

Training stripped back



The rationale and some science!

Dear All,

I am writing this in the context of people that have a good degree of training under their belts, recognise the importance of training but then stripping it back to remind us all of the core principles. It is also written as a Coach would operate on a 121 or small group basis. Our current downtime allows for us all to consider how to personally adapt our training.

The Principles of Motivation

If we consider “Intrinsic Motivation”, this is at a personal level, where we set out to achieve something...A goal...The latter being the key word...It is very difficult to be motivated unless we have powerful goals in place. It’s the goals that provide the vision that we are so eager to achieve. No goals means no structure, and this applies to our training.

Otherwise, we simply go through the motions of what is our norm.

The current cessation of club training and races being cancelled means that for once, we can stand back and reassess. If we consider this on a personal level, then don’t worry if you have not run for seven days. You won’t have lost any fitness. You may in fact have had some well-earned rest. But we have to start back!

Mesocycle

Most athletes will work to blocks of training called mesocycles. These last for eight weeks.

Within the eight week block would be a break down on a weekly and daily basis...Some real structure. This then becomes the *micro cycle*...The detail.

To develop as athletes requires a well-rounded approach which covers more than pure running...Almost holistic in style. All of our exercise should be incorporated (gym work/cycle/swim etc.) Without this, we are unable to assess the load each day (Low/Medium/High), and similarly, the load each week.

Remember that the whole principle of training is to stress the body (and mind!?), but then to have rest to allow the body and muscle groups to recover before we stress again.

No different to an elastic band but where we allow it to revert to “steady state”. Too much at any one time, means the band snaps.

Using a standard EA model, a mesocycle would look similar to the below.

Goals	Main Technical Skills Goal:	Driving arms backwards appropriate to pace				Main Fitness Goal:		Speed endurance/pace improvement by 5-10 sec/km	
		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Fundamental Running Skills: ABC's	Dynamic mobility in warm up x 3 Focus balance	X3	X2	X3	X2	X3	X2	Assess skill dev ABC's X2	
Physical Preparation (Strength & Conditioning)	Focus trunk stability X1 circuits X1 gym	X1 c X1 gym	X1 c	X1 c X1 gym	X1 c X1 gym	X1 c X1 gym	X1 gym	Assess trunk stability Circu	
Technical Running Drills	Arm drive Skill Intro(SI)	Arm drive for speed template(SD)	Relaxed arms for end (SD)	Arm drive for hills (SD)	Arm drive hills (SR)	Arm drive off road (SD)	Arm drive speed end (SR)	Ass	
Fitness: Running activities, endurance, speed,	1x long 1x tempo 1x easy 1xhills	1 long 1x ints 1x fartlek 1x steady	1x long 1x tempo 1x easy	1x long 1x tempo 1x easy 1xhills	1x long 1x tempo 1x easy 1xhills	1x long off road 1xmile reps 1x easy 1xhills	1x tempo 1x easy 1xhills		
Other sports	1 swim 1 gym	1 swim 1 gym	1 swim	1 swim 1 gym	1 swim 1 gym	1 swim 1 gym	1 swim 1 gym		
loading: High, medium or Low	M	H	L	M	M	H	L		

What is interesting is the degree of non “core running” activities included.

If we look at the title of my article “Training stripped back”, my intention is to remind everyone that self-improvement will only happen when we tap into and improve across a range of disciplines...Key elements that all require our attention. Think of marginal gains.

Also look at the top right...”Main Fitness Goal”...That word again GOAL. A measure so that we can assess the block of training.

Technique

The most important feature is good technique.

For endurance...

- ✚ Tall posture with high hips but not tense!
- ✚ Relaxed shoulders with efficient **backwards** driving arm action.
- ✚ Your natural efficient forward rhythm guides speed and efficiency
- ✚ The foot lands naturally under the centre of the mass moving down and backwards

For speed...

- ✚ Shoulders low and relaxed
- ✚ Fast arms, elbows driving backwards
- ✚ Tall posture and high hips

- ✚ Heel up and under buttock / Knees up...Toe up
- ✚ Land on front half of foot, driving down and backwards.

Imagine running or racing for an hour and where 10% of your energy was wasted due to the inefficiency of your technique!

It's never easy changing years of poor (or less than perfect!), technique. Let me tell you one thing as told to me by Barry Fudge. Over the years, I have been fortunate to spend time with some very talented people. Part of my own self development. Barry is Head of Endurance at UKA, and also physiologist to Mo Farah. I spent half a day trackside with him...He told me that athletes should not have easy days or recovery runs!! Wait for it!!...If that is what was needed, he would rather they sit on the settee with a can of beer!!! 😊 His words and not mine!

His point became..."Everyone run should have a purpose". So runs that we know as easy days should become those where we play with our technique. Practice good technique...Erase slovenly habits. Run relaxed...forwards momentum...graceful, arms working like a pendulum...good leg cadence.

Next stages

We now have some thinking around our training cycle and eight week (mesocycle), periodisation.

Similarly, the need for efficiency of technique.

What may surprise you is how many hard days we have in our schedules...Why that may not be wise...And then how to work this out!

My plan over the next week is to share with you...

- ✚ Our energy systems and use of
- ✚ Key training sessions and rationale
- ✚ Recovery & The mental block.

What is first most important is to recognise blocks of training and technique (Today).

You can then drop the key components (To follow) into your mesocycle with clarity of purpose and with a goal in mind to drive towards!

Best Regards,

Nick

"We all have dreams, but in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort".

Jesse Owens