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Illinois Man Pedals Toward Exercise Record

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All Things Considered

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This weekend, George Hood of Aurora, Ill., is trying to break the world record for continuous exercise. If he's successful, he will have pedaled his stationary bicycle for 132 hours straight. He talks with Andrea Seabrook as he nears the finish line.

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ANDREA SEABROOK, host:

So, are you enjoying another lazy weekend? Well, a guy named George Hood sure isn't. He's been pedaling away on a stationary bike for almost a week straight. See, for a long time George Hood held the Guinness world record for continuous exercise - over 111 hours in a row - that is, until he was dethroned by somebody from Tasmania. The record now? 175 hours.

Now, at age 50 Mr. Hood is working hard to break that new record. I spoke with him earlier today as he was pumping away on the bike at the YMCA in Naperville, Illinois.

Mr. Hood?

Mr. GEORGE HOOD (Trying to Break Guinness World Record): Hey, yes.

SEABROOK: Hi. This is Andrea Seabrook. How are you?

Mr. HOOD: Andrea, how are you doing?

SEABROOK: I'm good. How are you?

Mr. HOOD: A little tired...

SEABROOK: How long have you...

Mr. HOOD: ...considering.

SEABROOK: ...been on the bike?

Mr. HOOD: Since 9:10 Central standard time last Sunday.

(Soundbite of laughter)

SEABROOK: So, what's the record you're trying to beat here?

Mr. HOOD: It's the Guinness world record for what they call the static spin cycling marathon and maintaining a distance requirement of 12 miles each and every hour and being permitted to accrue five minutes of rest after every completed hour.

SEABROOK: And as I understand it though, you've actually already broken the record.

Mr. HOOD: That's correct.

SEABROOK: What are you doing on the bike?

Mr. HOOD: Well, as of yesterday afternoon we were advised that the Tasmanian attempt, the 132 mark, had in fact been beaten. But Guinness told us that the record was 175 and it was set here in the United States. I believe it was just recently.

So I assembled my team and the YMCA has been gracious thus here and they're going to back us and we're going to press on and I'm going to set this record in a minimum stopping point of 176 hours, which puts us at approximately 5:00 a.m. on Monday morning.

(Soundbite of laughter)

SEABROOK: Oh my God. All right. So, what are you eating?

Mr. HOOD: Actually I'm on liquid diet consisting of the succeed line of sports nutrition ultra training product. It's purely an ultra-fuel. It's like liquid fuel.

SEABROOK: Do you...

Mr. HOOD: So...

SEABROOK: ...how do you sleep?

Mr. HOOD: Well, during this attempt I took, so far, 34 authorized breaks for a total time amount of nine hours and 21 minutes.

SEABROOK: In a week?

Mr. HOOD: So far, yes. And of that nine hours and 21 minutes, six hours and 42 minutes of that time was spent catnapping I call it. No more than probably 12 minutes.

SEABROOK: Cat naps for 12 minutes?

Mr. HOOD: Yes.

SEABROOK: That just - that sounds like you could go crazy or even have serious health problems.

Mr. HOOD: Well, one could. I mean, you don't want to intentionally deprive yourself of sleep for too long of a period. I mean, you have the whole hallucinatory experience may very well manifest itself, you know, tonight 'cause I press on through.

(Soundbite of laughter)

Mr. HOOD: But it's nothing to be afraid of, and I've been given a clean bill of health by my physicians and, you know, I'm looking forward to it.

SEABROOK: Mr. Hood, good luck to you.

Mr. HOOD: Okay. Thank you.

SEABROOK: George Hood from his stationary bike. He's been on it since Sunday. He's trying to break the record for continuous exercise. If all goes well, he'll hit 176 straight hours by Monday morning.

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