

MEADOWS CROSS COUNTRY

SUMMER TRAINING GUIDE

Welcome to Meadows Cross Country! The success we achieve during the fall season will be directly proportional to our summer preparation. If we wait until school starts to begin training, *it is too late!* The following is a guide to summer training.

Before you begin: Safety Issues

Running in the desert poses certain health hazards, the primary one being dehydration. Runners can gradually become dehydrated over a span of a few days or after a long run. The best strategy is to drink plenty of fluid throughout the day, not simply right before you run or during the run. Furthermore, you should adequately replete your fluid loss after the run. You can tell if you are well hydrated by checking your urine. If it is clear, then you are doing a good job. It is also a good idea to plan your training run to go by sources of water (e.g. water fountains in parks) or take some fluid with you.

Most other running safety rules are just common sense and include:

- Run with others if possible. Try to get teammates, parents, siblings, or pets to run with you.
- Run in well visible areas; avoid running alone in unpopulated, unfamiliar areas
- The early morning is generally the safest time to run
- Let someone know where you are running and consider carrying a cell phone

Shoes:

The cause of most running injuries can be traced to your shoes and biomechanics. The only equipment that is needed in running is your shoes; don't scrimp on getting the correct shoe. Unless you know what type of running motion you have, it may be worth initially obtaining your shoes at a running shoe store (e.g. The Athletes Foot, Red Rock Running Store, Fleet Feet). In addition, shoes should be changed every 300 miles or 4-5 months, whichever comes first.

Training Principles

Why do we train? Training can loosely be defined as the process of adapting to a particular task. Training is type and site specific. That it is site specific is not too surprising; in order to strengthen your arms, you're not going to exercise your legs. Similarly, the best way to condition the distinct set of muscles used in running is by running.

In addition, your body adjusts to the specific type of activity it is given. With running, muscles become more efficient at producing and utilizing energy so that they can contract more rapidly and work for longer periods of time before becoming fatigued. Moreover, the response of the muscles depends on the amount of training you do under aerobic (with oxygen) or anaerobic (without oxygen, breathless) conditions. In cross-country racing (2-3 miles) the majority of running (60-70%) is aerobic and the remainder (30-40%) anaerobic. Consequently, a training schedule should be designed to simulate those conditions.

While there are numerous ways to design a training schedule, most share three common principles: *base training*, *sharpening work*, *rest*.

Base training refers to running long distances at a significantly lower intensity than race pace. The purpose is to adapt one's muscles to using oxygen more efficiently, along with strengthening muscles, tendons, bones and ligaments. Base training runs are aerobic and should be done at a pace where you can talk comfortably. Your base is the foundation upon which all further training is done.

Sharpening training emphasizes development of speed and anaerobic endurance. It weaves in shorter interval runs at or faster than race pace. While it prepares the runner for racing conditions, its effects are short-lived and injury and illness are more easily provoked.

Rest While you would think that everyone would welcome rest days in a training schedule, some young runners become so focused and dedicated that they feel guilty to take an easy day. However, rest is essential to allow muscles to recover from a hard workout. Attempting to run hard every day serves only to wear and tear you down mentally and physically. Rest also includes adequate sleep. At The Meadows, we encourage *active rest* (which is thought to be better for recovery than no activity at all), shorter runs at an easy jog or cross training.

Our training schedule focuses on base conditioning over the summer and first weeks of the school year, followed by progressive sharpening work, peaking for the state meet in early November.

Types of training runs:

Long slow runs are the mainstay of base training. They are done at a steady pace well within the capacity of the runner, yet still requiring a real running movement (as opposed to jogging). A typical pace may range from 7:00 – 8:00 minutes/ mile (men) or 7:45- 8:45 min/mile (women).

Tempo runs are continuous runs at the fastest pace the runner can maintain for the distance. These runs allow the runner to become accustomed to the stresses encountered in race conditions. The distance is usually much shorter than covered in long slow runs.

Intervals are designated distances (intervals) that are repeated, usually at a fast pace, with a recovery period between repetitions.

