

WRITTEN BY DR. BILL PIERCE
PHOTOS BY JULIE TURNER

TRAIN SMART FOR the

DR. PIERCE'S TIPS

1. Gradually build a base.

For the novice, this means a year of running 15-25 miles per week before beginning a marathon training program. For beginning runners, it may take up to two years to properly train for a first marathon.

2. Run at your planned race pace.

Frank Shorter, Olympic gold medalist in the marathon, would run the first 10 miles of a 20-mile training run at 6 min. per mile and the second 10 miles at close to 5 min. per mile, his marathon pace. After a few warmup miles, you can experiment with running different segments of your long run at your planned race pace. The stress of running at marathon pace is necessary to stimulate the physiological adaptations that result in increased fitness.

5. Gradually increase the distance that you train at your race pace.

Long runs of 13 to 17 miles each should become the foundation of your marathon long run training. Twenty-mile runs improve muscular strength and endurance, improve cardiovascular fitness, but also require additional recovery time. These runs will provide confidence and mentally prepare you for race day.

3. Alternate long runs weekly.

FIRST (the Furman Institute of Running and Scientific Training) recommends alternating weekly between runs of 13-15 miles and 17-20 miles. The recommended pace for 13-15-miles is from marathon pace (MP) to marathon pace plus 30 seconds (MP+30). The recommended pace for 17-20 miles is from MP+15 to MP+60. For all distances, the target pace gets faster through the training program.

For example: For runners with a target marathon time of 3:10 or 7:15/mile pace, their long run might begin with a 7:55 mile followed by a 7:45 mile before settling into a 7:35/mile pace. After a few miles at a 7:35/mile pace, they may want to try the next 3 or 4 miles at 7:25-7:30 pace before running the last few miles at 7:35/mile. Alternatively, they could hold the 7:35/mile pace through 12 miles, then try to run the last three miles faster than 7:35/mile pace. These strategies can be alternated from one long training run to the next.

4. Rest before and after.

Rest the day before your long run. The hard effort associated with a long run damages muscle, and it usually requires 48 hours for your body to fully recover. Hard training without recovery leads to increased damage.



long

run

Bill Bowerman, University of Oregon track coach, brought New Zealander Arthur Lydiard's high-mileage training methods to America in 1962. Lydiard's methods focused on building endurance, and were further publicized in Bowerman's book, *Jogging*, published in 1966.

In 1969, Joe Henderson, prolific running author and former chief editor of *Runner's World*, published his first book, *Long Slow Distance*. He popularized the LSD approach at the same time that Ken Cooper's book, *Aerobics*, was encouraging Americans to promote good health through exercise. Soon Americans were jogging through the streets and parks. Long, slow running seemed to be the path to follow. The popularity of running has continued to grow over the past 40 years. Today there are races with more than 30,000 participants and you often have to enter a lottery to get an entry.

Long, slow distance became popular as a training method for road racers as well as joggers. It was easy for Americans with their strong work ethic to embrace the concept that the more mileage you ran, the better runner you would become. Many runners in the 1970s began running 80 to 120 miles per week. As their mileage increased, their performances improved. It was common for runners to train 7 days per week, many running twice per day. More miles, more success, they thought. These high mileage programs meant that most of the miles were run at a slow pace – less than 70% of max heart rate (typically, this translates to 60 to 90 seconds slower than marathon pace). The conventional wisdom, as promoted by Henderson and others for training, included performing long training runs at a comfortable, conversational pace.

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When Lyle finally arrived at the little Prudhoe Bay Hotel, the person at the counter said, “Hi, we have been expecting you.”

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Lyle says he averaged less than 10mph for the entire trip.

The Haul Road is so remote that Lyle saw very few people along his 500+ mile route. Traffic consisted of 4-5 trucks per day hauling supplies and he rarely saw another soul on his three week journey. He encountered several herds of musk ox and some moose, but he avoided the grizzly bears that have a reputation for prowling the wilderness along the remote highway. “As rugged and adventurous as the Alaskan people are, they all thought I was crazy for doing this trip along the Haul Road,” jokes Lyle of the gun-toting locals.

Along with his provisions and equipment, Lyle had to carry enough clothing for the changing climate he would encounter on his journey to the Arctic Ocean. Leaving Fairbanks at a sunny 77 degrees, Lyle had to be prepared for the mid-thirties he would meet on the shores of Prudhoe Bay. 24-hour sunlight helped him find his way at any hour, and he found himself alternating between riding in the “day” (10am-

4pm) and “night” (10pm-4am).

