



Fairlands Valley Spartans Running Club

UK's Best Running Club 2010

Affiliated to UK Athletics and the Association of Running Clubs

'Catch a Coach' ~ newsletter

Issue 15

April 2011

Catch a Coach newsletter

After a month's hiatus, welcome back to the April edition of 'Catch a Coach', the publication from the coaching team for all members. It's a real bumper edition!!!

April is the time of the year when things are really starting to build up on both the training and racing front. It is the month of the Virgin London Marathon and the Brighton Marathon and we will have our usual strong contingent of Spartans taking part. Attention is also already turning to the upcoming midweek league series of races and training for those. In addition the track season will be in swing and there are a number of events sign posted at a range of distances to suit all. The coaching team are already working through the details of the training schedule for the coming months, more details in next month's edition!

It has been great to see the discussions taking place on the Forum regarding a number of features within the club's training schedule and this month's edition focuses on one in particular – 'steady v speed' and achieving a balance in your training schedule. There is also the first in a regular series of core training exercises. This month it is the Scissors!!

I hope you find the newsletter helpful. Remember if you have any questions about the material in it or on the 'Catch a Coach' section within the club's website just CATCH A COACH or send an e-mail to the team at catchacoach@fvspartans.org.uk

Cheers

Chris 'Coach' Leigh



What's coming up - 10 of the best for April

Here's our ten of the best for April!

1. The 17th April sees the Virgin London Marathon. Fairlands valley Spartans are going to be out in strength again this year. The runners coach leaves from behind Waitrose, Stevenage Old Town at 6:30pm with the baggage coach leaving from the same location at 7:30am. For those running please remember to pop by the baggage coaches to say hello to those Spartans helping out.
2. Training sessions on Saturday mornings at Ridlins have great variety during April. On the 16th April there is a 200m based session, whilst on 23rd April and 30th April there are longer intervals using groups of 600m, 400m, 300m, 200m and 100m. The sessions will all contribute to runners developing an improved running style and speed as part of their balanced training schedule.
3. The Handicap 5K series continues on the 21st April. Please let Paul Holgate know whether you are running this or not so that he can adjust the starting lists and make the start as smooth as possible. Either meet at Marriotts for 6:50pm or go start to the start. Please look out for all of the details on the Forum, including your handicap time and start time.
4. The Tuesday sessions will provide a firm building block for training towards the 10K midweek league series this year. The sessions have their usual variation of interval lengths during the month with a pyramid session added for good measure on the 19th April. We will continue to arrange ourselves in 5 ability groups (see below).
5. Look out for the alternative steady run sessions on Thursday evenings at Marriotts, 7pm. These cover approximately 5 miles and give runners an alternative that may fit in better with their own training schedule and objectives. Please take a look at the feature below entitled 'steady versus speed'.
6. We will continue to be offering our usual set of Sunday runs during April (with the exception of 17th April because of the London Marathon) so that runners can still get their fix of 5/6 miles to 10/11 miles. For those running the London or Brighton marathons in April then please remember your taper period and ensure that the distance of the runs on the weekend of the 3rd and 10th April are appropriate.
7. April sees a steady progression in the interval length of the Thursday training sessions ranging from 400m to 1K efforts. Please do not be put off by the word 'speed'. The sessions are for ALL abilities. Speed refers to the fact that the individual runner is running faster than they would do normally in a steady type run. This increase in individual pace has a range of benefits including improved running form/style, improved fitness levels and a higher level of burning of calories. If you have not tried a Thursday 'speed' session then April is a great month to start and runners will see benefits as they go into May and June and the midweek league series.
8. There are loads of great races that you can take part in during April. Details are shown in the packed 'Races' board on the Forum. Races are continuing to fill up fast so please plan your coming months racing and get your entries in early. May and June will be dominated with the club's 10K midweek league efforts so take care not to over race!!
9. It may seem a while away but the summer will be soon upon us and with that comes a great series of Fairlands Valley Spartans races. The Off Road Challenge is in July followed shortly after by the 3K relays. We then move into the three race 5K series in August and September. A little further out is our own half marathon on 6th November. Something to suit everyone. Please take a look at the details on the Forum and get your entries in (use of the on-line entry system is highly recommended; just go on through the club's website).
10. Not strictly in April (!) but there is a great chance for an early 1500m at the County Vets Championships/Open meeting on 2nd May at Ridlins stadium. As well as the 1500m there is a full range of track and field events that Spartans can enter, including 5K and relays. Details are in the track and field board on the Forum. In addition, if you are a Vet why not get involved with the EVAC track and field team this year. More details can be found on the Forum or why not have a chat with Dave or Tessa Stephenson.

Remember: if you are feeling unwell in any way during or after your run please make sure that you speak to a member of your groups coaching team. They need to be aware of this so that they can monitor the situation during training.

If you are feeling unwell before the training session then you are advised not to run.



Feedback

Members of the coaching team really value feedback from members of the club. Feedback enables us to adjust training sessions and also create brand new ones!

