Triathlon beginner olympic plan

Created for Prostate Cancer UK by runningwithus

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How should each run feel?

There are a number of different paces that you should aim to master that will make up your training:

Easy run – fully conversational at the speed of chat and about 6/10 effort.

Steady run – conversational, controlled but working at about 7/10 effort.

Threshold running – controlled discomfort, 3-4 word answer pace 8/10 effort.

Interval running 5k-10k effort - 9/10 and working hard.

In detail:

The feeling of not being sure how fast you should be running for any particular session is common, from beginners to elite international athletes. For beginners it never feels as though running is easy, but we can assure you that running doesn't need to be hard all the time.

At the beginning all you are trying to do is get out and run. That should be at **easy pace** or 'the speed of chat' – if you can't talk as you are running, you're going to fast, simple as that. For the more experienced runner, 'the speed of chat' is how your easy and recovery runs should feel - totally in control, relaxed and slow enough to talk. If you are combining walking and running, the effort level remains the same – you should be able to hold a conversation on both the walking and running segments.

Faster than easy, conversational running is **steady running**. This is the backbone of training for more experienced runners. This is where you must be honest and not push too hard or you might ruin your faster sessions, so conversation should still be possible, but a little strained.

Incorporating **threshold running** is how the elites train and you can train like this too. This is where you are running at a controlled discomfort level: you can still talk between breaths, but only 3 or 4 word phrases. This is not running to exhaustion or sprinting. You may already feel able to include some 3 minute blocks into a run each week which will grow in volume throughout your training.

Interval training and 3k/5k/10k pace is top-end training. This is often called the "hurt locker" and is used in training to replicate the feeling at the end of a hard race. The effort levels here should be almost at maximum.

Glossary

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Rest (R)
To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the running. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've run a step, find yourself thinking up excuses not to run or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!

Recovery Run (RR)
Training for endurance requires your body to work harder than it has ever done. To see improvement without breaking down, you'll need some recovery runs. These should be nice and easy and you should feel relaxed. Enjoy the scenery. You should be breathing easily and be capable of holding a conversation throughout the run. This will mean that you are running in the 60–65% range of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) and it should be no more than 45 minutes in duration. This allows your body to adapt to the training workload and therefore improve. It also helps with the removal of the waste products, which accumulate in your muscles after harder efforts.

Threshold Runs (THR)
After the long endurance runs, tempo runs are probably your most valuable workouts. You will find them slightly uncomfortable and they'll require concentration, but they are well worth the effort. As they're run at a controlled brisk pace, about 80–85% of your MHR, you'll only be capable of uttering a couple of words to your training partners. Tempo/threshold runs improve your lactate threshold (the speed above which your body struggles to cope with the lactic acid created by burning energy without oxygen), your running efficiency and aerobic capacity (your body's ability to utilise oxygen). All this helps to improve your endurance performance.

Long Runs (LR)
Long runs are vital in your plan and key to racing well in long distance races from 5km – marathon. At first, concentrate on increasing the time on your feet rather than worrying about distance. Start off by heading out for at least an hour and run at 65% of MHR (conversational pace). Gradually this will build to 75% of WHR as you start to practice periods of marathon pace (MP) running. These runs improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to burn fat as its primary fuel source.

Continuous Hills (CH)
Hill running develops strength in your muscles and tendons without putting them under the type of stress they are exposed to during faster running. Run up a 5-10% gradient for 45-90 seconds at a steady-threshold effort. Turn immediately at the top and run down the hill at the same effort, then turn at the bottom and repeat without any recovery until the rep time ends. Like a tempo/threshold run, a hill session is time to concentrate, as you should be working at about 80–85% of MHR and be able to utter just a word or two.

Fartlek (F)
This is a Swedish term that literally means "speed play". It involves a number of bursts of effort over a variety of distances with a variable recovery. Originally the length of effort was based on the terrain, for example, pushing harder every time you came to a climb, no matter how long it was. But you can adapt it for your needs.

Interval Training (IT)
Intervals help to boost specific race pace speed and involve running timed efforts with a controlled recovery. The effort level is around 85–100% of MHR, depending on the duration of the event you are training for and the length and volume of intervals used. A typical example might be 6 x 3 minutes @ 5km race pace with a 90 second jog recovery.

Marathon Pace (MP)
Understanding the pace & effort you intend on running your marathon at is very important. Pace judgment and patience on the big day will be crucial to running your best marathon. Marathon Pace Practice, at about 75-80% of MHR, allows your body and mind to get used to what will be required on race day, and builds endurance quickly.

Warming Up/Warm down (WU)
When you are going to do any faster running such as Hills, Threshold Runs, Intervals or a race, it is important to warm up gradually. A 10-15 minute jog lets your muscles warm up and improve their range of movement. It also allows your cardiovascular system to prepare. You should also jog easily for 10-15 mins after any hard work out. This reduces muscle soreness; flushes away lactic build up and will make you feel better over the next few days.

Cross Training & Core Conditioning (XT)
It is important that your training is balanced with some non-impact activities such as swimming, cycling, rowing, aerobics, etc, otherwise you are more likely to pick up an annoying injury that will set back your training. But more experienced runners should also add cross training to their regime. Endurance running, especially the marathon, requires whole body-conditioning. To achieve this you should aim to work a variety of muscle groups and not just your legs. Remember, though, that you are a runner, so just be careful not to make the cross-training, whether it is core conditioning, lifting weights, using an elliptical trainer or practicing Pilates, so intense that you are left too tired for your running.

