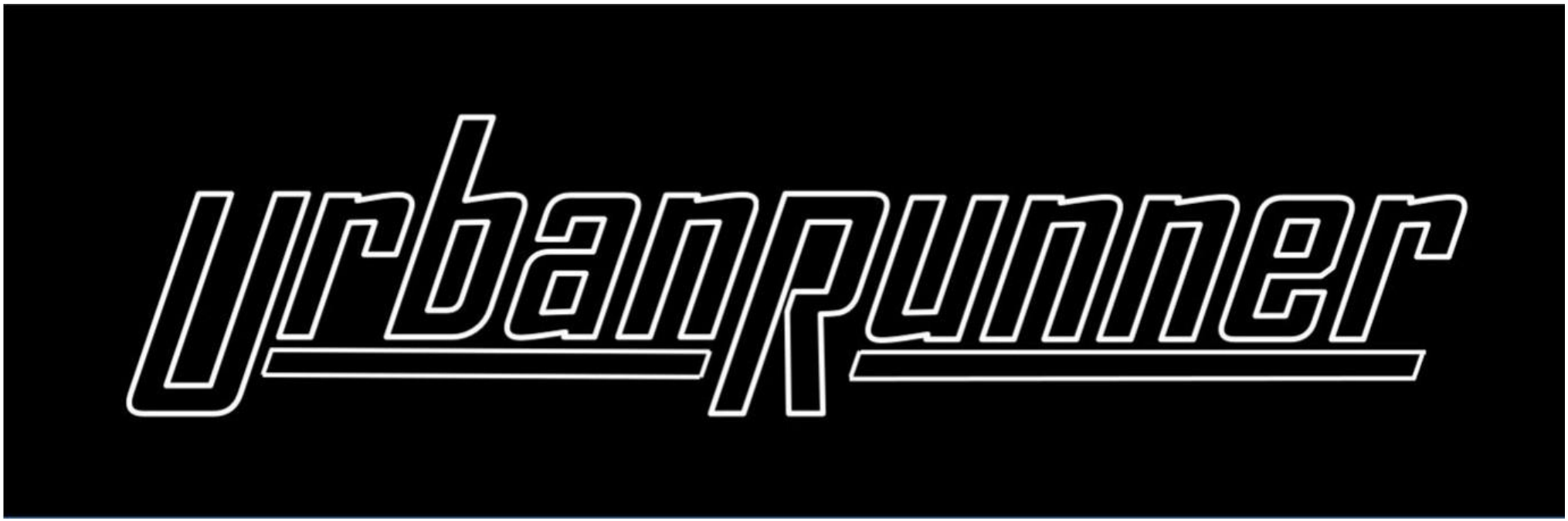


How to create a training plan

Updated 06th October 2025

What will you learn?

- How to create a bespoke training plan to suit your lifestyle.
- What elements can be changed if needed without a decremental effect to your end goals.
- The do’s and don’ts.

The 3 elements of a training plan

- Running
- Strength
- Flexibility/mobility

Also:

- Rest
- Diet

Types of runs

- Long Run
- Recovery Run
- Tempo
- Hills Runs
- Speed Work
- REST DAYS

How long should a long run be?

You should gradually build up your running distance to 20 miles around 2-3 weeks prior to your race day.