Whilst we think we are taking the correct steps in the design and delivery of the sessions, without your feedback we don't entirely know! The way in which you give feedback doesn't have to be particularly formal. Just a quick word with the coach after the session has finished is enough. If you would prefer to put it in writing after further thought then go ahead and drop the team a line at catchacoach@fvspartans.org.uk

We listen to all comments and it is a real help when we look at the forthcoming training schedules and sessions.

Thank you

Midweek League dates

5th May - Stevenage

18th May - Bishops Stortford

7th June - Welwyn Garden City

30th June - St Albans

13th July - MOB match

Please make sure they are all in your diary!!! We really want to see over 200 Spartans out at each of these fixtures - that would be really something!!!



Richie recommends

Meal of the month

This guava smoothie is a delicious end to an early morning run.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Guava
- 1 Banana
- 1 cup Orange Juice
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 2 handful of ice

PREPARATION

1. Slice banana into bite-size chunks.
2. Cut guava in half and scoop out pulp.
3. Put the fruit in the blender together.
4. Pour lemon juice and half of orange juice in the blender too.
5. Add one handful of ice to blender and blend.
6. After the ice is blended fairly well, add honey, the rest of the orange juice, and the rest of the ice into the blender and blend to the consistency you prefer.
7. Also good with plain or vanilla yogurt or soy protein mix blended in.

Exercise of the month

I have observed people doing static stretching before running, which is not recommended. This prompted me to find an article and to put it in this month's addition about why you should not be doing this, along with what you should be doing.

Researchers say stretching, considered an important part of any athlete's warm-up routine, can actually weaken muscles.

The habit of holding a stretch for 20 to 30 seconds, known as static stretching, has been considered beneficial for priming muscles. However, scientists from the University of Nevada Las Vegas say this should no longer be encouraged; UK Athletics now follow these guidelines.

Their findings highlight that the two common pre-running stretches - for the hamstrings and quadriceps - may actually reduce performance by weakening muscles in the leg.

Kinesiology professor Bill Holcomb, who authored the report, said: "Developing flexibility is important for reducing sports injury, but the time to stretch is after, not before, performance."

Other studies have found that this stretching decreases muscle strength by as much as 30 per cent. Stretching your leg muscles can also reduce strength in the other leg as the central nervous system can rebel against the movements.

The correct warm up, according to experts, should do two things - loosen muscles and tendons to increase the range of motion of various joints, and warm up the body. (We do this on a Saturday morning at the track and I urge people to come along and have a go)

To raise the body's temperature, a warm-up should begin with aerobic activity, and researchers recommend light jogging.

Warm muscles and dilated blood vessels pull oxygen from the bloodstream more efficiently and use stored muscle fuel more effectively.

Malachy McHugh, the director of research at the Nicholas Institute of Sports Medicine and Athletic Trauma at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City said that straining muscles makes them less responsive and they stay weakened for up to 30 minutes after stretching.

"This not how an athlete wants to begin a workout" he told the New York Times.

There is, however, an important place for static stretching and that is AFTER your workout.



You're Getting Warmer: The Best Dynamic Stretches

These exercises- as taught by the United States Tennis Association's player-development program – are good for many athletes. Do them immediately after your aerobic warm-up and as soon as possible before your workout.

STRAIGHT-LEG MARCH

(For the hamstrings and gluteus muscles)

Kick one leg straight out in front of you, with your toes flexed toward the sky. Reach your opposite arm to the upturned toes. Drop the leg and repeat with the opposite limbs. Continue the sequence for at least six or seven repetitions.

SCORPION

(For the lower back, hip flexors and gluteus muscles)

Lie on your stomach, with your arms outstretched and your feet flexed so that only your toes are touching the ground. Kick your right foot toward your left arm, then kick your left foot toward your right arm. Since this is an advanced exercise, begin slowly, and repeat up to 12 times.

HANDWALKS (OR INCH WORM)

(For the shoulders, core muscles, and hamstrings)

Stand straight, with your legs together. Bend over until both hands are flat on the ground. "Walk" with your hands forward until your back is almost extended. Keeping your legs straight, inch your feet toward your hands, then walk your hands forward again. Repeat five or six times.

More exercise tips and another great meal, tried and tested by Richie coming in next month's edition.

Richie Bate

Coach development

There is a tremendous amount of activity taking place in the development of the team.

UKA recently revamped its coaching courses available to road running clubs. You may have heard some of the members talking about completing the LiRF course (Leaders in Running Fitness). This one-day course allows them to take out and support groups of runners backed by UKA insurance. They will have learnt how to lead runs and look after groups for social running, fun running, improvement and perhaps competition. In May we have arranged for UK athletics/England Athletics to bring their trainers to us here at Marriotts and deliver a Leadership in Running and Fitness course with at least 10 Spartans attending. This will increase the proportion of members of the coaching team that are qualified and insured to lead out groups to over 80%.

The Coach in Running Fitness is another new course that Richie Bate, Steve Smithson & Jamie Drackford are currently undertaking.



Steve

Richie

Jamie

This course looks at all aspects of the Coaches role in looking after runners in road running clubs. They will be learning about:

Athlete Profiles – which can include your current and previous running history, other sports you take part in. What other training you do to support your running.

