

Blue runners: those who have run at least one season of cross country or have run a 5km race in less than 25 minutes sometime in the last month.

You have 8 weeks to train before practice begins. Use this time to get in shape and build a foundation for an injury free season! Stay off of the pavement as much as possible. Our races are on trails, so you want to simulate the racing surface: dirt roads, wooded trails, grassy fields.

Set up a routine of running, and it will be easier to stick to the plan. Think of each training session as an opportunity to make yourself a better runner.

Be sure to start slowly and to stretch after each run. Hip and hamstring stretches by crossing one foot over the other, and touching your toes, then leaning over to the side with arm overhead. Quad stretches by pulling your foot up behind you. Calf stretches with Downward Dog. Move from calf stretches to plank for 60 seconds. Lay down and do the hip stretches by pulling one leg across your body. Do other stretches you like or look up some Yoga moves on the internet. Your warm up will be easy running at a slow pace, giving your muscles time to prepare for the hard work.

WEEK ONE TO THREE: June 6 - 26 Building a strong foundation.

MONDAY: Long run. You should run for 40 minutes. Don't worry about distance, just get to where you can run for the whole 40 minutes at a constant pace. As the weeks go by, the distance you travel will increase.

TUESDAY: Warm up with 10 minutes of jogging, then transition to a tempo pace for 20 minutes. Tempo pace should be about 80% of your 5 km race pace. After the 20 minutes, slow down for a 10 min jog, then do your stretches.

WEDNESDAY: Long run, like Monday.

THURSDAY: Hill run. Running uphill will make you much stronger than any other running. Find a hilly trail or dirt road and run for 30 minutes. Somewhere along that route you need a hill that takes 15 - 30 seconds to run to its top. Stay at that hill and do 6 uphill repeats, then continue on your route. Be careful running downhill- go slow and take it easy or walk to prevent injury.

FRIDAY: Repetitions: these ARE NOT intervals. It is too early to emphasize speed work. You will mark out a distance of 1 kilometer (.62 miles) on a trail, field or dirt road. After 10 minutes of slow jog warm up, run the 1 km distance at your 5 km pace or in a time of 4:30 to 5:00. Rest the same amount of time as you ran. Then repeat 4 more times. Be sure to stretch well at the end.

SATURDAY: Go for a mountain hike or go mountain biking for an hour or more. If this is not possible, go on a longer run than Monday or Wednesday. An hour of moderate running is good, with fartlek included. Fartlek is "speed play" in which you speed up at random intervals and for random distances

within your run. Running faster to "the next power pole" or to the next intersection or to some landmark up ahead is a good way to vary the pace.

SUNDAY: REST!!!! Remember, this is only the first three weeks of an eight week PRE-season training. You will increase the workload during weeks 4 - 8 and during our regular season, which begins July 27.

You can further your fitness by drinking plenty of water, giving up sugary drinks and highly processed foods in favor of an athlete's diet of fresh fruit and vegetables, lean meats, eggs, dairy (if you have no dietary problems with it), whole grains and unsaturated fats. Some sweets are okay for an occasional treat, but they do not further your performance as a runner.