

How a 61 year old man taught himself how to sprint competitively and set goals and track them.

A Sprint to The Gold: How I Won the National Senior Olympics Without a Coach or Trainer

By John Hurd

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12110.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

A Sprint To The Gold!

How I won the National Senior Olympics in 4 events
without a coach or trainer!



John Hurd

Copyright © 2021 John Hurd

ISBN: 978-1-64719-592-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2021

First Edition

DISCLAIMER

This book details the author's personal experiences with and opinions about sprinting & goal-setting. The author is not a licensed coach or trainer.

The author and publisher are providing this book and its contents on an "as is" basis and make no representations or warranties of any kind with respect to this book or its contents. The author and publisher disclaim all such representations and warranties, including for example warranties of merchantability and results advice for a particular purpose. In addition, the author and publisher do not represent or warrant that the information accessible via this book is accurate, complete or current.

The statements made about products and services have not been evaluated by the U.S. government. Please consult with your own legal, accounting, medical, or other licensed professional regarding the suggestions and recommendations made in this book.

Except as specifically stated in this book, neither the author or publisher, nor any authors, contributors, or other representatives will be liable for damages arising out of or in connection with the use of this book. This is a comprehensive limitation of liability that applies to all damages of any kind, including (without limitation) compensatory; direct, indirect or consequential damages; loss of data, income or profit; loss of or damage to property and claims of third parties.

You understand that this book is not intended as a substitute for consultation with a licensed medical, legal or accounting professional. Before you begin any change your lifestyle in any way, you will consult a licensed professional to ensure that you are doing what's best for your situation.

This book provides content related to sprinting, physical training and goal-setting topics. As such, use of this book implies your acceptance of this disclaimer.

About the Author

John Hurd is a retired computer systems analyst and educator. He joined the IBM Corporation in 1956 in the “covered wagon” days of computers, as a programmer for the Air Force Defense System (SAGE) computer, which weighed 275 tons and covered over 8,000 square feet of floor space. It had rows of magnetic tape drives and drum storage devices, and an 8K memory of 8,192 33-bit bytes (they were called words). He retired in 2000 as an Associate Professor Emeritus from State Technical Institute of Memphis where he was Director of the Computer Resource Center.

John now lives in Navarre, Florida with Sandy, his bride of 40 years. His three sons, David McCollum (from his first wife and her first husband), John Jr. and Kevin reside in Benton, Arkansas, Baltimore, Maryland and Memphis, Tennessee respectively.

John has been a senior sprinter since 1993. He competes in the National Senior Games Association (NSGA), which covers all 50 states, also known as the Senior Olympics, for men and women of ages 50 to 100 and above. John is a two time national champion in the 50 meter, 100 meter, and 200 meter sprints, and three times as part of a 4x100 meter relay team. His son, David, has a silver medal of his own for the 220 yard dash in the state meet with his high school in Rockville, Maryland. John says that his genes deserve no credit for that achievement.

John also competes in The Masters events, produced by the United States Track and Field Association. The Masters ages begin at 30 and also can reach or surpass the century mark. Competition in each of these organizations is divided into five-year age brackets such as 50-54, 55-59, etc. One's age bracket in the NSGA is based on one's age at the end of the current year.

John did not participate in track or any team sport in high school or college, not because he didn't want to, but at age 15 in the 10th grade he was 5 feet 0 inches tall, and weighed 92 pounds. There are not too many football coaches that search the student body for a 92 pound running back. However, high school boxing had a weight division called mosquito weight, 92 to 100 pounds, so he gave that a go, and trained hard for two months, and got into pretty fair shape. His first fight in the city tournament paired him with the reigning city champion who weighed 100 pounds, had long arms, and the champ retained his title. Needless to say, the tournament continued without John.

Upon finishing high school in 1949 John joined the Naval Air Reserves, and volunteered to become a combat air crewman. After an eight week modified boot camp at the Naval Air Station in Millington, TN (Memphis suburb) he became a weekend warrior in a squadron of TBM torpedo bombers and went to work for The Quaker Oats Co. in Memphis. Then a year later the Korean War broke out and six months after that he

reported for what became two years of active duty. He did some boxing there, at 134 pounds in the lightweight division, and had a considerably better success with it than he had in high school.

After that John enrolled at Memphis State College (now University of Memphis), with the aid of the GI bill which paid \$110 a month. With that and part time jobs, he could afford the \$45 per semester tuition. Yep, it was \$45 per semester.

