# Flagpole Sitting Encyclopedia Article

## Flagpole Sitting

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# Flagpole Sitting

One of the more outlandish fads associated with the Roaring Twenties, flagpole sitting, like marathon dancing and bunion derbies, was an endurance feat performed for fame and money during a decade of change and restlessness. Less well known than Bobby Jones, Babe Ruth, Henry Houdini, or Charles Lindbergh, Alvin "Shipwreck" Kelly traveled across America, setting up and sitting on flagpoles through extremes of weather for increasingly longer periods of time. Seated atop a flagpole, he took only liquids for nourishment (hoisted to him by rope and pail), voiding his waste through a tube attached to the pole. In 1927, he perched on a flagpole in Baltimore for 23 days and 7 hours, while thousands stood and gaped, a feat which has become a metaphor for an American obsession with endurance feats and records, crazy thrills, and outlandish exploits.

## Further Reading:

Allen, Frederick Lewis. *Only Yesterday.* New York, Harper-Collins, 1957.