



# Training Program Notes

Our free programs have been carefully designed and prepared by us; distance running coaches Callum Jones and Hugo van den Broek. Between us, we have decades worth of experience as both elite athletes and professional coaches, having coached runners from a wide range of backgrounds and experience levels, from beginners to Olympians. We have included what we believe to be key workouts for the distances you are training for and tailored the level of training accordingly depending on the program.

## About the Training Programs

For each distance (5k, 10k half & full marathon) we have designed 3 levels of program, these are 'Fundamental', 'Experienced' and 'Advanced'.

While the '**Fundamental**' level programs are the easiest of the programs we have available, they are not designed for absolute beginners and do feature some challenging workouts. We recommend being able to handle 30 – 40 minutes of continuous running before starting the Fundamental 5 or 10k programs, and up to an hour or more before starting the half or full marathon programs. These programs are design to equip you with the fundamentals you need to perform well, not only on race day, but in your training in the future too.

As the name suggests, the '**Experienced**' programs are designed for runners with a little more experience with training for endurance events and are at a level where they can handle some harder workouts.

The '**Advanced**' programs are designed for runners who regularly do hard workouts and train 5 – 7 times per week. These programs are tough and are designed to challenge competitive club runners.





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## Base Training & Race Preparation Phases

For each distance, you will find 'Base Training Programs' and 'Race Preparation Programs'. These are two slightly different phases of training, both of which play a very important role in getting you to the start line in the best possible shape.

### Base Training

We like to think of preparing for a race like building a house. Think of 'race day' as putting on the last few roof tiles, but before you get there, the house needs to be sturdy, with strong walls and a good frame work. But for the walls and framework to stand tall, there needs to be a very strong foundation. This foundation is your base training, providing you with a strong platform on which you can build the rest of your training towards race day. The stronger your base, the harder and faster you can train during the Race Preparation phase. Without a good base, not only will the quality of your training suffer when preparing for your race, but you are also much more likely to become injured.

Base training should consist of plenty of high quality, aerobic & endurance work, as well as strength and conditioning, speed work, lactic threshold work - really base training means doing a bit of everything to cover a wide base! And that is exactly what you will find in our Base Training Programs. Ideally, you should start by doing our Base Training Program for your chosen distance before getting started with the Race Preparation Program.





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## Race Preparation

Once the base has been built, it's time to prepare for race day. In order to run the best race possible it is important to start getting your body (and mind) used to the type of exertion you will experience during the race itself.

This means doing some hard workouts at, or close to, your target race pace and also practising sustaining these paces for longer periods of time. In the case of marathon training this also means stepping up your long runs to prepare your body for the demands of 26.2 miles.

All our race preparation programs are 10 weeks in length, which we believe gives most runners enough time (providing you have done sufficient base training) to do some high quality hard workouts of varying lengths and intensities, while also leaving enough time to taper for race day. You should therefore aim to start your chosen Race Preparation Program 10 weeks out from the date of your race (you will see more details on this on the programs themselves).

Depending on your experience, current ability and recent training habits you may find that you can jump straight into the Race Preparation Program for your chosen distance and level. But in general, and especially for the marathon distance, we highly recommend following our Base Training Program before starting your race prep.





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## How to use our training programs

Our programs are designed to help guide your training and to help you reach race day in the best possible shape. However, it is important to understand that every runner is unique and will require different training, at different intensities, in order to truly get the most out of themselves. These free programs have been designed as a guide to help you structure your training and point you in the right direction, however you will likely need to adjust them slightly according to your own schedule, experience and ability. Here are a few ways you can make adjustments to your chosen program:

**Easy run days:** On days where we have specified a certain amount of easy running, feel free to add some more if you are feeling good, or reduce it if you feel like it is too much. Easy days should always feel easy and should not leave you feeling exhausted after the run, or later in the day. If you feel like this, then reduce the easy running volume.

**Rest days:** Rest days are important. We have set the number and position of the rest days in the program based on our experience of how much time beginner, experienced, or advanced runners need between runs to get the full benefit of the workout. However, if you feel like you are not getting enough rest, then first of all, reduce the volume of the runs and workouts. If you feel like you are getting too much rest and can train harder then consider taking the step up to the next Training Program level, or simply adding some easy running where we have scheduled rest days





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**Hard workout days:** On days where we have set harder workouts, such as tempo runs, intervals, hill work, etc, it is important to use your judgement as to how hard you push yourself. Some hard workouts are designed to really push you, while others are designed to feel a bit more comfortable. So don't be concerned if some workouts feel harder than others - it's meant to feel that way!

**Consistency:** Consistency is the key to great and enjoyable training and ultimately good performances. That is why our programs are designed to allow you to train consistently well and arrive on the start line of your race feeling fit, fresh and healthy. Some workouts should be pretty tough and challenging, but certainly not all of them! Some should be relaxed and comfortable allowing you to train consistently for many weeks/months/years.

