



SCHOOL PROGRAM

ATHLETE STORIES

John Morris —
Healthy Active Living // Grade 6+

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, and that's after 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 and won a number of top events, including two junior world titles, eating plenty of cheeseburgers along the way. But he noticed things changed not long after he began competing on the world stage. In his early 20's, John and his team lost a heartbreaking national final and his philosophy on physical fitness and nutrition changed.

"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 and 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, and determined to get better.

"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, and 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 one of the most important tactics 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, which is how you control the accuracy of the shot and the distance."

John had played other sports all his life and adapted some of those training techniques to curling, designing 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. Instead, our first stop on a road trip is the local supermarket where we can choose healthier food 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.

"It's one of the reasons why I always say sports are so important when you are growing up. Playing sports, any sport, makes you not only more fit, but helps you focus better in school and helps you grow smarter. Sport also teaches you valuable lessons about fair play, communication, and teamwork and also about 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 as they beat Norway 6-3. Millions watch the game on TV. John makes a crucial play late in the game, knocking out two Norwegian stones and keeping 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, and 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 makes reference to the importance of a healthy diet and regular physical activity. Healthy active lifestyles not only make you fit, but help you focus better in school and to grow smarter. Using the Internet to do research, list the advantages and disadvantages of exercise and a healthy diet. Include both long and short term affects for both healthy and unhealthy eating habits and regular and irregular physical activity.

Advantages of a healthy diet
and regular physical activity

Disadvantages of a healthy diet
and regular physical activity

Advantages of an unhealthy diet
and irregular physical activity

Disadvantages of an unhealthy diet
and irregular physical activity

