

# TT INTERVIEW: YURIY SYEDIKH

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*An interview with hammer World Record holder Yuriy Syedikh of the Soviet Union. Reprinted from The Thrower.*

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- Q. At what age did you begin throwing?  
A. 12.
- Q. What was your progression?  
A. At 15, 57.50 (188-8) with 7.25k and 64 (210-0) with the 6k. At 17, 62.96 (206-7) with the 7.25k and 68 (223-1) with the 6k.
- Q. How far have you thrown with the heavy hammers?  
A. 8k - 78.50 (257-6) !!!, 9k - 71(232-11) and 10k -64 (210-0).
- Q. At what weight do you shorten the hammer length?  
A. Up to 10k normal length. The 16k is 50cm in length.
- Q. You turn very fast but your sprint times are slow?  
A. I only need to turn fast; sprinting is not relevant.
- Q. Do you jump over hurdles?  
A. Yes. I do 5 - 7 sets of ten hurdles, 1 m high.
- Q. What is the strong point in your conditioning?  
A. Legs and back. Strong back; at 17 I could pull 230k (507lb). I am not so good on squats or cleans.
- Q. What are good exercises for the back?  
A. Hyperextensions, good mornings; the back is worked well in all Olympic-style lifting.
- Q. We have heard you do single-leg squats. Is this so?  
A. No, only if I have back problems.
- Q. Do you use (exercise) machines?  
A. They are available, but I do not use them.
- Q. How was the school set up when you started at 12.  
A. After school I would train for up to 1½ hours, 3 days a week.
- Q. Who chooses the sport?  
A. At the beginning of the school year in September there is a general questioning of the children. They are asked what sport they would like to take up. They are

then directed to where the trainers are for each type of sport. I was at a special sports school.

Q. Why the hammer?

A. At that age the hammer throwing only lasted a half-hour. The rest of the time was taken up with general sports. At 12 my aim was to be an athlete; I had been involved in wrestling, swimming and volleyball. My interest in the hammer grew from there.

Q. At what age should weight training be started?

A. About 15 years.

Q. In the first years when we saw you on the international scene you piked on entry. Why?

A. I was young then. The hammer is a sport for strong men. I could not stay upright, the hammer pulled me over. As I grew stronger and threw further I was able to enter more upright.

Q. What drills do you use to improve or maintain your turning technique?

A. Throwing the light hammer. If there is something wrong with the throw it is important that the accent is put on correcting that mistake. It is not good to do just turns. It is better to perform the full throw. In that throw you emphasize any corrections.

Q. What was your rate of improvement as a teenager?

A. From 17-18 I improved 5m; from 18-19, 2m; 19-20, 4m. These gaps vary according to the physical development of the athlete.

Q. What standards of throwing would you expect from junior athletes?

A. When I was 17 I threw 62.96 (206-7). The normal good standard in the USSR at the time was 56m (183-9). Now we expect the best to throw 70m (229-8). The normal good standard is now 52m (170-7).

Q. Do you have any special diet?

A. It depends if it helps the training. You do not want a big belly! One cannot say how many calories; it depends if I am at home or away. Sometimes I will eat 200g of caviar, other times 3k of apples.

Q. What is your favorite?

A. Seafood.

Q. Are you at your strongest and heaviest now, or will both increase?

A. I am at the age where speed may not increase further. My strength can increase a little but my individual reserve of development lies in increasing the speed of turns in the throw. I feel there is room for some improvement on the record.

Q. At the Championships, when the athletes come out, the Russian throwers have two tracksuits on, sit down and relax. The other throwers are jogging, swinging and turning. Have you already warmed up, or do you not require to run or throw?

A. It depends on the individual's characteristics and psychological make-up. If it is warm there is no need to run around. It is important to compete, not run around. One must develop a reserve for competition over training.