COACH'S CORNER

14-Day Cycle Training Plan

by Dan Aldridge

Editor's Note: In our September issue, Dan Aldridge, 39-year-old elite runner and coach, began the first of a two-part Coach's Corner on maintaining — or, for some of us, attaining — speed after age 40.

This month, the 40-year-old Aldridge (Welcome to Masters running, Dan!) provides a specific 14-day cycle training plan to help you improve your ability to run and race over a wide range of distances.

Year-Round Training Program

This 14-day cycle training program can be done year-round. Most of us like to be able to race at any time during the year. This program will enable you to do that at your highest level possible. The purpose of the training is to get accustomed to running at the proper paces for distances between 800 meters and 10k. I believe that it is important that you have the necessary speed, strength, endurance to be able to run fast 5k races. Once you get your 5k times down, your 10k times will soon follow.

Before getting into the program itself, let me explain a few things.

Workout Terminology & Details

Recovery Runs should be done at a pedestrian pace to assure full recovery. If you need a day off, take it on this day. If you train with a heart rate monitor, use the recovery zone effort level (65%).

Distance Runs are done at a moderate (70%-80% on your heart rate monitor) but still aerobic level. This is not "jogging pace." You should feel like you're working hard but you should still be able to hold a conversation with your running partners.

Tempo Runs should be 15-20 seconds slower than your 10K race pace, or 80%-85% on your heart rate monitor.

Intervals should be run on the track or an accurately marked course at 90% on your heart rate monitor. Rest between intervals should be kept to a minimum, just enough to maintain the pace you are trying to achieve.

Fartleks (the term means "speed play") are run strictly by time and effort, as you throw in surges and pickups. The purpose is to get the body accustomed to as little rest as possible, simulating your race effort.

Your 14-Day Training Plan

- Day 1 - 20-25 minute Tempo Run or a 5k or 10K race (lactate threshold training).
- Day 2 - 30-45 minute Recovery Run.
- Day 3 - 45-75 minute Distance Run.
- Day 4 - Intervals. Distances between 400 & 800 meters run at faster than 5k race goal pace with 30-90 seconds rest in between. Total workout should be no more than 2 miles.
- Day 5 - 30-45 minute Recovery Run.
- Day 6 - 45-75 minute Distance Run.
- Day 7 - Fartlek at 5K race goal pace. Run 6 to 8 fartleks of 3 to 4 minutes with 45 seconds rest in between.
- Day 8 - 30-45 minute Recovery Run.
- Day 9 - 45-75 minute Distance Run.
- Day 10 - Intervals. 8 to 12 x 300 meters with 1 minute rest in between or 16 to 20 x 200 meters with 1 minute rest in between run at your mile race goal pace.
- Day 11 - 30-45 minute Recovery Run.
- Day 12 - 30-45 minute Distance Run.
- Day 13 - 90 minute Long Distance Run.
- Day 14 - Intervals/speed training. 12 x 100 meters with a 300 jog between each. Run each fast, but relaxed, concentrating on maintaining good form.

Upon completion of the 14-day cycle you can do one of two things. You can begin another 14-day cycle after a recovery run day and a distance run day or you can complete a week of distance runs with an interval session or fartlek session at midweek.

- - - - -

Dan Aldridge is an accomplished runner over distances ranging from the mile (3:58 PR) through the marathon (2:21 PR). He also coaches youth (the Santa Rosa Express) and adult runners in Santa Rosa, CA.