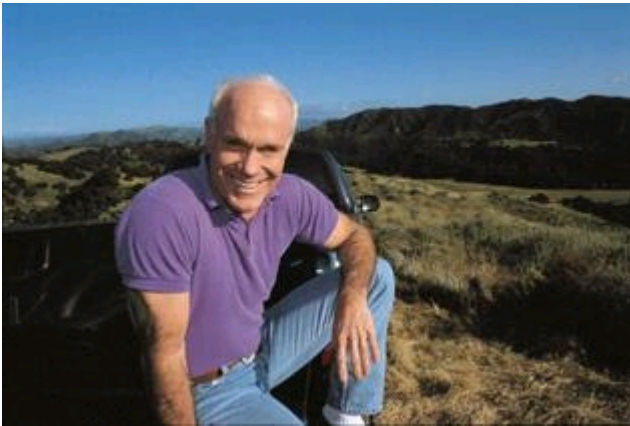


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On The COVER

30 Years of Progress for the Ultimate 10-Event Man
By Christopher Hosford

Former Olympic decathlon champion and world record holder Bill Toomey, 59, knew one thing very well—winning athletic competitions. But after his sports career wound down, it took him a while to perfect a plan for winning back his health and youth. With a new exercise and supplement regimen, he's done just that.



Last June, alumni of what was perhaps America's greatest Olympic team gathered in New Orleans for a 30-year reunion. The group, which competed in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, sweeping the world with records, included such luminous names as Jim Ryun, America's greatest miler, Bob Beamon, the legendary long jumper who broke the world record by almost two feet, Dick Fosbury, the high jumper who created the now-ubiquitous back-first technique named after him, Al Oerter, four-time Olympic discus champion, and many more Olympic legends.

As fine as this team was, only one of those track athletes was named the best of the best the following year, by garnering the Sullivan Award as the finest amateur athlete in the country. He was Bill Toomey, who captured the 10-event Olympic decathlon. He did it at the age of 29, after years of persistent, gradual improvement, as well as a constant struggle with a partially paralyzed hand, which made such events as the discus and

javelin even more difficult than they normally would be. Toomey never publicized his physical handicap, and in many ways his victory was the triumph of an enormous will to succeed.

Over the past 30 years, however, he would have to call on that will again to overcome aging and physical decline, depression, professional setbacks and the dilemma of how to create a second act out of a life that, by the age of 29, seemingly could not be improved on.

"You go from the heights, after the Olympics, and come back down and start dealing with people who want a piece of you," remembers Toomey, of the fame that came with his starring role on the world stage. "Afterwards, I signed with an agent who told me I could have a chance to be a wealthy guy. I thought I was a wealthy guy, both mentally and physically. Soon, I started to get the feeling that I was losing control."

Toomey didn't exactly go from riches to rags. But, after his competitive days, he did let himself go. He admits he lost touch with the "original" Bill Toomey, and in the process lost his superb physical conditioning and the one-to-one relationship with health and youth that he thought would be his birthright forever. Toomey's story is of a man rediscovering that relationship, and regaining his youth and health. If, at the age of 59, he'll never compete in an Olympic decathlon again, he is showing in dramatic fashion that achievement can be won on more personal fields of battle.

"There are no easy answers," says Toomey, whose extremely accessible personality underscores how he's been able to shift from success in athletics to a successful marketing career. "But there are logical ways of dealing with the aging process. People have to do the simple things, and not do the dumb things they do when they're young.

"You have to understand you only have one life."

He credits the Life Extension Foundation with much of his new knowledge about the care and feeding of his body. He became a member two years ago, and is a believer in the positive effects of the supplements recommended by the Foundation. Also, he feels the supplement regimen he's put his 88-year-old mother on has gone a long way to keeping her as healthy as possible.

"I recognized that this was the key to my future health and happiness," he says, of his Foundation membership. "And in my business"- he's a marketing executive for Natural Alternatives International, a California-based contract manufacturer of vitamins and supplements-"the better informed I am, the better I am at my business."

Bill Toomey was born January 10, 1939, in Philadelphia, but spent his youth variously in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Always an active youth-basketball was an early addiction, which honed his jumping abilities-Toomey, an altar boy, wiled away his idle time by jumping over aisles of folding chairs in church. He eventually was able to clear six rows of chairs. "Then I started jumping over fences," he laughs. "Then I built a high jump in the backyard."

Toomey's newfound love for track and field coincided with the rise of the sport's popularity in the U.S. True, America had always produced its share of great track athletes, including legendary decathletes Jim Thorpe, Bob Mathias and Bob Richards (Rafer Johnson and Bruce Jenner would join this pantheon in the 1960 and 1976 Olympic Games, respectively). But the 1950s featured such memorable feats as the first sub 4-minute mile, the first 60-foot shot put, and the first 7-foot high jump. The world seemed primed for athletic milestones, and the U.S. began to lead the way.

