

Stop it with the hand's thing

Most lives don't change because of talent alone. They change because someone noticed.

Sir Ken Robinson often said that what makes the difference isn't brilliance - it's encouragement. Someone who sees what others might dismiss as a distraction, a quirk, or "that thing you should probably stop doing" ... and recognises it as a signal.

A child who moves differently. A curiosity that doesn't fit the timetable. An ability that isn't on the test.

Bart Connor discovered at the age of eight that he could walk on his hands equally as well as his feet. Then he discovered that he could go up and down stairs on his hands. Although, at the time nobody thought much about it; his mother did. She spoke to Bart's school and said that she thought Bart would benefit from attending a gymnasium. And the school agreed.

When she took him down there, Bart said he would never forget the feeling he had when he walked into that gymnasium. He said it took his breath away, like Santa's house and Disneyland, together. There were wall bars, trampolines, trapezes, mats, ropes. He said it was kind of intoxicating.

Is that how you feel when you walk into a gym? Do you find it intoxicating? Are you thrilled to be there. Not all of you, no – in fact, some of you would need to be intoxicated to be within fifty metres of a gym.

Bart loved it and went every day or as often as he could. And ten years later he stepped out onto the mat at the Montreal Olympics, representing the United States in the male gymnastics squad. He went on to be the most decorated male gymnast in American history. He's married to Nadia Comaneci, recipient of the first perfect ten in gymnastics. They have a wonderful little boy called Dylan, after Bob Dylan; they have their own gymnastics centre, and he and Nadia are leading members of the Special Olympics movement. So, between them, they've helped to liberate the gymnastic capabilities of thousands upon thousands of athletes with special needs.

None of that would have happened if his mother hadn't encouraged him. She could have said, when Bart was eight, "Bart, will you stop it with the hand's thing! We get it, knock it off and focus on your homework."

The core subjects at school or college are important. Do them and do them to the best of your ability. But if you have a talent or see it in others – encourage them. Give them all the time and support they need, because that might just be the making of them.

Sometimes, one person - a parent, a teacher, a mentor - creates the conditions for something extraordinary simply by saying yes, keep going.

Sir Ken believed that human potential doesn't emerge through pressure or conformity. It flourishes when it's seen, valued, and given room to grow.

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- Stop it with the hand's thing.
- Recent results
- Doing a long stretch
- ADHD and neurodiversity in athletics
- Athletics Heroes
- Forthcoming Events



Newsletter February 2026

Recent Results

4th December: Sportshall

At a recent Sportshall match Lily Couch secured 5th place overall and achieved 5 of 6 personal bests.



*With apologies for not including this last month.
Ed.*

Recent Results

4th January: Hampshire County Cross-Country Championships, Botley



A fantastic effort from AAC's Middle-Distance team at the Botley setting for the Hampshire Cross-Country Championships. Alex Culley was up there in the Senior Men's event (U20 result TBC) followed by an impressive Jack Hainsworth, Mike Webber, Peter Warner and Craig Kennedy. Great team effort!!

U11 Boys

27th Lorenzo Izzo 9:51

U11 Girls

12th Aurora Short 9:18

Senior & Veteran Men

45th Alex Culley 42:59

68th Jack Hainsworth 44:58

80th Mike Webber 46:50

118th Peter Warner 52:24

128th Craig Kennedy 53:49

NEWBURY ATHLETIC CLUB

NEWBURY 10K

MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY, BERKSHIRE
MONDAY 25 MAY 2026

RACE TIMES

0.9k @ 9.10am
FOR 5-10 YEARS, ENTRY FEE £5

1.5k @ 9.20am
FOR UNDER 15s, ENTRY FEE £5

10k @ 10.00am
ENTRY FEE
£23 AFFILIATED
£25 UNAFFILIATED

Register online



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FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE RUN ROUTE:
newburyac.org.uk/road-running/newbury10k

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www.andoverathletics.co.uk

Recent Results

11th January: Stubbington 10k

Despite having several members entered, only two AAC athletes turned out in Stubbington this year, and one of those was taking the photographs. This was possibly because Stubbington was dropped from the Hampshire Road Race League!



Photo: Mike Webber

313th Darrell Waite 42:47

18th January: Romsey 5

Sometimes you have to listen to your body and drop out of an event. With a heavy heart, I stayed in bed and avoided further injury to my Achillies. However, Andover AC had one representative at this unique season opener in Romsey's Broadlands Estate.

269th Janet Taplin 77:28 [1st female & 2nd in Age Group]

Narrowly beaten by former AAC member in 267th place, Keira Merrigan.

