



SCHOOL PROGRAM

ATHLETE STORIES

John Morris —
Healthy Active Living // Grade 4-5

About John

BORN December 16, 1978

BIRTHPLACE Winnipeg, Manitoba

SPORT Curling

OLYMPIC GAMES PyeongChang 2018,
Vancouver 2010

FAVOURITE HEALTHY SNACK

Fruit smoothie

FAVOURITE ANIMAL

Grizzly Bear



John Morris — Healthy Active Living



John Morris wipes the sweat from his face. He's sitting in the gym at the Olympic Athletes village in Vancouver, the home for competitors during the Olympic Games. John has just finished his last repetition of sit-ups. He's done dozens. He has also done dozens of push-ups and at least a dozen chin-ups. His heart is pumping. He smiles. In just a few hours he'll be competing for the gold medal... in curling.

"Curling hasn't always had the best image. There used to be a culture of 'have a good time and then go out and curl'. Not anymore. I'm proud to say that we curlers can hold our own, physically, with pro hockey players. We have to if we want to win gold medals."

John admits he was brought up in the "old-style" world of curling. He ate plenty of cheeseburgers and still won a number of top events, including two junior world titles. Then he began competing at a higher level. It wasn't as easy. When he was in his early 20's John and his team lost a heartbreaking national final.

"We'd done well to get there but by the end of the week we ran out of energy. When you're tired you make physical mistakes. You also make mental mistakes. The difference between winning and losing is often just a few centimetres and we were giving that up and it was costing us crucial games."

Not long after that, John finished third in the qualifying tournament for the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turin. He was getting close to his dream of representing Canada at the Olympic Games. But he was still devastated.

"I looked in the mirror and asked myself what I was missing in my training and preparation. The answer was my physical conditioning. That changed then and there."

John flexes his arms. He feels good, fit, and strong. Curling stones are not light. They are chunks of granite that weigh more than 40 lbs. Curlers have to propel the stones with speed and accuracy toward a very small target at the other end of the ice.

"Velocity, the speed of the curling stone, has become so important in curling. You have to be strong to whip the stone down the ice hard enough to knock the other rocks

out. And the sweeping is both crucial and gruelling. You have to sweep hard enough to melt the ice. That helps you control the accuracy of the shot and the distance."

John had played other sports all his life. He adapted some of those training techniques to curling, and designed a fitness programme that would strengthen the precise muscles used in his sport. This includes plenty of strength training, as well as running and cycling, especially in the off-season. John also took courses in nutrition and began eating better.

"We started skipping fast-food joints at tournaments. Now our first stop on a road trip is the local supermarket where we can choose healthier foods that will allow us to perform to our max."

John noticed an immediate improvement in his play, and it wasn't just physical. He could concentrate more. His pre-game workouts helped him calm his nerves. He also started doing yoga which helped his strength, balance, flexibility and also his ability to focus.

"Sports are so important when you are growing up. Playing sports makes you not only more fit but will help you focus better in school and help you grow smarter. Sport also teaches you valuable lessons about fair play, communication, and teamwork. It also teaches you discipline and confidence. It is important that we acquire the skills and sport fundamentals to engage in sport for life."

All John's hard work pays off in Vancouver. He and his team don't fade. They beat Norway 6-3. Millions watch the game on TV. John makes a crucial play late in the game. He knocks out two Norwegian stones. That keeps his team in the lead. It's exactly the situation he's been training for since he stared at himself in the mirror years ago.

"If there's one hope I have, it's that kids see how tough and athletic the sport of curling is, how cool it is. I hope they see how important it is that they participate in a variety of sports and engage in healthy living over their entire lifetime."


The gold medal that he's earned through sweat and hard work will certainly help.



John Morris — Healthy Active Living



1. Throughout the article, John Morris explains the importance of regular physical activity and a healthy diet. Healthy active lifestyles not only make you fit, but help you focus better in school and to grow smarter. Working in small groups, develop a 20-minute Daily Physical Activity routine. The Daily Physical Activity routine should include warm-up, a cool-down and movements to get the heart pumping. Write the name of the activity and draw the exercise in the boxes, see example below.

	ACTIVITY # OF MINUTES	ACTIVITY # OF MINUTES	ACTIVITY # OF MINUTES	TOTAL # OF MINUTES
Example WARM – UP	Jumping Jacks  1 Minute			
WARM – UP				
HEART PUMPING MOVEMENTS				
COOL – DOWN				

Goal: 20 minutes daily!



John Morris — Healthy Active Living



2. Using the Internet, find recipes for healthy snacks and lunches. In small groups, create a cookbook with 2 snack recipes and 3 lunches recipes that you would like to eat at school. Each recipe should have a list of ingredients and instructions on how to prepare the dish. Write a sentence to explain why each recipe is a healthy choice.

Snack recipe 1: _____

Ingredients	Instructions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This recipe is healthy because _____

Snack recipe 1: _____

Ingredients	Instructions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This recipe is healthy because _____

Snack recipe 1: _____

Ingredients	Instructions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This recipe is healthy because _____



John Morris — Healthy Active Living



Lunch recipe 1: _____

Ingredients	Instructions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This recipe is healthy because _____

Lunch recipe 2: _____

Ingredients	Instructions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This recipe is healthy because _____

