

DMS Cross Country 2021

Pre-Season Distance Running Workouts



I know that many of your athletes are currently finishing up Volleyball and Football. Both of these sports are a great way to get your heartrate up and keep you in great shape; however, it is a different type of conditioning than what we would tend to do for middle distance runners that are trying to be ready for the cross country season. Due to the fact that our first cross country meet is Wednesday, November 3rd, I have decided to offer a workout program to prepare the distance team, if they would like to begin training at home.

The workouts below are absolutely not mandatory at all; however, if you feel like getting a bit of distance training in before the season begins, it will greatly benefit you endurance wise. Below are some suggestions for you to get started with your training. You can modify the intensity of the workouts depending upon your current abilities. Listen to your body, but don't be afraid to hurt a bit! Running is one of those sports that is physically demanding and mentally harder as we have discussed many times in the past. Comfort does not come without lots of training and if you start to feel comfortable, that is when you need to turn it up a notch ;) On the following pages I have also included some helpful information in regards to the various types of workouts that distance runners can follow. It is really just for your reading pleasure and some good knowledge to tuck away, especially if you are interested in running distance at the highschool or college level. Let me know if you have any questions! -Coach Owen

★ First week training period: 10/18-10/24

- **Train** three days a week. (You pick what works best for your schedule!)
- Run/walk (only if necessary) 20 to 30 minutes, two days a week.
- Take a **longer** run or run/walk (40 minutes to an hour) on the weekend, or whenever works best for you.
- Rest or cross-**train** (bike, swim, yoga, additional sports, etc.) on your off days.
- Run at a conversational pace. Meaning you can talk to a friend fairly easily. Consider taking a walk-break only if needed. Many of you are past this point in your training. At this point we are building mileage and will begin to work with our pace a bit when we come back together as a team.

★ Second two week training period: 10/25-10/31

- **Train** four days a week. (You pick what works best for your schedule!)
- Run/walk (only if necessary) 25 to 35 minutes, three days a week.
- Take a **longer** run or run/walk (45 minutes to an hour) on the weekend, or whenever works best for you.
- Rest or cross-**train** (bike, swim, yoga, additional sports, etc.) on your off days.
- Run at a conversational pace. Meaning you can talk to a friend fairly easily. Consider taking a walk-break only if needed. Many of you are past this point in your training. At this point we are building mileage and will begin to work with our pace a bit when we come back together as a team.

The Importance of Variety

Before we start wading through the details, let's first talk about variety. More specifically, why variety in your training is so important. There's a little running phenomenon I like to call "Single Speed Running," where a runner logs nearly all of his or her miles at the exact same effort. Day after day. That speed is usually around 75 percent of max effort — not fast enough to really make your body work hard and adapt, but too fast to build much endurance or count as a "recovery run."

Sound familiar?

Chances are it does, since that's exactly what most runners do, whether they're training for a marathon, 5K, or a simple track meet. Not only does Single Speed Running keep you from getting stronger; it also significantly increases the risk of injury: our bodies need variety. We need uber slow runs just as much as we need Lightning Bolt style sprints. The variety works the cardiovascular system and muscles in different ways, and makes room for both strength-building and recovery.

By understanding the importance of each workout, you're more likely to begin incorporating a variety into your training, and in return, reaping the benefits.

The Easy Run

I'm putting the easy run first because it's often the forgotten workout. But it's also one of the most important. Running at an easy pace builds endurance, promotes proper form, establishes routine and base mileage, and facilitates recovery. This type of run should be your most common, making up about 65-80% of your mileage (the percentage will vary depending on your running philosophy). The easy run is your aerobic workout, staying within heart-rate zones 1 and 2. If you're unsure where that is for you, ask yourself this question when you're running:

Can I keep a conversation going, speaking in paragraphs with full sentences? Ask it out loud if you're really unsure ... just maybe not when others are within earshot. If the answer is yes, you're running in that aerobic, or easy zone, where your body and muscles have the energy and oxygen they need. For most runners, this is also where they should run the majority of their long run miles.