By that time John had grown to 5 feet 8, but realized that his boyhood dream of becoming a jock with all the ups and downs of sports was over. However, in the spring of 1992 he learned about the Senior Olympics and he began to dream again. He thought “What if I could get in shape and maybe outrun some of the speed merchants of my earlier years, with their aching knees and all, and end up winning a state medal or two?” So he started walking daily, adding a little jogging later, and finally running a little faster as he felt ready to do so. Then in 1993, at the age of 61, he went out for the track team. He did not win his first race, nor his second. But he stayed with it, and became addicted to the goal setting, the friendships he was making, the knowing that he was maintaining good health, and probably stretching his years on earth, and as a result he did soon win “a state medal or two.” As of this writing he has won state championships in six states, including 15 undefeated years in Florida, two-time national champion in the 50, 100 and 200 meter dashes, and three national gold medals in the 4 x 100

meter relay with friends from his Tennessee days. He has won numerous awards, including being named “Amateur Athlete of the Year” by both the Pensacola Sports Association and the NW Florida All Sports Association, as well as induction into the Memphis Amateur Sports Hall of Fame. And he says that some of his best friends are fellows he ran behind, beside, or in front of over the years.

The point to make from all of this is: If this tiny little scrawny, painfully shy kid, born on a sharecropper’s farm in rural west Tennessee, afraid of what everyone might think of him, can do it, by golly, YOU CAN TOO. It doesn’t have to be sprinting, and you don’t have to win hundreds of medals. But if you want to be good to yourself, pick something you can have fun with, set some goals for yourself, and go for it, because “You’re never too old.”

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Beginning	1
First Things First.....	1
General Health.....	5
Dos and Don'ts.....	9
Some Concerns You May Have	10
New and Surprising.....	13
The Crawling Procedure.....	17
Equipment.....	19
Disclaimer	23
Training Tips.....	23
Mental Attitude	24
Chapter 2: Sprinter's Dictionary	25
Chapter 3: The Starts.....	39
Starting Blocks	39
The 3-Point Start.....	41
My Starting Choice.....	42
A Last Minute Insertion to This Book.....	48
Chapter 4: The Training Program.....	53
First the ABCs.....	53
Now the Regimens.....	54

Chapter 5: The Big Event	63
The Day Before Game Day	63
Game Day	64
The Warmup	64
The Start	65
The Finish	68
Chapter 6: Stick With It	69
Chapter 7: Tracking Your Goals	73

Chapter 4: The Training Program

First the ABCs

Always Be Careful:

In really cold weather, if you feel the cold air in your lungs, get the heck “out of Dodge.”

A little rain won't hurt you. BUT... if it thunders, get off the track. At the official events, the following rules about lightning are followed: If thunder is heard, meaning there was lightning, immediately leave the field and take cover until 30 minutes have passed without another incident. You may then resume activities unless and until it happens again. In that case, repeat the procedure. In the 2011 National Championships in Houston, Texas, we had to warm up four times for the 100 meter finals. That was a delay of almost three and a half hours. They take your health and safety seriously, and so do I. But, unlike baseball, you usually don't get rained out in track and field.

There will be times when you are tempted to skip a practice workout. Maybe you want to do something else, or just don't feel up to it today. Remember this: it is much easier to quit than it is to get started again. Here's a tip I got from Phil

Campbell's book "Ready Set Go Fitness." Get dressed for the workout. The odds are pretty good that you will go ahead and do it, and in most cases you will be glad you did. But if you really don't feel well, and may be coming down with something, take the day off. Always listen to your body when it is trying to tell you something. You have to stay well and have fun, or it's not your thing.

Here is another idea that works to help keep me motivated and keep my mind on the game. I always keep a set of goals for each of my events at every meet that I enter, and I track them on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet after every practice session. I have found that just being accountable to myself for everything I put on that chart actually helps to inspire me to honor my commitment to the training program.

Now the Regimens

This is very important to remember. Recent studies have determined that doing *just* dynamic stretches before the workout or games will improve your start speed. You are getting the body's juices flowing and limbering up the muscles. Static stretches (hold for 20 to 30 seconds) should be done at the end of the session to help prevent soreness and injuries. This is contrary to what athletes were taught in years past.

I started by working out at least four times or more each week, and cut it back in my late 70s, so that I now work out three

times a week. Depending on your age and condition, you may want to do four or five times a week. But do give yourself adequate rest between sessions, and do not do two extra-strenuous workouts back to back.

I started by walking at least one lap, up to as many as three or four. Then I ran heel-toe (jogging style) up to two or three laps. I have recently reduced the jogging to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a lap (300 meters). I gave myself permission to do that when I reached my 80s.

After my walk-around and brief jogging, I then do some simple dynamic (moving) stretches. I stand with legs spread from side to side and stretch left to right and reverse at least five times. With legs still spread I swing down touching the left foot with the right hand then the right foot with the left hand for five or more reps. Then I swing down with both arms reaching back between my legs and then up at least five times.

Now I swing both arms in a circular motion, usually ten reps forward and then that many more backward. Leaning on a tree or fencepost I do 15 to 20 leg swings with each leg, front to back then side to side and I'm ready for the track.

I do four strides (sprint form, but warm-up speed) up and down the 100 meter straightaway, resting just over a minute between each one. I like to mix them up a little. The first one I do in straight sprint form. The second one I do the first half taking high "drum major" steps and the last half in straight

sprint form. The third one I do about 50 meters skipping, and then the rest of it is run in sprint form, but doing a butt kick every fifth step. The fourth one is like running in place, but moving somewhat forward for about 40 to 50 meters. Rest 35-40 seconds and repeat.

