

# Winter Running

---

## Year round training

Distance running is a year round sport. It doesn't have seasons like the typical team sport. Not only is it possible for a runner to continue to improve strength, speed, and endurance year round, it is essential if you want to reach your potential. You'll never find that potential without year round training. "Off season" training, either winter or summer for track and cross country athletes, is the time to build aerobic endurance, and spend just a little bit of time on improving your basic speed. Aerobic endurance is the base for everything middle distance and long distance runners do and the biggest most important thing you can do for that is pile on the easy mileage. It really can be that simple, just go out and run lots!

Base aerobic endurance is the base that all good distance runners are built on. But the rules don't give us the time to build that in season. The season, either track or cross country is only 12 weeks long. That time is filled with racing, race specific training, hard interval training, and maybe some rest to recover from all of that. What it doesn't leave time to do is build the foundation. If you want to be good as a distance runner it is your responsibility to build the foundation. That's what pre-season winter and summer training are for.

The recipe is simple. Start with a level of mileage you can handle easily. At the peak of cross country we were running 30 to 35 miles a week. So after a month off, it's probably safe to start from 20. Break that down to a long run of 6 miles and three 4 mile runs and a two mile run for the first week. That will help you get your legs back under you. The pace never needs to be any faster than you can run and keep up a conversation. If you can't run and talk then slow down. If that means walking occasionally to catch your breath, then accept that as your starting point and work from there. The long break after the season has given you time to heal most injuries and your legs have re-filled with energy, but you aren't in the same great shape you were at the end of the season. Some of that conditioning is gone and it will take time to come back.

To get that back spend the first three weeks doing nothing but these easy runs. Take the longest run you do and make it a mile longer each week. After this first phase your legs should be ready to start laying a foundation of speed for the upcoming season. This is even easier than the rest of the work you've been doing. It's a quick and easy as doing a set of 50's twice a week in the middle of your shortest runs. These very short, fast runs will stimulate your fast twitch muscles and the nerves that feed them. This will improve your strength and form so that when it comes time for intervals and racing during the season, you'll be smooth, strong, and less prone to straining muscles.

For those who are competing in another sport season during the winter, you don't have a whole lot of time to run and pile up mileage. Fortunately, basketball and wrestling give you enough of running and sprinting that all you have to do is one or two runs a week to help preserve your endurance from the cross country season. Finding the time for those couple of easy runs a week is tough, but it will be well worth it when track season nears its peak.

What follows are sample training plans to bridge the gap between cross country and track so you can have the foundations for success laid at the beginning of the season.

## Beginner program

For those getting ready for their first track season or coming back from serious injuries

Weeks 1-3

Long Runs of 5, 6, and 7 miles; Daily runs of 2 to 3 miles for a total of 15 to 20 miles per week.

Weeks 4-6

Long runs of 7, 8, and 9 miles; Daily runs of 2 to 4 miles for a total of 20 to 25 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds three 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

Weeks 7-9

Long runs of 9, 10, and 11 miles; Daily runs of 3 to 4 miles for a total of 25 to 30 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds four 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

Weeks 10-12

Long runs of 10, 11, and 12 miles; Daily runs of 4 to 5 miles for a total of 30 35 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds five 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

## Veteran Program

For those who are in a little better shape and ready to take the step to the next.

Weeks 1-3

Long Runs of 6, 7, and 8 miles; Daily runs of 3 to 5 miles for a total of 20 to 25 miles per week.

Weeks 4-6

Long runs of 9, 10, and 11 miles; Daily runs of 4 to 5 miles for a total of 25 to 30 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds three 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

Weeks 7-9

Long runs of 12, 13, and 14 miles; Daily runs of 5 to 6 miles for a total of 30 to 35 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds four 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

Weeks 10-12

Long runs of 13, 14, and 15 miles; Daily runs of 5 to 6 miles for a total of 30 to 35 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds five 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

## Champion Program

If you think a trip to the state championships is in your future, this is where you need to be.

Weeks 1-3

Long Runs of 6, 7, and 8 miles; Daily runs of 3 to 5 miles for a total of 20 to 25 miles per week.

Weeks 4-6

Long runs of 9, 10, and 11 miles; Daily runs of 4 to 5 miles for a total of 30 to 35 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds three 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

Weeks 7-9

Long runs of 12, 13, and 14 miles

Daily runs of 5 to 6 miles for a

Once a week Fartlek workout

Total of 35 to 40 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds four 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.

Weeks 10-12

Long runs of 13, 14, and 15 miles

Daily runs of 5 to 7 miles

Once a week Fartlek workout

Once a week tempo run with two miles at 75% effort

Total of 35 to 40 miles per week.

Twice a week, on the easiest days adds five 50 meter sprints with a full recovery between to the middle of your workout.