Running Technical Model – how to compare an athlete's running style against the recommend running style for endurance or speed.

Planning the Clubs Training Sessions - which include looking at training schedules over a year, 6 to 8 weeks, weekly and on an individual session basis.

Delivering Training Sessions – including warm-ups, mobilisations and running drills as well as the main session. Assisting the athlete to evaluate their own performance and giving feedback, cooling down and stretching.

Whilst studying for this course Richie, Steve & Jamie will have to deliver a number of practical sessions where they will need your support. You might find them focusing on one aspect of the session slightly more than normal. They may ask you to repeat a drill more than once or they may ask questions of the whole group and individuals to check your understanding of what you have been asked to do. They will also offer you feedback on how you are doing and look forward to receiving your feedback on how the session went – good or bad!

Please give them your support and patience as in the end your are helping them to help you!

Swanage training weekend 25-27 February 2011

The Spartans training weekend to Swanage was a huge success this year with 37 Runners, friends and Children all hitting the beautiful sea side town for a weekend of running and socialising.

The Purbeck Runners who are a reasonably new club welcomed us into their world for the weekend and helped plot runs for us all to enjoy.

We stayed in the Purbeck House Hotel, who were very accommodating for the whole weekend. Saturday Morning saw a surprising number of Spartans turn up ready to run at 7.45 am. We made our way down to the sea front to meet our hosts from the Purbeck Runners. Ross lead the first group out on a muddy and very hilly 7 miler. The first 2 miles of which made the Aston Hills look like a gentle slope....the views though were spectacular. The other groups came back with similar comments before thanking our hosts and heading back to the hotel.

Saturday afternoon saw various groups off visiting different locations, some were cultural - catching the steam train to Corfe Castle whilst some visited friends at Monkey World (some members of the coaching team are still missing!).



Saturday night we were joined by some of our new friends from the Purbeck Runners for dinner at the hotel. We all enjoyed a 3 course meal which was again superb. Sunday saw 4 groups head out running at various speeds and distances, while some stayed in bed, and others took a more civilised option and had a nice stroll avoiding the biggest hills. Still the paddle / wash in the sea after the hills and mud was most welcome on our return before we joined our new friends for a most welcomed tea, coffee and a selection of homemade cakes, and of course chats.

The weather was stunning, only raining after we'd run, and as we left to come home on the Sunday afternoon.



We look forward to seeing some Purbeck Runners at our half marathon in November!

Next year's trip to Swanage has already been ear marked. The date will be 24th-26th February so stick it in your diary now! Details will be on the forum within a month or so!

Jamie Drackford

Core exercise of the month

Each month we will be featuring a recommended core training exercise kindly provided by Jamie Drackford. The first of the series looks at the Scissors.



- Lie on back
- Both legs raised, knees over hips and slightly bent
- Keeping in neutral spine position, brace the Abdominals to keep correct alignment
- Lower right leg towards floor, but hold it at a point that allows you to maintain correct alignment.
- From this position, simultaneously change position of legs in a 'scissor' action.
- Do not hold your breath at any stage of the exercise.
- One complete repetition counts when the leg lowers and then returns to the start position.
- Aim to repeat 15-30 times.

Coaching point

- If you feel that your lower back is moving out of neutral, stop the exercise.

Finding Neutral Spine Position when lying down:

Lie down on the floor, face up, with your knees bent and your feet on the floor approximately hip distance apart. Begin by rocking the hips back and forth a few times and be aware of the 2 extremes:

1. The pelvis tilting backwards, where the hip bones push up towards the ceiling as the lower back flattens into the floor.
2. The pelvis tilting forwards as the back arches away from the floor.

Now try and find the neutral spine alignment by allowing the pelvis to relax into a position that feels natural to you, between the 2 extremes.

Marathon training – the Fab Four

It is at this time of the year that I turn my thoughts to all of those runners who have put in loads of hard work, sweat and tears getting themselves primed up for one of the big Spring Marathons. For those tackling their first marathon this can be a particularly daunting time. I caught up with a few of the 'Fab Four' recently to find out how they have been getting on and what they are expecting from their big day in London on the 17th April. (I am not sure what the 'Fab' stands for but I am sure it is not short for fabulous!!!)

If you haven't already seen it, the four guys (Jason, Andy, Nick and Steve) have their own blog that can be found at <http://runningwiththefabfour.wordpress.com/>



Jason



Andy



Nick



Steve

Here are some thoughts from Andy Prior:

"I can't talk about other members of the Fab 4, but for me London 2011 started on 25th April 2010 whilst doing the baggage. Seeing the runners come through after completing a marathon for me sowed the seed of 'I can do that', so on the 5th May I entered the ballot to get a place.

It wasn't until the autumn that I was reminded that the ballot results were out soon, so the expectations and dream of running the marathon were reignited. That fateful day when the magazine hit the doormat came and I became a reject, the only positive I took was that on the face of it all of my peers were also rejects, so I must be in good company.

