

TRAINING

The word 'TRAINING' is written in a large, bold, serif font. The letter 'A' is enclosed in a square box. A vertical arrow points upwards from the top of the 'A' box. A horizontal arrow points from the right side of the 'A' box towards the right side of the 'I' box. Two circles are positioned on either side of the word, overlapping the 'T' and 'G' respectively. The circles are connected to the horizontal arrow by thin lines.

With *PhysioLink* - Physiotherapy and sports injury centre

...PUTTING TOGETHER A TRAINING SCHEDULE

When it comes to writing a training schedule for a key race or season, many club runners don't know where to start or what ingredients need to be included.

Outlined below is a step by step guide for putting together a schedule and will use the example of a runner trying to break 40 minutes for the 10k.

STEP ONE

Choose a race in the future which you want to target as a potential PB, or a key race you want to be in peak condition for.

This means looking ahead at least 8 weeks for a 5k, 10-12 weeks for a 10k or half marathon and 14-16 weeks for the marathon. Either look in the running mags or on running web pages for events coming up or target a race you know is held on a particular date in the running calendar.

Now you have to plan backwards from that date, this involves laying out on paper a week by week running plan which ends on the race day you have chosen (see the sample below which we are using for our sub 40 minutes 10k example). Lets say the 10k is 16 weeks away, this gives me time for a 12 week build up, plus 4 weeks prior to beginning to get me up to my chosen weekly starting mileage, of course this could be longer or shorter depending on how far off the race is or what mileage you are presently doing. You may even want to use any spare time to ease off prior to starting your schedule.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Weekly total
WEEK1								
WEEK2								
WEEK3								
WEEK4								
WEEK5								
WEEK6								
WEEK7								
WEEK8								
WEEK9								
WEEK10								
WEEK 11								
WEEK12							RACE 10K	

STEP TWO

To be realistic, in order to break 40 mins for the 10k, the average club runner will have to build their weekly mileage up to around 35 to 50 miles per week depending on their natural ability. This mileage is not done every week for the 12 week duration but built gradually up from a reasonable starting mileage and then held for a number of weeks before tapering down again a week or two before the race in order to keep you fresh for race day.

The next sample below shows how to build the mileage safely from a 30 mile a week starting base from week one.

For runners who have not trained at these weekly mileages before, reaching them safely and avoiding injury is essential. A good guide is to stick to the 10% rule—that is that from one week to the next the mileage is not increased by more than 10% of the previous week and this rule is followed in our example.

Also included in the example opposite is a couple of races during the build up, it is not always possible to find a race of the right distance on the right date but a race close to these dates will give the same sharpening effect and act as a dry run for the key race. Failing this, a time trial on the track or a similar distance over your favourite route will suffice. Remember though, you need at least a two weeks for tapering purposes.

So far, we have got the number of weeks in our schedule, our weekly mileage totals and a couple of build up races. The next step is to fill in the gaps with the right kind of training sessions and spread these out among the number of days per week we need/want to train in order to achieve our goals. To break 40 mins, a minimum of 4 or 5 training sessions per week is probably needed for the average runner with 6 sessions later on in the schedule to meet the weekly mileage requirements. This always leaves at least one day of complete rest per week and with a couple of easy recovery runs each week the body is more able to adapt and cope without breaking down. Of course, cross training could replace some of the running days but to achieve goals the work has to be put in consistently to raise your game.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Weekly total
WEEK1								30
WEEK2								33
WEEK3								36
WEEK4								40
WEEK5								44
WEEK6							Race 5k	44
WEEK7								46
WEEK8								46
WEEK9							Race 10k	40
WEEK10								46
WEEK 11								36
WEEK12							RACE 10K	18 + Race (24.2)

STEP THREE

In the sample below, you can see the number of days training starts out at 5 per week and eventually 6 per week as the mileage progresses. Below are the ingredients needed in a structured training plan which will allow us to progress and achieve our goals. This article will not go into the science of why the different training sessions need to be included, that would take up another article in itself, but will just concentrate on how we can integrate these into a schedule.

