

BASICS OF SUMMER TRAINING FOR XC

Cross Country fitness develops over time. Training consistently for several months is the best way to reach your highest potential as a runner. The focus is on building from beginning to end, with the goals of staying healthy, enjoying the process & challenges of becoming race fit, and ultimately running your best when it counts (at the end of the season).

The purpose of summer running & strength work is “training to train”. The focus is on higher volume, and lower intensity, so the work you do over the summer will increase your capacity to train and prepare you to do the more intense training in the fall.

Elements of summer training:

Rest/Recovery: Rest is an important component of training, especially early in the training cycle. If you do something that takes a lot out of you – whether it’s a longer run, or a run on a very hot day – take the next day or two as recovery days (i.e., a day off, or just a shorter run than you would normally do). Listen to your body.

Mileage: Just getting out and running is the backbone of summer training, with the weekly “long run” a crucial component of training.

Mental Training: Over the summer, make the conscious decision to train. Little decisions add up, and every day you make the decision to run, you’re a little stronger mentally. You can reinforce this by keeping a running log of what you did – be proud of your accomplishments.

General thoughts:

- Run as you feel. If you feel good, run a little quicker but don’t press. If you feel crappy, take it easy.
- Listen to your body, and learn how it responds to different distances, paces, etc.
- Make sure you have good shoes, and wear them only for running. Most running shoes will last approximately 3-4 months.

Why Running Mileage Will Make You Faster In the Long Term, Even if You’re Not Running Fast...

Consistent easy running (read: comfortable, not necessarily slow) produces numerous training benefits:

- The heart becomes stronger and can pump more blood with each beat.
- On the cellular level, there is an increase in the number, size and distribution of mitochondria, which are the sites of aerobic metabolism within muscle cells.
- Tendons, ligaments and bones adapt to the measured stress placed on them by becoming bigger, stronger, and more dense.