I read the 'you're a reject magazine' (maybe I took it too personally!) and found a few charities that said they had no fundraising limits, maybe just maybe I could get a place after all? But no, after telephone conversations I was getting rejected by some of the charities as well.

Two of my Fab 4 running buddies (Steve Watkins & Jason Scales) had gained charity places and it was decided that the unlucky two would support the lucky two if we were unsuccessful in the club draw, our last chance of free entry. Guess what? we were both unlucky again, but I saw a posting on the Spartan forum by the Hertfordshire Community Foundation who were looking for runners and made the call, got two places reserved and suddenly realised that the dream was alive, the Fab 4 would be running London 2011.

But I had no idea of the commitment involved until I saw the training program, luckily someone explained I didn't have to run every club session listed otherwise I would probably have tried, so I got some advice from Dave, Tessa & Katrina.

They all explained that running was only part of the training required, cross training was also just as important so connected muscles were also developed and this would help to prevent the potential for injury. I was told to think about how much time I could commit to training, as this would have a result on my performance on the day. I was also reminded that of the Fab 4 I was probably the one guiltiest of over-training & pushing too hard, resulting in many injuries so I was a major doubt even to get to the start line, but so far the tough love has worked a treat!

Marathon training officially began for me on the 1st of January, it couldn't start in December as I was injured (again). I spoke to Jamie Drackford and signed up to Marriots gym on the Spartan deal, well worth the money and the journey began. I decided early on to invest as much time as possible to my training, did a deal with the family and started to focus.

My training routine is Monday Gym for upper body strength, Tuesday FVS run followed by the occasional Core session (they kill me), Wednesday is Flexibar & Circuit training, Thursday is FVS run (sometimes a double loop of the starter group to add midweek miles) Friday & Saturday off and Sunday was normally my Long run day.

So far my monthly running stats are as follows;

January	13 sessions	115 miles
February	12 sessions	121 miles
March	14 sessions	135 miles

The **total** hours spent training is January 33, February 34, March 38, so a huge investment in time, but the benefits I have seen from my training diary is that my average speed is rising, my average heart rate is falling and I have burnt 57,000 calories from running alone.

You would possibly think 57,000 calories burnt and all this training he must have lost loads of weight? Unfortunately not, 4lbs at the most, but I feel fantastic and I'm fitter than I have been for years.

The encouragement and advice from all FVS coaches along the way has also helped, but Sarah O baiting me to catch her on hills, Sharon Crowley and Tessa Stephenson offering me Bread Pudding rewards, Katrina's wagging finger and Dave Stephenson's pearls of running wisdom have all helped to keep me motivated, I was even discussed by 'ladies that lunch' one Friday!

Other members of the Fab 4 have followed slightly different training programmes due to their personal situations, 'Top Gun' Jason Scales has favoured early morning runs due to family commitments (starting as early as 5am!), our 'celebrity' Steve Watkins has been force to train within a gym due to knee issues (he is going stir crazy) and 'Inspector Gadget' Nick Witcombe was training hard until the curse of new trainers hit and he is now hitting the cycle paths hard to maintain fitness levels to be ready for London.

We also have all had to raise our charity monies, an additional pressure; our charities are The Ron Pickering Memorial Foundation, Children with Leukaemia and Hertfordshire Community Foundation. Friends and family have all been asked to help out, plus we organised a charity Race Night which has really boosted the totals for us all. We think that between us the Fab 4 will raise close to **£4,500** for charity which is something I am very proud to be associated with and we can't thank our Spartan supporters enough.

My personal targets for London 2011 have remained the same throughout training;

1. Get to the start line
2. Finish the race
3. Get a sub 5 hour time
4. Get a sub 4.30 time

But most of all enjoy the experience of the journey and find out what works for me, so next time improvements can be made and scalps taken!"

Jason Scales added:

"10 years ago and in his late forties my Dad started on a health kick to reduce his well paid for beer belly. Along with healthy eating came exercise, starting with walking, progressing into cycling and after a few weeks, light jogging.

Over the coming weeks a mile became two and soon up to five miles or more. I remember asking him what he got out of running alone, pounding the streets and country lanes of Wheathampstead. He said "I just can't explain it, I have the running bug, It's like a drug and I need a regular fix". The same year he entered the Flora London marathon and got a place for the following year at the first time of asking, (Jammy so-and-so!)

The months rolled past and after all the training the big day arrived. With a photograph of my eldest son Owen pinned to his sleeve he made it through the 26.2 miles in five and a half hours. When he showed me that shiny medal I vowed that I would follow his footsteps in London.

I myself used to be involved with lots of sports, mostly football, but the good life had left me well out of shape. I couldn't even run up the stairs without getting out of breath. My health deteriorated too and I was diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnea syndrome about 5 years ago. I won't bore you with the details, but it means that I stop breathing when I'm asleep. To combat this, the treatment means I go to bed looking like a TOPGUN pilot, face mask etc, blowing air in to keep the airway open. My size was to blame, so enough was enough. I had to do something about it.