**Injuries/illness:** While our programs are designed to provide enough rest and recovery between hard workouts to avoid over-training, sometimes injuries or illness are simply a result of bad luck! It is important to monitor your health and take care of your body. If you become ill or get injured during a training period, please do not feel like you MUST complete a workout. Take extra rest days, see a physio/doctor and put your health first. Taking an extra rest day if you are unwell won't do you any harm at all and is nearly always the better option.





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## Abbreviations

" = seconds

' = minutes

rec = recovery

WU = warm up

CD = cool down

## Sessions with distance

For some sessions we have set specific distances for intervals or parts of workouts for example 5x (1km at 5km race pace, with 200m jog recovery). Ideally these should be either done on a track or using a GPS watch to measure your distance. However, if these options are not available, and you are not able to accurately measure your distance, then as an alternative you can simply use the approximate time you would take to do those intervals. So for someone who runs 5km in roughly 20 minutes, the example session of 5x (1km with 200m jog recovery) would therefore become 5 x (4' with 2' jog recovery).





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## The Principles of Training

When training to become a better runner there are some key principles that help to focus our training in the right way. These principles apply to everyone trying to improve their running, whether they are a complete beginner or an Olympic athlete.

It is not essential to understand these principles in detail in order to execute the training in our programs. However, having a basic understanding of these principles will help you understand why the training program is the way it is, our reasons behind setting certain sessions and the reasons why you do them.

You can see these training principles on the 'Our Training Philosophy' section of our website at [www.trainsmarterterrunfaster.com](http://www.trainsmarterterrunfaster.com)







# Training Program Notes

## Types of Training

### Easy Running

Easy runs should feel comfortable. If you are a complete beginner, then it may take some time before you get to a stage where continuous running feels 'easy', but trust us, you will get there and it won't take as long as you think!

When doing an easy run, try to maintain a pace where you could have a conversation with a friend. Your breathing should not be too stressed and if you have a heart rate monitor then your HR should not really go above 65 - 70% of your HRmax.

Why do we do easy runs? Well, there are lots of benefits! When you run, changes happen in our body at a cellular level. We make more mitochondria (tiny energy factories inside our cells), we create more capillaries which carry oxygen to our muscles and remove waste products, and lots of other important changes. These changes happen as a function of time spent running, i.e. the more we run the more of these great benefits happen inside our bodies! So, if we want to run for a long 'time' we should do some of our running at an easy pace, so we don't get too exhausted and have to stop before these changes have a chance to happen.

We also need some time to recover from our hard workouts. We don't always need a complete rest day to recover, sometimes we are recovered enough to do an easy run, but nothing harder than that, so getting these miles in when we can, will help us become better runners.







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## Moderate Running

'Moderate Pace' falls somewhere between easy pace and threshold pace. You should be able to run for up to 45-60 minutes at this pace without any significant fatigue. After 15-20 minutes at this pace you should not be able to have a full conversation, but you should be able to comfortably say a few sentences.

Moderate pace runs can be used as 'quality workouts' if you do them for long enough. E.g, 60 minutes at moderate pace is a pretty tough workout, but 20 minutes at moderate pace should be relatively easy. You can also add some moderate pace running to your easy runs to increase the aerobic stimulus and you will see some of that in our programs.

## Threshold Running

To describe threshold running we have to get a little scientific. Inside our muscles we produce a substance called lactate. We are always producing this and we are also always clearing it at the same time. When we exercise, we produce more lactate but we also clear it faster, so we don't accumulate too much of it. However, if we run hard enough, we produce lactate at such a high rate that we can no longer clear it fast enough and it begins to accumulate in our blood and muscles. Imagine running a bath but you forgot to put the plug in. When the tap is flowing gently, the water runs straight out of the plug-hole and the bath does not fill up. Open the tap up a little more and the water level rises but still does not overflow. However, turn the tap on full blast and suddenly the water cannot drain fast enough and the bath fills up and spills over the top!





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## Threshold Running continued

Your threshold pace is the fastest pace you can maintain while lactate production and lactate clearance are in equilibrium. i.e. the fastest you can run the tap without the bath overflowing!

Of course, this is kind of hard to measure without lots of fancy equipment, so many coaches and athletes approximate threshold pace by saying it is the pace you can sustain for 1 hour of hard running. For most beginners, this is a little slower than 10km race pace. For world class elite athletes, threshold pace is around half marathon race pace!

Threshold workouts include tempo runs (such as running at your threshold pace for 20 - 40 minutes) or long intervals (such as 5x6 minutes at threshold pace with 90 seconds recovery) and you will see a lot of this in all of our programs.

## Tempo runs

Tempo runs should be done at a moderate to hard effort. At the beginning it may feel more moderate but towards the end it should feel pretty tough. As a guide, when you finish a tempo run you should feel like you could do another 5 minutes at the same pace, but not much more. If you feel like you could go for longer than 5 minutes more, then next time you can push a little harder, if you feel like you couldn't continue even for another few minutes, then the intensity was a little too high for this particular type of run.





