

thelondontriathlon

Running For Triathlon



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Training Advice

Many people when they start training just go out and run for as long as they feel. By doing this you will get fitter but will you get better?

Below are the types of run sessions used by many runners, combined at different points in their training year. These can be structured for any level of athlete and can be applied to training for specific purposes.

- § Long Slow Run – This is the laying of your basic aerobic foundation. Aerobic simply means in the presence of oxygen and is teaching your muscles to become more efficient. If you think of training as a pyramid, this would be your first layer. If the bottom layer is not wide enough then the subsequent layers will be limited in their capacity and stability. The long slow run should be run at a comfortable pace where the fatigue comes from the distance rather than the intensity. Although it is an easy run it should still be progressive within your program. Don't become complacent and continue to plod, adapt it to the changes in your fitness by increasing the distance and/or intensity.
- § Interval Training – Quite literally this is intervals of work. This incorporates four elements; distance of interval, amount of rest in between, number of repetitions and time of each block of work. Interval training can be used in a variety ways for whatever purpose is necessary i.e. speed work or aerobic



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- § conditioning. This can be made specific by adjusting any of the variables mentioned above.
- § Fartlek – The direct translation of this is “speed play”. This simply means running continuously but changing the pace throughout the workout. Again this can be adjusted for a variety of purposes but would generally be used for aerobic conditioning.
- § Hill Reps – These are the runner’s version of resistance training – the equivalent of over-gearing on the bike or pull/paddles work whilst swimming. Again they can be applied in a number of different ways with longer, slower hills for strength endurance and shorter, faster ones for power based work.
- § Tempo Run – A steady state run for aerobic conditioning. This should be run at a slightly uncomfortable pace, which is sustainable for the entire duration.
- § Brick Training - A triathlon specific technique designed to prepare your body for the bike / run transition. You are required to complete a session on your bike and then immediately transfer to a run leg. This is a crucial technique to consider when training for a triathlon.



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Running Technique

Many people make the mistake of only looking at technique issues when a problem arises, for instance with an injury. The novice runner is in a good position to look at this before any bad habits develop, thereby making them a more efficient runner and reducing the risk of injury. A good technique is especially important for triathletes because of the effect of the other disciplines on mechanics.

An efficient running style is one that enables the runner to get the maximum speed for the minimum effort. Here are a few points to think about when looking at run technique:

- § Direction of travel – when you run you want to travel forward as fast as possible. Therefore any movement not in this plane will be wasted energy. Excess movement can come from a number of different sources, for example vertical movement caused by a lack of stability at the trunk.
- § Foot placement – the foot should land directly underneath the body close to a point under the centre of gravity. Many people place their foot in front of the body. This will cause a braking action and therefore slow the runner down. When an athlete runs foot placement should also be in a straight line, successive foot placements should be parallel with each other and in the



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direction of running. If the foot is placed in any other direction than straight it will give the leg a reduced forward force vector as it generates propulsive thrust. It will also increase the likelihood of lower limb injuries.

§ Stability – this is an important consideration for the triathlete who will be running on fatigued muscles. A lack of stability can cause a number of things, for instance a side-to-side movement and “sitting in bucket syndrome”. These will make you an inefficient runner and increase the risk of injury. In order to combat these you can think about running tall, pulling your lower abdominal muscles in towards you belly button.

§ Cadence – this refers to the speed of your legs. The faster your legs turnaround, the shorter your contact time with the ground, thus maximising your push off the floor. If your foot spends a long time on the floor, the reaction force which propels you forward will have chance to dissipate to other areas. It will also allow your body time to develop excess movement. Many people don't realise that turning your legs over fast is a skill and needs to be practised.

There are many ways to improve your technique. Thinking about it when you run is a good start as this helps to develop the neural pathways. Running drills can also



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be incorporated into your program. A good strength program will also help technique by increasing stability and reinforcing movement patterns.

Running shoes

It is important to be correctly fitted with good running shoes. The following is a bit of background behind why we need good kit!

BIOMECHANICS

Scientists suggest that mankind's ancestors have been walking upright for many millions of years. Beginning by moving on **two** legs through the trees, using arms for balance much as an orangutan does today. We are designed to move in this way and our bodies have developed through evolution to provide the very complex systems that allow us to walk upright efficiently.

Our bodies are very adaptable. If you specifically overload its structures and physiology it will grow and adapt to that overloading, just as executing a bicep curl at the gym will grow your biceps. Our ancestry as "hunter/gatherers" meant that we spent our distant past on the move. Our days were occupied running around trying to catch something to eat or running around trying to avoid being caught and eaten by something else.

We ran for necessity. Lifestyles today are somewhat different. We lead a largely sedentary way of life and our running is usually confined to a leisure activity. **We run for recreation.**

Because more and more of our immediate landscape is covered in concrete and asphalt and our bodies are less well adapted to regular running, Asics manufacture a range of sports shoes designed to compliment the mechanical assets nature has supplied.



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To understand the biomechanics of running and the technologies we employ, it is necessary to first of all understand some of our physical mechanisms.

The **gait cycle** is the term used to describe the action of taking a step and is broken down into two phases - swing phase, during which the foot is off the ground and swings through to start the next step and Stance phase when the foot is in contact with the ground. Stance phase then breaks down into three stages - contact, foot flat and propulsion.

Contact normally occurs on the lateral (outside) edge of the heel. This represents about 25% of the stance phase. At this time incredible forces are at work and pressures of up to 4 times bodyweight can be experienced.

As the foot rolls into foot flat position the knee and lower leg will rotate inward allowing the bony structure of the foot to collapse. This is a simplified description of **pronation**, a normal and natural action. A foot that pronates too much, too little or at the wrong time may, over time, lead to injury or impaired performance.

The final phase of the cycle is propulsion. As the foot progresses through its range of motion and the ball of the foot becomes weight bearing, the plantar fascia (soft tissue of the sole of the foot) work to restore the bony structure of the foot to create a more effective lever to drive into the next step. This is **Windlass Mechanics**.

To identify your running style it is best to visit a running specialist store where experienced staff can assess your gait and make a recommendation. To find your local store please visit www.asics.co.uk.

Once you have identified your style you will be able to make an informed selection.

Ideally work with several pairs of shoes and rotate them to maximise their life and to ensure if any fail that you have footwear broken in and ready to go.



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CATEGORISATION

In order to make selection of the correct footwear an easier proposition ASICS have categorised the running shoe range into subsections. These are:-

Structured cushioning

Well cushioned shoes with an element of structure to guide the mild to excessive **over-pronated** foot.

Cushioning

Well cushioned shoes allowing for a foot with the optimum range of motion, to guide a foot through its optimum range of motion or to allow for motion in an **under-pronated** or **supinated** foot.

Guidance Control (Motion Control)

Well cushioned shoes seeking to guide and manage the hyper-mobile/severely overpronated foot.

Lyte

Lyte category shoes offer a performance version of the structured and cushioned categories. Designed for speed these shoes are ideal for faster sessions and longer races .

Trail

Our trail shoes translate much of the technology of our road running products and configures them specifically for the rigours of off road running.

Racing

These shoes are for speed. Very light and minimalist in structure they are designed for maximum performance.



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