I thought the easiest way to start exercising was on a bike, less impact on my heavy frame. It was great and along with a great diet plan, the pounds rolled off. After losing a stone I decided that a progression in to fast walking / light jogging was the way to go. I just started around the block at home, walk 200mtrs, jog 100mtrs, walk 200mtrs jog 100mtrs etc, etc, etc. This went well and after a couple of weeks, i was running half way round and walking the other half. I loved it, 4 to 5 nights a week I would get in from work, change and back out, rain or shine. I loved that fresh air, couldn't get enough of it.

I wanted more from running, but didn't know about running clubs or anything. I googled the local area....Garden City runners looked good, so I emailed them...No response !. I then came across Fairlands Valley Spartans, they had a starter group. I remember ringing Tessa and after a quick chat I went along for my first session, Monday night...summer route through the park. Everyone was really friendly and supportive. I never thought there would be such a mix of different people, from all walks of life. After that first session i was hooked, Monday and Thursday nights every week without fail. For the first time i felt what my old man went on about all those years before....The Bug. He was right, you couldn't explain it to people that didn't run, they thought i was mental, out at all hours, rain, dark, cold. I completely understand now, how he felt.

Things have gone from strength to strength in the past year, winning starter of the year will be the highlight of course, but making new friends has been massive for me, especially the other members of the Fab Four and Ange. Thanks a lot guys, your constant support keeps me going.

And so to London 2011. That was always my aim, London as my first marathon.
My personal targets for London 2011 have remained the same throughout training;

Get to the start line
Finish the race
Get a sub 6 hour time “

I think Andy and the other members of the Fab 4 epitomise the current spirit of the Virgin London Marathon – individuals deciding to do quite extraordinary things and raising a lot of money in the process. I hope their experience may inspire many others in the club to follow in their footsteps.

Chris 'Coach' Leigh



Tuesday training sessions

A reminder that the club now has five training groups on a Tuesday evening with sessions starting at 7pm from our base at Marriott's.

The groups are ability based and each group has runners within a 10K indicative time range. For example, if you are running a 10K race in a time of 50 minutes then Group 3 is your recommended training group.

Group number	Total repetitions/efforts	10K indicative race time
Group 1 – red	20 minutes	60 minutes +
Group 2 – yellow	24 minutes	54 to 59 minutes
Group 3 – blue	27-28 minutes	48 to 53 minutes
Group 4 – green	28-30 minutes	43 – 47 minutes
Group 5 - black	30-32 minutes	Under 43 minutes

There may be good reasons why you wish to move to a different group on particular weeks. For example, you have raced on the previous weekend and are recovering from that. As a result, you move down one group. Equally, you may be striving to hit certain training targets and wish to move up a group to stretch yourself just a little further.

Paul Holgate includes an indicative Group number within the monthly training plans he sends to each of you. This should help to guide you into the group that you will be most suited to for the majority of your Tuesday based training runs. If you have any doubts about the group you are running in please have a chat with one of the coaching team before the session.

Marathon Tapering

With spring marathons well on their way, including the first Virgin London Marathon, here are a number of tips and advice provided by the Archangel (Tony "Ossie" Osborne) as you look to move into your period of taper:

The schedule at the end of this article is intended to be a general guide to tapering for the marathon. It is shown using dates in step with the London Marathon and can be easily adapted for other marathons. There is a separate article to help with recovery also within this edition. It is not intended to be prescriptive and should be read in conjunction with anything you have planned with your own coach. While written for the marathon the same general principles apply to shorter races.

We are all different, we run at different speeds and train different mileages each week. The mileages shown may appear to be too low for anyone running 50-60 miles per week for the past 6 months. These runners may want to add a few more miles and include slightly less rest days. However, try to resist the temptation to over train. The principles are the same whatever your mileage. You have worked very hard and made big demands of your body and your mind. Now is the time to start being kind to your both mind and body and allowing them to prepare for the big day.

I have started the schedule from 4 weeks before your marathon date. This assumes you will be running until then on your own planned schedule. The Sunday before this schedule starts should be the last really LONG HARD RUN. This run should be at, or slightly slower than, your planned marathon pace.

Marathon less 4 weeks is the ideal time to start to ease back although you may see some schedules/advice refer to marathon less three weeks. As I said earlier, we are all different and are training at different levels so if you are in any doubt please consult me or one of the club's coaches.

I have called the first week Easing Back and then from the following week, Tapering . Views on how much you should taper vary, RunnersWorld recently suggested 10% 3 weeks before the race. However, I am suggesting slightly more i.e. nearer 20% at the same 3 weeks. As I said before the mileage depends on how far you normally run, so the following table gives some examples. Average weekly mileage shown is your average up to week ending 4 weeks before your race. Then taper as following table.

	Weeks before marathon	Average weekly mileage		
		50-60	40-50	30-40
Easing back 4	4	50	45	35
Tapering 3	3	45	35	30
Tapering 2	2	30	25	24
Tapering 1	1	20	15	15

For those that are running the London Marathon, try to collect your number on one of the working days available leading up to the race weekend rather than going on the Saturday, even if it means taking a day's holiday. Think what you have sacrificed in the last 6 months, and if your partner protests remind them of what **they have sacrificed to support you**. It is worth giving up a day's holiday. Whether you go on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday do not spend too much time on your feet at the Exhibition and do NOT go shopping in London. Saturday is a day of **REST**, keep off your feet as much as is reasonably possible. However, remember the partner, children etc have a life as well. You do not need added psychological stress!

