



“Go the Distance” November, 2008

Highlights

GTD November “Deep Thought on Fitness” (Linda Shoenberger)

Fitness swimming comes naturally to many of us and for some it is hard work. Either way it is important to have regular check-ups with your doctor. Many fitness swimmers take their health for granted because they work out, yet lurking below the surface may be silent health issues like high blood pressure or high cholesterol due to genetics.

November Highlight #1: Have you made your GTD 2009 goals?

Ok, so we have less than one month to go for GTD 2008 – wow - did this year fly by! So as most of us try to get those last miles squeezed in so we can make our final 2008 GTD goal – let’s start thinking about what your GTD 2009 goal(s) could be! Are you going to try and go farther next year? How about achieving the next GTD milestone? So many things to think about!

Starting with GTD 2009 we will be tracking two new parameters! The first is the time you spend in the water. Simply add up the time you spend each month and submit it to your GTD pal with your distance. We should be able to come up with some fun ways to analyze our new data!

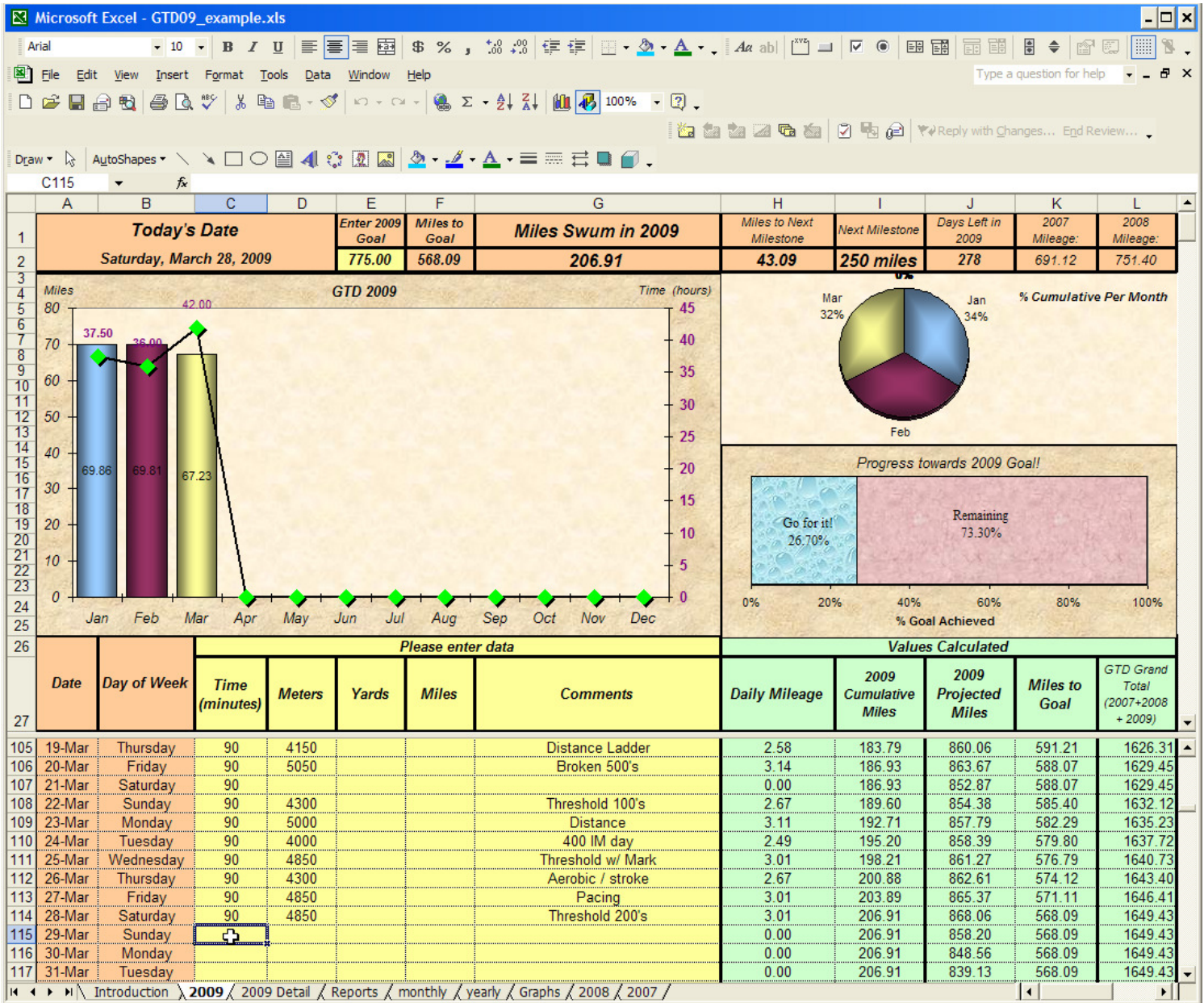
In addition, another new feature is the option to enter your GTD 2009 goal! We can then track everyone’s progress towards their very own personal goal in addition to the GTD distance milestones.!

