me more than I would push myself. I feel faster at running," she said.

"I used to think I was in shape, but I could barely do a proper squat," said Chad Lewis, of Marmora. "I'm in better shape now than when I was 25."

The biggest change, Lewis said, is in his outlook. Pushing himself beyond his limits has "changed my life. There's nothing I can't handle now."

Pappano agreed the "biggest adaptation happens between the ears. There is no 'can't' in here." In fact, anyone who uses that forbidden word is required to do 10 "burpees," a challenging exercise that begins with a squat, turns into a plank, and reverts to a squat and a standing position in four quick counts.

The gym, with its industrial look, is more functional than flashy, and that's okay with Pappano. "We're not big, but we get a lot done in a small space."

He said CrossFit 609 "gives people a place to come, get healthy, and have the confidence they need to do things they want to do, mentally and physically."

His motto is "anything is doable."

## **CrossFit 609 offers elite level of fitness**

Written by Marjorie Preston

Monday, 30 January 2012 12:04 -

---

No long-term contracts are required. Memberships are available on a month-to-month basis.

CrossFit 609 is located at 155 Route 50, Unit 1. For more information, call 609-805-0829 or see [www.crossfit609.com](http://www.crossfit609.com) .