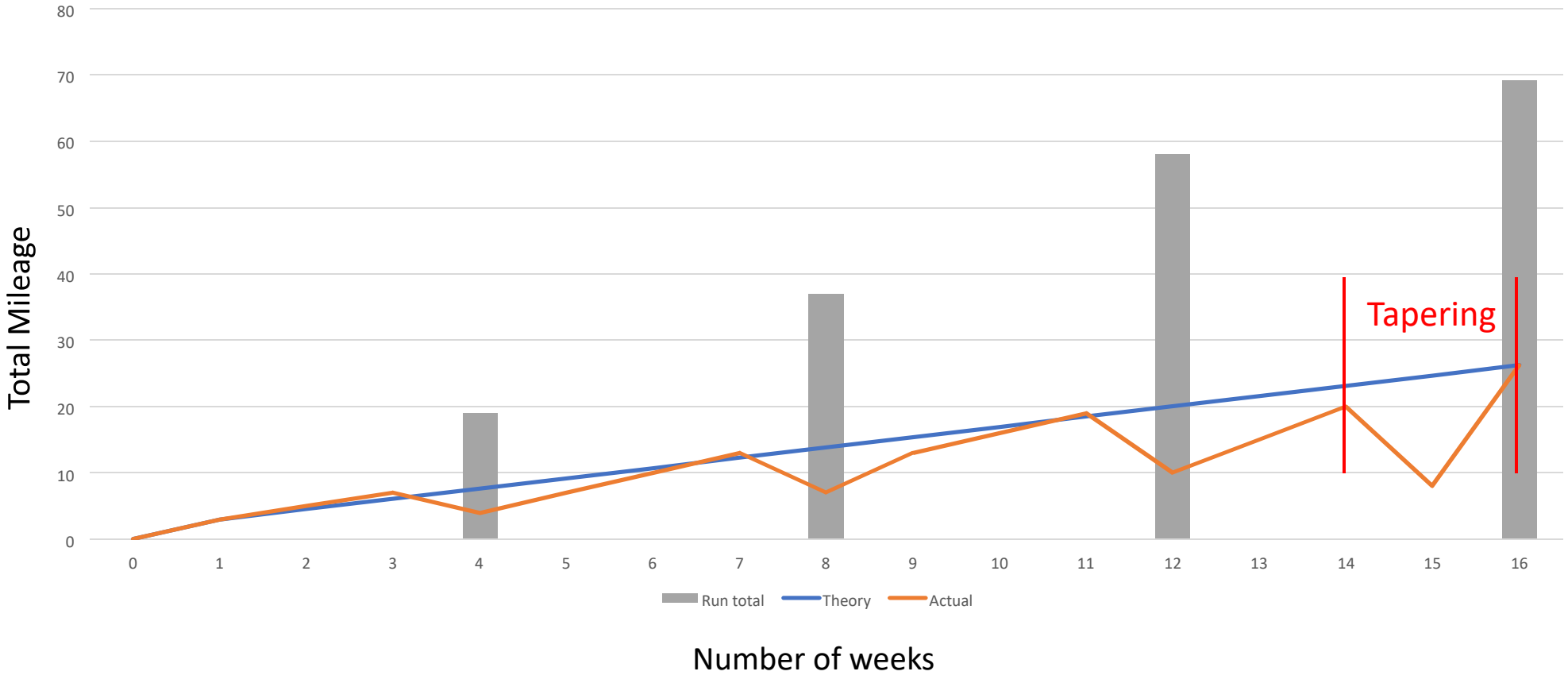
Work on a 4 week cycle: 3 weeks of increased mileage then 4th week will be a rest week (reduced mileage). Some may prefer a 3 week cycle which will give you more rest.

You can start your training runs slower than your “race pace” but work up to it by week 10/11.

Your longest run should be in the region of 20 miles or 3 hours (which ever comes first).

After 3 hours of running you body is fatigued and the risk of injury is increased.

Typical marathon long run profile



How often should I stretch?

- Active stretching pre run (5-10 mins).
- Static stretching post run (5 – 10 mins).
- Ideally dedicated stretching sessions 2-3 times a week (30-60 mins). However, this is very unlikely to be sustainable, so just be mindful and do what you can by fitting it into your everyday life. If you are desk bound, can you get up every hour for a 5 min stretch routine?

How often should I do strength work?

- The purpose of strength work is to build up your body to hold form. Bad form can lead to injury. This is clear towards the end of a long run – are you running upright or is your body leaning forward? It's actually harder to run leaning forward than upright and wastes so much energy.
- Ideally 2 dedicated strength sessions per week.
- Focus on single leg exercises to simulate running. Single legged squats will be more beneficial than standard double legged squats.
- Also, focus on core.

How long is my training plan and how long should each running cycle be?

- Most marathon plans last around 12-16 (depending on your experience and fitness level they can be shorter).
- Most plans work around a 1 week cycle - can you fit all of the running, strength and stretching into a 1 week cycle and still manage your life?
- So, split your running into a 2 week cycle!!!

