

ALPINE RUNNERS SPEED WORKOUTS 2015

Once again, I will be coaching the track workouts for Alpine Runners. This year we will be doing these workouts in a virtual sense. Due to logistical issues with renting tracks and the diverse schedules and geographic area of our runners, we will be using an online format.

We will have two 8-week sessions. The first one will start on May 4th through June 22nd and then we will do a second session starting July 6th through August 24th.

To start off the first session, I will host an onsite workshop at a speed session on Monday, May 4 at 6:00 p.m. My first choice is to use Old Mill Grove Park in Lake Zurich off Meadowbrook Lane. My second choice will be to use Cuba Marsh (we may park in Barrington lot, though, due to the potential size of our group). I will be there to facilitate and coach you through a track/speed session, including warm-up, running drills, the main workout, and the cool down and stretching and rolling routine. This first coached session will be in a park or on a trail for two reasons. First, most of the tracks are in use in early May and getting one is difficult for one evening without running out of light. Second, many of you will be doing your speed work on trails and parks, so why not show you how to make the most of this scenario? Then from that day on you will do the weekly speed session using your local track or path by yourself or with others who have signed up to follow these speed sessions. By Friday afternoon of each week, you will send me your results (actual times, heart rates, and any brief notes or observations) then I will send out the next week's pacing and workout description by Sunday evening. You can then plug the speed session into your weekly running routine in the morning or evening or even on your lunch break. I don't recommend doing these on treadmills, but in certain situations it can be done.

I will have you do two or three cycles of the workouts so you can compare and see your progress. (For example, the 400's or 90 second intervals you did one week in the first four weeks of speed workouts, you will repeat in the second four weeks, but the rest or the number may change as your fitness and your total mileage is going up.) This is not a perfect scenario because depending on your other training loads (total mileage, racing schedule, long runs, family, and work commitments) you may see subtle or no obvious changes comparing workouts in one week, but over the course of all 8 weeks, you will see a trend of progress. Then as you do the second set of eight weeks, you should see even more positive changes. In the past 5 years, we have had many people mention how they are running easier on their long runs, running PR's in their 5K & 10K races, and generally just running faster and stronger, along with added strength and leg speed to help them with their marathon goals.

Speed training can be done with any level of runners. I will customize your distances and paces to your current fitness level and total mileage. The key is that you give me accurate information on the questionnaire I send out.

We realize that this format does not appeal to everyone, but we have also seen that many find this format works even better than having a set time and place to get to each week. (Work commitments, family and weather can all add stress or not allow people to make the sessions, due to the difficult nature of the geographic locations of the chosen track venue). Last year we had to change to this format after 4 years of a set location and track. We had definite success and a similar number of participants, if not a few more

than in past years. We had two groups meet at their local tracks each week and help support each other, which provided the best of both worlds for them (set time, local location, fellow runners for support, written workouts, etc.). I think one group even did it in the early mornings.

As I have done in the past, I'll ask that each runner answer a handful of questions about their weekly mileage, yearly mileage, marathon, half, 15K, 10K, and 5K PR's (personal records). I'm looking for times and splits from the last two years. This will give me solid information to use in putting together a basic pacing chart for each runner. Everyone will have their own workout to run. The "theme" is typically the same for everyone in the group: i.e. ¼'s, ½'s, miles, or 60 second, 2-minute, 3-minute repeats, etc. However, the pacing, number of intervals, and recovery time tends to be slightly different from person to person. I encourage you each to use a heart rate monitor and keep track of actual lap times and heart rates through your lap button. The heart rate gives us real-time data and helps me better help you! The more data I have, the better I can apply my many years of coaching experience to your workouts. (If you are on heart medication, you most likely will not be able to use a heart rate monitor. Please email me and let me know if this is the case, and we will address those situations individually.) AT A MINIMUM, A RUNNING WATCH WITH A LAP TIMER IS A MUST, but a heart rate monitor is highly encouraged. I use mostly Garmin 305, 310xt, 910XT, and 920XT with my endurance athletes, but Polar and other Garmin monitors are fine. There are many new products coming to the marketplace regularly and I have some experience with most of the big name newer ones. Since this is what I do for a living, it is important to me that I use some of the best and most dependable units on the market. I have found others, which I have not named, to not be as dependable as I need. Please don't feel the need to go buy a new unit; after a session or two, you'll have a better idea of what people are using and get their opinions as well as mine. This will allow you to make a more informed decision.

OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE (AND THE ANSWERS):

Who can come?

Any runner--regardless of mileage or experience--who signs-up, fills out the forms, and pays.

How much does it cost & HOW DO I SIGN UP?

\$75 for the 8 weeks (no pay as you go or drop-in sessions). You sign up by emailing Bodyphysicstom@gmail.com and sending me the filled out questionnaire from the Alpine Runners website. Please put Alpine speed workouts in the subject box. I will then email you the specifics, including the final location for the first session on May 4 and where to mail the check. You can also feel free to email me with any other questions.

What do I need to bring?

Running clothes & shoes, water, a towel, sport nutrition (sport drinks, gels, etc.), a watch with split timing, heart rate monitor, and a good attitude.

How long will the sessions be?

1-1.5 hours

How many miles will I run?

