

Training Tips for 10 Mile races to the Marathon



Consistency – There is no short term answer to training for longer distance races. Anything under 10k in distance and you can get away with limited training. Stepping out over 10 miles and finishing with a smile on your face and a PB achieved requires a structured training programme. Ensure that you fit in your training around your existing life rather than fitting your life in around your training. You are far better to run three times a week consistently for ten weeks rather than erratically training twice one week, three times the next and then only once the week after. Be realistic with your training and life and the gains will be far greater.

Key Training Session 1: Long Run – Including a long run into your weekly schedule ensures that your body adapts to the rigours of the longer distance as well as training the body to utilise the correct energy system for your race. In all but the marathon it is definitely worth building up your long run to exceed the race distance i.e. for the half marathon running 15-17 miles as your longest run is beneficial. For the marathon 20-21 is enough for your longest run as long as this is part of a good structured week. Caution should be used if this takes more than 3.5 hours though as recovering from long runs for this length of time can take two weeks! Building up in blocks of three is a good move i.e. 15, 15, 17-16, 16, 18 and so on. Once you get to the distance of your longest run try and run this three times over a six week period. Just doing one 20 mile run will not be enough for your body to adapt. These runs need to be about 1 minute per mile slower than your expected race pace. Don't forget to increase speed of these runs as you get fitter and quicker!

Rest & Recovery – This should be the first thing in your training plan and a regular time off each week from all activity is essential and built in easier weeks are vital. Working on a three week cycle works well i.e. week 1 medium intensity/mileage, week 2 high intensity/mileage and week three low intensity/mileage. In the easier weeks you can still do the harder club sessions, but cut back on mileage and run your harder sessions 5% easier. Get a massage, go to the sauna/steam room or even go for a nice walk will all help recharge the batteries. Your body needs time to repair from all your hard training, this will not only help prevent injury but will give your body time to adapt to the training you have put in making it stronger and quicker!

Key Training Session 2: Tempo Run – For longer distance races a tempo run or race pace run is very important. It's all very well running a long run at an easy/steady pace, but you need to train your body to be able to cope with the racing speed you hope to attain. It's an old saying but it is true 'train the same race the same'. Once a week or even every other week with enough lead in time to your race complete a run at race pace or just below. As the distance of your race gets longer so should these runs. i.e. 10 mile race a tempo run of 40-45 minutes will be beneficial, for marathons a tempo run of 75-90 mins can be a great help. Remember though you need to fit these runs into a training schedule that will allow time for adaption and recovery.

Have a Back up Plan – No matter how well you plan your training inevitably something will hinder your progress. Don't be afraid to adapt your training schedule if something goes wrong or you have a busy week at work/home, trying to meet the demands of training and life is a juggling act, you need to be consistent as discussed, however don't try and play catch up in the following week if the week before was a write off. You also need to think of a back up plan for your target race, book another date in the diary for key race number 2. If your first race is a disaster for whatever reason you already have a plan in hand to ensure that your time training is not wasted.

Use Club Nights Wisely – Both Monday and Thursdays are the club nights for WAC you should utilise these as much as possible. They have structure and provide a variety of sessions that will help you progress. Try a different group on club nights as well, we all stick to our preferred group and that's fine, just mix it up every now and then you will be surprised at the benefit this has to your motivation and training.