HAVE A GREAT TIME ON THE DAY

Date	Week#	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun	Total					
Normal weekly mileage 50-60 miles per week														
21-Mar	4	Steady 7	Intervals 8	Steady 7	Club 8	REST	Steady 7	Long Run 13	50					
28-Mar	3	Steady 6	Intervals 8	Steady 6	Club 6	REST	Steady 7	Long Run 12	45					
04-Apr	2	Easy 5	Intervals 7	REST	Steady 5	REST	Steady 5	Long Run 8	30					
11-Apr	1	Easy 5	Easy 5	Easy 5	Easy 5	REST	REST	MTHN 26	46					
Normal weekly mileage 40-50 miles per week														
21-Mar	4	Steady 6	Intervals 7	Steady 6	Club 6	REST	Steady 8	Long Run 12	45					
28-Mar	3	Steady 6	Intervals 7	REST	Club 6	REST	Steady 6	Long Run 10	35					
04-Apr	2	Steady 5	Intervals 6	REST	Steady 5	REST	Easy 3	Long Run 6	25					
11-Apr	1	Easy 5	Easy 5	REST	Easy 5	REST	REST	MTHN 26	41					
Normal weekly mileage 30-40 miles per week														
21-Mar	4	Steady 5	Intervals 6	REST	Club 6	REST	Steady 6	Long Run 12	35					
28-Mar	3	Steady 5	Intervals 6	REST	Club 5	REST	Steady 5	Long Run 9	30					
04-Apr	2	REST	Intervals 6	REST	Steady 5	REST	Steady 6	Long Run 7	24					
11-Apr	1	Easy 5	Easy 5	REST	Easy 5	REST	REST	MTHN 26	41					

Rest means different things to different people. Sometimes it may mean not doing any exercise apart from walking the dog. To others it may mean swimming, Pilates, Yoga etc. On the above schedule it may also mean different things on different days. To me it means RECOVER & RELAX, both physically and equally importantly mentally. Whatever you do make sure it fits the 3Rs, rest, recover and relax. Personally I would have treated myself to a Sports Massage every 2 weeks with all the heavy training. If you have done this then obviously continue. If you have not tried a Sports Massage then I would recommend one in week 3 and week 1 but no later than Thursday Evening/Friday morning.

When you arrive at your race you should be fully Recovered, Rested and Relaxed. NOW ENJOY THE DAY!!!

Recovery after a race



Tony Osborne kindly provided the following advice for those that are lucky enough to be running a spring marathon (such as London, Brighton, Stratford Upon Avon, Edinburgh etc).

The following comments are written in relation to recovering from your marathon race. However, the general principles apply to any race distance. Basically the longer the race the longer you need to recover. A rough guide often quoted is 1 day per mile. So to FULLY recover from your marathon it takes around 26 days, for a half marathon 13/14 days and so on. You will of course be back in training long before that. Fully recovered means back to your racing best.

When you read this you will probably not even have run the marathon and we are talking about recovery. You bet, as Haille Gebresellassie said immediately after setting the world best for the marathon "the next race starts here". I assume this marathon will not be your last ever race. We need you in the Midweek League Series!

Remember we are not all the same. Some of us have memories of coming down stairs on our backside the next day after a marathon because it was the only way we could get down stairs! Other people are walking and even jogging gently the next day. Some of us can remember both. You will even hear tales of runners who ran a PB a week after their marathon. We are definitely not all the same.

Please refer to the example schedule below for someone who has run the London Marathon. The recovery phase covers 4 weeks (28 days, 1 day for each mile run approximately). The mileages are only a suggestion, if you normally run 40-50 miles per week you will clearly include more miles. THE PRINCIPLE IS UNCHANGED, GO GENTLY, GO CAREFULLY. The weekly mileages go from walking/jogging to gradually back to a normal schedule. **Try to include a massage around 48 hours after the race.** Some runners like the massage the next day but I always found my legs too sore and I benefitted more the following day.

The time to start GENTLY stretching is immediately after your marathon finishes. Although this is true those of us who have actually run marathons know how difficult this is. However, difficult as it may be, try to GENTLY stretch as soon as your mind will allow. Note as soon as your mind will allow. Your body will probably object but it will be worth the effort. Keep stretching as often as possible during the next 10 - 14 days.

Whether you are male or female the same applies, **do not be macho**. You are not trying to prove you are the toughest/hardest runner in the club, or the stupidest. You are, presumably, trying to recover from the marathon and get back to racing and running as well as you can as soon as you can. As I have said already some members will be back to racing and training flat out within a few days. Let them, it is their body, you look after your own body, no one else will. Remember you only get one body, treat it like a friend, not something to be punished.

By the time you get around to putting your recovery schedule into practise I hope you have run a brilliant marathon. Now have a great summer with loads of 5 mile and 10K SBs at least and maybe even a PB, and then on to the Autumn Half Marathons!

