

No sweat: High school junior completes 7,000 pull-ups to shatter records

By T. Rees Shapiro, Washington Post on 05.25.16

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Students do pull-ups as they train at the Bnei David academy in Israel. Photo: REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun. BOTTOM: Seventeen-year-old Langley High School junior Andrew Shapiro shattered three Guinness World Records over the weekend at a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society in Virginia. Photo: Stephanie Shapiro

Andrew Shapiro's quest to set a Guinness World Record began seven months ago, with "American Ninja Warrior" and his father's cancer diagnosis.



Shapiro, a fan of the obstacle course challenge television show, decided he wanted to dedicate himself to getting into peak physical condition. Inspired by his father's five-year battle against colon cancer, the 17-year-old practiced incessant pull-ups with the goal of setting three world records during a Relay for Life event in Fairfax County, Virginia.

Beginning Saturday at 8 a.m., he started his pull-up marathon. Within six hours, the Langley High School junior completed 3,515 pull-ups - a new world record. By 12 hours, he had finished 5,742 pull-ups - another world record. Then he set his sights on a final record - the most pull-ups performed in 24 hours: 6,800 completed by Czech Republic athlete Jan Kares in 2015.

At the 15-hour mark, Shapiro matched Kares' 24-hour record and kept going. After 18 hours of pull-ups, Shapiro stopped, having put his chin above the bar 7,306 times. His family set up three video cameras to continuously record Shapiro's attempt while 15 judges observed his efforts and completed paperwork to certify the achievement for the Guinness World Records books.

So how did Shapiro do it? He credits his success to "American Ninja Warrior," the "Star Wars" movies, sushi and pineapple.

Shapiro said he became interested in fitness after watching the show and has a long-term goal of auditioning to compete on it. (At 17, Shapiro has to wait four more years until he can go on "American Ninja Warrior," which he said he considers, "the biggest challenge out there.")

Shapiro's training to set the world records was extensive. To test his endurance, he performed 10 pull-ups a minute for six hours straight and watched the "Star Wars" movies, as well as "Indiana Jones" and the "X-Men" flicks, to help pass the time. For snacks, he ate boxes of sushi and half pound cartons of pineapple. Setting the record became an obsession.

Along the way he blistered his hands. His shoulders ached. He gave up baseball this year, skipping the season in order to train full-time for pull-ups.

"It was blood, sweat and hours and hours and hours of hard work," Shapiro said.

Shapiro not only completed his goal but also raised \$4,000 for the American Cancer Society. His mother, Stephanie Shapiro, said that her husband was diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer in 2011. He's endured two major surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation and is now cancer-free and in remission.

The younger Shapiro said that he hopes his experience at the Relay for Life event will prepare him for competition in front of a national television audience.

"I've always liked challenging myself so I'll add this to my resume as a person for 'American Ninja Warrior,'" Shapiro said. "I figure they won't say no to someone who has the world record for pull-ups."

Quiz

- 1 Which of the following sentences from the article shows Andrew Shapiro's motivation to set the new world record for pull-ups?
- (A) Inspired by his father's five-year battle against colon cancer, the 17-year-old practiced incessant pull-ups with the goal of setting three world records during a Relay for Life event in Fairfax County, Virginia.
 - (B) After 18 hours of pull-ups, Shapiro stopped, having put his chin above the bar 7,306 times.
 - (C) His family set up three video cameras to continuously record Shapiro's attempt while 15 judges observed his efforts and completed paperwork to certify the achievement for the Guinness World Records books.
 - (D) To test his endurance, he performed 10 pull-ups a minute for six hours straight and watched the "Star Wars" movies, as well as "Indiana Jones" and the "X-Men" flicks, to help pass the time.
- 2 Which of the following aspects of the article is NOT thoroughly discussed?
- (A) Shapiro's motivations for completing pull-ups
 - (B) Shapiro's training methods and diet
 - (C) Shapiro's future goals for competition
 - (D) Shapiro's father's reaction to his achievement
- 3 What are the two central ideas of the article?
- (A) "American Ninja Warrior" is motivational to all kids, and Andrew Shapiro wants to be on it.
 - (B) Exercise helped Andrew Shapiro deal with cancer, and now he enjoys good health.
 - (C) Andrew Shapiro set a new pull-up record. He was motivated to succeed by his father's illness.
 - (D) Andrew Shapiro's father motivated him to achieve a goal, and he wants him to set new ones.

- 4 Which paragraph in the article BEST reflects the central idea that Shapiro worked hard and sacrificed to meet his goal?
- (A) Andrew Shapiro's quest to set a Guinness World Record began seven months ago, with "American Ninja Warrior" and his father's cancer diagnosis.
 - (B) So how did Shapiro do it? He credits his success to "American Ninja Warrior," the "Star Wars" movies, sushi and pineapple.
 - (C) Along the way he blistered his hands. His shoulders ached. He gave up baseball this year, skipping the season in order to train full-time for pull-ups.
 - (D) The younger Shapiro said that he hopes his experience at the Relay for Life event will prepare him for competition in front of a national television audience.