

“The Crossroads” High-Intensity Interval Workout

(Ron Jones, MS, ACSM Health Fitness Specialist, Corporate Wellcoach)



“Those who say it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.”

--Chinese Proverb

Background: My *Crossroads* workout was performed successfully after a seven week pre-season conditioning program I designed for a highly-disciplined community college football team. I had careful progressions starting with just one 4:00 minute round in Week #1 along with the foundation of my Dynamic Warm-Ups, Core Training Protocols, and Mental Skills Training. *The Crossroads* was their final workout. At double sessions the following week, not one player had a pulled muscle. My pilot team went on to win 12 games in a row. I've never seen anyone do this for football conditioning. It was experimental—and was performance-proven later that fall as our players accelerated explosively into the 4th quarter and even into double overtime.

Many laughed at my program and The Crossroads. Some said impossible. While they were talking, we were doing.

Science: To get the most physiological effect out “*body-weight*” Tabata Intervals, I emphasized level changes with the largest muscles groups. Basically this means you need to use your legs to go up and down as fast as possible!

- **Leg Priority:** You'll notice no push ups added to my Tabatas—this is because the legs require more blood flow with a higher heart rate. I went after MAX metabolic challenge to get the most aerobic and anaerobic improvements. Tabata options are endless from adding push ups to using dumbbells and machines, but when it comes to *body-weight* metabolic enhancement, I'd recommend prioritizing LEGS with the maximum level changes possible.
- **Reps:** It varies with exercise type, but the prisoner squat should run about 12-18 reps per 20 second set. The box lunges run about 12-16 reps per set. These two are your “base” Tabata exercises. The other rep counts will vary slightly by age and ability of group and difficulty of exercise.
- **Equipment.** Your body weight. I'd also recommend a special timer that can be programmed for Tabata intervals. You can buy one from www.gymboss.com for \$19.95. Trust me—you will become so disoriented and overloaded during Tabatas and my *Crossroads Workout* that you won't be able to read a regular watch or keep track of your sets and rounds! Let the timer keep track of time so you can focus on your interval output and survival!

Crossroads Order of Exercises: While you can go back-to-back plyo exercises for shorter Tabata workouts, *The Crossroads* is literally *beyond* other Tabata Olympic-level training because of its 32 minute length. Always use the prisoner squat between the harder exercises. The prisoner squat acts as the “rest” interval even though it is still very hard. For the most part, I staggered the prisoner squats with the more difficult plyometric-type leg exercises to keep the quality.

- At this level of intensity, going back-to-back plyos all the way through will NOT maintain quality because most, if not all, will completely implode! Even with the staggered strategy above, it took all we had for the team leaders to get through it rep for rep. The weaker people were pulling out a little early and doing less reps. My advice—do NOT make it any harder because you'll lose the quality. Again, make sure to start your Tabata program with the basic prisoner squat and box lunge then add the more difficult ones as you progress.

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Psychology of Setting: Run the workout in a “circle” instead of rows for a number of reasons. There is significant symbolism to the shape of a circle. The circle is a flow of movement and strength that must not be broken. If someone quits, they leave the circle, and that space immediately gets swallowed up by someone stronger. The shape of the circle puts everyone there in full view—no one can hide. There will be an incredible amount of peer pressure to stick with it and not quit in the faces of teammates.

Have more than one circle. The “Inner Circle” will have the team leaders. Inside the Inner Circle will be the workout leaders that are calling off sets and rounds. The rest of the team will be in the outer circle layers. ***Be one unit woven together for the greatest amount of strength and power—make it happen!***

“The Crossroads”...a special place where the Golden Age can begin through spiritual strength, where you can break through to the other side...or, where retreat occurs away from betterment and growth.

It’s a turning point in life where warriors have positive outcomes. Those that retreat--remain unchanged.” --Ron Jones

“The Crossroads” Tabata Intervals!

8 Rounds • 64 Sets • 32 minutes

1. Burpee
2. Prisoner Squat
3. Split Lunge Jump
4. Prisoner Squat
5. 180° Spin Jump
6. Prisoner Squat
7. Box Lunge
8. Jump Squat

(30 Seconds=1 Set • 8 Sets=1 Round • 1 Round=4 Minutes • 4 Minutes=REDLINE!)

🕒 **32 Minutes = The Crossroads** 🕒

* Ron Jones (12.3.10)