About Creating Your Typical Weekly Running Plan

A little background for perspective: Historically, runners trained for performance improvement mainly by brute-force [Intervals all out until fatigue stopped them, powered up hills and increasing long runs, 60… 90 miles per week]. As professional racing grew, it became obvious that brute-force training had reached its limits. About 25 years ago, the sports physiologists began to investigate ways to achieve better results by training smartly, based on observable parameters and testing. Noteworthy of these scientists was Prof. Billat. See below "Interval Training Not Understood". Thus, I recommend you take advantage of Prof. Billat's research and base your performance improvement on vVO2max training.

First, keep in mind that we are primarily discussing training for road-runners, and not sprinters. There is a significant difference based on the fundamental fact that road-running primarily utilizes your aerobic muscles, whereas sprinting primarily utilizes your anaerobic muscles. This does not mean exclusively utilizes; just primarily. e.g. during a 10k race, you may need extra help from your anaerobic muscles to charge up a hill, sprint at the finish to beat someone, etc.

Each week should include the following elements. Note, both vVO2max (for your aerobic system) and sprinting (for your anaerobic system) are included. It's just the main emphasis is on VVo2max training. More on this point near the end.

I suggest that you assign the following drills to each of your weekdays, in the order shown. Don't try to just add them into your current schedule, assuming you have one.

- Rest, recovery day, a must [See [About Resting Days For Runners](#)]

- 20 Minutes at your vVO2max pace *This doesn't need to be at one time; you can break it up over 2 or 3 days*

- 10 reps of 30/30 seconds at about 150% of vVO2max, that's 30-sec fast + 30-sec recovery per rep. This trains your anaerobic muscles and ups your max stride-rate. Also, it can help improve your vVO2max as it moves your maximum limit to a faster pace. *Be very careful with this drill as it can cause injury. Make certain your DOMs [delayed muscle soreness] is 0 or 1, 2max and your next day is an easy one.*

- Hills, springing uphill and fast downhill. *This can easily be part of your weekly long runs. A total of five or 10 minutes per week should be adequate.*

- At least 200m on grass.[This keeps your neuro system healthy] *This is a must for 60+ runners.*

- On a regular basis, one long run of 10 miles or 1 hour (Ignoring distance. *This is a must for 60+ runners*) This should be at about 80% of your vVO2max pace. *Note, this pace is slightly less than 85%, which is the nominal 10mile race-pace for experienced, good runners.*

- Incorporate some anaerobic muscle work in your regular tempo runs by running the last 1 to 2 minutes at your vVO2max x 150%. *Incidentally, this will help you develop a good "kick" just before race finish lines.*

- When preparing for races exceeding 10Ks, your long runs should be about 10% longer than your intended race distance. Run this at about 90%/95% of your intended race pace. *We all tend to run races faster than our training run pace, excitement, pack effect, etc.*

In addition, it is highly recommended that you run a vVO2max test every 2 or 3 weeks. Or, even every week if you like. A suggestion: Run 2 or 3 on a calibrated track. If they are consistent, go to a location where you typically run and pick a benchmark starting point. Then run exactly 6:00min and mark the spot. Now all you need, for training, is to run farther every time. If less distance, you may be over-training. More on this subject in: [About Resting Days For Runners](#) and just below.

The benefits of routinely running your vVO2max test are:

- If you are training to improve your performance, you can accurately determine your progress.

- If you are slipping into the over-train-state, it will be very apparent. You will see a significant reduced distance. Don't jump to a conclusion on this point; the drop-off may be due to an illness [You probably shouldn't be running anyhow, especially respiratory diseases] or mental stress, etc. With experience you'll be able to determine the cause.

- It is a good and the most accurate way to satisfy 6 minutes of your weekly vVO2max-pace drill. You can even run 2 or 3; just allow 5 minutes recovery between runs.

A typical example is used for illustration. Obviously, you'll want to use your particular running speeds, etc. And, you will likely want or need to mix up your daily plan due to circumstances, e.g., weather, upcoming race, personal obligations, etc.

IMPORTANT, keep in mind this a typical week plan. You can incorporate hill training and some of your speed work while doing your Sat and Sun runs.

- Select a day for your rest and recovery. Typically, most runners run long, race, etc. on Saturday and/or Sunday. So, Monday is an obvious choice for your recovery day. See [About Resting Days For Runners](#)

- Mix up the remaining 6 days. **Adjacent days should be different**. e.g. Road, hills, track, etc. e.g., Don't run 5miles on both Saturday and Sunday.

- Select the average **time** per week you want to devote to your running hobby. Typically, younger non-professionals spend about 5 hours per week. That's roughly 40 miles per week at an 8:00min/mi pace.

- Assume 5 miles for Saturday, 10 miles for Sunday [These take care of your tempo runs] and Monday for recovery. That equates to a little under 2 hours, leaving 3 hours for the remaining 4 days.

- Next, you need to include your hill and track workouts. Track workouts include vVO2max and max speed drills.

- A very slow 1-hour fun run.

A note about training in preparation for an upcoming race. I won't go into detail in this article; but:

- Generally you'll use the same type of drills, but tailored to the race distance.

- Recall, in terms of vVO2max: 5K ~96%, 10k ~92%, 10mi ~85%, ½ marathons ~78%, mar ~65%

- Thus for 5K....8K races, you need to improve your anaerobic system; e.g., 50m..400m intervals at 150% vVO2max, with recovery times about x2 interval time or 60sec minimum.

- Thus for your marathon, you need to improve your aerobic system; e.g., 6min intervals, 1600m.. 3200m intervals at about 80% vVO2max. All with short ~60sec recoveries between intervals.

- Obviously for 10K….. ½ marathons, adjust proportionally.

- When preparing for races exceeding 10Ks, your long runs should be about 10% longer than your intended race distance. Run this at about 90%/95% of your intended race pace.

All of the vVO2max-based training elements are based on research by Dr. Billat, a professor of Sport Sciences at the University of Lille, France circa 2000. She states that vVO2max training is primarily beneficial for running distances ranging from the 1500 to the marathon, and longer. However, road runners need both types, though vVO2max improvement is the primary focus.

Here are 3 PDF [printable] documents you may find helpful when planning your training programs. Keep in mind, there are many subtle variations you can incorporate; so, it is best to understand the vVO2max-based training fundamentals. The links should work in most PDF reader apps; if not in yours, they are available at ridersite.org

- [Prof Billat's Interval Training_Not Understood](#)

- [Mackenzie"s Discusion About Billat's_Intervals](#)

- [Mackkenzie On vVO2max and tlimvVO2max re: Billat](#)

- See: [About Resting Days For Runners](#) [Same link as above]

Your comments, critique, and questions are most welcome. You can freely disseminate this article.

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Revision 3b