HAMPSHIRE CROSS COUNTRY LEAGUE
MATCH 5 – READING
SATURDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2026

LEA HEATH FIELD, DINTON ACTIVITY CENTRE, SANDFORD LANE,
HURST, BERKSHIRE, RG10 0SU

Recent Results

The indoor track and field season is upon us! At the recent South of England Athletics Association (SEAA) U13 / U15 / U17 indoor championships AAC was well represented by Lily Gray in the U17W triple jump, Miles Gillard in the U17M 60m and Freida North in the U17W 200m.

Despite a challenging winter for speed and jumps events, all three competed well; Miles secured a 60m PB and narrowly missed the semi-finals, Freida ran close to her indoor PB and despite being bottom age Lily secured gold with a jump just outside her current PB.



Lily Gray on the podium

There are several indoor competitions coming up that AAC athletes will be competing at including the SEAA U20 and Senior Champs, The London Indoor Games and the National Indoor Championships at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield.

Report: James Coney

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ADHD and neurodiversity in athletics

When I talk of Andover AC being an inclusive club, you might think I'm referring to athletes with physical disabilities or differing gender identification. Our membership also covers those from different neurological backgrounds. And for some of them, this can prove to be a bonus.

ADHD can influence athletic performance, with many athletes finding that their symptoms can translate into unique strengths in sport, whilst also presenting certain challenges.

Prevalence of ADHD in Athletes

Neurodivergence is more prevalent than many realise, with an estimated 15% of the UK population being neurodivergent, which is the term used to describe those with neurological and behaviour traits which sit further from what society consider 'the norm'. It is important that everyone is aware of it and the ways in which it can be harnessed. Research indicates that ADHD is more common amongst athletes than in the general population. Studies suggest that up to **8% of athletes** may have ADHD, compared with 2%-7% in the general population. This higher prevalence raises interest in understanding how ADHD affects athletic performance and participation.

Notable Athletes with ADHD

Many elite athletes openly discuss their ADHD diagnoses and how they navigate their condition. For example, Simone Biles, decorated US gymnast has spoken about her ADHD and the importance of managing it effectively. Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympian, has also shared how his experiences with ADHD, emphasising how sport has helped him channel his energy positively.

Benefits of ADHD in Sports

While ADHD and neurodivergence are often viewed as a challenge, it can also confer certain advantages in athletic contexts.

High Energy Levels: Athletes with ADHD often possess high energy, which can translate into

explosive performance and stamina in sport.

Risk-Taking: The tendency for risk-taking can lead to creative and bold playmaking, enhancing performance in competitive environments.

Focus During Activity: Many athletes report that they can hyper-focus on their sport, allowing them to excel during practice and competition despite challenges in other areas of their life.

Challenges Faced by Athletes with ADHD

Despite the potential advantages, athletes with ADHD may encounter specific challenges, such as:

Difficulty with focus: Maintaining attention during long periods of inactivity or complex strategies can be tough, leading to issues in team sports.

Impulsivity: Impulsive behaviour can result in conflicts with coach or teammates, especially if an athlete struggles to wait their turn or follow instructions.

Managing ADHD in Athletics

Engaging in sports can be beneficial for managing ADHD and neurodiverse symptoms. Physical activity is known to help reduce symptoms and improve focus, potentially decreasing the need for medication in some cases. Treatment options for athletes with ADHD may include:

Medication: Common medications can help manage symptoms effectively.

Behavioural Strategies: Techniques such as concise instructions and regular reminders can support athletes in managing their condition.

Many athletes leverage their unique traits to excel in their sports, while also finding ways to manage their difficulties associated with the condition. Engaging in sport can provide a positive outlet for individuals with ADHD and neurodiverse symptoms, promoting both physical and mental well-being.

Parking

Please park considerately when using the parking area alongside the clubhouse and pavilion. Space is limited and often used by others at the Astroturf.

Do not park on the track access or block the pedestrian ramp.

Safeguarding & Welfare

The club Welfare & Safeguard Officer is Sophie Shorts, can be contacted at
to be confirmed

Instagram

Andover Athletic Club can now be found on Instagram



<https://www.instagram.com/andoverathleticsclub/#>

2026-27 Membership Renewal

The annual membership renewal comes into effect on 1st April. Any member not renewed by 1st May can have their membership (access to training and entry to events) removed.

Membership forms will be available from the website [Membership | Andover Athletic Club | Andover, Hampshire](#) by the end of February.

There will be three membership renewal forms:

- Athletic / Competing members
- Supporter members
- Ad hoc / monthly membership

The Athletic / Competing members form lists fees for the whole year, half year and last quarter. The latter two categories ONLY apply to newly joining members. If membership has lapsed for less than two years, you need a full annual membership.

The Ad hoc / monthly membership has been introduced for EA athletes looking to train at the club whilst on holiday, (e.g. university students) and not for returning members. Further details will be on the forms.

Note also that the EA fee has increased this year to £23, but your overall fee has not increased.