Toomey in these early days was far from a great star, but if anything, this early "mediocrity" underscores the Toomey modus-a continuous seeking after ways to improve, to gain the edge, to find a better way. Even through his college years at the University of Colorado, where he competed on the track team, he never earned a medal in national collegiate championship competition, nor gained the coveted honor of being named an All-America athlete. But he was improving, gradually and surely.

"I was not a great athlete, but I had the 'bag of tricks' theory...that is, there is no big move you can make in your training or in competition, but there are thousands of little things you can do. And, if you keep adding information, and you're always flexible, and always examine what you're setting out to do, you'll be successful."

Toomey's improvement came despite his virtually paralyzed right wrist. Even today, there is no feeling in some 80 percent of his hand.

"When I was 12, I was a victim of a pretty stupid trick. A kid threw a dish under the door as I was bending over, and it tore into my wrist. The nerve was severed in half." His youth comprised a series of operations-five from junior high through graduate school-none of which was particularly successful. He remembers working as a youth with a word-burning tool, and gripping it so low that the flesh began to sizzle. He never felt the pain; the smell of frying fingers alerted him.

Does the FDA have the legal right to keep Americans from learning about views contrary to its own? The FDA says yes, but the Supreme Court says no. With their proposed new rules, the FDA has defied the Supreme Court decision in a case called *Daubert v. Merrill Dow*.

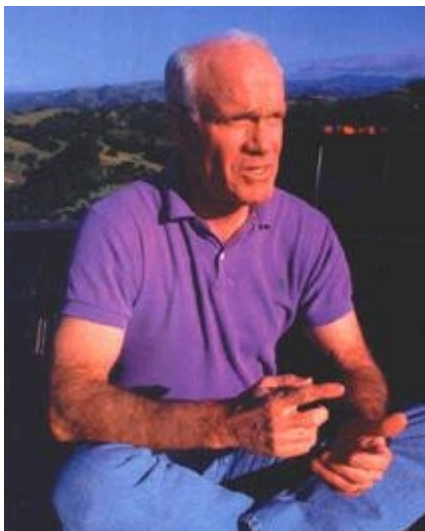
Daubert replaced the "General Acceptance Test" (an equivalent phrase to "significant scientific agreement") with the Federal Rules of Evidence for admitting scientific testimony at a federal trial. The new standard mandated by the Supreme Court demands that there be "significant scientific evidence" to support a claim, instead of the "significant scientific agreement" standard proposed by the FDA. The difference between the two standards is enormous. The Supreme Court standard relies on scientific evidence rather than the opinions of FDA scientists and bureaucrats, who may be unaware of the evidence in favor of a claim, or may chose to ignore this evidence.

The FDA has shown a consistent pattern of bias against dietary supplements over the past 70 years. Moreover, the agency does no research of any kind itself. It depends entirely on evidence submitted to it by companies and individuals. As a result, the FDA is often ignorant of important scientific findings that no one has told it about.

In the decathlon, four of the 10 events-the shot put, discus, javelin and pole vault-require gripping an implement (the other events are 100, 400 and 1,500-meter races, a 110-meter hurdle race, the high jump and the long jump). Old films of Toomey preparing to throw the javelin are particularly revealing of his injury, as, trancelike, he goes through a long series of mental and physical "visualizations" of the movements that are to follow. "I didn't feel what I was feeling," he explains, with a Yogi Berra-ish explanation that is strangely apt.

Surprisingly, Toomey credits his injury with much of his subsequent extravagant success. It also established a pattern for his subsequent comeback from physical and mental decline. "Because of my wrist, I had so many suggestions that I shouldn't be good, so I read everything I could about being good. I began to understand the psychology of performance. One thing I learned was not to talk in negatives, because it soon leads down that pathway.

"Later, when I was competing at the national level, I never told anyone I had a paralyzed right hand. To tell someone would have provided me with an excuse to fail."



"You have to think about where it was in life where you were successful. You need to do an inventory of the things that worked. And you know what? Those things still work, the lessons you learned when you were six about tenacity and persistence."

But he didn't fail. After college, the Toomey devotion to the minutiae of physical and psychological improvement began to pay off. Because of his all-around excellence, he put himself under the tutelage of multi-event coach Pete Peterson, and wound up winning five national decathlon championships in a row, still a record for American 10-eventers. He failed to make the 1964 Olympic team in Tokyo by one qualifying place, but broke the world record in 1966, and won Olympic gold in the Mexico City Games of 1968.