Date	Week #	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	
Normal weekly mileage 30-60 miles per week									
18 Apr	4	REST/walk 20 mins	REST/walk 20 mins/massage	REST/swim 30 mins	REST/Jog 20 mins	REST/walk 40 mins	REST/swim 45 mins	REST/jog 25 mins	Mileage irrelevant, plenty of stretching.
25 Apr	3	Walk 50 mins	Easy Jog 30 mins	Swim/Yoga/Pilates/rest	Easy Jog 40 mins	REST	Easy Jog 50mins	Walk 60 mins	Keep stretching, rest if you still feel tired
2 May	2	Steady run 30 mins	Steady run 45 mins	Swim/Yoga/Pilates/rest	Steady run 40 mins	REST	Steady run 45 mim	Steady Run 45 mins.	Less if stiff/sore/tired. Try another massage Friday.
9 May	1	Steady run 40 mins	Club session 1 group SLOWER than your normal group	Swim/Yoga/Pilates/rest	Steady run 50 mins	REST	Steady run 60 mim	Steady Run 45 mins.	

Do NOT rush, recover gently. There are no prizes for being macho. If you really feel COMFORTABLE doing more then go ahead. If you are tired, stiff or sore then REST or EASE BACK. Swimming and massage should help with any stiffness but KEEP ON STRETCHING, both static and dynamic.

Weekly mileages, both plan and actual have been suspended for 4 weeks to allow you to concentrate on RECOVERY, both MIND and BODY.

Enjoy your well earned rest and recuperation back to racing fitness.



Steady versus Speed?????

Many of you will have already seen the discussions that have been taking place on the Forum regarding the relative benefits and choices between a steady run and a 'speed' workout. This was initiated following the recent introduction of a Steady run within the club's training schedule on a Thursday at 7pm (from Marriotts).

Within the discussions, the single point that seems to be consistently made is that within a runner's schedule you should not have too much of one type of training (or worse still, all of the same type of training). There are clear benefits in completing sessions that demand you increase your pace beyond that of a steady run, even if those pace increases are relatively marginal. These can take many forms such as hill training, tempo runs, intervals and track based sessions. However, you shouldn't be filling your whole schedule up with them! This leads me nicely into the article 'balancing your schedule' which provides more information on the range of running/sessions you should be aiming to complete to achieve an appropriate balance in your training.

A final thought. Why not add some flexibility into your schedule and try the different sessions that the club are providing, incorporating those into your own personal schedule. This will help with your running motivation and you will also benefit from the training effects the variations will bring. So, go Steady but also try out the club's alternative 'Speed' based sessions, including enjoying the ones that are based on inclines!!

Chris 'Coach' Leigh



Balancing your Schedule

In the last copy of Catch a Coach I stated that the 2 key areas of running were Consistency and Balance. Due to lack of both space and time I concentrated on the area of Consistency which is pretty straightforward and not really contentious. This edition I am going to talk about Balance and I suspect this will be different.

First of all let's just spare a moment to mention a few different types of training. They are not mutually exclusive and there are grey areas which overlap. When does a run become Long as opposed to Steady, when does an Interval session become a Tempo run? If hills build strength and power are they speed sessions?

Long run, a steady paced run of whatever distance is *Long* for you. Probably something between 8 miles and 18 miles. Run about 1 minute per mile slower than your marathon pace. You can chat ALL the way.

Steady run, the back bone of your training, around 60%-75% of your weekly mileage. Run at about 60 seconds per mile slower than your 10K race pace.

Possible to talk most of the time but shorter sentences.

Threshold run, once a week if possible, depending on how often you run. Faster than your steady pace but not racing speed. Talking difficult, only infrequently and short phrases.

Tempo session, close to race pace but shorter distances. Longer efforts than Interval sessions. Classic example, 1 mile efforts with 5 minutes recovery. Number and pace depends on your personal fitness. Obviously add warm up and warm down. Only possible to talk a few words.

Interval/Endurance session, much faster shorter efforts from 100 metres upwards. Number of efforts, recovery time etc depends on you as per Tempo sessions. Not possible talk.

Hill sessions as their name implies utilise hilly terrain. However, there are at least 5 different types of hill sessions to my knowledge. Not possible to talk

Speed sessions vary even more than Hill sessions. Personally I am not happy with the name. Surely any session that encourages you to run faster encourages speed. There are Continuous Relays, Paarluf, and a wide variety of sessions where you sprint over different distances. **Of course I encourage Speed sessions in my coaching.** However, they are carefully placed in the schedule, depending on the race distance for which the runner is training. Basically run a distance of anything between 100 and 600 metres. The pace will be faster than in an Interval session with a much lower number of efforts and with much longer recovery periods than during an Interval session.