In layman's terms, the 3 types of workout that must be included in any serious schedule each week are:-

THE LONG RUN

Regular runs up to and over the chosen racing distance on a weekly or at least fortnightly basis depending on experience, susceptibility to injury etc. These should be done at BASE PACE usually at the weekend. BASE PACE is your steady running pace, 90 seconds to 2 minutes per mile slower than your 10k race pace. Therefore if you have run a 10k in 42 minutes - that works out at 6min 45 sec per mile. This gives you your base pace of 8min, 15s to 8min 45s per mile. If you have no race times to work from then the run/talk principle can be used. This is where you can talk without too much difficulty as you run along and gives a good indication of your base pace.

QUALITY SESSIONS

These are workouts done at an increased pace and/or effort and include, speed sessions such as repetitions, pickups and fartlek, hill running and tempo runs (these workouts will be explained further on in the article).

RECOVERY RUNS

Often neglected by runners, especially the experienced, but these runs are an important ingredient in any schedule as they allow the body to recover and "train up" between hard workouts and long runs. A rule of thumb is that you should allow at least one but preferably two days of either complete rest or recovery runs between the harder sessions. It is important that these runs are kept at base pace.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Weekly total
WEEK1	REST	6 fartlek	5 Recovery run	6 Choppy pace	REST	5 Rec run	8 Base pace	30
WEEK2	REST	6 fartlek	5 Rec run	7 Choppy pace	REST	5 Rec run	10 Base pace	33
WEEK3	REST	5 4x400m 2min/rec	5 Rec run	7 fartlek	REST	5 Rec run	12 Base pace	34
WEEK4	REST	6 5x400m 2min/rec	5 Rec run	8 4 at tempo pace	REST	5 Rec run	14 Base pace	38
WEEK5	REST	6 6x400 2min/rec	6 Rec run	8 Inc 4xlong hills	4 Rec run	6 Inc 3 fartlek	12 Base pace	42
WEEK6	REST	7 4x800 2½min/rec	6 Rec run	9 4 at tempo pace	5 Rec run	3 Rec run	Race 5k + 1 mile w/up w/down Total 5 miles	35
WEEK7	REST	6 8x400 2min/rec	5 Rec run	9 Inc 6xlong hills	5 Rec run	5 Choppy pace	14 Base pace	44
WEEK8	REST	8 6x800 2½min/rec	5 Rec run	10 6 at tempo pace	5 Rec run	6 Choppy pace	12 Base pace	46
WEEK9	REST	7 10x400 100sec/rec	5 Rec run	9 Inc Easy fartlek for 4 miles	5 Rec run	3 Rec run	Race 10k + 1 mile w/up w/down Total 8 miles	37
WEEK10	REST	8 6x800 2min/rec	5 Rec run	10 6 at tempo pace	5 Rec run	6 Choppy pace	12 Base pace	46
WEEK 11	REST	7 5x800 100sec/rec	5 Rec run	6 6x400 100sec/rec	5 Rec run	REST	9 Base pace	32
WEEK12	REST	6 Inc 3 fartlek	5 Rec run	4 Rec run	REST	3 Rec run	RACE 10K	18 + Race (24.2)

HOW TO RUN THE QUALITY WORKOUTS

Those new to speedwork often shy away or put off doing these type of sessions but there is nothing to fear from them if handled correctly. Remember they are only done in relation to your own level of fitness and ability and the tips that follow will guide you in setting the right intensity levels and pace.

REPETITIONS

These are usually done on the track for accuracy reasons, but can be done on any reasonable surface marked out to the approximate distance.

First you have to determine your pace, again this can be based on your 10k time. First convert your 10k pace into seconds then divide by 6.2 to determine your pace per mile.

e.g., (for a 42min 10k), $42 \times 60 = 2520$ seconds

2520 divided by $6.2 = 406$ seconds per mile

therefore 406 seconds = 6 mins and 46 secs.

Now for 800m rep's we half that and take 10 seconds off,

e.g. 3 mins 23 secs - 10 secs = 3 mins 13 secs per 800m

For 400's we quarter it and take 10 seconds off,

eg, 1 min 41 secs - 10 secs = 1 min 31 secs per 400m.

RECOVERIES

This is the time you take in between each repetition, generally the longer the rep the longer the recovery. The rest of the mileage for that workout is taken up by an easy warm up and warm down jog,

e.g., (8 inc 8x800 2½ min/rec), means you would run a 2 mile easy warm up, followed by 8 x 800m reps with 2½ minutes jog/walking recovery in between each rep, then an easy 2 mile warm down for a total of 8'ish miles.