Don’t be frightened of a training plan

XXX's (what marathon) Marathon Training Plan
Target Time: X:XX
Pace: X:XX/mile

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date																	
Monday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Saturday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
																TAPER	

1	Do the pre warm-up routine before ALL runs - Ankle, Hips and Lunge Matrix. We can discuss this.
2	All runs to have a 5 min warm-up jog at the start and 5 min cool-down jog which is not part of the main session
3	5 @ 10:00 means 5 miles at 10:00 min per mile pace
	3/5 @ ? Means 3 to 5 miles at an easy pace

Races	

Key	
Run	**Pace**
Long run	
Tempo run	
Hill run	
Speed run	
Recovery run	

Step 1 Determine your finishing time (rough calculation)

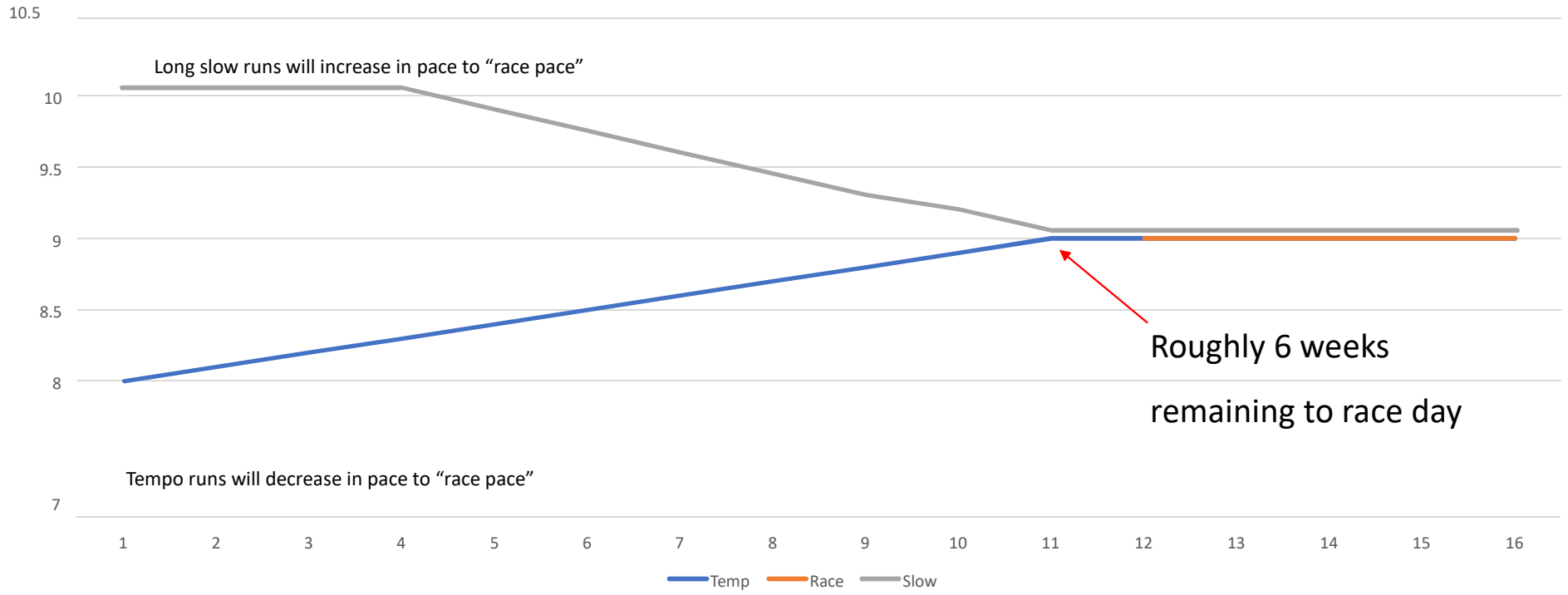
Distance	Time (calculated)	Actual
5K		00:22:00
10K (5K doubled + 2 min)	00:46:00	00:46:00
HM (10K doubled + 10 mins)	01:42:00	01:46:00
Marathon (HM doubled + 30 mins)	04:02:00	04:07:00

Step 2

Determine your pace for training

Time	Mile Pace	KM pace
3:45	08:35	05:20
4:00	09:10	05:42
4:15	09:44	06:03
4:30	10:18	06:24
4:45	10:53	06:45
5:00	11:27	07:07
5:30	12:35	07:49
6:00	13:44	08:32

Pace Graph


10.5
10
9.5
9
8.5
8
7
Long slow runs will increase in pace to “race pace”
Tempo runs will decrease in pace to “race pace”
Roughly 6 weeks
remaining to race day
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
Temp
Race
Slow

Step 3

Add long runs

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date		22nd Feb	01st Mar	09th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	06th April	13th Apr	20th Apr	27th Apr	04th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	01st Jun	08th Jun
Monday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Saturday	Run	6	8	10	6	10	12	14	8	12	14	16	8	14	20	8	
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																26.2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
																TAPER	