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## Intervals

Interval workouts (whether on or off the track) should be done at a hard to very hard effort. This means that when you finish a session you should feel like you might be able to do one more repetition at the same pace, but not 3 or 4 more. If you feel like you can do another 3 or 4 reps, the effort was not hard enough. When we do want you to run the workout in a more controlled way it will be mentioned in the notes on the day of the workout itself.

Unless otherwise specified the pace should be more or less constant. An ideal way to run an interval session would be to start at a controlled and constant pace, with the last 1-3 reps slightly faster than the rest.

## Fartlek

Fartlek is a (usually continuous) run at varying speeds. Usually a fartlek run will consist of several faster sections of running separated by a period of easier running which is used as active recovery. Depending on the length of the run and intensity of the faster sections, fartleks can be very tough workouts! usually we will write a fartlek session something like this: 5 x 2/1, which means alternating 2mins hard, 1min easy, 2 mins hard, 1 min easy etc, 5 times

## Strides

Strides are 10 - 15 second runs at a fast, but always controlled pace. You should aim to get progressively faster throughout the duration of each stride. Performing strides helps to improve your running economy at higher speeds. When doing strides you should always aim to do them with good posture and running form, focusing on making your strides powerful and keeping short ground contact time. Gradually increase the speed of each stride. You can add 3-6 strides after an easy run, walking or slowly jogging back between each one, You will see these appear in the program.





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## Hill Sprints

You may wonder why there are very short, very fast hill sprints included in some of our programs. You're an endurance runner right? Why do you need to sprint fast up a hill?

Well, when we run at a certain pace, say 5k or 10k pace and slower, we are not going 'all out'. We are only using a small percentage of the force that our muscles could produce. We do this for a long time, so it becomes tiring, but still the force we produce with our muscles during these runs is relatively small. This means our body gets a bit lazy, and starts to think "well, if I am not using all my muscle fibres then I may as well ignore them".

By doing some short fast hill sprints occasionally, we 'wake up' more of our muscle fibres and remind our body that we have lots of power! By doing this, we increase the pool of recruitable muscle fibres. When we come back to do an endurance workout again, our body remembers that we have all these extra muscle fibres that we can use to produce some extra force, and we run with a bigger natural stride length as a result.

Hill sprints should be all out, 100% effort, with good upright posture, powerful strides, powerful arm drives and short ground contact time. The reps will be short and the recovery will be relatively long so that even when going as fast as possible, it is not a hard workout overall. We will often set these hill sprints the day before a quality workout (such as a threshold run), to prepare your body for a hard session.





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**Circuit training** is a form of strength training that involves a variety of exercises performed one after another. There is sometimes a very short rest between each exercise, or often there is no rest between exercises and you go straight from one exercise to the next. At the end of the circuit you can take a 2-5 minute break and repeat it from the start. Circuit training develops muscular strength and power and is great for developing mental strength – a very important factor in endurance running. Below is an example you can use but feel free to mix it up with other exercises you have learned from other sources.

Circuit Example:

Spend 45 seconds on each exercise. Take a 15 second break between each exercise, take 3 minutes rest then repeat all exercises 2 or 3 times through.

1. Sit ups
2. Press ups
3. Deep Squats
4. Russian twists
5. Walking lunges (or alternate lunges)
6. Tricep dips
7. Plank (for 90 seconds)
8. step ups
9. fast high knees
10. dead bugs

You should be able to find these exercises online by typing in the name of them into google if you are unsure of how to do them. To make the circuit harder you can remove the recovery between exercises, add more exercises, add weight to some of the exercises etc - get creative!





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## Warm-Up & Cool-Down

When doing a faster workout it is important to warm up properly before starting the session. This means you should do a 10 - 15 minute very easy jog to get your heart rate up and aerobic system ready to work. After your jog, do some dynamic stretches (such as high knees, skips, straight leg bounds, leg swings, arm swings, etc) and importantly, follow this with some 10-15 second strides at a fast, controlled pace. 3 - 6 strides is usually enough.

You should do this warm up (or similar) for any workouts that are faster than easy/moderate running. This is because your body needs to be prepared to run fast/hard.

For easy/moderate runs, a dedicated warm up is usually not necessary. For these runs, we instead recommend starting the first 5 - 10 minutes of the run at a very comfortable pace and gradually working into the run. However, you may wish to do some mobility exercises or a very light warm up walk/jog before you start if you are particularly stiff in some areas, or know that you are particularly injury prone.

After harder workouts (again, anything faster than easy/moderate pace), it is a good idea to include a 10 minute easy jog as a cool down. This helps to lower your HR in a slow controlled way and speeds up the removal of waste products after your session.





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## Good Luck!

Finally, from the Train Smarter Run Faster Team, we wish you the best with your training and most importantly we hope you enjoy the process of becoming a better runner!

Please tag us in your running photos, we want to see your progress! And remember to use the hashtag #Trainsmarterrunfaster

If you want a **personal online running coach** who will be on hand 24/7 to offer advice on anything running related as well as a **personalised program**, that takes into account your individual needs, goals, experience and daily commitments, please do not hesitate to **contact us at [trainsmarterrunfaster@gmail.com](mailto:trainsmarterrunfaster@gmail.com)**

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