Articles for submission.

The Andover Athletic Club newsletter is about the members and their exploits on track, field, road and cross-country.

Whether you compete in club, school, or Country colours, we'd love to hear how you get on. Articles are often less than 20 words long! Forward your story, ideally with a picture, to aacchairman@yahoo.com

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Newsletter

February 2026

Junior Cross-Country

The dates and venues of the 4 matches have now been confirmed

Sunday 15th February 2026 Greenfield School
Sunday 15th March 2026 Wellesley Woods
For further details, please speak to an Under-11's coach.

Wessex League Matches 2026

The following fixtures have been confirmed for the Wessex League.

Sunday 19th April – Basingstoke
Sunday 14th June – Andover
Sunday 5th July – Salisbury
Sunday 12th July – Swindon

2026 Race Entries NOW OPEN



Entries for the **Goring 10k 2026**, taking place on **Sunday 8th March**, are **now open**. Now in its 26th year, the Goring 10k is widely regarded as one of the **most enjoyable 10k races in the UK** – set in the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, with closed roads, chip timing, and a fantastic community atmosphere.

[Goring 10k Race | One of the Most Enjoyable 10k Races in the UK](#)

League Match support

Andover AC are at risk of being withdrawn / barred from competing in both Wessex League and SAL Matches due to lack of officials.

If your child or partner is competing, please consider offering your help, even if its only for one event. Every Little Helps.

Southern Athletic League Meetings 2026

Following the UKA Fixtures Meeting held recently the SAL have been allocated the following dates ...

1. Saturday 16th May – Andover (Dorset hosting)
2. Sunday 21st June - Aldershot
3. Sunday 19th July - Andover
4. Saturday 8th August - Aldershot

Division 3 West

Aldershot F&D (Relegated)

Team Kennet and Marlborough (Composite)

Team Dorset (Composite)

Andover Havant Chichester



White Horse Half
Marathon
29th March 2026

Entries are now open for the 2026 White Horse Half Marathon. Usual course - same PB potential, same friendly marshals!

The race is at 9:30 on 29th March 2026, with race HQ at St John's Primary School, Wantage.

Entries are now open, [Register Here!](#)
Find out more: [White Horse Half Marathon](#)

Andover Athletic Club

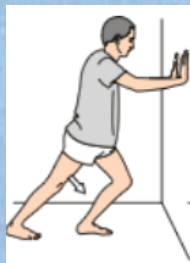
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Doing a long stretch.

You know you're supposed to do it, but still, it's the thing you always "forget" to do and decide you'll do it later (and the never do). All it takes is a couple of minutes of stretching to reap the long-term benefits of increased mobility and range of motion, both of which will help you perform properly and ultimately reduce your risk of injury.

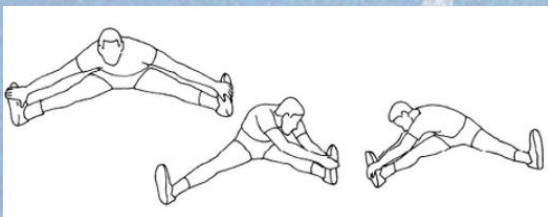


1. Calf stretch.



2. Hamstring stretch.

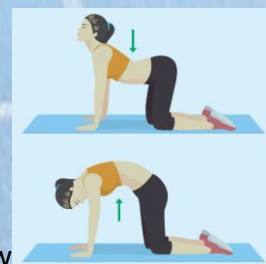
3. Straddle Stretches.



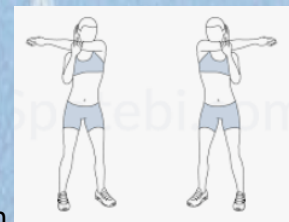
4. Cross-over (Piriformis Stretch)



5. Hip Flexor



6. Cat 'n' Cow



7. Shoulder Stretch



8. Overhead Tricep Stretch

Each stretch should be held for 20-30 seconds, but don't over stretch or cause undue pain. Repeat all / most of these stretches later the same day for 10-15 seconds each.

As with any exercise, consult your coach, physiotherapist, or doctor before starting any new routine of exercises.

Athletics Heroes

Emil Voigt

Finding the last British athlete to win a long distance running gold medal at the Olympic Games prior to Mo Farah in 2012 means going back 104 years to the first London Olympics. In 1908 Emil Voigt triumphed in the 5 miles event (the 5000m and 10,000m were not introduced until 1912) in a time of 25:11.2.