Olympic Triathlon – Beginner Plan

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
1	Swim 20 minutes freestyle easy effort as 4 x 5 minutes with 2 minute recovery	Run 30 mins easy conversational pace (add a 1 min walk every 5 mins if required)	Rest + core	Swim 6 x 75m steady effort with 30 seconds recovery	REST	Bike 45 minutes easy	Run 30 mins easy conversational pace (add a 1 min walk every 5 mins if required)	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
2	Swim 20 minutes freestyle easy effort as 4 x 5 minutes with 2 minute recovery	Run 4 x (4 mins @ threshold / 3 minute jog/walk recovery) all built into 30 mins running	Rest + core	Swim 8 x 75m steady effort with 30 seconds recovery	REST	Bike 50 minutes easy	Run 45 minutes easy (add 1 min walk sections if required every 5 mins)	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
3	Swim 30 minutes freestyle easy effort as 3 x 10 minutes with 2-3 minute recovery	Run 3 x (5 mins @ threshold / 2 minute jog recovery) all built into 30mins running	Rest + core	Swim 10 x 75m steady effort with 30 seconds recovery + 2 minutes recovery + 50m fast	REST	Bike 60 minutes easy	Run 45 minutes easy (add 1 min walk sections if required every 5 mins)	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
4	Swim 30 minutes freestyle easy effort as 3 x 10 minutes with 2-3	Run 4 x (5 mins @ threshold / 2 minute jog recovery) all built into 30mins running	Rest + core	AM: Swim 6 x 100m steady effort with 30 seconds recovery + 2 minutes recovery + 100m fast recording time	REST	Bike 60 - 70 minutes easy	Run 45-60 mins easy conversational pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹

				PM: Run 20 minutes easy OR rest					
5	Swim 30 minutes freestyle easy effort as 3 x 10 minutes with 90 secs recovery	Run 30 incl 3 x 5 mins @ threshold off 2 min jog/walk rec	Rest + core	AM: Swim 30 minutes go as far as you can whilst maintaining control	REST	5k Park Run or GPS Time Trial – Good luck	Bike 60 mins easy ride	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
6	Swim 30 minutes easy	Brick Session Bike – 30 minutes easy with last 10 @ threshold + Run: 4 x 3 minutes @ threshold with 90 seconds jogged recovery	Rest + core	AM: Swim 6 x 150m steady effort with 45 seconds recovery + 2 minutes recovery + 100m fast recording time PM: Run 20 minutes easy OR rest	REST	Bike 90 mins easy	Run 60 mins easy	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
7	Swim 30 minutes easy	AM: Bike 30-45 minutes easy PM: Run 5 x (5mins @ threshold/90s jog recovery) all built into 45 min running	Rest + core	AM: Swim 5 x 200m steady with 120s recovery PM: Run 30 minutes easy OR rest	REST	Bike 90 mins easy	Run 60-70 mins easy pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
8	Swim 35 minutes easy	Brick Session Bike – 40 minutes easy with last 20 @ race day effort + Run: 4 x 5 minutes @ threshold with 90 seconds jogged recovery	Rest + core	AM: Swim 6 x 200m steady effort with 120s recovery PM: Run 30 minutes easy OR rest	REST	Bike 1hr 45 mins easy	Run 70 – 80 mins easy pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹

9	Swim 40 minutes easy as 2 x 20 minutes with 5 minutes recovery	AM: Bike 45 minutes easy PM: Run 6 x (5mins @ threshold/90s jog recovery) all built	Rest + core	AM: Swim 30-40 minutes go as far as you can whilst maintaining control PM: Run 30 minutes easy OR rest	REST	Bike 2hrs easy	Run 80 mins easy pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
10	Swim 40 minutes easy	Brick Session Bike – 45- minutes with last 20 @ race day effort + Run: 4 x 6 minutes @ threshold with 90 seconds jogged recovery	Rest + core	AM: Swim 8-10 x 100m at race pace with 30-40s recovery between sets PM: Run 30 minutes easy OR rest	REST	5k Park Run or GPS time trial + 20 mins easy run after	Bike 90 mins with 4 x 3k @ race effort built in off 3 min easy spin out rec.	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
11	Swim 30 minutes easy + core	AM: Bike 30 minutes easy PM: 6 mins @ threshold + 5 x 2 mins @ 5k pace + 6 mins @ threshold all off 2 min jog rec	Rest + core	AM: Swim 30 minutes freestyle Continuous easy effort or rest PM: Run Continuous progression run 10 minutes easy, 10 minutes steady, 10 minutes threshold effort	REST	Bike 75 mins easy	Run 45-60 mins relaxed	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
12	Swim: 20 minutes easy + core	30 min run including 3 x 5 mins @ threshold off 3 min jog rec	Rest	AM: Swim 20 minutes freestyle Continuous easy effort	REST	Run 15 minutes easy run and stretch	Race Day. Good luck!!	☐	☺ ☺ ☹

- Note please do a 15 minute warm up and cool down before Threshold, Continuous Hills or Interval sessions

- Note please do a 4 x 25m or 2 x 50m easy warm up and cool down around faster swim sets

- Always substitute cross training for running if you are injured, very sore or it is not safe to run.

- Please add a core conditioning, Pilates or Yoga class once or twice a week if you have time.

- Try to stretch every day for at least 10 mins.

- Always eat within 20-30 mins of finishing a run, swim or cycle

- If your swim is in open water please practice some of your swims in a wetsuit. Only swim open water in training in supervised and safe environments

- Always train at your target pace in race paced sessions, don't compromise or run too hard. Tiredness always catches up so take extra rest if required……