For your convenience you can use the new and improved GTD tracking spreadsheet available on the USMS website. An example is shown below.

Note that your GTD 2009 goal is entered (or revised!) by you (see top left next to date). The value you enter is then used to calculate the miles you have remaining to achieve your goal. There is also a new graph illustrating your progress towards your goal (see bottom right graph). Encouraging words will appear as you progress!

There is also a new field to enter the time you spend per day swimming. The amount of time you spend swimming each month is then displayed in the graph above by the green diamonds. The axis for this curve is on the right.

When GTD participants were asked if they would like to review and test this new spreadsheet – over 125 of you responded with “yes”! Unbelievable! Your comments, suggestions and testing of the GTD 2009 tracking spreadsheet is very much appreciated!



A very, very special thanks to Michael B., Ms. Max, Marty, Jon, Martin, Son, Jeff, Bob A., Craig B. and Charlie F. – you all went amazingly above and beyond the task of reviewing a file and providing feedback. Thanks to these folks, we now have several new options and way cool ways to look at our data. I continue to be humbled by the generosity and enthusiasm of our participants – not to mention their expertise that they are so willing to share! Thank you all so very much.

Each year GTD becomes more driven and customized by our participants – which is just as it should be! Let's continue with this trend and always strive to make it better and more fun than before. Your suggestions and feedback are always welcome!

Meet GTD Swimmer Ellen Tobler (35-39 age group, 275.35 miles year to date)

Greta van Meeteren: Ellen was a very excited participant in the “meet the GTD swimmer” part of our program. Here are Ellen’s answers to the questions I asked her.

About Real Life

Professionally, I am a senior account manager for a healthcare marketing company. I fully enjoy my job and the clients that I work with. I have a handful of clients who have multi-faceted projects and I like working on those accounts the most since there’s never a dull moment and it enables me to work closely with them in different ways.

I have been married for 10 years and have 2 boys who are 7 and 4. We are a very close-knit family and spend a lot of time together. I volunteer at my children’s school quite a bit and I love it because I get to know the other kids and their families (and get to know what my kids are *really* like in school!).

Life is crazy busy with my family—I would be completely lost without my Outlook calendar! My older son is just starting sports (swimming and basketball) and my husband has Chicago Bears season tickets so our schedules revolve around those activities as well as my swimming schedule of course.

About Real Life and Swimming

I swam for a few years in a summer age group when I was 9-12 then I didn’t swim for more than 20 years. I started back in the pool to get in better shape and because I remembered how much I loved to swim. I haven’t stopped swimming in 2 years.