Toomey continued to mix competition with fame, going after and setting a second world record in the decathlon at the same time he was "doing the decathlon" with Johnny Carson on the *Tonight Show*.

"I finished what I wanted to do in sports, but I realized that my biggest hurdle was still in front of me: It was to try to find a way to maintain health, happiness and energy. At the time, I felt my energy was dissipating, and I noticed that I had lost muscle because I wasn't working out. And things got worse."

Bill Toomey, former Olympic track star, didn't wind up on Skid Row. But his decline was typical of what many people experience as they age...he began to exercise less or not at all, he didn't watch his diet, he paid no attention to proper nutrition, he acquired smoking and drinking habits. Along with a gain of 20 pounds came a muscle loss of 10 pounds, for a net 30-pound fat gain. Just as his rise was gradual and persistent, so was the pathway in the opposite direction.

By the mid-1980s, his sports management company had failed, as did his marriage to another track great, Great Britain's Olympic long-jump champion Mary Rand, whom he married following his own Olympic triumph in 1968. He took a fund-raising job with the United States Olympic Committee, but his salary over the course of the next year only equaled what he used to make starring in one commercial.

What caused the decline?

"The most satisfying part of the Olympics to me was the preparation," he says, "learning what I was involved in and finding the route to get there. After that, I didn't like the idea of being a human trophy, and I made some decisions that weren't thought out as well as I should have. I was looking for excitement after my athletic career, and maybe I was looking with the wrong people in the wrong places. By the time you recognize it, you're well down.

"From 40 to 48 were the worst years of my life. I ended up weighing 215 (his normal weight was a muscled 195), and worked up to a mild case of obesity. I had bad sleep patterns, and I didn't eat right. Somehow, I had lost the strength I had, as well as my strength in dealing with problems. I was able to deal with a lot of the problems once I didn't deny them. I began to get over it once someone told me, 'Why are you making it hard for people to like you?' "

He credits his two daughters with Rand-Samantha and Sarah-as being a riveting force in his turnaround, inspiring him to set a good example. But the road back wasn't easy. "I went to the gym after 15 years of not working out, and I was actually embarrassed." He even admits to having worn a hat and dark glasses to the gym so as not to be recognized in his then-overweight condition.

"But I realized that minute I was reversing the problem," he says of his first workout. "The vitamins and supplements were still to come, but I recognized then that I was on the road back to health. And once you start doing positive things, no matter what stage you're at, you start gaining inertia. As soon as someone says you're in pretty good shape, you just run to the next workout. I started out going to the weight room in a hat and shades, and turned into a confident guy who could bench press over 300 pounds."

After being close to \$17,000 in debt from his business failure, he managed to pay everyone back. Three years ago, he married again. His wife, Trish Nelson, is an artist whose paintings are exhibited extensively in California.

Toomey's stint with the U.S. Olympic Committee also was inordinately successful. In addition to feeling one with the international Olympic community again, he was able to help raise \$65 million. And his current work with Natural Alternatives International continues his ties to the Olympic movement. For example, he often arranges promotional packages between NAI's client companies and national sports teams; the teams get the funding, and the companies get the exposure.

He's also moved from a condo in San Diego to a 42-acre ranch in San Luis Obispo County, midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. He's enjoying the benefits of beautiful privacy, scenery and no smog.

Two years ago, Toomey saw a copy of Life Extension magazine in his doctor's office, and joined the Life Extension Foundation. "The nutrition was the final answer to combatting aging, both emotionally and physically."

All has not gone completely smoothly on the road back to physical well-being. He had back surgery in 1991, and after a ruptured disk had surgery on his back again in 1995. He blamed an ill-advised workout program that emphasized weight-lifting and some 1,500 sit ups a day ("It destroyed my back," he notes, ruefully). He has since turned to a workout program in a pool, based on the Hydro-Tone resistance system.

This year, Toomey's younger daughter, Sarah, made him a grandfather. "I'm now 'attacking' the age of 60, which is the way to do it," Toomey says. "The answer is moderate exercise and attention to the details of what one can do with nutritional supplementation. Age is not the parameter that it used to be. When my Dad was 59, I don't think he felt as I do.

"The great message in this is that a lot of people collapse a little from time to time. We live in a sea of stress, and a lot of people fall into the trap of too much overhead, too much food, the wrong kind of food, no exercise. They lose touch. And all of a sudden you're coughing in winter in a taxi heading to a flight from La Guardia that's going nowhere."

Toomey is definitely somewhere these days. As he says, he's Bill Toomey again.

"You have to think about where it was in life where you were successful. You need to do an inventory of the things that worked. And you know what? Those things still work, the lessons you learned when you were six about tenacity and persistence.

"And it's a great journey back. I think you have a greater reverence for a good life after not having it for a while."

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