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Step 4

Add long run pace

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date		22nd Feb	01st Mar	09th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	06th April	13th Apr	20th Apr	27th Apr	04th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	01st Jun	08th Jun
Monday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Saturday	Run	6 @ 9:45	8 @ 9:45	10 @ 9:30	6 @ 9:30	10 @ 9:30	12 @ 9:15	14 @ 9:15	8 @ 915	12 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	16 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	20 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																26.2 @ 9:00
	Strength																
	Stretch																
																TAPER	

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Step 5

Add recovery runs

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date		22nd Feb	01st Mar	09th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	06th April	13th Apr	20th Apr	27th Apr	04th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	01st Jun	08th Jun
Monday	Run	3	3	3	3 to 4	3 to 4	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	?	?	?	3 to 5	?	?	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run															3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run															3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Saturday	Run	6 @ 9:45	8 @ 9:45	10 @ 9:30	6 @ 9:30	10 @ 9:30	12 @ 9:15	14 @ 9:15	8 @ 915	12 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	16 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	20 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																26.2 @ 9:00
	Strength																
	Stretch																
																TAPER	

Step 6

Add tempo runs

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date		22nd Feb	01st Mar	09th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	06th April	13th Apr	20th Apr	27th Apr	04th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	01st Jun	08th Jun
Monday	Run	3	3	3	3 to 4	3 to 4	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	?	?	?	3 to 5	?	?	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run	4 @ 8:15	4 @ 8:15	5 @ 8:15	5 @ 8:30	6 @ 8:30	7 @ 8:30	7 @ 8:45	4 @ 8:45	8 @ 9:00	7 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	6 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	6 @ 9:00	3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run															3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Saturday	Run	6 @ 9:45	8 @ 9:45	10 @ 9:30	6 @ 9:30	10 @ 9:30	12 @ 9:15	14 @ 9:15	8 @ 915	12 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	16 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	20 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																26.2 @ 9:00
	Strength																
	Stretch																
																TAPER	

Step 7

Add speed and hill runs

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date		22nd Feb	01st Mar	09th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	06th April	13th Apr	20th Apr	27th Apr	04th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	01st Jun	08th Jun
Monday	Run	3	3	3	3 to 4	3 to 4	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	?	?	?	3 to 5	?	?	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run	4 @ 8:15	4 @ 8:15	5 @ 8:15	5 @ 8:30	6 @ 8:30	7 @ 8:30	7 @ 8:45	4 @ 8:45	8 @ 9:00	7 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	6 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	6 @ 9:00	3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run		3		3		3		3		3		3		3	3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Saturday	Run	6 @ 9:45	8 @ 9:45	10 @ 9:30	6 @ 9:30	10 @ 9:30	12 @ 9:15	14 @ 9:15	8 @ 915	12 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	16 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	20 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																26.2 @ 9:00
	Strength																
	Stretch																
																TAPER	

Step 8

Add stretch and strength

Weeks left		16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Date		22nd Feb	01st Mar	09th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	06th April	13th Apr	20th Apr	27th Apr	04th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	01st Jun	08th Jun
Monday	Run	3	3	3	3 to 4	3 to 4	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 5	?	?	?	3 to 5	?	?	1 or 2
	Strength	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Stretch																
Tuesday	Run	4 @ 8:15	4 @ 8:15	5 @ 8:15	5 @ 8:30	6 @ 8:30	7 @ 8:30	7 @ 8:45	4 @ 8:45	8 @ 9:00	7 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	6 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	6 @ 9:00	3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Wednesday	Run																
	Strength	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
	Stretch																
Thursday	Run		3		3		3		3		3		3		3	3	1 or 2
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Friday	Run																
	Strength																
	Stretch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Saturday	Run	6 @ 9:45	8 @ 9:45	10 @ 9:30	6 @ 9:30	10 @ 9:30	12 @ 9:15	14 @ 9:15	8 @ 915	12 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	16 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	14 @ 9:00	20 @ 9:00	8 @ 9:00	
	Strength																
	Stretch																
Sunday	Run																26.2 @ 9:00
	Strength																
	Stretch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
																TAPER	

