SLAINTE FITNESS

Cross-training

In regard to running, cross-training is another type of cardio exercise that uses similar muscles as running does, but is NOT running! For example, great options for cross-training would include swimming, biking, or using an elliptical. It could also include a combination of these exercises. Don't over-exert yourself on your cross-training days. These are meant to give your body a break and should be fairly easy.

Fartlek

Fartlek is a type of training that includes fast running and slow running, sometimes even walking. You jog or sprint alternating between fast and slow running for a given amount of time. Think about it as "surges" in your run whenever you feel like it. A great way to do this is to pick an object such as a fence or a telephone pole and use that as your marker. Sprint from one telephone pole to the next and then jog. Make sure you always warm up properly before you begin any sprinting. You can also structure your Fartlek to specific times if you desire to.

Overtraining

Overtraining does not mean you are injured, but that you are overdoing it and at risk for injury. The symptoms of overtraining include physical exhaustion, heavy legs, increased pulse rate, insomnia, excessive soreness, change in mood, and frequent common colds – especially upper respiratory infections. Preventing overtraining is vital and can be done by taking rest days and cross-training seriously.

Pace

To perform a pace run, complete your workout at "race pace." Remember to start and finish easy, giving your body the proper amount of time to warm up and cool down. If your training schedule directs you to do "5 total/3 pace," this means that in a 5-mile run, three of those miles should be completed at race-pace.

Rest

Rest days are vital and allow your body to recover so that you can get ready to run again. Without recovery days, you will not improve.

Speed work

Alternating between fast running and walking or jogging is an effective form of speedwork. For example, if your workout says to do 6 X 400 meters, you are to run each 400 at about your mile pace, and jog or walk between each repeat. Performing these workouts on a track is best, but they can also be performed if you have a marked trail.

Stepback

Stepback weeks are when your training volume decreases slightly. This allows you to prepare yourself for the next increase in difficulty to follow. These stepback weeks give you a physical and mental break in your program.

Strengthen and stretch

Strengthening and stretching is extremely important for runners because it helps to prevent injuries and aids in physical conditioning. Always stretch and strengthen after your muscles are properly warmed up. Stretch and strengthen your running muscles as well as your full body for best benefit. Strength training can be added to your schedule 1-2 days per week on days when you have your easier runs. Strength training should never be performed on two consecutive days!

Taper

Tapering is reducing the amount of exercise before a race. This usually occurs from as little as one week to three weeks prior to your competition. This allows your body to prepare for race day.

Tempo

Tempo runs are one of the most efficient ways to raise your lactate threshold. With a tempo run, you begin and end your run at an easy pace, and accelerate for the middle of your run. This accelerated effort should be maintained anywhere from two to ten miles depending on the race you are training for. The pace should be "comfortably hard" at an 8 on a 1-to-10 scale (comfortable effort being a 5; and racing being a 10) and you should not be able to hold a conversation.

Walk

Walking is a great way to build your cardiovascular endurance before beginning a running program. However, remember that walking is permitted and should be used during your running workouts whenever you feel that you need a break.