CHOPPY RUNS

These are run at the quick end of your base pace. ie, 1½ minutes a mile slower than your 10k pace and your recovery runs are at the slower end, ie, 2 mins slower than 10k pace

HILL SESSIONS

Choose an hill on your route to run out to. The hill should not be so steep that it ruins good running form but on the other hand, it needs to be steep enough to gain a positive training effect from. It should be long enough to give between 1 and 2 minutes uphill running and should be run at a good strong pace with steady down hill running in between for recovery.

TEMPO RUNS

These involve running at a strong pace for the middle section of the run, with steady running at base pace before and after, e.g., (8 inc 4 at tempo pace) means , 2 mile w/up followed by 4 miles at a good sustained pace (your half marathon pace or about 20 seconds slower than your 10k pace), then w/down for 2 miles at base pace.

FARTLEK RUNS

Basically “fartlek” is a Swedish word meaning “speedplay”. After a steady w/up do a few miles of alternating between different paces over varying distances. This is a good introduction to speedwork and can be as hard or easy as you want to make it. The pickups, recoveries and distances for these are up to you, for example, you could run between 3 lamp posts at a quick pace, recover at a steady pace to the end of the road, then ease into a strong pace to the crest of the hill, recover down the other side before turning into the park and doing a fast lap of the football pitch and so on, all the time varying your pace and distances throughout the run. These can become more demanding as your training progresses.

TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR QUALITY WORKOUTS

Always warm up before and warm down after each quality session for at least a mile or 10 minutes of easy running. Ideally this should be followed by a safe stretching routine of the major muscle groups (this topic will be covered in a future article). Make sure you do the sessions at your pace and capabilities, with the repetitions for example, you should be able to complete the last one at the same pace as the first, if not you are running the early ones too hard. Alternatively, you should finish your quality sessions feeling worked but not “wiped out”

FINAL TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR SCHEDULE

The previous pages have outlined the fundamentals of writing a schedule towards reaching a goal or key race in your training and the example used throughout is typical of one that could be used by the average club runner to break the 40 minute, 10k barrier.

However, the principles outlined can be used to design a training schedule for any level of runner or any race distance. By making minor adjustments and applying common sense, the novice or experienced runner alike can use the steps to guide them through the process.

For shorter races, such as the 5k, more speed and less endurance is needed, therefore, the overall weekly mileage should be lowered a little, the distance of the long runs reduced, and the emphasis more on the speedwork and quality sessions.

Longer races, such as the half marathon, require the emphasis to be placed more on endurance than on the speedwork, although this is an important element in all training schedules and still needs to be included in order to be successful. The long runs and weekly mileage should be increased and the type of quality sessions geared towards training towards racing this longer distance. This involves repetitions of longer distance, e.g. 800m, 1000m, 1200m and one mile. As the reps, get longer the rest/recovery periods should be longer accordingly, i.e., up to 4 minutes between the mile reps. Hill runs and tempo runs will build further endurance.

The marathon is a special event and really requires a more specific approach towards the training, running mags and running web sites often include solid schedules to follow for this distance.

Experienced runners will usually know their capabilities and limitations regarding how much mileage and speedwork they can handle. The more inexperienced runner should be on the side of caution and follow the tips for safe progression of weekly mileage and introduce speedwork gradually.

Finally, remember a training schedule is not written in blood, and a few sessions missed through injury or illness will make little or no difference at all at the end of a schedule. The emphasis is on consistent training over a period of time that gradually stresses the body safely to give a “training up” effect.

Serious injury/illness should be respected, even if this means resting from training completely or finding an alternative form of training to maintain fitness levels. There is always another day or another race to target at a later date.

You may feel one quality session per week is enough for you to handle at present, or that the long run and/or weekly mileage is beyond you at the moment. That's fine, tailor the training accordingly and progress at a later date. A couple of strategies I have used in the past when constructing schedules for the less experienced runner are, to include the long run fortnightly rather than on a weekly basis and to introduce speedwork through some gentle fartlek sessions in order to ease the runner into changes of pace and the feeling of working harder.

I hope this article proves useful to some of you and I will produce other articles on sports related subjects on a regular basis for the website. Meanwhile, I welcome feedback and also any suggestions you may have for topics to cover in the future.

Yours in Training,

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