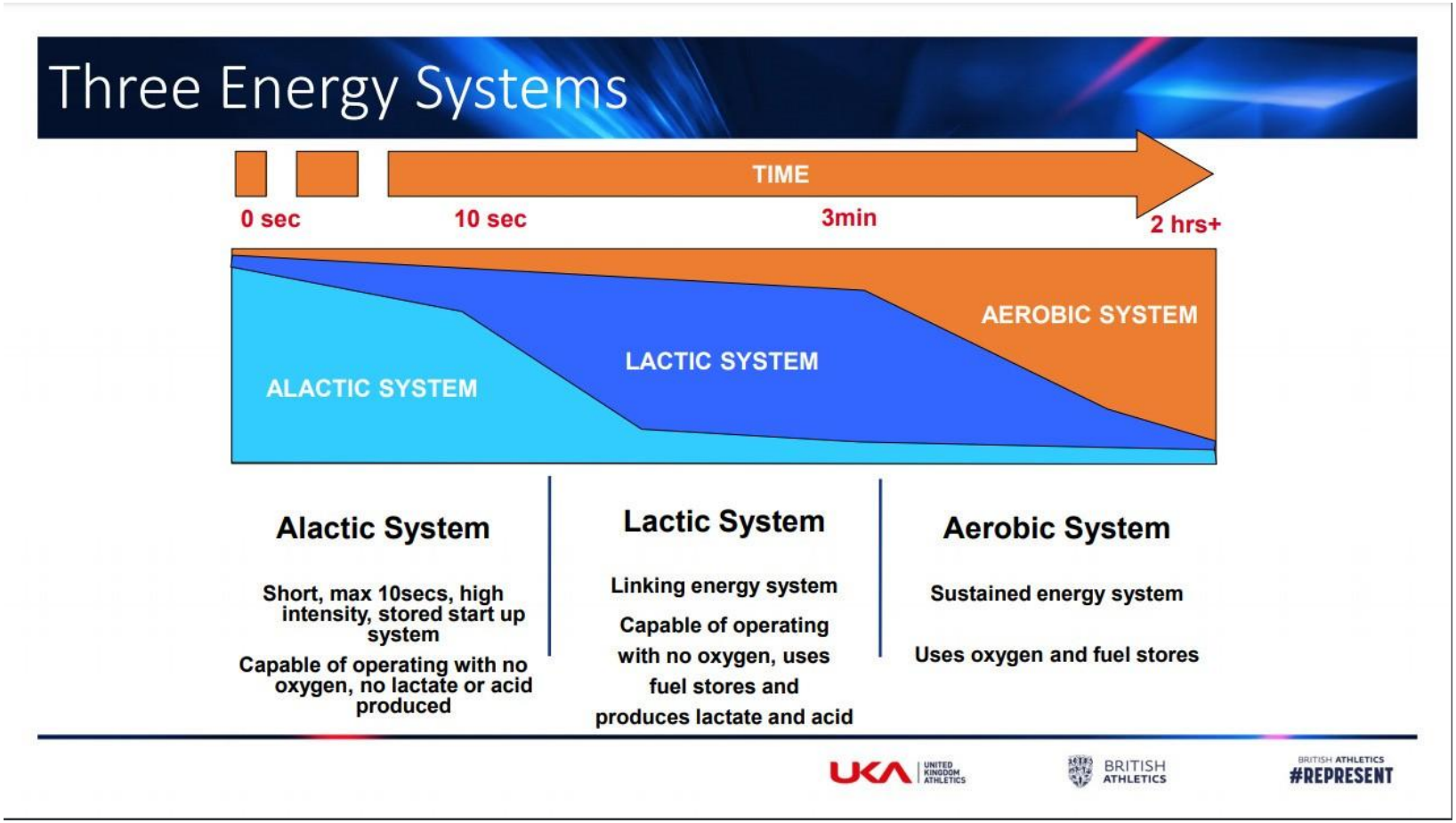
Prepared by Rakesh Sandhu

Other Important Information

- Hitting the wall.
- Carb loading.
- Physical and Mental training.
- What time of day do you train? Try to start your runs at marathon start time.
- Don’t be afraid to walk if needed (hills or to drink).
- Nothing new on race day.
- Be aware of your running (be present).
- Know the terrain/elevation of your marathon.

