

### Level 3 (Becomers). Week 11. Workouts 1-3.

**This is the third week of your third 4-week training period.** The training ends next week and we will know then whether you have qualified as a fitness Level 3 athlete. The main question is whether you have established the three weekly workouts scheduled to this point.

- **To establish** a workout is a lot like preparing a dish according to a recipe. The incremental schedule is a part of our recipe; my workout descriptions are another part.
- **Of course**, a lot happens between my job, your facilitator's interpretation of it, and your filtering of our ideas before you can do a set of workouts. Yet, everyone has a job to do.

**The theme for the week** is "Taper-Gather." Your workouts are shorter (by a total of 25 minutes) than they were last week. You must be willing to give up duration this week and next so you can gather energy to the eager level for the difficult test-effort on the last day.

- **Of course**, if you choose to disregard the schedule, you might still be eager then. But following the schedule gives you a low-risk way of experimenting with your energy.
- **Why do you train**, if not to race? Since hard/eager performances are significantly better than hard/ready performances, shouldn't you know how to become eager?

**Here is a summary of your three Week-11 workouts:**

- **Workout 1.** A 70-minute, moderate/ready tempo workout on a flat route. Please refer to earlier workout descriptions for details on how to structure this workout.
  - **The most important thing** is to obey the comfort rule. All tempo intervals must be short enough to remain comfortable at racing tempo.
  - **Since you can't change** the two-minute duration, you must control your pace to remain comfortable, rather than even tolerably uncomfortable.
  - **It's easy to let intensity** get away from you. To rationalize ramping it up a little to improve your performance. But where will you draw the optimal line?

**Counting Steps.** Refer to the week 10 workout description to review the way to count your steps during a two-minute interval. The object is to establish a 2-minute step-count standard for each interval. In future weeks you can track how your step-count changes.

- **There are two ways** your body can manifest adaptation, i.e., a positive change in your ability: a faster pace at the same heart rate, meaning you go farther in two comfortable minutes. This is an increase in tempo ability.
  - **The other way** is to take more steps in two minutes, which is a sign of increased efficiency. The most efficient athletes take 190 steps per minute at marathon pace. How many steps do you take at a quick, relaxed 10K pace?
  - **The less time you spend** on the ground, the more efficient you become. The object is to spend more time floating in mid-air, where little work is done. Which is why taking shorter-quicker steps is a way to practice efficiency.
- **Workout 2.** A 50-minute, moderate/ready, speed-endurance workout on your .25 mile interval route. As you warm up, make sure you are ready for this workout, i.e., you have enough energy to run **two** 6-minute repetitions and **two** 2-minute speed repetitions.

- **This is an excellent opportunity** to practice your efficiency. How long during each repetition can you sustain a shorter-quicker step-count?
- **But remember**, you may be asking your body to do something novel and possibly injurious.
- **Moreover**, there's no use wasting your energy on unnecessary performance while you are trying to gather energy for the one that counts on race day?
- **Workout 3.** A 70-minute moderate/ready stamina workout (NOTE, the workout effort in the schedule has been changed from hard to moderately hard). Your task during this workout is to find a measured mile and count your steps at a slow-comfortable tempo.
  - **This standard** (like the one for tempo intervals at 10K tempo) will serve for stamina training and as a way to measure your body's adaptive responses. You'll want to know whether to keep the workout or change it, right?
  - **None of these standards** will be set in stone. You can measure your performance as often as once a week and the new standard moves forward with you until you measure it again on the same 1-mile course.

**In addition to the following new ideas**, please refer to the week 5 workout description for a summary of the various aspects that should be incorporated into every workout. Please refer also to the new material that has been added to this section in recent weeks.

- **Brian's Mid-Workout Stretching Routine.** The stretching routine that's posted to your fitness level page evolved to meet my particular needs (but not necessarily yours):
  - **A Lower-Back Issue.** Caused by an accident 10+ years ago. The pain is now related to the amount of sitting I do each week. Stretching helps.
  - **Short muscles.** I've always been relatively inflexible, despite a lot of stretching in my life. Not everyone can easily touch their toes.
  - **Training-related stiffness/soreness.** I've always stretched because it made my body feel more relaxed and less twitchy between workouts.

You may have different needs, which could make my routine inappropriate for you (see the next section below on what to look for).

- **Your Mid-Workout Stretching Routine.** I've given you little direction on what stretches to incorporate into your mid-workout routine. Your stretches might be better than mine for your needs. Here's what to consider in further developing your routine.
  - **Your Goal.** What are you trying to achieve/accomplish with a mid-workout stretching routine? Do you want to be more flexible? What does that mean? How would you measure it and when would you know you've arrived?
  - **Your Mind.** Suppose you want a new self-image, as being physically flexible. Being able, say, to touch your toes, instead of mid-shin. Are you concerned about your image in your eyes or the eyes of those who see you?
  - **Your Body.** Has to be in charge, not your mind. Your thinking should never predetermine your standard for flexibility, either for yourself or others. The only relevant issue is whether your stretching makes your body feel better.