TIME FOR KIDS

Physical Feats & Failures



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One Foot in Front of the Other

When a baby toddles on its little legs and takes its first step, there is no doubt it has achieved a **feat** worth celebrating. After all, it took a lot of falling down and try-try-again spirit to get to that single step! Through time, babies everywhere have done what they have to do to get the job done. Their efforts seem to be a part of the human spirit. And their achievements don't stop with a single step!

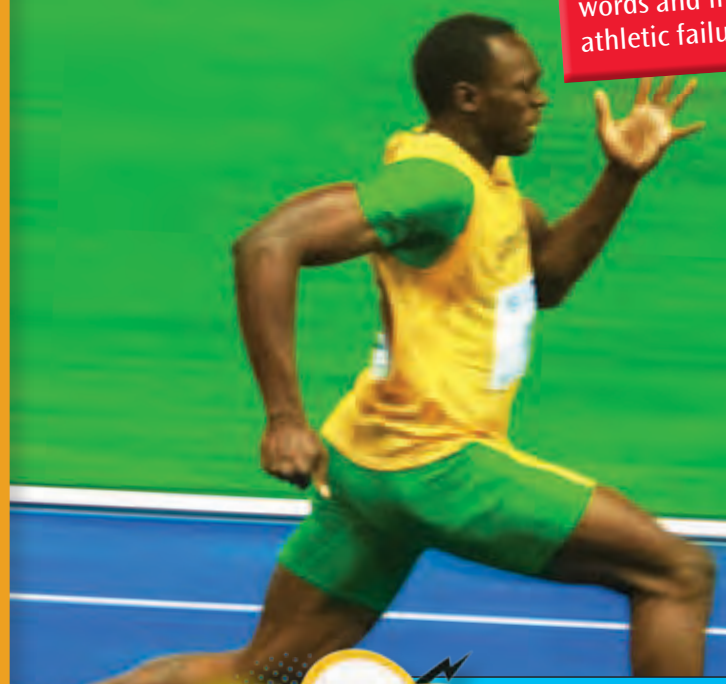
People around the world go from walking to running, jumping, flipping, spinning, and even flying in ways that seem superhuman. How do they do it? The secret to their success is the same as the drive inside that baby working up to its first step. Try and try. Believe you can do it. Go for it. Then, success!

Or not. The truth is, for every awesome physical feat, there are many failures. But the failures can make the feats seem even sweeter. The world has known many mind-blowing feats. And it has known many heartbreaking, bone-crushing failures. But no matter what happens, just as with babies, people get up, get out, and get the job done.



The Agony of Defeat

For 37 years, a weekly television show called ABC's *Wide World of Sports* included in its opening monologue the famous phrase, "the thrill of **victory**...the agony of defeat." When the words about defeat were spoken, ski jumper Vinko Bogataj was shown in a terrible crash that had him reeling over a mountainside. The words and image became linked with athletic failure.





- What is your greatest feat?
- How can the accomplishments of others inspire you?
- What are the limits of the human body?

The Fastest Woman in the World

In 1960, Wilma Rudolph was called the Fastest Woman in the World. She set world records and won three gold medals for track and field. People were awed by her speed and skill. Little did they know that when Rudolph was very young, she could not even walk on her own.

Rudolph was born too early and was a sickly child. She had **polio** when she was four years old. The disease left her left leg and foot twisted. Her mother spent hours with Rudolph, helping to straighten her leg and improve its use. Rudolph needed leg massages several times a day. She wore a brace on her leg for three years. Finally, when she was 12, Rudolph could walk like other children.

Rudolph and her mother took a 50-mile bus trip every week for special treatments.

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Leading the Way

Rudolph grew up during a time when black and white people were kept apart. She demanded that a parade in her honor be open to everyone. It was the first time that black and white people were together at a town event.

One of Rudolph's sisters was a basketball star. Rudolph wanted to do that, too. So, with practice and **determination**, she became a success on the court. A **scout** for track and field spotted her there.

Rudolph made the U.S. Olympic track and field team in 1956 at age 16. In 1960, she won her gold medals. She also won the praise of the world!

Rudolph had 22 brothers and sisters. That's an amazing feat for her parents!

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Racetrack Math

Runners apply force to the ground. The success of each step can be measured by how force is applied. Steps that are 100 percent **efficient** waste no energy.



If an athlete falls to the ground, the step is completely inefficient.



If the heel touches the ground, the steps are slower. Missteps can make runners only 70 percent efficient.



If an athlete doesn't push off from the ground hard enough, only 80 percent of potential energy is being used.



The perfect step, or stride, results in 100 percent of potential force being used.

0% potential force used — **100% potential force used**