

## How should each run feel?

runningwithus

There are a number of different paces that you should aim to master that will make up your training:

**Easy run** – fully conversational at the speed of chat and about 6/10 effort.

**Steady run** – conversational, controlled but working at about 7/10 effort.

**Threshold running** – controlled discomfort, 3-4 word answer pace 8/10 effort.

**Interval running**  
5k-10k effort - 9/10 and working hard.



### In detail:

The feeling of not being sure how fast you should be running for any particular session is common, from beginners to elite international athletes. For beginners it never feels as though running is easy, but we can assure you that running doesn't need to be hard all the time.

At the beginning all you are trying to do is get out and run. That should be at **easy pace** or 'the speed of chat' – if you can't talk as you are running, you're going too fast, simple as that. For the more experienced runner, 'the speed of chat' is how your easy and recovery runs should feel - totally in control, relaxed and slow enough to talk. If you are combining walking and running, the effort level remains the same – you should be able to hold a conversation on both the walking and running segments.

Faster than easy, conversational running is **steady running**. This is the backbone of training for more experienced runners. This is where you must be honest and not push too hard or you might ruin your faster sessions, so conversation should still be possible, but a little strained.

Incorporating **threshold running** is how the elites train and you can train like this too. This is where you are running at a controlled discomfort level: you can still talk between breaths, but only 3 or 4 word phrases. This is not running to exhaustion or sprinting. You may already feel able to include some 3 minute blocks into a run each week which will grow in volume throughout your training.

**Interval training** and 3k/5k/10k pace is top-end training. This is often called the "hurt locker" and is used in training to replicate the feeling at the end of a hard race. The effort levels here should be almost at maximum.

## Rest (R)

To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the running. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've run a step, find yourself thinking up excuses not to run or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!

## Recovery Run (RR)

Training for endurance requires your body to work harder than it has ever done. To see improvement without breaking down, you'll need some recovery runs. These should be nice and easy and you should feel relaxed. Enjoy the scenery. You should be breathing easily and be capable of holding a conversation throughout the run. This will mean that you are running in the 60–65% range of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) and it should be no more than 45 minutes in duration. This allows your body to adapt to the training workload and therefore improve. It also helps with the removal of the waste products, which accumulate in your muscles after harder efforts.

## Threshold Runs (THR)

After the long endurance runs, tempo runs are probably your most valuable workouts. You will find them slightly uncomfortable and they'll require concentration, but they are well worth the effort. As they're run at a controlled brisk pace, about 80–85% of your MHR, you'll only be capable of uttering a couple of words to your training partners. Tempo/threshold runs improve your lactate threshold (the speed above which your body struggles to cope with the lactic acid created by burning energy without oxygen), your running efficiency and aerobic capacity (your body's ability to utilise oxygen). All this helps to improve your endurance performance.

## Long Runs (LR)

Long runs are vital in your plan and key to racing well in long distance races from 5km – marathon. At first, concentrate on increasing the time on your feet rather than worrying about distance. Start off by heading out for at least an hour and run at 65% of MHR (conversational pace). Gradually this will build to 75% of MHR as you start to practice periods of marathon pace (MP) running. These runs improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to burn fat as its primary fuel source.

## Continuous Hills (CH)

Hill running develops strength in your muscles and tendons without putting them under the type of stress they are exposed to during faster running. Run up a 5–10% gradient for 45–90 seconds at a steady-threshold effort. Turn immediately at the top and run down the hill at the same effort, then turn at the bottom and repeat without any recovery until the rep time ends. Like a tempo/threshold run, a hill session is time to concentrate, as you should be working at about 80–85% of MHR and be able to utter just a word or two.

## Fartlek (F)

This is a Swedish term that literally means “speed play”. It involves a number of bursts of effort over a variety of distances with a variable recovery. Originally the length of effort was based on the terrain, for example, pushing harder every time you came to a climb, no matter how long it was. But you can adapt it for your needs.

## Interval Training (IT)

Intervals help to boost specific race pace speed and involve running timed efforts with a controlled recovery. The effort level is around 85–100% of MHR, depending on the duration of the event you are training for and the length and volume of intervals used. A typical example might be 6 x 3 minutes @ 5km race pace with a 90 second jog recovery.

## Marathon Pace (MP)

Understanding the pace & effort you intend on running your marathon at is very important. Pace judgment and patience on the big day will be crucial to running your best marathon. Marathon Pace Practice, at about 75–80% of MHR, allows your body and mind to get used to what will be required on race day, and builds endurance quickly.

## Warming Up/Warm down (WU)

When you are going to do any faster running such as Hills, Threshold Runs, Intervals or a race, it is important to warm up gradually. A 10–15 minute jog lets your muscles warm up and improve their range of movement. It also allows your cardiovascular system to prepare. You should also jog easily for 10–15 mins after any hard work out. This reduces muscle soreness; flushes away lactic build up and will make you feel better over the next few days.