Recovery runs take place in between hard sessions, they are fairly short run of say 3-5 miles depending on your fitness. Easy pace, able to talk in same way as long run. **THEY ARE VERY IMPORTANT.**

Now of course we have not talked about Yoga, Weights, Pilates, Circuit training, Tai Chi, Swimming, Cycling or a few other methods. Generally these types of training come under the umbrella of Cross Training. In fact we are not going to talk about them in this article. Back to where we started i.e. with time and space, **BUT MORE LATER.**

So where do we start when thinking about Balance in our schedule? What about how often we run? The more sessions in our training the easier it is to fit in different types of session. Also what about the event for which we are training? A marathon requires a different balance to a 10K.

In an ideal running world we would be able to train as often as we needed for our particular event. It would probably be a very boring world! So we have to train along with working, being partners, parents etc. The following is a **very simple model.** Each runner has to look at their own schedule.

Tony Osborne

Day/No of Sessions per week

	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Mon.			**	Core stability
Tues.	Intervals	Intervals	Intervals	Intervals
Wed.	**	**	Recovery run	Recovery run
Thurs	Steady run	Threshold/ Steady run	Threshold/ Tempo	Threshold /Tempo
Fri			REST	REST
Sat		Steady run	Steady run	Steady run
Sun	Long run	Long run	Long run	Long run

** Core Stability if possible e.g. Pilates

Remember this is simply an example. You will find something similar in any running website/magazine. A schedule should not be copied directly. They are examples only. Equally you should not copy someone else's schedule. However, when you work out your own schedule bear in mind balance. As I said training for a 10K is different to training for a marathon, or some distance in between, but the principles are the same. **If in doubt, please ask a member of the coaching team, that is why we are here.**

*Tony Osborne
Head Coach.*



Race Tactics

With a good eye on marathons and the 10K midweek league series alike, here are my thoughts on race tactics.

Some race tactics can be prepared well in advance but often you will need to respond to situations as they unfold, such as a competitor making an unexpected surge. You can practice stressful tactical moves in training workouts and mentally rehearse tactical possibilities so that you are more prepared for various situations that can arise in races. Here are a series of additional tactical points to consider in your racing and preparations:

- One option is to pace to run your best time and be confident this will be good enough to beat your main competitors. This won't exactly pit you in racing duels but can be the most effective way to compete for many of us;
- Take the lead from the start, whether leading the entire race or just the set of competitors you are pitting yourself against. You can push for the first part of a race, say the first mile, before easing into a pace you can handle to protect the lead you have established. This tactic can undermine your competitors confidence and boost your own. This tactic is not without risk because it demands that you can break away and maintain that lead without faltering during the remainder of the race. You can adapt this tactic by forging ahead early on in a race but without pushing 'all out' and aim to wear down your competitors over a longer period of the race.
- You can run with your competitors and look to push on ahead of them at a key part of the race. This could be at a particularly challenging point, for example on a hill, where the sight of you passing them and holding a lead can be a psychological killer blow. You need to practice putting in these surges as part of your training. The best opportunities for this are either in interval sessions or on fartlek runs. Start the session using a fast but controlled pace and somewhere in the middle of the session put in a faster interval. You can then finish the session pushing through with the remaining reps, feeling tired, to mimic the finishing conditions of a race.
- Responding to a surge – if your competitor puts in a surge during a race then you will need to be ready to respond. Try mentally tossing out a line to them and gradually pull them back into contact. Resist the temptation to go all out by responding immediately and don't panic or give up. Try and remain calm and consider how you will respond by gradually increasing your pace and drawing them back in.
- Remember to adjust your tactics for different race distances. The tactics you use in a 5K race will not necessarily service you well in a half marathon. In a 5K race you need to be in contact with your competitors from the start whereas a half marathon distance gives you longer to respond to gaps that emerge between yourself and your competitors.
- Don't let others psych you out! Focus on yourself and what you need to do rather than letting others get into your head! Remember, you run the race with your legs and not your mouth!
- Try running as part of a pack in the race. You can use other runners in this way to hold or push your pace, use them as a wind break or help you up hills.
- Use runners as tow ropes – drop in behind someone who passes you and stay with the pace as long as possible. If you have to let go, take a break and then try to hook up with another runner.

- Set passing goals - set yourself small goals of passing runners as the race progresses. See how many runners you can catch over the second half of a race, for example. You can play games with yourself by keeping a mental score - +1 for each runner you pass and -1 for each runner that overtakes you. By setting yourself scoring targets in final sections of races you can also help this to hold your concentration on the race and get the best out of your performance

- Don't get bogged down with the 'pecking order syndrome'. If you analyse your competition and work out that you should be placed behind certain runners than that is what is likely to happen. Challenge the pecking order – dare yourself to move up to a new level!

Experience of racing will give you a greater understanding of what works for you in different situations. Practice different situations in training so that you are better prepared but don't forget – don't leave your race in the training session! (i.e. don't over cook your training so that you are spent for that big race coming up).

Chris 'Coach' Leigh

Cram Tags



A reminder that the club has a supply of 'Cram Tags' that are free to all members. These little tags can hold your emergency contact information and are simply threaded on to the laces of your running shoes so that information is always readily available.

Our Chairman, Ian Larman, has been able to discuss the use of the Cram tags with senior members of the St John's Ambulance and we expect there will be a pickup in their use nationally. Not the first time the club have been trail blazers!!!!