Swimming has become a major part of my life. Earlier this year we organized a Masters team at the YMCA that I swim at and helping with the team takes a lot of my time. I also volunteer with the YMCA’s kids USA swim team and with the local masters swimming committee (LMSC) for Illinois. I started competing in pool meets about a year ago and absolutely love it. I try to swim at as many meets as I can and, luckily, my family is very supportive of my swimming and all the time it takes. This past summer I was fortunate enough to swim in 3 open water events and have realized just how much I love, love, love open water swimming. I think I need to move someplace warmer so I can swim outside more than 3 months a year.

About Swimming Habits

I swim 5-6 days a week and usually swim anywhere between 2,500-4,000 meters. I swim by myself sometimes and with my Y team as well as another local Masters team. Because my schedule is so busy, I swim when I can and depending upon the day, I may swim in the morning or late at night.

I like all the strokes, but am focusing on breaststroke this year. I needed a complete overhaul on my stroke technique and am in the process of reworking it. I’m hopeful that my stroke will become more efficient and, of course, faster as a result of my hard work.

About GTD

GTD has enabled me to gauge the work I do in the pool and makes me feel good about the progress I make every day and month and year. My goal this year is to swim 365 miles (a mile a day) and I have a lot to go for the rest of the year. I may have to double-up some swims to get to 365 by the end of December. The advice I take for myself is to try and make my miles quality miles, not just miles to increase my GTD tally.

About Your Personality!

Three adjectives that describe me are: upbeat, dependable, and energetic. I love to be outside swimming, hiking, camping, etc. My family has a plan to see as many US national parks as possible. Every year we go to at least one national park and take as many camping trips as we possibly can. In 2009 we're planning on visiting Mammoth Caves National Park and Grand Tetons National Park and hope we *don't* see any bears (especially at our campsite)!



Ellen and her husband at the 2008 YMCA Masters Nationals in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Meet GTD swimmer Kevin Hoffman (Age Group 50-54, 402.49 miles to date)

Greta van Meeteren: Oh my, definitely read Kevin's story. Here is one determined Master swimmer who is enjoying time in the pool to the fullest. How wonderful to "get to know" all of you great GTD swimmers out there!

Real Life

I am a 52-year-old lawyer who specializes in Wall Street related cases--investor fraud, compensation and employment disputes with Wall Street professionals, and regulatory investigations. I have had my own firm in Greenwich, CT. since 1995 after spending thirteen years as an in-house investment banking litigator. I am married with four children--ages 22,21,19 and 12 and I have two dogs and two cats who keep me busy outside of the office. Life is full and swimming is the stress reducer that enables me to balance the rigors of litigation with being a family man. Swimming also provides me with the conditioning to charge my battery. I love my work and I feel that since I have moved from defending brokerage firms and investment banks to protecting individuals that I have added greater purpose to my professional life.

The Role of Swimming

I was a junior varsity swimmer at Dartmouth College from 1974-1978. I then took a long vacation from swimming and in 2005, was invited to join a masters group in Greenwich by an old friend, Nick Cavataro. Nick coaches the Iona swim team (both men and women), the local YWCA age group teams, a country club team during the summer and our Masters program. He is an inspiration to us all and one great coach. After 27 years off, I had no idea that I would fall in love with the sport once again when I started. I was so impressed with the caliber of my fellow masters swimmers--they looked like superstars to me when I got back in the water in the slowest lane.

I would say that swimming is a hobby of mine but I have strong passions for all my hobbies. I am a golfer as well (handicap 5) and I belong to a club in Ireland called the Old Head Golf Links where I am now captain and a former Club Champ. I am also a former golf champion at my home club here in the States--the Apawamis Club in Rye, New York. I love competition in all sports. My approach is to try and be the best that I can be with the tools given to me. In swimming, I know that I am not a star but I try to be consistent as I work on my conditioning and work on my two main strokes--free and butterfly.

I have competed in the New England short course championships the past three years in March and the CT. state championship meet. I won the 200 Fly in 2006 and finished 2d last year by a tenth of a second in the NE meet and I have won free and fly events in the CT. state meet. The NE meet is the high point of the season for me and I love swimming against so many gifted athletes.