## Cross Training & Core Conditioning (XT)

It is important that your training is balanced with some non-impact activities such as swimming, cycling, rowing, aerobics, etc, otherwise you are more likely to pick up an annoying injury that will set back your training. But more experienced runners should also add cross training to their regime. Endurance running, especially the marathon, requires whole body-conditioning. To achieve this you should aim to work a variety of muscle groups and not just your legs. Remember, though, that you are a runner, so just be careful not to make the cross-training, whether it is core conditioning, lifting weights, using an elliptical trainer or practicing Pilates, so intense that you are left too tired for your running.

| Week | Monday  | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday | Saturday  | Sunday                         |                          |             |
|------|---|--|--|---|--------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| 1    | Recovery run, 30 mins + Strength & conditioning - | AM: easy run 30 mins<br>PM: Progression run, 45 mins total 15 mins easy, 15 mins steady, 15 mins threshold | AM: Easy run 45 mins or 45 mins aerobic cross training       | Easy run, 60 mins   | REST   | Continuous hills 4 x (6mins effort/90s jog)                 | AM: Long run, 80 mins total    | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 2    | Recovery run, 30 mins + Strength & conditioning - | AM: easy run 30 mins<br>PM: Progression run, 45 mins total 15 mins easy, 15 mins steady, 15 mins threshold | AM: Easy run 45 mins or 45 mins aerobic cross training       | Easy run, 60 mins   | REST   | Continuous hills, 4 x (6 mins effort/90s jog)               | AM: Long run, 80 mins total    | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 3    | Recovery run, 30 mins + Strength & conditioning - | AM: Easy run 30 mins<br>PM: Threshold run, 5 x (6mins threshold/1min jog)                                  | AM: Easy run 45 mins total or 45 mins aerobic cross training | AM: Recovery run 30 mins or aerobic cross training<br>PM: Progression run, 45 mins total. 15 mins easy, 15 mins steady, 15 mins threshold | REST   | Continuous hills, 45 mins total. 5 x (5mins effort/90s jog) | AM: Long run, 90 mins total    | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 4    | Recovery run, 30-mins + Strength & conditioning   | AM: Easy run 30 mins<br>PM: Threshold run, 45 mins total. 3x(10mins threshold/90s jog)                     | AM: Easy run 45 mins total or 45 mins aerobic cross training | Progression run, 45 mins total. 15 mins easy, 15 mins steady, 15 mins threshold   | REST   | Continuous hills, 45 mins total. 3x(10mins effort/90s jog)  | AM: Long run, 75-90 mins total | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |

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| 5 | Recovery run, 30 - 45 mins + Strength & conditioning | AM: Easy 30 min run<br>PM: Threshold run, 60 mins total including 3 x 12 mins @ threshold with a 2 min jog rec. | AM: Easy run 45 mins + core   | AM: Recovery run 30 mins or aerobic cross training<br>PM: Progression run, 60 mins total. 20 mins easy, 20 mins steady, 20 mins threshold   | REST | Continuous hills, 45 mins total. 3 x (10 mins effort/90s jog)  | AM: Long run 105 mins total. All relaxed and conversational  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 6 | Recovery run, 30-45 mins + Strength & conditioning   | AM: Easy 30 min run<br>PM: Threshold run with 45-60 mins running containing 25 mins @ threshold effort built in | AM: Easy run 45 - 60 mins or 45 - 60 mins aerobic cross training + core     | AM: Recovery run 30 mins or aerobic cross training<br>PM: Mixed pace session - 12 mins @ MP + 6 x 2 mins @ 10k effort + 12 mins @ MP. All with a 2 min jog rec. (MP = marathon target pace) | REST | Continuous hill session to contain 6 x 6 mins with a 75-90 sec jog recovery                          | AM: Long run of 2 hours. If you feel good run the last 20-30 @ target MP. Make the first 90 1 min per mile slower than MP! | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 7 | Rest or 30 min rec run/X train + core -              | AM: Easy 30 min run<br>PM: 45 mins to include 5 x 5 mins @ threshold off 1 min jog rec                          | AM: 45 mins easy  | AM: Recovery run 30 mins or aerobic cross training.<br>PM: Progression run – 30 mins as 10 easy, 10 steady, 10 threshold  | REST | AM: 30 min rec run   | AM: Half marathon race + 30 min easy jog afterwards OR 2 hours with the last 60 @ target MP                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 8 | Recovery run, 30-45 mins + Strength & conditioning   | AM: Easy 30 min run<br>PM: 30-45 min recovery run + conditioning work   | AM: 60 mins easy-steady running. Your legs should be feeling better by now! | AM: Recovery run 30 mins or aerobic cross training.<br>AM: Mixed pace session - 15 mins MP + 5 x 3 mins @ 10k effort + 15 mins @ MP. All with a 2 min jog rec                               | REST | Continuous hills session with 60 mins to include 3 x 12 mins of continuous hills with 2 min recovery | AM: Long run - 2 hours 15-30 mins all easy   | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |

