



FROM EASY RUNS TO INTERVAL WORKOUTS

A Breakdown of Different Types of Running Sessions

Easy Runs

- ◆ Your pace should be so comfortable that you can keep up a conversation without much huffing and puffing. If you can manage singing while running, however, you're going too easy.
- ◆ You want to end an easy run feeling as though you have lots of power and energy left and that you could have increased your pace a lot towards the end.
- ◆ Another way to tell you might be going too hard on your easy runs is if you don't feel as if you could do that same run, at the same pace, day after day.

Do not underestimate the importance of easy running. It's the backbone of your training as about 80% of all your running should be done at an easy effort. This type of running is the single most important block to building your endurance and improving as a runner.

You want your aerobic system to be doing all the work when you do your easy runs, which means your effort should be right below that aerobic threshold of yours. This fits into what's commonly known as zone 2 in a 5 zone system. By putting in the hours in this zone, you are building your aerobic capacity and base endurance.

Go too hard on those easy days and not only are you not building that base, but you won't have as much energy to push on your hard workout days, when it really matters to put in harder effort.

Long Runs

Long runs are, simply put, long easy runs. What constitutes a long run depends on your current training and what your goal is. For some, your weekly long run might be 20k, for others, 35k.

They not only get a big chunk of your easy running in, but continue to build your aerobic base and perhaps even more importantly, they build mental toughness.

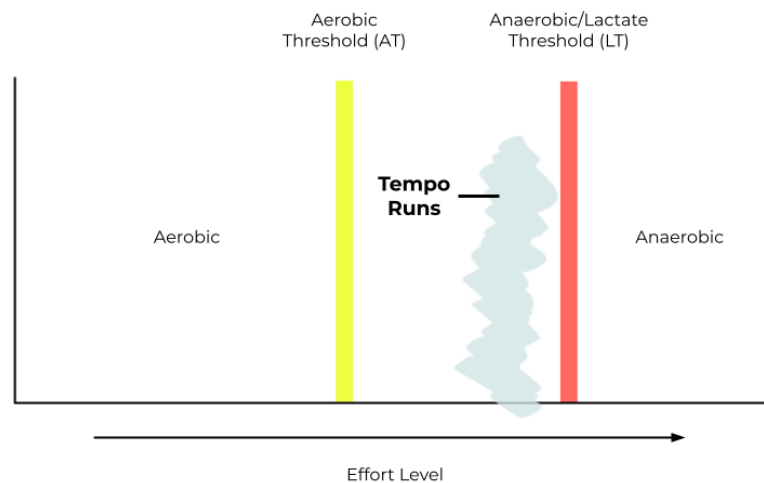
Similarly to easy runs, long runs should be done right below your aerobic threshold. However that doesn't mean you won't be tired at the end - but you're looking for a feeling "oh, I just ran very far and my legs feel that" as opposed to bending over with hands on knees, panting hard and saying "never again".

Tempo Runs

Tempo Run - any harder effort run, done at a consistent pace, usually up towards your lactate threshold.

Threshold Run - a running session right at your aerobic OR lactate threshold, but in most cases, it's referring to a run right below your lactate threshold.

Going forward in this course, we're going to lump these together, calling any run at an effort level in the upper half of zone 3, before you cross your lactate threshold, a tempo run.



What Should a Tempo Run Feel Like?

Breathing is heavy and talking will be difficult, but not impossible.

Your muscles are not going numb, and if you are relatively fit, you should be able to maintain this pace for approximately one hour.

Controlled hard effort is one way of describing it, and during these sessions, you want to go fast, but not so fast so you go over the edge and start falling behind in your breathing - or accumulating too much lactic acid in your bloodstream.