The Tempo Run

The tempo run's pace is often called comfortably hard. Difficult enough to require pushing, but comfortable enough to where you can sustain the effort. This is often around 85-90% of your max heart-rate, where short sentences are possible, but a full-blown conversation isn't. We run tempo workouts to increase our lactate threshold, or that point at which your body switches from its aerobic system to its anaerobic system, and quickly fatigues thereafter. The higher your threshold at a certain pace, the longer you can sustain that given pace and build strength, speed, and endurance.

Sample Workouts:

40 minute run with 3 x 5 minutes at tempo pace, and a 3 minute recovery in between. For this style workout, you'll start the 40-minute run with an easy warmup, once warm, begin five minute tempo intervals with three minutes of rest, and repeat three times. Allow for time at the end to cool down.

The Progression Workout

A progression workout is one of my favorites, and commonly found in marathon training plans. The idea is simple: Start slow, finish fast. Over the course of your workout, you'll increase in pace by starting easy and finishing hard. This progression in pace gives you a complete workout, using both your aerobic and anaerobic systems, without over-straining your body or requiring the same recovery time as a traditional speed workout.

Sample Workouts: Thirds Workout: 10 minutes at an easy pace, 10 minutes at a comfortably hard pace, 10 minutes at a hard pace. In this workout, you'll increase speed at every 10 minute increment throughout the run, starting at an easy pace and making your way up to a hard pace.

The Interval Workout

When you picture the quintessential speed workout, you're probably thinking of interval training. A set distance, repeated a set number of times, at a set pace. Usually with a short rest period in between. Interval distances can be anywhere from 100 meters to a mile or more. Most intervals are designed to build speed and strength by working your anaerobic system, or lactate threshold running, and focus on shorter distances of a mile or less. They can be run on a track or along a set loop.

Sample Workout:

1. Workout: 6 x 400 meters on the track with a 200 meter light jog in between. Try to maintain a consistent pace for each of the 400 meter intervals.

The Ladder Run

The Ladder Run is a popular form of interval workout which climbs up, down, or both up and down in distance with a short (often 90 seconds or a 400 meter jog) rest period in between each interval. It's a fantastic way to challenge yourself and mix things up, with a variety of high-intensity running paces and distances, all in a single workout. On a track, increase in distance to the "top" of the ladder, or the longest distance interval, before decreasing back down. If you're just descending the ladder, increase in speed as you decrease in distance.

Sample Workouts:

1. Up and Down: 200 meters , 400 meters , 800 meters, 1600 meters, 800 meters , 400 meters, 200 meters. With a 100 meter light jog/walk in between each interval. This is an incredibly tough workout, which tests and builds both your endurance and leg speed.

The Fartlek Workout

Ah, the classic Fartlek run. The word fartlek means speed-play in Swedish, and that's exactly what the workout is. An opportunity to play around with different speeds and distances in a single workout. This was my favorite workout day when I ran cross country in high school, and not just because of the name. In a sport that requires plenty of structure, the Fartlek run allows your creative juices to flow. The workout is simple as this:

Intermix fast running with slower running, and vary the pace and distance of each interval. It could be as flexible as randomly picking a street corner, tree, car, or lamp post to sprint to, or run at a tempo pace for three minutes, followed by an easy pace for four minutes, and a sprint for one minute, and so on. There are no rules, other than to have variety in your paces and distances.

Sample Workouts:

Unstructured: 3-mile run with the final 2 miles consisting of 4-6 Fartlek intervals. This is probably the most approachable workout in this entire post (other than an easy run), since you have the freedom to do as you please. Upticks: 45 minute easy run with the last 15 minutes consisting of 5-10 short upticks to a tempo effort. Each uptick should last 15-30 seconds in length.

The Long Run Workout

Your weekly long run is arguably the most important run of the week. It's your chance to build endurance, and learn how to handle increased mileage both mentally and physically. But for most people, that's where it ends. They view long runs as only an opportunity to go long, not fast. I believe strategically planned long runs throughout your training are a great opportunity to work on late race speed, mimic the final push on race day, and toughen your mind to push through the fatigue.

"HAPPY TRAILS!"

