

## ***These 90-Year-Old Runners Have Some Advice for You***

Runners at the National Senior Games in Miramar, Fla., competed in events ranging from the 50 meters to 1,500 meters. Their secret? “You’ve got to keep moving.”

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By [Talva Minsberg](#) NYT May 22, 2022 Photos and Video by Alexander Aguiar

The scene at the Ansin Sports Complex in Miramar, Fla., was recognizable, not unlike any high school track-and-field meet. There was a practice area where athletes jogged and stretched. There were anxious runners milling about the track and tarps providing shade from the hot Florida sun.

But the athletes competing at the National Senior Games track-and-field event had a few more gray hairs than their teenage counterparts. They also had grandchildren cheering for them in the stands.



Many of the runners were between 75 and 99 years old and didn’t pick up running until they were in their 60s. Some needed a bit of assistance getting their shoes on before making their way to the start line. But all shared in their determination to compete — and to complete each race. They had plenty of advice for younger runners who hope to follow in their footsteps around a 400-meter oval. Stay consistent, stay persistent and stay in motion, they said.

**Walter Lancaster** 82 years old, Charleston, S.C. “I try to be an inspiration,” Walter Lancaster said. “A lot of people, you know, get lazy or something. And I say: ‘Look. You got to keep moving.’ That’s the secret. Just keep moving.”

As a passionate competitor, the 82-year-old Lancaster taught himself how to compete in field events — both throwing and jumping — to complement his track races. “If you hate running, you’ll find a lot of reasons not to run,” he said. Lancaster doesn’t anticipate slowing down any time soon. “I just enjoy it,” he added. “I’ll keep going as long as my joints hold up.”

**Lillian Atchley** 93 years old, Cleveland, Tenn. Lillian Atchley said she didn’t have much advice for new runners. “I guess you just have to have the love to race, the determination to just do it,” she said.

The 93-year-old Atchley, from Cleveland, Tenn., entered every track event available in Miramar: the 50-meter dash, the 100, 400, 800 and 1,500 in the women’s 90- to 95-year-old category.

The 50-meter race was a close one: Patricia Fujii and Yvonne Aasen tied for first place with a time of 20.43 seconds, and Atchley finished third in 20.53 seconds. She placed second in the 100-meter dash with a time of 44.28 seconds, behind Fujii, who won in 43.25.

“The people in the run community are wonderful,” she said.

### **Roy Englert**

99 years old, Springfield, Va. At 99-years-old, Roy Englert was one of the oldest participants in the National Senior Games. He competed in the 400-meters, finishing in 3:35:47.

Englert credits his success to a simple equation. “My consistent advice is to keep moving, keep moving, keep moving,” he said, “and have a little luck.”

### **Yvonne Aasen**

90 years old, Westminster, Md. Many have called Yvonne Aasen an inspiration. But running is “just what I do,” she said. “I feel good when I run, and when I don’t run it feels like I’m missing something.”

As a member of two running clubs — the Annapolis Striders and the Westminster Road Runners Club — she embraces the opportunity to compete. Like her friendly rival, the 93-year-old Atchley, Aasen entered the 50-meter dash, the 100, 400, 800 and 1,500. In some races, she was one of only two runners. But she didn’t mind. “I feel competitive even when I don’t have competition,” she said.

And for runners looking to keep pace? “Run every day, even if it’s a short distance,” she said. “I can’t run very much now, but when I can’t run any more I’ll still walk.”