Benefits of Tempo Runs

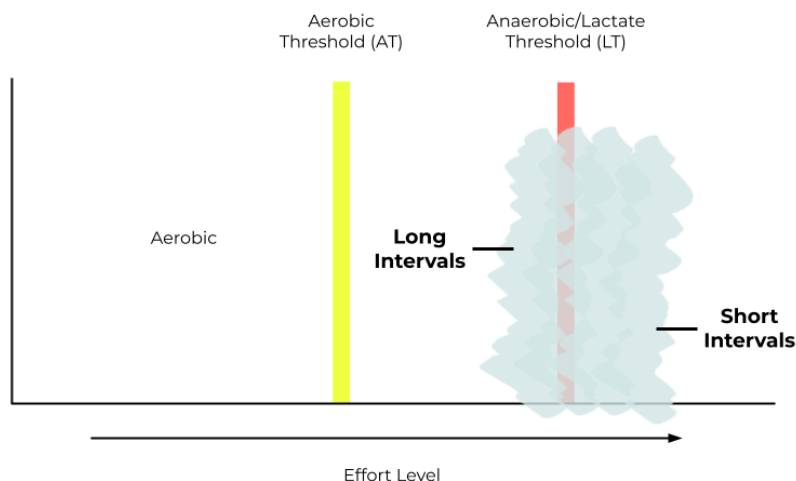
- ◆ The main benefit of tempo runs is to help train the body to better clear lactic acid, allowing you to run faster before that becomes an issue. The more you train the body to clear lactic acid, the better it will become at doing it.
- ◆ By consistently doing tempo runs, you are essentially pushing your lactate threshold higher - meaning that you will be able to run farther at a faster pace before the lactic acid buildup in your bloodstream becomes too much for the body to handle.
- ◆ Another benefit of tempo runs is that they also teach you how to pace yourself.



Interval Workouts

Repetitions of higher effort running with lower intensity recovery in between, anywhere from 30 second intervals up to about 5 km, with standing, walking, or jogging rest between.

The shorter duration of intervals allows for you to push your effort past your lactate threshold, but you can also do intervals at threshold pace - especially if you're just starting out doing higher intensity work.



Short Intervals - Shorter duration intervals that typically last from 30 seconds to 6-8 minutes, where your effort brings you above your lactate threshold into zone 4 and 5.

Long Intervals - Longer duration intervals that typically range from 6 to 20 min, where you stay right under your lactate threshold and remain in zone 3, but very often you'll be dipping your toes into 4 towards the end of the session.

Short Interval Workouts

As we use these intervals to go into zone 4 and 5, we welcome a lactic acid buildup and breathe really, really hard. Because of the greater load, the duration will be shorter - the total working time (excluding warm up, recovery in between and cool down) typically adds up to about 15 to 30 min. Note here, that it's best to be familiar with and experienced doing tempo runs right below the lactic threshold before adding these higher intensity intervals to your repertoire.

What do these shorter interval sessions feel like? The longer into the interval, the more numb you'll feel in your muscles. They'll start to burn and feel stiff, and you'll be longing for the work to end. You will not be talking - but you could get a word out if you had to. Your breathing will be heavy, and the more experienced you get, the closer you'll be able to push yourself towards a feeling of "I can't breathe!" right before the interval ends.



Short Interval Workouts Continued...

The **recovery** in between is usually about a 1:1 ratio up to 2 min, and any interval beyond 2 min duration can still do with just a 2 min recovery. A moving recovery - we like to promote light jogging - is by far better than standing, as the aerobic system stays active and, well, that's what we want.

You train every single aspect of your endurance when pushing yourself this hard.

Long Interval Workouts

These typically range somewhere between 6 and 20 min and are done at a pace that you can just about maintain for the entirety of the workout. What does that mean? That if you, let's say, set out to do 5x8 min intervals, you want to tune in and find a pace that you can approximately clock for each one of the 5 intervals. You don't want to go out too hard and then see yourself chug through the last one because you have nothing left to give.

What do these longer interval sessions feel like? The longer nature of these means you shouldn't dive headfirst into lactic acid land, but feeling a numbing sensation towards the end of each repetition - and that sensation building up quicker and quicker for each one - is what you're after. You could get a word or two out if you wanted to, but you're not pushing enough if you can talk - even in short sentences.

The recovery ratio looks a little different than for the shorter ones - with longer, it's more a 4:1, which means for a 12 min interval, you would do 3 min jogging in between. Yes, active recovery and not standing is the name of the game here as well.

Strides

Strides can be described as a set of 20-30 second bursts - preferably up a slight incline but flat works too - where you don't go all out, not at all, but instead really focus on a powerful, almost exaggerated stride, push the pace a bit and try to embody the textbook example of excellent running economy.

Strides really help in streamlining your running mechanics and running form, and act as a nice speed tune up. They're also great at providing a sense of a good, productive workout without adding any real burden - and every runner would benefit from incorporating some into their routine. We like to throw in a set of 6x30 seconds or 8x20 seconds with strides about twice a week, usually towards the end of a regular easy run, and we highly encourage you to start exploring them as well.