I am sure that one would say that swimming is a major part of my life once again. I train with my fellow masters swimmers Monday through Friday from 5:45 AM to 7 AM. I have missed only two practices since we started in late August (our season runs from August 25 to July 25). My attendance record is something that I am proud of as it shows a commitment to improve. I know that my college attendance record was not as good!!!

Practice Routine

Swimming in a group is the way to go if you can. We have a very tight group who do socialize outside of the pool. If somebody is missing for more than a few days, we call around to see what is up. Our coach keeps a very varied practice regimen with different types of training equipment--paddles, fins, buoys, snorkels, small kickboards and the like. We generally go between 4,000 to 4,500 yards per day. I am a pool swimmer but there are several members of our group who swim open water events and compete in triathlons. Personally, I like to see the black line on the bottom of the pool!!

My favorite stroke is fly and I feel the most comfortable at the 200 yard distance. In many ways, this event is such a challenge that I get an extra boost from competing at that distance.

I entered the GTD because I wanted to create a discipline to record my workouts to compare going forward. It is amazing how easy it is to get into a routine to keep track of my times and distances. Perhaps, my 27 years as a lawyer has been good practice for record-keeping! I do not set specific goals for distance--I try to be consistent and make every workout possible.

Personality

***These questions are very difficult to answer.** I think my favorite swim story is more about diving than swimming. As a JV swimmer at Dartmouth, we had a long winning streak that Yale tried to break one year by swimming down a couple of varsity guys. Our coach predicted this could happen so he asked for 2 volunteer divers as Yale had no divers. I could do a front flip, a back flip and some twisting dives so I dove with one other volunteer. The Yale coach was livid since he had no divers and we went 1-2 and made the difference in the meet. My 200 fly race immediately followed the diving and my chest was completely red from the belly flop on the last dive--needless to say, there was much laughter in the stands and on the pool deck.*

If I had to use three adjectives to describe myself--competitive, determined, but fun-loving.

My friends would hopefully agree with that description, and I would also hope that they would say that I have brought a smile to their face on occasion.

Kevin T. Hoffman

Meet GTD swimmer Mike Parry (Age Group 40-44, 241.05 miles to date)

Greta van Meeteren: I've seen so many stories of people who prefer that black line on the bottom and the chlorine that it is truly fun to read about a swimmer who prefers the open water and to see how he trains. Enjoy!

Thanks for the opportunity to share my story with the GTD community. I love swimming and sharing swimming stories.

I've been working in a small consulting business in Stamford, CT for the past 20 years. I spend most of my time managing our office and meeting with clients. I'm married and have two daughters (ages 12 and 13) who are very enthusiastic Irish dancers. They compete in national and international events. My wife is active with their dance school.

I swam throughout high school, but not in college. I got back to swimming when I moved to Stamford 20 years ago. About ten years ago I got interested in open water swimming since Stamford is on the Long Island Sound and we have some great beaches in the area. I entered a few one-mile swims and eventually met and swam with a few of Connecticut's many English Channel swimmers including Marcia Cleveland. I also began participating in triathlons.

Somewhere around 2002, I entered more challenging events including Olympic distance triathlons, the Chesapeake Bay Swim and the January One-Hour swim. I've done all those events this year. I haven't done a swim meet in years – I much prefer the open water events.

I usually swim 2 to 3 times a week – 5:15 am Tuesday (and often Thursday) mornings and at 7:30 am on Saturdays. There is an informal swimming group at our swim club and we could have as many as 10 or 12 on a Saturday morning. I usually try to come with some ideas for a workout since we don't have a coach. I'll swim 3000 to 3500 yards on a weekday and 4000 to 5000 yards on a Saturday workout. In the summer I'll often run or bike after I swim.

We always do the same workout on Tuesday mornings because at 5:30 am no one's able to come up with anything better!! After warm up we do a pyramid from 50 to 300 and back down. It totals 1800 yards and takes about half an hour on a 45 second interval per 50 yards.