Back Up

Energy system



Energy system

Duration	Classification	Energy Supplied By
1 to 4 seconds	Anaerobic	ATP (in muscles)
4 to 10 seconds	Anaerobic	ATP + CP
10 to 45 seconds	Anaerobic	ATP + CP + Muscle glycogen
45 to 120 seconds	Anaerobic, Lactic	Muscle glycogen
120 to 240 seconds	Aerobic + Anaerobic	Muscle glycogen + lactic acid
240 to 600 seconds	Aerobic	Muscle glycogen + fatty acids

Energy for running

- Our body converts the food we consume in to energy to be used for all training, Marathon races, and other activities. As a marathon runner preparing for the next marathon race or other endurance distance it is crucial to have at least a basic understanding of how the system of energy conversion works.
- Nutrition or energy is retained from converting carbohydrates, fat, and protein to adenosine triphosphate or ATP. When ATP is broken down energy is released which allows the muscles to contract.
- For any training of moderate to high intensity carbohydrate is the main source of energy. Low intensity exercise for longer periods of time uses fat as its main source of energy. Body tissue and especially the damaged muscles are repaired by proteins which are normally not used as fuel for muscle activity.
- It is not easy for our body to store ATP (whatever stored ATP there is would be used up in a matter of seconds), so it is critical to continuously create ATP during exercise. There are two major energy conversion ways which are:
- Aerobic metabolism (with oxygen)
- Anaerobic metabolism (without oxygen)

Energy for running

- While running for more than 5 minutes you will move through these metabolic pathways. In the first stages when you start running, ATP is produced by anaerobic metabolism until breathing and heart rate increase. With increased breathing and heart rate the endurance runners' body switches to aerobic metabolism as more oxygen becomes available. Your running can then continue until you reach the lactic threshold. At this stage running intensity needs to be reduced to lower lactic acid levels.
- Nutrients fuel the energy systems when converted to ATP depending on the duration and intensity of the run. Of all nutrients it is carbohydrate which is the main energy provider for moderate to high intensity runs. Fat is a great energy provider for low intensity runs like LSD or a recovery run. Humans have enough fat stored to continue running at an intensity below 50 percent of their maximum heart rate for hours and even days provided there is a steady supply of oxygen for fat metabolism to occur.
- When your body has warmed up during running, carbohydrate metabolism takes over from fat metabolism. Using carbohydrate for fuel is more efficient than fat but has limited availability. Stored carbohydrate reserves will be able to provide energy for moderate to high intensity runs for about 2 hours. When the stored carbohydrates are used up glycogen depletion occurs and unless they are not replaced runners may hit the wall or bonk. To avoid this runners need to refuel during their run or race. Especially during a full marathon it is important to eat easily digestible carbohydrates if you are running for more than two hours (no one has run a marathon under two hours yet). Failing to consume carbohydrates will force you to reduce your running intensity while shifting back to fat metabolism.
- When running intensity increases, there is a dramatic drop off in carbohydrate metabolism efficiency due to a lack of oxygen and anaerobic metabolism takes over.
- carbohydrates can produce about twenty times more energy (ATP) per gram if it is metabolized in the presence of adequate oxygen than when generated in the oxygen-starved, anaerobic environment that occurs during intense running or sprinting.
- With appropriate training, these energy systems adapt and become more efficient and allow greater running duration at higher intensity.

ATP

- The ATP-CP (adenosine triphosphate - creatine phosphate) is an energy pathway that supplies about 8 to 10 seconds of energy for short extremely high running bursts such as a 100 meter sprint. This anaerobic energy pathway doesn't need any oxygen to create the ATP. First all the ATP is stored in the muscle is used up after that the creatine phosphate is used to re-synthesize ATP until there is no more CP. After this process the body will change its energy supply to either aerobic or anaerobic metabolism (energy from glycogen) to produce ATP to fuel exercise.

Anaerobic

- The anaerobic glycolysis energy pathway produces ATP from carbohydrates only. This energy pathway produces lactic acid as a by-product. Anaerobic glycolysis doesn't require oxygen for the (partial) breakdown of glucose. For short high-intensity running periods which last no longer than several minutes before the lactic acid build-up reaches a threshold known as the lactate threshold this pathway is employed. After reaching the lactate threshold, burning muscle pain and fatigue make it difficult to continue running at the same intensity.

Aerobic

- Aerobic metabolism is the pathway which provides energy for long distance running. Aerobic metabolism converts carbohydrates, fats, and protein to ATM using oxygen. Relying on the circulatory system to supply oxygen to the working muscles before ATP can be created, this pathway is slower than anaerobic energy systems. Longer endurance runs can be maintained at a 50 to 70 percent of maximum heart rate.