



RUN WORKOUT DESCRIPTIONS

Varying the intensity of your workouts is important to improving your performance. Here are descriptions of a variety of run workouts you should include in your training plan. I will talk about running workouts this week and cycling and swimming workouts in the future. Review the chart at the bottom of this article for further clarification of the levels of intensity.

There will be eight types of running workouts that we will discuss. You should be doing all of these irrespective of whether you are training for a Sprint, Olympic distance or half/full Ironman distance race or if you are training for a pure running event of any distance. Naturally, if you are training for a pure running race, you do not need to include the transition run or brick workouts.

Recovery Run

Recovery runs are short runs at an easy (recovery) intensity. They provide a slight training stimulus but still allow for recovery from previous hard workouts - and without adversely affecting your next hard workout. By including recovery runs, you can complete more total running mileage than you could if you tried to run hard every run. You can also work out at a higher level when you are scheduled to run hard.

Foundation Run

Foundation runs are steady runs of short to moderate length and are done at a moderate aerobic intensity - see my earlier note. These runs increase your aerobic capacity, endurance, and efficiency.

Long Run

Long runs are also done at a moderate aerobic intensity; they are just longer (> 60 minutes) and will build your running endurance.

Fartlek Run

A fartlek run (Swedish for Speed Play) is a foundation run with a number of high-intensity bursts at VO₂ max to speed intensity (fast to very fast) within it. Fartlek runs provide a good transition from the aerobic development of the base phase and the high-intensity work of the build phase. A fartlek run is less structured than other workout formats (hence, the name speed play). Do the high-intensity bursts whenever you wish, but give yourself at least a minute between them for recovery.

Hill Repeats

Hill repeats (a repeat is another name for an interval) are another workout used to bridge between the Base and Build phases. The short, hard uphill intervals in these workouts provide the same fitness benefits as speed intervals but are not as hard on the body because there is less impact. Specifically, hill repeats increase stride power and efficiency and resistance to muscular fatigue. Do them on a moderate grade and recover after each repeat by jogging back down the hill at recovery intensity. You want to warm up thoroughly before doing the hill repeat portion of the workout and cool down well afterwards so that the total time of the workout matches what is prescribed.

Tempo Run

A tempo run is a block of threshold-intensity running sandwiched between a thorough warm-up and cool-down at recovery intensity. Tempo runs increase the time you are able to sustain a relatively high running pace and increase the speed you are able to maintain for a relatively long duration. Occasionally, you may see the tempo effort broken into two blocks separated by a ten-minute recovery.

Lactate Intervals

Lactate intervals are 30-second to 4-minute segments of VO₂ max-intensity running performed in a 1:1 ratio with active recovery at lower (between recovery and moderate aerobic intensity). Lactate intervals maximize aerobic capacity and increase resistance to neuromuscular fatigue while enhancing your ability to recover quickly from hard running. Warm up thoroughly before the intervals portion of the workout and cool down afterwards to match the total workout time to the time prescribed.

Speed Intervals

Speed intervals are short (30-second to 1-minute) bursts of speed-intensity running (very fast) separated by long active recoveries. They increase stride power and efficiency. Speed intervals are NOT full sprints but should be performed at the fastest pace you can maintain through the end of the last prescribed interval without slowing down.

Strides

Strides are 20-second *relaxed* sprints, usually performed after a recovery of foundation run to provide a small stride power-building stimulus. You can do strides on level ground, an uphill, or a down hill, and you should do all three types. Uphill strides are better strength builders and downhill strides enhance your body's ability to absorb impact forces. Note, below, that tempo runs and strides are done at a somewhat similar intensity. However, a tempo run is between 10- and 40-minutes long while strides are each 20-seconds long.

Transition Run

A transition run is a short (10-minute) run immediately after a bike ride. The purpose is to train your body to make a smooth, efficient adjustment from cycling to running. The difference between a transition run and a brick workout (described above) is that, in a brick, the run is longer. Transition runs are really about the transition between cycling and running while brick workouts provide an actual run workout in addition to your cycling workout. Brick workouts teach your body to run in a 'pre-fatigued' state.

Brick Workout

A brick workout is a bike ride followed immediately by a run (with just enough time to change clothes, if necessary). Running after a hard bike ride is one of the true challenges of triathloning - and you need to prepare for this. There are three types of brick workouts. In the basic type, both the bike and run portions are performed at moderate aerobic intensity. In the second type, you perform both the bike and run segments at a slightly more intense, high-aerobic pace. In the third type of brick workout, you will do a moderate aerobic ride followed by a tempo run. I will specify which type of brick you will be doing. Unless otherwise specified, you will be doing a standard brick workout.

RATING OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE) AND YOUR WORKOUTS

- 10 - Very, very hard (maximal) ---- zone 5c (Speed)
- 9 - ---- zone 5b (VO2 max, Hill repeats)
- 8 - ---- zone 5a (Strides)
- 7 - Very hard ---- zone 4c (Tempo run)
- 6 - ---- zone 4b
- 5 - Hard ---- zone 4a (High Aerobic Intensity)
- 4 - Somewhat hard ---- zone 3b
- 3 - Moderate ---- zone 3a (Moderate Aerobic Intensity)
- 2 - Fairly light ---- zone 2b (Recovery)
- 1 - Light ---- zone 2a
- 0.5- Very light ---- zone 1
- 0 - Nothing at all