

world record advice from bill & jeanne daprano

by Phil Campbell

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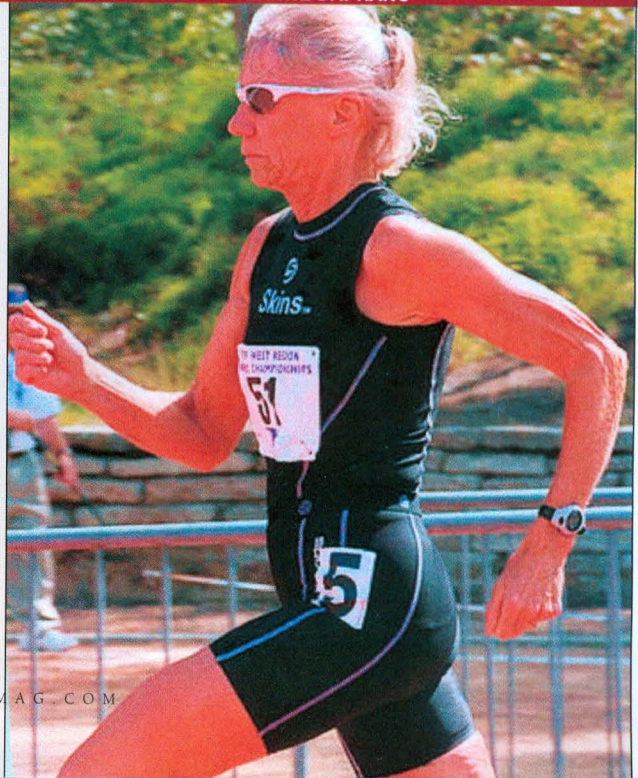
hile participating in a master's track & field event in 2003, I had the privilege to see Bill and Jeanne Daprano redefine for me what it means to age, the right way!

I was throwing discus and heard the gun sound to start the 200 meter sprint. Out in front was Bill Daprano (76 years young at this time), running a strong 200 meter

sprint that he finished in a little over **30 seconds**.

Today, Bill is 80 years young, looks 50, and runs, throws and jumps like he is 20. Bill has set more than 10 world records in master's track & field – two of them in the pentathlon for his performance in five events (long jump, discus, 200 meter sprint, javelin, and the 1500 meters). When Bill competed in the 75-79 age group, his javelin throw was 100 feet, 7 inches.

Later that day, I asked Bill if he was going to enter the World Games, and he explained that his main event is the five-event pentathlon, and the World Games only offers the grueling 10-event decathlon, which includes the pole vault. Bill explained that he had never pole-vaulted before. So I responded, "Going to sit out the World Games and watch Jeanne (his wife) participate?"





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Bill said, "I'm not going to miss the fun; I'm planning on taking pole vault lessons and go and compete!"

Bill gets even more excited when he talks about Jeanne, who holds over 10 world track records too. Jeanne Daprano, age 71, was the first woman over age 70 to break the 7-minute mile during a master's track meet at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Bill describes her feat, "Her time of 6:47 beat the existing record of 7:15 by Helly Visser of Canada in 2004 by 28 seconds."

Five years earlier while in the 65-69 age group, Jeanne set a world record in the 1500 meters (roughly 100 meters less than a mile) with a time of 5:46. And this 1500-meter time is actually considered quite competitive at the high school level!

What's amazing is that Jeanne didn't get into consistent running until age 45 and didn't become serious about competing until she was 60. "I grew up as an Iowa farm girl," she says. "I played basketball in high school and college, and started running on the beach when I moved to California to study for my master's degree. That fitness led to years of encouraging my students to be active and in joining in fitness activities with them."

Jeanne offers great advice for adults wanting to adopt a healthier lifestyle and perform at a record-breaking level, "First, I took out cigarettes and caffeine, and my migraines went away. I started to take things

out of my diet and started seriously working out.”

Jeanne removed all fast-food and processed food from her diet. “I also put things back into my diet that are nourishing, and before noon I have wheatgrass juice and raw fruits, soft-boiled eggs, and cooked oatmeal with dates, and a smoothie.”

Jeanne has six small meals a day. She does eat beef, but she knows the source – her brother raises beef in Iowa. “I bring beef back from Iowa, and I’ve found a place where I can get eggs right from the chickens,” says Jeanne. She drinks milk, but not from the store. She found a local source for raw milk.

Jeanne trains six days a week, with one day of complete rest. Her cardio program involves running, sprint cardio (high intensity intervals), and spinning classes. She stretches daily for flexibility, and for strength she does traditional Pilates and weightlifting.

Husband Bill believes that most of the negative effects of aging are self-inflicted. “None of us can predict how many years we will live, but barring unforeseen circumstances, we can certainly add years to the number. And I’ve found that the equation for adding those years is very simple: Exercise regularly, eat right, and get adequate rest.”

Bill’s training begins before breakfast. “I have a yoga tape that I slap in the VCR and I do 30 minutes,” he says. Then he has

breakfast that consists of hot or cold cereal with three or more fruits – bananas, peaches, blueberries or strawberries. “My rule about diet is more geared to what not to eat, than what to eat. No fried foods, no salt shaker, no sugar bowl and no coffee or alcohol.”

Since Bill competes in the combined events of the 10-event decathlon and five-event pentathlon, he breaks his training into two workouts. “I try to get started at about 10 in the morning with the skill events and I work on each skill at least two times a week,” says Bill, regarding throwing the discus and javelin, pole vault, and high- and long-jumping.

Bill does his sprint training, running, and weight training in the afternoons. He says, “This seems to work for me. I will admit that I get a little bushed at times. That’s when I know to back off.”

Think about this for a moment. Here’s a woman, over age 70, who can probably outrun 98 percent of all the high school students in the country. And Bill, at age 80, can out-run, out-throw and out-jump the great majority of high school students in America. Bill and Jeanne Daprano motivate me, and I hope they motivate you to get the message out that middle-age and older adults are cheating themselves out of the quality (and the quantity) of their lives because they don’t train, eat, sleep, and live ... like the Dapranos. 🏃

