

In The Picture

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Guy André

Nordic Walker

Ex-ultrarunner



HIGH5
SPORTVOEDING



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Guy André lives in Trélon, together with his wife. He has two children who already have three children themselves, and soon birth will be given to two new family members! He works at the National Education to guide parents who have handicapped children. He was a runner since 1990. In 2014 he became a Nordic Walker.

When did you start Nordic Walking?

I started Nordic Walking in 2014.

Why did you start Nordic Walking?

I started to get health problems. The doctors decided that I needed to stop running. So I decided to start Nordic Walking. I was in fact an ultrarunner since 1995. I started running in 1990, when I was 30 years old, to lose weight. I quit smoking and soon afterwards I got interested in ultra running. I've done trails of 50 km and 100 km. But I really liked the hour runs, like the 6-hour or 12-hour race, and of course my favourite, the 24-hour race. In total I've done about 30 24-hour races, on track and on the road. In 2010 I've increased my training intensity and I ran over 100 km per week on the road. I've ran in the Belgian Championship 24-hour in 2013 as well as the French Championship 24-hour in 2014. It was obvious that I was preparing myself for the World Championship at Turin in 2014, in the open categorie. Unfortunately I've forced myself way to far and I got severely injured at both my knees...I stopped running in November 2014, 5 months before the World Championship at Turin. It's so sad!!! I wasn't able to run but above all I had severe cartilage problems...It was during the training for the marathon at Amiens that I decided to quit running. I was really suffering a lot. Because I couldn't imagine a life without sports I randomly contacted a Nordic Walking Club in the Paris region, VGA Saint Maur. For me sports was like drugs! I got lucky because Hakim Bengoua, World Champion Nordic Walking, is teamleader at VGA Saint Maur. He convinced me to join the

team. The team that won the French Championship in 2014 and 2015.

According to you, what are the additional benefits of Nordic Walking compared to just walking?

Nordic Walking uses about 90% of your muscles. You use your legs, your back, your abdominals, your shoulders and your arms because you push on each stick. Nordic Walking doesn't traumatise your joints either, because you balance yourself on four points. You will also go faster, between 0,5 and 0,7 km per hour, if you push at the right time. We train more effectively on burning fat and train our body much more than someone who walks. We sweat a lot and after a good session you can feel your entire body aches from top to bottom and from bottom to top.

Are there specific Nordic Walking races?

Yes. You have for example the Nordic Walking Tour. A championship of 12 days with competitions between 10 and 15 km. And longer competitions are making their way towards the public. And we are mostly also allowed on trails. But I do think that we don't have enough Nordic Walking competitions in France. I really would like to enter long endurance races, like Endurance Day had foreseen! But the biggest problem in France is that you are not allowed in these types of competitions. There is also, for the second time, a 24-hour race in the south of France. But it's really far!

Thank you for the interview Guy. We wish you good luck with your future preparations.

Kevin Simons