You will run .5-1.5 mile warm-up, 1.5-4 miles of "speed," and .5-1.5 mile cool-down. Total nightly mileage

will range from 3 to 9 miles depending on your needs, goals, experience, etc.

Will this be like racing?

NO! These are track WORKOUTS, not track RACES. We will be running at faster speeds than we would normally run, but we will be running under control, with various rest intervals, and various target heart rates. The goal is to help you increase your running speed, lactate threshold, and most importantly, keep you SAFE (un-injured). Track workouts are an increased load, much like increases in total mileage, long runs, and hill running. Your body can only handle limited amounts of increased loads. I'll do my best to keep your track load reasonable. However, you are also cautioned to watch these other load stimuli and avoid rapid increases that will break down your body too much and lead to injury or decreased performance, especially in races.

Why should I do speed or track workouts?

For one, they are fun! But the main reason is that they will help your body learn to run more comfortably at faster paces. Track workouts help increase running strength, economy, and efficiency, all of which will help you improve your race times in distances from 5K to marathon. The hardest thing to remember is that these sessions need to be treated with respect. Too much of this type of workout, or working too hard within each workout, adds risk and will increase your likelihood of injury. This can be difficult to remember when you feel really fast on a beautiful summer night! Remember, SAVE THE RACE FOR THE RACE! Our goal is to help you run faster for shorter segments with rest in between and then slowly shorten your rest time, so you can run faster both on normal runs and in races. If you are training for the marathon, you will not run your speed sessions as fast as those training for 5Ks and 10Ks. Marathon racers will tend to do more intervals or longer intervals at slower speeds while the 5K and 10K runners will run faster and do a bit shorter intervals and possibly less of them. As a runner, you should only do 10% of your weekly mileage as speed per week. So if you are running 20 miles per week, I tend to keep you in the 2-2.5 mile range for speed and if you are up to 40 miles per week and at least an intermediate runner (sub 3:30-3:40 marathoner, sub 44 minute 10K, or sub 21-22 minute 5K runner) you can go up to 4 miles of speed. Most people are doing between 2-3 miles of speed per night with .5-1.5 mile warm-up and the same for cool-down. Doing track workouts on Wednesday fits well for those who have mid-week middle distance mileage requirements in their training plans. Meaning that if you need 7-9 miles on Wednesday, here is how you will achieve it: do an easy warm-up of 1.5 miles, then stop and stretch, then do 3 miles of intervals w/.75-1 mile of recovery jogging between the intervals, and then 1.5 miles cool-down. You quickly get 7-8 miles in for the night plus some high quality speed.

Do you need to be an experienced runner to run speed workouts on the track?

No! When most people start running, they run/walk a lot anyway and sometimes those who don't, could really use it. What speed workouts do (if written correctly and run correctly) is allow you to run at faster paces than you normally would, but then you stop and recover and do it again. This interval type method allows your body to gain efficiency and get used to running faster. It also helps you increase your fitness. (This is basically what most beginning runners either do out of gut instinct or based on a plan or coaching.) When you run a non-stop warm-up then pick up the pace too much and then do your cool down all without paying attention to recovery, your heart rate typically goes up past the level where it can process the blood and oxygen supplying nutrients to your muscles and those muscles become more fatigued without allowing the muscles to recover. That will cause your body to hit the ground harder and possibly cause injury to the

joints and muscles. (This also becomes a mentally difficult task which many people don't want or need in their already busy lives, so they just tend to not come back for more.) With track workouts we basically have you run shorter distances (.25-1 mile) at speeds faster than you would run on normal runs and close to paces you would race a 5K-1/2 marathon at. The difference is **we stop** you just as you hit those levels where you are feeling that you are losing form and getting tired (and in most cases even before you realize this is happening ... sometimes by the time runners notice, they have already done too much). The other benefit is that we foam roll and stretch between intervals and after the session which can help your body recover faster and avoid injuries. Not to mention there are many others of all different speeds working just as hard as you within their own limits. This is always fun to see people who are starting where you were, are where you are now, and what you hope to be like in the future.

Now for the questions I need answered:

- 1) What is your weekly mileage?**
- 2) How long have you been running this weekly mileage?**
- 3) What is your typical long run?**
- 4) How many times per week do you run?**
- 5) Do you cross train? What do you do? How much? (# of times per week and # of hours)**
- 6) How many years have you been running?**
- 7) Have you had any reoccurring injuries? (Tell me about it and if you saw a professional and what they decided)**
- 8) Have you been injured recently? (Tell me about it and if you saw a professional and what they decided)**
- 9) What is your goal this year? (Both primary and secondary, ie...sub 3:30 marathon and to run a sub 20 minute 5K or to safely run 55 miles in one week, etc.)**
- 10) Why do you want to do the track workouts? What do you want to accomplish?**
- 11) Tell me your PR's for the last two years. (You can include older ones if you think they are relevant. Don't worry if you don't have times for all of these):**
 - a. Marathon**
 - b. Half Marathon**
 - c. 15K**
 - d. 10K**
 - e. 8K**
 - f. 5K**
 - g. 1 mile**

Feel free to email me at Bodyphysicstom@gmail.com with any questions. I look forward to meeting and working with new faces and can't wait to see those of you who have done track workouts with me over the last four years.

Respectfully,
Coach Tom