Then it's time to put on the spikes, and do a little more shuffling around to get the feel of the shoes.

There are two routines I do at least once each, every week. There is a third one I do whenever I want to focus on speed. I do not try to run full speed at every practice session. Once or twice a day I will approach full speed, but mostly I save the all-out effort for the games.

The first routine is simply five 100 meter dashes. I rest 3 ½ minutes each after the first two. After the third it's five minutes, and after the fourth it's seven minutes for a total of 500 meters.

The other routine that I do at least once every week consists of a 100 meter dash, 3 ½ minutes rest, another 100 and a five minute rest, then a 150 and a seven minute rest, then a 200, for a total of 550 meters.

Some sprinters run more distances, but I've found this has worked for me for several years. Again, according to Phil

Campbell, how long you exercise or how far you run is not as important as the intensity you put into it.

The other routine that I do once in a while, for speed improvement, is called flying starts. I got this one from Jim Mathis, my college friend who set so many national and world records. First, I run a 100 meter dash at moderate speed, take a five minute rest, then I do a series of short dashes. The first series is 30 yards, not meters, just because it's easier to measure with conventional tapes. I do four of these, with a walking back time of about a minute in between each of the four. After all four dashes I rest 5 minutes.

Then I do another series of four, this time at 40 yards, taking about a minute and a quarter to walk back after each of the four. Again, I rest five minutes. I then repeat the same routine for a series of four at 50 yards taking about a minute and a half walking back after each of the four. The idea is supposed to be to run each time at full speed. However, I limit the all-out effort to the last one of each series of four. The total distance, including the 100 meter dash, is about 539 meters.

The flying starts are for speed development. They're called flying starts because you get a running start from three or four steps back from the start line. Actually, I do all my practice sprints that way, just not so much flying in the other routines. I will occasionally run a few practice starts and limit them to 20 or 25 meters.

Now we put the flats back on and do the static stretches. I sit and lean forward and reach for my feet (but I don't always get to them) and hold for 30 seconds. Then I lie back, lift my legs and wrap my arms around them at the knees, pull myself together and hold for 30 seconds. Then on to the tree or fence post, pull one leg up, grab a foot behind me, stretch up, and hold for 30 seconds. Then do the other leg. Still at the post, place one leg way back, lean in toward the post and stretch the hamstring muscle and Achilles tendon on that back leg for 30 seconds. Then do the other leg.

Walk a lap to cool down, get your gear and go. The workout is complete, and the lapsed time is usually about an hour and a quarter. The flying starts drill takes a few minutes longer than the other two routines.

A Sprint to The Gold



Swing one arm down to the opposite foot, then the other side.



Swing down all the way, then all the way up with both arms.

John Hurd



Swing leg forward 15 to 20 times, then the other one.

A Sprint to The Gold

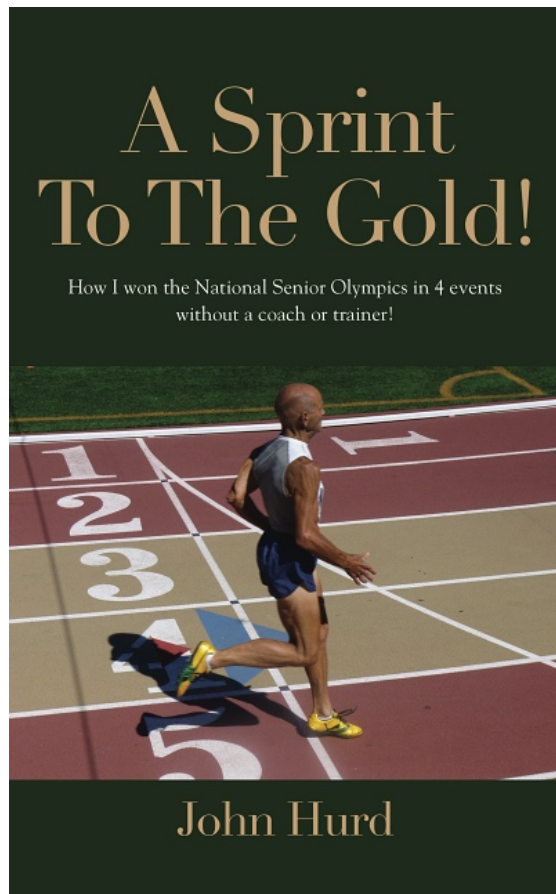


*Grab a foot, pull all the way up in back,
hold for 20-30 seconds.*

John Hurd



Lean forward, one leg perpendicular to the ground, the other extended back, its heel flat on the ground, hold for 20-30 seconds.



How a 61 year old man taught himself how to sprint competitively and set goals and track them.

A Sprint to The Gold: How I Won the National Senior Olympics Without a Coach or Trainer

By John Hurd

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12110.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**