

Training basics

After skills-share Dec 2013 geoff.read@facethestreet.com

There are no definitive methods that will work for everyone, but the most common mistake is to race too often and train without structure. Each person needs to work out a planned programme that fits their level, targets and physiology. Ask for input from coaches and experienced runners. It is a recipe, not a pill: here are some of the ingredients:

Elements of running

- Distance
- Intensity (how hard you make it)
- Time
- Gradient
- Surface / terrain
- Load (the effect all the above have on you)

Aerobic -----<threshold approx. 65% of VO₂max>-----**Anaerobic**

Steady, for heart lungs, stamina, slow-twitch fibres

Intense, for speed & strength, fast-twitch fibres

Session types:

Recovery/rest: easy pace not putting any demands on you or damaging muscle fibres

Tempo (controlled speed, sub-race-pace)

Speedwork (higher than race pace for short times):

- Fartleck/intervals
- Fast repetitions on a gentle hill
- Structured track sessions (for speed)
- Aerobic threshold or heart-rate based sessions using target heart-rate monitor

Steep hill repetitions (strength)

Distance runs (stamina and conditioning) including LSD (long, slow distance)

Conditioning runs to prepare for surface/gradient (eg road/rough fell, climbing and descending)

Additional activities and cross-training:

Stretching (there are various views on this)

Drills / plyometrics / specific exercises eg hopping, step-ups, circuit training

Core strength exercises (back/abdomen/hips area to provide stability e.g. Pilates)

Weights (from light reps to a few heavy reps to build max strength)

Other sports:

- Cycling: stamina and climbing strength, low impact
- Fell walking/backpacking: strength and fell craft/navigation
- Cross-country skiing
- Climbing (core strength and flexibility)
- Swimming: stamina and coordination, rest the legs. Low impact
- Dancing: good for flexibility, rhythm, relaxed effort, coordination
- Football and martial arts have benefits but note that they are high-impact and may risk injury

Mental skills:

Planning

Pace judgement & structure

Navigation/route awareness

Listening to and understanding your body

Race focus and concentration

Will

Diet and nutrition (skills-share later)

How can you tell if your training is working?

We need objective measures:

A time for a fixed course or distance

Race PB's

Resting heart rate

Food for thought:

- Get regular medical checks, especially before upping exercise
- Rest and recovery is as important as training
- Over-training can be more damaging than under-training
- Quality beats quantity
- Listen to your body/resting heart rate and respond (5bpm higher have an easy day, 10bpm higher do not exercise)
- Seek help and cross-train when injured, avoid doing nothing
- Don't suddenly increase load (increase by no more than 5-10% a week)
- Alternate hard sessions with recovery sessions; alternate hard weeks with easy weeks
- Top form only lasts for a few weeks, perhaps twice a year: target important races
- Over-racing will reduce your potential
- Most fell runners race too often and are tired at the start line.
- Being over-competitive in training runs is ineffective: save it for races
- Always carry appropriate equipment on the fell to help your fellow runners in the event of a problem (also for your safety and to get accustomed to race requirements)
- Avoid suddenly starting or stopping regular heavy exercise

Ten Things to Consider Trying in Order to Run Faster with Fewer Injuries

1. Do hill reps on your bike every 3 or 4 sessions
2. Activate glutes pre-run/ride.
3. Stand in a barrel of water for 7 mins post-training.
4. Strengthen your glutes.
5. Easy bike ride for an hour the day after a race is better than an easy run.
6. Change one thing in your training programme for 6-8 weeks. If you get good results then keep the change.
7. Do cross country races in the winter.
8. Keep a training diary and look for patterns now and again that produced faster running or injuries.
9. If you're not enjoying a run then change the run (or your perspective on the run) until you are enjoying it.
10. Figure out why you run. Remind yourself regularly of why you run. Make sure you are meeting the 'why' aspect in your runs.

P. Brannigan