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| 9  | Recovery run, 30-45 mins total + conditioning | AM: Easy run 30 mins<br>PM: Mixed pace session 8 x 800m (or 3 mins) with odd numbers @ threshold effort and even numbers at 5k intensity. All with 90 sec jog rec         | AM: 60 mins easy pace + core | AM: 30 mins easy<br>PM: 80 mins with the final 45 mins to include 4 x 6 mins @ threshold with 2-3 mins easy recovery.               | REST | Continuous hills with 60 mins to include 30 mins of continuous hills and no recoveries. | AM: Long run - 2 hours 30 mins with last 30 @ MP if you feel good. -  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 10 | Recovery run, 30-45 mins total + conditioning | AM: Easy run 30 mins<br>PM: Mixed pace session 6 x 800m (or 3 mins) @ at 5k effort. All with 75-90 sec jog rec  | AM: 60 mins easy pace + core | AM: 30 mins easy<br>PM: 25km Progression run as 5km easy, 5km MP, 5km easy, 5km MP, 3km threshold, 2km easy                         | REST | 6 x 6 mins @ threshold off 90 second jog recovery                                       | AM: 1hr 45 minutes all easy   | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 11 | Rest or Recovery run, 30 mins                 | AM: Easy run 30 mins<br>PM: 6 mins threshold + 2 x (6 x 400m or 75 secs) @ 5k pace. Take 2-3 mins between threshold and 400's then just 1 min jog rec between each 400. - | AM: 45 mins easy pace + core | 30 minute progression run with 10 easy, 10 steady and 10 @ threshold building in effort   | REST | AM: 30 min recovery run + stretching  | AM: Half marathon fast @ PB effort or + 45 mins easy after. If not racing then 2 hours 30 mins with the last 60 mins @ MP | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
|    | Recovery run, 30-45 mins total + conditioning | AM: easy run 40 mins<br>PM: 45 mins running to include 4 x 6 mins threshold to turn the legs over again. Take a 2 min jog rec between each effort                         | AM: 60 mins steady           | AM: 30 mins easy recovery run<br>PM: 90 minutes with the final 45 mins to include 3 x 10 mins @ threshold effort – 2-3 min recovery | REST | 45 mins relaxed running   | AM: Key long run – 35km progression run (10km easy, 10km MP, 5km easy, 5km threshold, 2km hard, 3km easy                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |

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| 13 | Recovery run, 30-45 mins total + conditioning         | AM: Easy run 40 mins<br>PM: 3 x (5 mins @ threshold + 4 x 400m or 90 secs @ 5km pace from 60s rec) + 15-20 mins @ MP when finished   | AM: 60 mins steady      | AM: 30 mins easy recovery run<br>PM: 90 minutes with the final 30 mins @ threshold effort           | REST | 45 mins relaxed running  | AM: 2 hours 45 mins with the last 45-60 mins @ MP     | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 14 | Recovery run, 30 mins very relaxed + extra stretching | AM: Easy 30 min rec. run<br>PM: 5 x 400m (or 90 secs) @ 5km effort (60s rec) + 2km @ threshold + 5 x 400m (or 90s) @ 5km effort (45s rec) – 2 min rec .between sets        | AM: 60 mins steady      | AM: 30 mins easy recovery run<br>PM: 45 mins to include 4 x 6 mins @ threshold off 90 secs jog rec. | REST | Interval session with 6 mins @ threshold (2-3 min rec) + 5 x 3 mins @ 5k pace off 90 sec jog - | AM: Long run - 2 hours with the final 30 minutes @ MP | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 15 | Recovery run, 30 mins + conditioning                  | AM: Easy 30 min rec run<br>PM: 6 mins threshold + 3 x (4 x 400m or 90 secs) @ 5k pace. Take 2-3 mins between threshold and 400's then just 1 min jog rec between each 400. | AM: 45 easy run + core  | 30 min progression run with 10 easy, 10 steady and 10 @ threshold                                   | REST | AM: 5k Park run to sharpen up + 30 easy after.   | AM: 60 mins very easy                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | ☺<br>☹<br>☹ |
| 16 | Recovery run – 30 minutes or rest.                    | 30 mins to include 3 x 5 mins @ MP with a 2-3 min jog rec  | AM: 30 min recovery run | PM: 30 min rec run  | REST | 15 - 20 min light jog + stretch  | <b>RACE DAY – GOOD LUCK!</b>                          |                          |             |

- **Note please do a 15 minute warm up and cool down before Threshold, Continuous Hills or Interval sessions**
- **If your are feeling ok you may wish to consider a 20-30 minute recovery run in the morning before any of the quality sessions above**
- **Always substitute cross training for running if you are injured, very sore or it is not safe to run.**
- **Please add a Core conditioning, Pilates or Yoga classes once or twice a week if you have time.**
- **Try to stretch every day for at least 10 mins.**
- **Always eat within 20-30 mins of finishing a run**
- **Always train at your target pace, don't compromise or run too hard. Tiredness always catches up and take extra rest if required...**