



WHY DO WE DO THE TYPES OF RUNNING THAT WE DO?

Endurance Training

For any distance-running event, especially the marathon, the greatest need is for endurance. We accomplish endurance training mainly through the long steady runs that we do on Saturdays. We run these slow enough that we can carry on a conversation without too much difficulty during most of the run. But, we are not running slowly. We are still putting out a good effort and finishing each run feeling pleasantly tired. We are also training for endurance during our "easy" midweek runs.

Muscle Training

At the other end of the spectrum is the need for muscle strength. The purpose of muscle training is to stimulate neuromuscular adaptations that enable you to run with more strength, power, and efficiency. In the early phases of training, we do hill sprints once a week. These are short efforts of high intensity done on a relatively steep hill. After a few miles of easy running, we do a series of ten to twelve second runs up a steep hill at near maximum effort. After each run up the hill, we walk down and fully recover before the next sprint. In later phases of training, we do these hill sprints only once every three or four weeks.

In the middle part of the training cycle, we will do longer hill runs once every three weeks. These will be runs over a hilly course or hill repeats. Hill repeats will be moderate efforts of one to two minutes up the hill followed by a jog down the hill.

Speed Training

As you run faster and faster, your breathing rate increases, and the processing of oxygen by your body increases until you reach the point where you are maxed out and cannot process oxygen at any faster of a rate. This is what is called your VO₂ max. Your VO₂ max can be improved by training near the pace that it occurs, which is close to your 5k race pace. A typical workout might be warming up and then doing four to six ½-mile repeats with 2 minutes rest between each repeat.

Stamina Training

The endurance training and the muscle and speed training described above sort of hit the training from opposite ends of the spectrum. The problem with this is that marathon race pace is faster than the pace of the endurance training runs and much slower than the muscle training and speed training runs. As the training cycle gets closer to the goal race, the training should more closely simulate the race itself. The ultimate goal of stamina training is to stimulate adaptations in the body that enable you to maintain goal pace for the required duration.

The training that would best simulate a marathon is to do a long run at race pace. The problem with that is it would take too long to recover from the workout. However, we do have two basic types of run that will help us to have the stamina we need for the marathon without leaving us wiped out. These are tempo runs and pace runs.

- **Tempo runs.** These runs are also sometimes called threshold runs because they are run at a fast enough pace that lactate begins to build up in the muscles and you begin to feel fatigue or a burning sensation in the muscles due to that buildup of lactate. Tempo runs help the body to adapt so that it can handle the buildup of lactate for a longer time or that the threshold at which lactate does accumulate is pushed to a faster pace. We emphasize these runs early in the training cycle. The classic tempo run is an effort of 20 to 30 minutes at a pace that you could maintain for an hour if you were racing. A variation of this is a longer tempo run, sometimes called a "steady state" run. The longer tempo run is done at half marathon pace or perhaps a little slower and can last for up to an hour or so. Both the shorter and longer tempo runs should begin and end with running at a slower pace to warm up and cool down.
- **Pace runs.** As we get further into the training, we incorporate more marathon pace runs. We do these runs much closer to marathon race pace than even the longer tempo runs. Ideally, we would do these no more than ten percent faster or slower than race pace; as the race gets closer, the tolerance should narrow. For Saturdays, we replace some of the long runs with fast finish long runs; we run the first two-thirds at our usual long run pace, but then we shift to running to near race pace for the remainder of the run.

RunnersWorld Tulsa Training Sessions

RunnersWorld offers the following regular training sessions:

Monday: We meet on the west side of the river at the boathouse (about 21st and Jackson) at 5:30 p.m. Most of the runners do an easy run along the River Parks trails. There will also be an opportunity for hill workouts – either hill sprints or hill repeats on some of the streets east of the river.

Tuesday: We meet at Helmerich Park at about 74th and Riverside at 5:30 p.m. Most of the runners do an easy run along the river park trails. There is also opportunity for some cross training (e.g., weights, core exercises, etc.) on Tuesdays.

Thursday: We meet at the store at 44th and Peoria at 5:30 p.m. Some do easy runs and some do tempo runs or speed workouts. Sometimes we run on the roads behind the store going north to Utica Square and back, and sometimes we run to the River Parks trails.

Saturday: We meet at various times and locations. Check the store or the website (www.runnersworldtulsa.com) for details. Saturday is our long run day, and we range in distance from just a few miles up to 22 miles or so.

Other Training Opportunities

Tulsa Area Trail Ultra Runners hosts a couple of regular training runs, on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. For details go to their website at www.tatur.org