

## Speed Training

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Nailing on the roof is the last thing we do in our training analogy, which means we work on speed training. This should not take place until six to eight weeks before the event. Speed training should really be thought of as the fine-tuning done in preparation before race day. Even then, if sufficient base and strength training are not completed by this time, speed training may be contraindicated.

### *What Is the Purpose of Speed Training?*

Speed training isn't for everyone. If you are a first-time marathoner or a time goal is not your priority, then continuing to work on your long-term fitness should be the most important aspect of your training.

For those looking for more specific results in the marathon, speed training may become an important phase in preparation for the event. The principle of training specificity states that what a person does in their training will directly affect how they do in their races. Generally this means that if you want to run an 8-minute kilometer in your event, you'd better get your body used to or able to run at that pace in training.

### *How Hard and How Far?*

Pacing is a critical aspect to successful speed training because it involves running a set pace over a specified distance. Short distances are used in speed training because the pace is hard enough that it can only be maintained for a short period of time (three to six minutes). To keep pacing simple, use your race paces for 1 mi., 5 km and 10 km. Each interval should be finished in approximately the same time. If you are burning out or slowing the pace during the last intervals, you probably started too fast. If you are becoming faster throughout the workout, you most likely started off too slowly. The idea is to maintain the desired pace for the entire workout. Try not to become discouraged. Pacing really takes practice.

Rest between intervals is a very important aspect of speed training. A good rule of thumb is to rest for as long as it takes you to run the interval. You can then adjust the rest period depending on your pace or how you feel. During your rest period, try to remain active (walking, slow jogging). Stopping or bending over to rest will delay recovery and promote feelings of nausea or light-headedness. Remember, too much rest can defeat the purpose of the speed work and too little can poop you out before any training can be accomplished.

The nice thing about speed training is that the total distance covered during the workout isn't really the most important aspect. Interval distances at these paces should be no longer than 1500 m and no shorter than 400 m (use the faster paces for the shorter distances and the slower for the longer distances). For most runners, three to five intervals of a moderate length is

a good place to start.

The longer the total distance you cover, the longer your intervals should be resulting in fewer repetitions. To progress, add no more than 500 1000 m of speed work per week.

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