Fartlek is derived from the Swedish word for *speed play*. It combines fast and slow running in an informal combination. Sprinting, walking, continuous fast running and slow running can all be mixed into the workout. A sample workout may begin with a 10 minute jog and stretching, followed by 1-2 X $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles of tempo running (5 minute walk after each), then 4-5 X 100 yard sprints, finishing with 1-2 miles of continuous slow running.

Sample Summer Training Schedules

The major challenge that is faced in beginning summer training is becoming acclimated to the high temperatures. Therefore, initial workouts should focus, not so much on distance, but for targeted periods of time at a comfortable pace. Here are some suggestions:

Beginners If you do not have any running experience, don't worry, everyone must start somewhere. The most common way to start is by time running. For example, you may begin with 20-minute workouts. If you are unable to run continuously for that period, run as long as you can comfortably, walk a bit to recover, resume running again etc. Gradually increase the amount of time running, while decreasing that walking, until you can run 20 minutes without problem. Then, try to add an additional 5 minutes to the workout each week so that you are eventually able to run 40-60 minutes (men) or 30- 45 minutes (women) continuously. Best results occur if you run every day, although several days a week you could run for a shorter distance but faster pace. However, don't become frustrated or discouraged if progress seems to come slowly. Unquestionably, the most difficult part of any conditioning program is the initial month or two. Once your body becomes physiologically adapted to distance running, workouts will seem much less effortful.

Advanced

The beginning phase (mid June to mid July) develops stamina similarly by running for a certain period of time. Most runs will be slow, continuous with occasional faster efforts sprinkled in. A typical week might be:

Mon. 20-30 min tempo run
Tue. 30-50 min slow run
Wed . 20- 30 min slow run or cross train
Thur 30 min fartlek
Fri. 45-50 min slow run
Sat. 30-40 min slow run
Sun 40- 60 min slow run

In the next phase (mid July to mid August), the emphasis shifts more to the distance and pace of the workouts, so that you become somewhat accustomed to running at a higher intensity. A sample week:

Mon.	4-6 mile tempo run
Tue.	6-10 mile slow run
Wed.	6-8 mile fartlek
Thur.	7- 10 mile slow run
Fri.	4-6 mile hill running
Sat.	6-8 mile slow run or cross train
Sun.	8-12 mile slow run
Total	41-60 miles

In order to build up mileage, the advanced runner could add twice a day workouts to achieve their target mileage.

The same training principles apply for our women runners, although the distances may be reduced by 1/3.

And remember, in general, the more running you do the better it is but ***something is better than nothing.***

For other information on distance running, there are a number of comprehensive books on training in the library or the following sites on line:

www.runnersworld.com -- this is the site for *Runners World* magazine, which contains articles on training and runner profiles.

www.runningtimes.com --similar to the above

www.lvtc.org – this is the site for the Las Vegas Track Club. They regularly sponsor track and road races of various distances where one can get race experience in a pressure free atmosphere.

Final Thoughts

One principle common in most motivational or success literature is that of being *proactive*, preparing, taking responsibility. In short, things don't *just happen* – you make them happen. For us to achieve our goals next season, we need everyone to ***make it happen.*** To do this requires *commitment*: a commitment to place running as one of your priorities; a commitment to go beyond the minimal amount of training required; a commitment to do everything within your power to reach your potential and strengthen your team. As you probably suspect, making a commitment and building confidence do not occur passively. We all at times have the *wish to win*, a wish that we were among the best at something. The true champion has the *will to win*, the attitude that says “ I will work toward my goal no matter what it takes.” For us, it means running everyday, including weekends. It means pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone at times. Without question, if you can apply that, you and your team will benefit. Remember, nothing that is worthwhile in life comes easy; nothing that comes easy in life is truly worthwhile

Official practices begin Monday, August 16 at 6:30 pm, meeting at the field house. We will have team runs every Thursday at 6:30 pm at the field house beginning July 8. If you have any questions over the summer, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Good luck and hope to see you this summer.

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