

# RUNNING RACES AT ANCIENT OLYMPIC GAMES



1<sup>ST</sup> EXPERIMENTAL LYCEUM OF ATHENS  
“GENNADEIO”



Ancient Greeks held many athletic games and contests so as to honor their gods.



By that time, the most famous games were held at Olympia on South- West of Greece.



Ancient Olympic Games have begun approximately on early 700 BC so as to honor God Zeus. Ancient Olympic Games took place every four years.



## Running Games

During Ancient Olympic Games, there were 4 different types of running races.

The first was stadion (stade), the oldest running event of the Games, where runners sprinted for 1 stadion, which was the length of the stadium(192m).



The other running races were a 2-stadion race (384 m.) and a long-distance run which ranged from 7 to 24 stadion (1,344 m. to 4,608 m.).



The fourth running race was held with runners wearing full armor for 2-4 stadion (384 m. to 768 m.) so as to build up speed and stamina for military purposes.



At first, the Olympic Games lasted only one day, but eventually grew to five days.



Over the years, more events were added like boxing, wrestling, pankration.



Only free men of Greek origin were allowed to participate in the Ancient Games of classical times. Women were not allowed to participate or watch the Games.





The winner of Olympic Games was awarded an branch of olive and often was received with much honor throughout Greece, especially in his home town, where he was often granted large sums of money .



Sculptors would create statues of Olympic winners and poets would sing odes in their praise for money.





## Spirit of the Games

Citizens of Ancient Greece lived by a set of ideals, values and morals. These ideals were known as the concept of olympic spirit and include:



Areti (Virtue)  
Amilla (Noble competition)  
Timi (Honor)  
Elefteria (Freedom)  
Irinia (Peace)



For an Athlete, only a life with honor was worth living. An honorable man was a man with self-discipline and respect for himself, the gods and the laws of the city. He took pride in carrying out his duty towards his family and his town. He valued moral rewards more than profit.



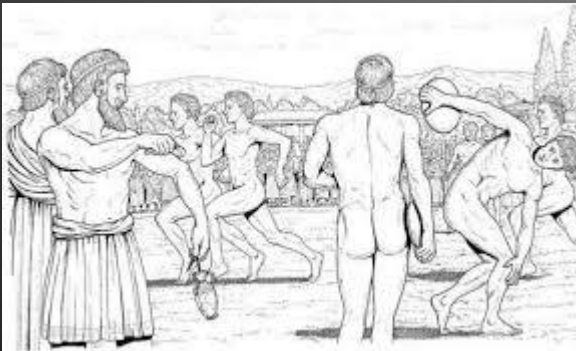
## Olympic Truce

Truce bearers from the state of Elis traveled to all participating Greek cities states taking part in the games in order to announce the terms of the truce.



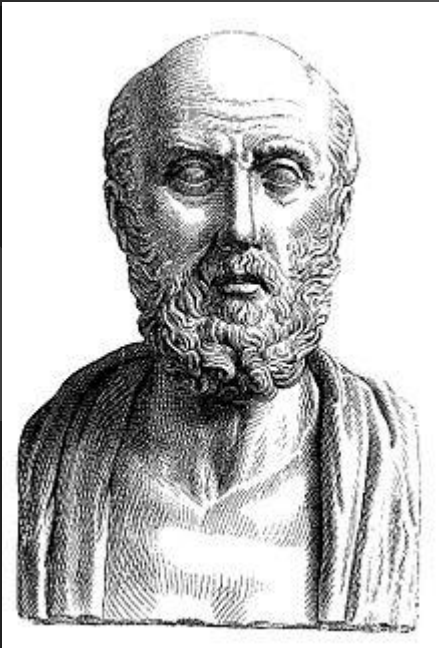
Each athlete had to take an oath that he had trained for ten months prior to the games.

Thirty days prior to the olympic games athletes were required to gather at Elis for preliminary training and trials.



This was to make sure that all athletes were fit and received equal treatment. It was also to determine which athletes would participate in the official Games.





Hippocrates, a famous ancient Greek physician, believed that athletes who walked after exercising would have a stronger and more rested body.

Because of his beliefs, ancient Greek athletes ended each workout with a low-intensity cool down.

Aristotle, a Greek Philosopher, also observed that athletes who have a rest day should not rest completely but do a mild, low-intensity workout instead.

These practices are still in use today as physiological principles had been figured out the outcome.

Ancient Greeks valued rest after exercising.

After exercising, they also often had a bath and a massage.







Ancient Greek Trainers had figured out many ideas about specific ways of training.

One practice that developed had athletes exercise with 3-pound (1.4 kg) weights in each hand. This practice helped improve arm strength, which is beneficial for running, throwing the javelin, swimming, and martial arts.



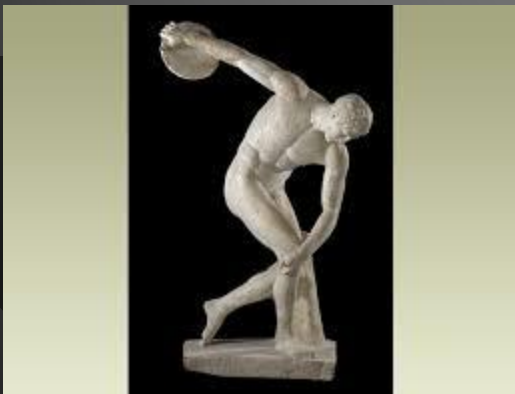
Lucian, an ancient Greek philosopher, postulated another principle. He believed athletes should always train in "exuberated conditions." His idea was that training should take place outdoors in the sun every day of the year. During workouts, he believed athletes should work as hard as possible. When training in the gymnasium, his idea was that one should not run or exercise on the stone floor but on sand instead to add difficulty.



Ancient Greeks believed that training and music should be experienced together because they both pleased man's spirit. Music was used both in training and in competition. Each gymnasium had at least one aulos player.



In ancient times without modern scientific knowledge, the Greeks were able to recognize food's beneficial effects on an athlete's diet .



The ancient Greeks divided athletes into three age categories. Each age category would have its separate set of coaches. The training programs for each age level varied, growing increasingly strenuous the older the athletes were.



## First Marathon race

The traditional story refers that Pheidippides (530 BC–490 BC), an Athenian day-runner or a running courier was sent to Sparta so as to request help when the Persians landed at the place of Marathon in Greece.



He ran about 240 km (150 mi) in two days. Afterwards he ran the 40 km (25 mi) from the battlefield near Marathon to Athens so as to announce the Greek victory over Persians in the Battle of Marathon (490 BC).

As soon as he arrived Athens, he spelled the word "We win!" and then collapsed and died.



# 5k Run with 1st Experimental Lyceum of Athens

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