

FIVE KINGS OF DISTANCE

PETER LOVESEY

ST. MARTIN'S PRESS • NEW YORK © 1981

APPENDIX III

The 100-Up Exercise

W. G. George's own account from *The 100-Up Exercise* (Ewart Seymour, London, 1908)

It was when I became articled in 1874 to chemistry at Worcester that, as an indoor apprentice, I first missed the freedom of the open air and the joy of outdoor exercise. My father loved the open country of the Wiltshire wilds and inculcated in his children a like passion; yet here was I, a youth of sixteen, cooped up, with the exception of one short hour's leave for recreation, from 7 am to 9 pm daily, after which – supper, one hour's study, and then to bed.

Necessity is the mother of invention. My physique cried out for its accustomed exercise – the health-giving tonic which was denied it. The brain, alone remaining active, sought to alleviate the trouble, and, becoming convinced of the importance of the case, evolved the idea which, in a perfected form is the '100-Up' Exercise of today – a system of home exercise and training now practised by thousands, all of whom swear by it.

First of all let me impress upon the student the necessity of maintaining perfect form in every practice, be it in the preliminary or the exercise proper. Directly the correct form is lost the work should stop. Beginners should start the exercise slowly and on no account strain or over-exert themselves. Hurried or injudicious training, or fast work while the system is unprepared for it, induces breakdown and failure. On the other hand, slow, well considered, steady practice is never injurious, while breakdowns are practically unknown among those who start their training slowly and who gradually increase distance, time or pace as the heart, lungs and the muscular system throughout grow accustomed to the extra strain and revel in it.

I have divided the '100-Up' Exercise into two grades – the Minor and the Major. The Minor is for all classes when learning and is the limit for those who are physically incapable, through age or through infirmity, of participating in the more strenuous or trying major form of the exercise.

The Minor Exercise

Draw two parallel lines along the ground, 18 inches long and 8 inches apart.

Place one foot on the middle of each line. Stand flat-footed, the feet lying perfectly straight on the lines. The arms should be held naturally, loosely, and, except for a slight forward inclination, nearly straight.

Now raise one knee to the height of the hip, and bring the foot back and down again to its original position, touching the line lightly with the ball of the foot and repeat with the other leg. Continue raising and lowering the legs alternately. The main thing to remember is correct action. See that the knees are brought up at each stride to the level of the hip if possible, or as near as possible to the point as can be managed by the too-fat or bodily infirm individual, and that the body maintains its correct perpendicular.

The exercise at first sight looks so easy of accomplishment that one might well think it possible to go a thousand up. This is the result of not raising the knees to the prescribed height – the main point of the exercise – or of ‘galloping’ through a short-timed movement in incorrect form. Get a friend to watch you at your practice and to correct any shortcomings in your leg action or poise of the body and you will find the difference. Correct form once attained, the exercise may be increased in severity by gradually working from 10 to 20, 30 to 40 and so on to the ‘100-Up’ at each session, and by speeding up the pace.

The Major Exercise

This exercise is more difficult of accomplishment, yet comes easily to the student who by reason of having attained correct form in the preceding preparation will have, at the same time, acquired strength and the art of properly balancing the body when in action.

Stand on the lines marked out on the ground as before, except that the body must be balanced on the ball of the foot, the heel clear of the ground, the head and the body being tilted very slightly forward, and the hands down by the side.

Now spring from the toe, bringing the knee to the level of the hip or as near to that point as physique will permit, as in the minor exercise, letting the foot fall back to its original position. Repeat with the other leg and continue raising and lowering the legs alternately. This action is exactly that of running, except that instead of the legs moving forward as

each stride or leg action is performed, the foot drops back into its original position on the ground.

The knees must be brought to the level of the hips (for full benefit) as each stride is taken, and on returning the foot to the ground, care should be taken that it is not carried further behind than the original position. Thus the body is practically kept upright except for the very slight tilt forward.

While performing the ‘100-Up’ Major Exercise use the arms as they should be used in the correct way for running, i.e. hold them at full length and swing them forward half across the body and backwards a few inches behind the back as each stride is taken.

I do not advise anyone to attempt more than 20-Up of the Exercise at the start, ten for each leg. Very few can manage so many in correct form at the outset, but regular practice brings greater stamina and an easy action which renders the task less arduous, and once the 20-Up has been accurately accomplished, the number may be steadily increased.

The student must not expect to get true action in a moment. The first few attempts may even be disappointing, but keep steadily on trying, and the correct form will come sure enough. Once having become proficient he can keep on working gradually up to the 100 and by judicious variation of pace and number, the athlete can so frame his exercise as to suit the speed and stamina required for the competition, race or branch of sport he has in view.

Success is the result of the application of scientific methods of training to the development of natural talents or skill, which we all possess in some degree or other. In placing the ‘100-Up’ Exercise before the public, and thus spreading the knowledge of it still further I am confident I am giving them an exercise which though simple and natural in practice and incapable of harm when practised discreetly, is second to none as a means of attaining, and retaining, physical fitness, and of developing the body muscles and health generally. . . . By its constant practice and regular use *alone*, I have myself established many records on the running path, and won more amateur track-championships than any other individual has ever won so far. Hence my supreme faith in what I honestly believe is the century’s best – the ‘100-Up’ Exercise.