

Trail Running 101

Oh - the aroma of spring dirt, lace up the shoes and hit the trails...

Trail running is one of the most simple and enjoyable summer pursuits - equipment cost and maintenance is a minimum, and production low - we can run right out our doors. And California is the land of trail running and racing opportunities - so many world-class trails and events at our toe-tips. I highly recommend signing up for a few events throughout summer - to provide motivational focal points for your summer workouts. Plus events are great opportunities to meet new running partners.

It is my opinion - whether you are an 5Ker or 50Miler - a structured, diversified, quality workout plan is key. If you truly want to improve - each workout must have purpose, and you must understand that purpose and hit your workouts with intention. Make every workout and your time investment count.

Ultra- runners tend to want to slog out the slow miles - day after day, week after week. Of course ultra runners need to build in the endurance aspect to training - but I have found working with my clients - that best results are achieved - when all pertinent (based on an individual's goals) physiological systems -endurance, aerobic, lactate, vo2, anaerobic - are systematically trained in three week build blocks, with the fourth week taken as recovery. Two rest days are diligently taken within each week. Often each three week block focuses on a specific physiological system. It is also beneficial to include cross-training endurance activities - swimming, mtn and road cycling - to keep the mind and body fresh and recovered.

In order to maximize our biomechanical soundness, which directly translates to an efficient stride - consistently work the core and practice pilates and yoga. Too often us endorphin-junkies just want to go and go hard from the get go, but the workouts mentioned above will provide the biomechanics to optimize our individual efficiency - and keep us injury-free. Staying injury free and healthy are the surest ways to stay on a progressively upward track toward our goals.

Before jumping into structured systematic interval training - it is necessary to build an endurance base - at least two months of base miles (which will vary depending on your distance event goal). And trail running neophytes - will potentially require a longer

endurance base period to build endurance to facilitate specific running strength and agility.

Training plans are effective when intense workouts are prioritized first in the week, followed by medium intensity, then endurance and specific strength workouts. After the initial base period I would structure the first three week training block as follows, and progressively build intensity time and overall volume. ..

Mon- easy or off - ideal day for yoga or pilates

Tues - speed

Wed - tempo intervals on rolling terrain

Thurs - specific strength and endurance

Friday - easy or off - again ideal day for yoga or pilates

Saturday - Speed as warm-up, tempo intervals on climbs for technique and specific strength

Sunday - Endurance - zone 1-2 - teaching the body to efficiently utilize fuels, ie continue to tap into fat stores - before jumping over to carbohydrates

Besides training specific physiological systems - these workouts provide a defined period of time, ie the interval duration, facilitating 100% attention to efficient technique and sustainable rhythm and pace. These are key elements in endurance endeavors.

Based on the athlete's past training experience, present fitness and all-important feedback - this block would be repeated with a progressive increase in volume of interval time and overall workout duration, or the intensity increased with focus on training the lactate buffering system with sub-Lactate Threshold intervals. The athlete's past and present fitness, feedback and future goals also determines the length of the initial interval duration, ie 2-20 minutes.

For hands on trail running training --- join Julie Young ongoing Tuesday morning Martis Valley training group. Or for the more a la carte-inclined, two training days on the dirt, to prime for the Tahoe area's newest trail running event - the Wildest Run 100K, half-marathon and 10K.

Training Day #1, Saturday June 19th, 8-10am at Royal Gorge Summit Station

Focus : Pre-hab exercises; proper biomechanic drills; Run on 10k and part of half-marathon course to include speed, specific strength and technique workout. Race tactics provided - per each individual's goal. Post-run tailgate Q and A with Sierra Pacific coffee, fruit and Tsuda's pastries.

Cost: \$15/runner

Training Day #2, Sunday July 25th, 7am-12pm at Royal Gorge Summit Station

Route to be determined

Focus: Importance of training the fats - the difference to bonk or not to bonk. Endurance run over scenic High Sierra trails with goal to stay in zone 1-2 and teach the body to burn fats longer and longer before jumping to carbs. Efficient stride is key to low heart rates. During duration of run - efficient stride technique - ascending, descending and flats will be demonstrated and discussed. Race tactics provided, per each individual's goal. Post-run lunch served thanks to Tsuda's Market.

Additional details available at www.o2fitness.net or contact Julie at jyoung@o2fitness.net