Life in the remote tundra regions of Alaska is quite different from what we’re used to in

the lower 48. Lyle was treated to some unique experiences along the way. When riding into the remote outpost of Yukon River Camp, “a small plane landed right on the road I was traveling on, picked up and delivered the weekly mail and took off again.” He encountered some wild characters too, including one modern day Daniel Boone, with a rifle across his shoulder, a pistol on his hip and a huge knife tied to his leg. After asking a local, it turns out this pioneer from up the river never leaves his home without all his gear, because “you never know when you might have a grizzly encounter and get the chance to bag some meat.”

When Lyle arrived in Deadhorse, AK – the northernmost settlement in North America with a road – it was midnight but there was full daylight. More than 500 miles of trail lay behind him as he checked into the primitive Prudhoe Bay Hotel for his first night in a real bed after weeks of sleeping under the stars. Lyle remembers that, “The first thing the person at the counter said was, ‘Hi, we have been expecting you.’” Word travels quickly along the road, when you’re riding your bicycle alone across America’s Last Frontier.

So, what is this certified aerobics instructor and personal trainer going to do for his 2008 annual challenge? He was supposed to summit Mt. Everest, but unfortunately the Chinese government closed the Tibetan border for a few months, inconveniently during the time he was supposed to reach base camp. His trip to the summit is now postponed for another year. When he gets another chance, he won’t do the summit alone, but you could argue that he never does any of these adventures alone. He does them all with Little Feather.



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However, long, slow distance was only one element of Lydiard's training. He advocated a long period of building endurance with high mileage followed by six to eight weeks of high intensity speed training leading to a peak for racing. He did not recommend racing during the high mileage buildup. Most American road racers will not give up racing for 6-12 months to peak for a race. Age group runners were not accustomed to the demands on the body that six weeks of speed work presented. As a result, an essential part of Lydiard's formula for successful racing was lost in their preparation. The challenge for the typical runner is to find a method that combines intensity training with endurance training in a formula that his or her body can tolerate.

Most runners training to run a marathon spend part of their weekend doing a long run, an essential part of the preparation. Some run with a group and others go solo. Some intersperse their running with walk breaks and some won't even stop to drink. Some target a specific pace; others target heart rate; and others just run. Some run a specific distance; others run for total time. With so many

choices, what's a runner to do? You can find a variety of recommendations for how to incorporate the long run into your marathon preparation.

The concept of specificity states that the more closely you train to the specific demands for the sport or event for which

you are training, the better you will perform. This concept applies to the long training run for the marathon. Intensity is the factor that provides the most benefits to runners. These benefits include 1) increasing economy – running at a given speed at a lower energy cost, 2) optimizing the ability to utilize fats and therefore, sparing muscle glycogen, 3) training all the muscle fibers in the legs that remain untrained at slower speeds, 4) training the body's ability to tolerate and clear lactic acid and 5) learning to tolerate running with low levels of blood glucose.

How should you plan your long training run? Your long run needs some intensity, and you also need to simulate the stress of running for the length of time associated with running the marathon. Trying to increase both distance and pace simultaneously is a recipe for injury, so you need to gradually add distance so that your body adapts to the increased duration of the run. Once you build to your desired distance, you can begin to increase the intensity.

There is a belief that the more you run, the faster you will become, but this is a myth. Train smarter, not harder. Quality long runs with proper recovery will lead to improvement and success.



Two years ago some friends convinced me to run the Paris Mountain 20K. I was a middle-distance runner in college but had never run that far and, on race day, I hit the wall at mile eight and struggled to finish.

Since then I've learned that to be a successful runner, you must put in the distance. Natural ability can only take you so far, especially in the longer races. These days I try to get one long run in per week. My long run is generally around 25-35% of my weekly mileage. My distance depends on the race for which I am training. For instance, if I am training for a 5K, my long run is typically 9-12 miles. If I am training for a half marathon, my long run is more like 14-17 miles.

My long run pace is typically one to two minutes per mile slower than my race pace. Sometimes I will alter my pace and throw a fartlek workout in the middle of the run. I prefer to do a long run with others, as a good conversation and companionship tends to make the run go by a lot faster.

With more long runs under my belt I decided to tackle Paris Mountain again. Not only did the race seem easier, I won the female race in 2006 and 2007. I attribute this success to the long run, which has surprisingly become my favorite part of my training program.

— Becca Prichard ran cross country at Furman 1997-99, and at Spartanburg Methodist in the Fall of 2007, where her success led to her inclusion in Sports Illustrated's Faces In The Crowd.

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