When I'm training for distance swims, I force my swim group to do the "3 minute workout" (for lack of a better name) once a month. The interval starts at 3 minutes and drops by 5 seconds per interval. Swim as far as you can on the interval until you miss and then drop your distance by a 50. I'll usually get in 6 or 7 200s before I drop to 150s. If you don't slack off, this will force you to swim

hard and then ease up with “active rest” before swimming hard again. If you keep going until you miss on the 50’s you’ll swim for about an hour. This is almost as much fun as the One Hour swim!

When I travel I always look for places to swim and it is often the most memorable part of the trip. Of course, it can be challenging to find a lap pool, but I haven’t missed a workout in a long time because I’ve been travelling. This year I’ve swum in Las Vegas, Washington DC area, Boston, Phoenix, Nashville, Wilmington, NC and St. Michaels, MD.

My biggest swimming challenge was in the summer of 2007 when I dislocated my right shoulder body surfing. (The first hour of the first day of a week’s vacation!!) I was out of the water for several weeks but was able to complete an Olympic distance triathlon just 7 weeks after the injury. The physical therapy exercises that I continue to do have helped my stroke and increase endurance. I’m now a believer in low-weight, high-rep exercises to keep your shoulders strong.

I crossed the 200-mile mark in GTD on October 4 and I’m on track to do about 260 miles by the end of the year. It still amazes me how the miles add up over the course of a year.

See you in the pool!

Mike

Meet GTD swimmer Lois Goodman (60-64 age group, 505.99 miles to date!!)

Greta van Meeteren: Lois is at the top of the list in her age group (and mine) for distance to date. Here is how she got there, and a whole lot more great stuff to know about her.

I’ve been retired for about four years, now. I was a civilian biologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for 25 years. When I was working, I especially enjoyed projects that involved habitat restoration. It seems like I’m busier now than I was when I was working! I thought I’d be traveling more during my retirement than I’ve done so far. (Instead, I spend most of my time at the pool!).

When I was young, I had aspirations of becoming an Olympic swimmer or some kind of “professional” swimmer. But swimming on the high school team and working as a lifeguard in college were about as far as I got. I started taking swimming lessons when I was six, because my mother thought it would be a good idea in case I ever fell into an irrigation ditch. (We lived in Fresno at the time, and they were very common then. Now, I’m looking forward to going to Clovis, just outside of Fresno, for Short Course Nationals in 2009.)

I started Masters swimming in 1978, but only stuck with it for a few months, because I started my full-time job in early 1979. In 1984, I attended some of the Olympic swimming events in Los Angeles and decided I really wanted to swim seriously again. I'd recently run into the friend who had originally introduced me to Masters Swimming back in 1978. She was swimming with the Masters team at Industry Hills, a first class swimming aquatics center that had been built as an Olympic training facility. I swam there until it closed a few years ago.

Now I swim at two community colleges. One of them has a Masters program, and it is where I first started Masters swimming back in '78. I enjoy competing, even though I only occasionally meet qualifying standards for nationals. I especially enjoy swimming relays with my teammates from Ojai. Swimming was an important part of my life before I retired, but now it's become almost an obsession. It seems I plan most of my other activities around my swimming schedule. When I work out on my own, I try to swim about 2.5 miles. When I work out with a coach, it's more like 3,500-4,000 yards.

I'd participated in the February Fitness Challenge over the years, and last year (2007) I decided to give it a try again because I was "ageing up." Their website provided a link to GTD, and I got hooked. GTD keeps me fit. GTD really gives me an incentive to swim on days when I don't really feel like it. My goal for the year 2008 is one million (1,000,000) yards. GTD rewards me for quantity! Also, I enjoy corresponding with Mary.

When I'm not swimming, I folk dance and square dance. In the spring, in years when we've had enough rain, I like go to the desert to look for wildflowers.

And one more thing: here's my "swimmer" signature: Lois o^<