Born in Manchester (his father was German, his mother Scottish), Voigt began racing aged 14, winning the first race he entered. It was only in 1908, at 25, that he made his mark outside of Lancashire. He was an unexpected winner of the Olympic 5 miles trial in his debut at the distance. Competing in the AAA Championships for the first time, he won the prestigious 4 miles title in a championship record of 19:47.4. He was one of seven British runners selected for the Olympic 5 miles but in winning his heat tore muscles in his foot causing his arch to collapse and considerable pain. Being a resourceful character he arranged for a plaster of Paris arch support to be built into his running shoe. Despite the discomfort he sprinted clear in the final with 700 yards to go, "running in beautiful style" according to the Official Report of the Games. He was a class apart, finishing 70 yards ahead of team-mate Eddie Owen with the two favourites, Sweden's 5000m world record holder Johan Svanberg and South Africa's Charles Hefferon, placing a distant third and fourth.

Barely 5ft 5in (1.66m) tall and weighing 53kg, Voigt attributed much of his athletic success to being a strict vegetarian, his diet largely restricted to fruit, vegetables and eggs. He was the first known vegetarian in the world to become champion in the Modern Olympics. His career as a top class runner was brief but brilliant. In 1909 he retained the AAA 4 miles title

Athletics Heroes

and, at the invitation of the Crown Prince of Sweden, embarked upon a highly successful and influential tour of Scandinavia. He raced distances between 1500 and 10,000m, and among the Finnish athletes he defeated during the tour was Hannes Kolehmainen, then 19, and destined to win the 5000m, 10,000m and cross country at the Stockholm Olympics of 1912.

In 1910 he became AAA mile champion and founded the short lived Amateur Athletes' Union in Manchester, an organisation which pressed for improved dressing room accommodation, facilities, better prizes and a general raising of the amateur athlete's status. He was suspended by the AAA after competing in a non-sanctioned event in March 1911 and later that year emigrated to Australia, where he amassed several titles and records before retiring from the track in 1914, his career cut short by World War 1.

He lived a long, varied and colourful life, described in the Australian Dictionary of Biography as an athlete, political organiser (for the Labor party), master engineer and radio manager (he was a pioneer in wireless broadcasting including as founder of 2KY in Sydney). He was a sportswriter and wrestling commentator for the BBC! He moved to New Zealand in 1947, jogging well into his eighties, and died in Auckland aged 90.

Courtesy of the athleticsmuseum.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

A list of future Track & Field, Road Race, Cross-Country and Open Events. You are encouraged to wear your club vest wherever you compete and let us know your results, ideally with a photograph.

7th February: Hampshire Cross Country League, Reading

14th-15th February: England Athletics South Winter Long Throws Championships [Info](#) , Lee Valley

15th February: Junior Cross-Country, Greenfield School

15th February: Bramley 10/20

22nd February: Winchester 10k

28th February: Basingstoke Winter Throws Series

8th March: Solent Half (HRRL7)

10th – 13th March: Cheltenham Festival

14th March: Basingstoke Throws Winter Series

15th March: Junior Cross-Country, Wellesley Wood

22nd March: Eastleigh 10k

22nd March: EFL Cup Final (Carabao Cup)

29th March: Combe Gibbet to Overton 16 mile

29th March: Fleet Half Marathon

11th April: Grand National

12th April: Salisbury 10 (HRRL8)

19th April: Wessex League, Match 1 – Basingstoke

26th April: London Marathon

10th May – Alton 10 (HRRL9)

16th May: SAL Match 1 Dorset

16th May: Men's FA Cup Final, Wembley

17th May: Netley 10k (HRRL10)

19th May: Thruxton 10k Series, Race 1

25th May: Newbury 10k

6th June: Endure Reading

14th June: Wessex League, Match 2 – Andover

16th-20th June: Royal Ascot

Forthcoming Events

18th-21st June: US Open Golf

21st June: Alresford 10k (HRRL11)

21st June: SAL Match 2, Aldershot

23rd June: Thruxton 10k Series, Race 2

5th July: Lordshill 10k (HRRL12)

5th July: Wessex League, Match 3 – Salisbury

12th July: Wessex League, Match 4 - Swindon

19th July: SAL Match 3, Andover

21st July: Thruxton 10k Series, Race 3

8th August: SAL Match 4, Aldershot

30th August: Totton 10k (HRRL1) (tbc)

6th September: Overton 5 mile (HRRL2) (tbc)
25th October: New Forest 10 mile (HRRL3) (tbc)

15th November: Gosport Half (HRRL4) (tbc)

6th December: Victory 5 (HRRL5) (tbc)

International / Elite Events

6th – 22nd February: Winter Olympics, Milano Cortino, Italy

6th – 15th March: Winter Paralympics, Milano Cortino, Italy

26th April: London Marathon

11th June-19th July: FIFA Worlds Cup, North America

29th June-12th July: Wimbledon Tennis Championships

5th July: British Grand Prix

2nd November: New York Marathon

7th December: Valencia Marathon

www.fetcheveryone.com

runabc.co.uk

www.thepowerof10.info/fixtures

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