

### Level 3 (Becomers). Week 12. Workouts 1-3.

**This is the fourth week of your third 4-week training period.** The training ends this week with a hard/eager test-effort.

- **The eager part** of the equation is the most important thing. The goal of the exercise is to be eager to race. Here, “race” means exert yourself at a high level. You must have abundant energy to do this test-effort without an adverse physical or mental reaction.
- **Feeling eager** is one of the supreme pleasures of the distance running game. You don’t need a warm-up to have ample energy from the start. And you soon feel like you want to charge, to taste raw flesh between your teeth. Abundant energy is a gift from God.
- **What will it take** to be eager for your 3<sup>rd</sup> workout? Continue your taper (short-slow workouts) so you can gather your energy. Focus on the coming effort and how you want it to go. Focus on the racing moment so your energy is there when you want it to be.

**The theme for the week** is “3<sup>rd</sup> Test (Calloused).” The goal is to approach the difficulty and discomfort of the test with stoic equanimity. Yes, it will hurt a little at a certain point, but you’ve been through it before and will again. And you can bank on recent training to toughen you.

**Here is a summary of your three Week-12 workouts:**

- **Workout 1.** A 60-minute, moderate/lazy stamina workout on a flat route.
  - **This should feel like** a throw-away workout that won’t do you any good. The “good” you’ll derive is an opportunity to conserve your energy for later in the week, when you’ll expend it at a time to do your future ability some good.
  - **Feeling lazy means** you only have some energy at best. That’s a skill in itself: to deliberately withhold energy from a workout so you have more to expend later when you want it in a race. How well are you able to do this?
- **Workout 2.** A 60-minute, moderate/lazy, stamina workout on a flat route.
  - **Another** throw-away workout, right? Many traditions would have you continue with harder workouts so you don’t “lose” anything by backing off. Your capacity is not so fragile that you can lose it overnight.
  - **Besides**, what’s important here is the way you perform on race day. Victory and glory go to the athlete who is willing to lose ability in order to gain it back on race day. The worse you feel mid-week, the better you’ll feel on race day.
- **Workout 3.** An 80-minute hard/eager test-effort. This is a repeat of your week-8 test. The following sections will describe the workout. You have several program goals:
  - **Make sure your energy holds** for the whole test. Don’t eat for at least four hours before the workout, so you feel empty (not hungry). You won’t feel energy deprived. The energy you need should be in your legs not your gut.
  - **There are a number of moving parts** to the test protocol (see below). You should go through the protocol several times in your mind, and especially while you warm up so you know exactly what you are going to do.
  - **The protocol tells you exactly** how to pace the event. Follow it closely so you don’t crash. The more energy you have, the more you have to hold yourself back in the early going and until you can estimate it accurately.

**The Test-Effort.** Our purpose is to test your ability to hold a pace at the threshold between inaudible and audible breathing. Can you hold the threshold level for a minute without going into audible breathing? 5 minutes? 10 minutes? More?

**We will establish two pacing standards** for your threshold-level running.

1. **Your threshold pace.** You may use a GPS monitor. Otherwise, please take note of a start and finish place on your quarter-mile course, along with the time you took to cover that distance. We'll do the pacing calculations later.
2. **The distance or time you ran inaudibly at threshold.** At this target level you would hear your breathing if you went just a little faster. Audible breathing means you have lost control of your breathing and your efficiency.

**Finish a 20-minute warm-up** at the start line of a flat, quiet, unimpeded circuit of about a quarter mile. You can use your car to measure a quarter mile (2.5 tenths on your odometer). But the exact distance is not important, as long as you come around to the start after each quarter-mile lap.

**Here's how to do the test-effort:**

- **Circuit 1.** Start running/jogging/walking at a slow pace ("slow" means holding your pace back). Continue at this pace for a complete circuit.
- **Circuit 2.** Without stopping, increase your pace until it feels quick, relaxed, comfortable and sustainable for several circuits, without audible breathing.
- **Circuit 3.** Without stopping, very gradually increase your pace until your breathing is very close to becoming audible to someone running beside you.
  - **Once at your threshold level,** time a full circuit starting and finishing at a point you can remember later (not necessarily your usual finish point).
  - **If your breathing becomes audible** in the middle of your circuit route, Mark that point and stop your timer. But continue running at threshold!
- **Last Circuit.** See about bringing your breathing back to the *inaudible* threshold level within the next circuit and *without* slowing your pace.
  - **Notice what you did** to bring your breathing back to the inaudible level. See about relaxing your upper body or focusing on your posture.
  - **This is one of the most** valuable racing skills because inaudible breathing takes much less effort, yet is almost the same pace.

**After the test-effort,** continue at a very-slow-to-slow pace for the remainder of the workout (you're scheduled for 80 minutes).

- **Notice your energy** during the slow, post-test-effort warm-down. Is it better or worse than before the test? Does it begin to flag?
- **Be sure to record** everything important about this workout in the training log on your fitness level 3 page.

**Becoming Certified.** This week marks the completion of a 12-week certification program. The program has three parts: the lessons, the workouts, and the people who support you in the certification process. Here is the workout recipe you were given in writing 12 weeks ago.

### **Three 4-Week Training Periods.**

- **Period 1 (4 weeks). Establish a Base of Moderate Workouts.** During the first four weeks, athletes will establish a base of moderate-effort workouts, i.e., there will be no hard workouts in the schedule. Each moderate workout will have an ability-building purpose: stamina, power, or tempo. We will start with three stamina workouts the first week, convert one of those to hills the second week, and another stamina workout to tempo training the third week. Rather than having to cope with hard training, the goal in the first period is to get used to moderate workouts structured by the following exertion rules (e.g., stamina-slow, power-relaxed, tempo-comfortable).
- **Period 2 (4 weeks). Increasing One Workout from Moderate to Hard.** Athletes will continue building stamina, power, and tempo at the moderate effort level. But they will add duration incrementally to one of the three major workouts, making it a hard workout by week 7. On the last workout of the second period (week 8), the new hard workout will become a hard test-effort. The test-effort will “test” the ability to sustain a relaxed, steady state level of exertion during intervals of 4, 6, 8, and 10 minutes at 10K race pace, without audible breathing.
- **Period 3 (4 weeks). Converting to a New Exertion Structure.** Athletes will stop doing one of the hill workouts, but maintain a stamina workout and a tempo workout, while structuring a workout to build speed and endurance from a newly structured tempo workout base.
  - This can be accomplished by incrementally lengthening comfortable tempo intervals into longer, more uncomfortable tempo “repetitions.” Discomfort arises with longer, sustained repetitions at the established, racing tempo pace.
  - Pace should be sustained long enough to become increasingly uncomfortable (tolerable to uncomfortable, but not very uncomfortable) at the end of first and second repetitions, and especially at the end of the third and final repetition.
  - Recovery periods (at a very slow jogging or walking pace) between repetitions should last long enough to feel “ready to go again” (usually about 5 minutes). Complete the workout by adding several, much shorter speed repetitions at the same level of discomfort.

**To what extent** did you follow the above certification plan? To what extent did the program help you become certified? To what extent did you follow your own plan instead of the certification plan? To what extent are you now qualified to train yourself with minimal supervision during future BC Endurance race-preparation programs or other non-racing fitness programs? If you feel unqualified to train yourself with minimal supervision, to what extent would you be willing to participate in a remedial program aimed at full certification at your #3 level by the end of the year? What case can you make for having met minimal certification standards? What standards would you propose for this and future certification programs?