How should each run feel?

There are a number of different paces that you should aim to master that will make up your training:

Easy run – fully conversational at the speed of chat and about 6/10 effort.

Steady run – conversational, controlled but working at about 7/10 effort.

Threshold running – controlled discomfort, 3-4 word answer pace 8/10 effort.

Interval running 5k-10k effort - 9/10 and working hard.

In detail:

The feeling of not being sure how fast you should be running for any particular session is common, from beginners to elite international athletes. For beginners it never feels as though running is easy, but we can assure you that running doesn't need to be hard all the time.

At the beginning all you are trying to do is get out and run. That should be at **easy pace** or 'the speed of chat' – if you can't talk as you are running, you're going to fast, simple as that. For the more experienced runner, 'the speed of chat' is how your easy and recovery runs should feel - totally in control, relaxed and slow enough to talk. If you are combining walking and running, the effort level remains the same – you should be able to hold a conversation on both the walking and running segments.

Faster than easy, conversational running is **steady running**. This is the backbone of training for more experienced runners. This is where you must be honest and not push too hard or you might ruin your faster sessions, so conversation should still be possible, but a little strained.

Incorporating **threshold running** is how the elites train and you can train like this too. This is where you are running at a controlled discomfort level: you can still talk between breaths, but only 3 or 4 word phrases. This is not running to exhaustion or sprinting. You may already feel able to include some 3 minute blocks into a run each week which will grow in volume throughout your training.

Interval training and 3k/5k/10k pace is top-end training. This is often called the "hurt locker" and is used in training to replicate the feeling at the end of a hard race. The effort levels here should be almost at maximum.

Glossary

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Rest (R)
To help your body cope with the workload, rest is going to be as important a part of your training schedule as the running. Listen to your body and take heed of any warning signs. If you feel fatigued even before you've run a step, find yourself thinking up excuses not to run or start suffering a series of minor injuries; you probably need more time off. Taking enough rest allows physical and mental recovery and gives your body the time to adapt to your workload. Remember: on rest days, that is exactly what you should be doing!

Recovery Run (RR)
Training for endurance requires your body to work harder than it has ever done. To see improvement without breaking down, you'll need some recovery runs. These should be nice and easy and you should feel relaxed. Enjoy the scenery. You should be breathing easily and be capable of holding a conversation throughout the run. This will mean that you are running in the 60–65% range of your Maximum Heart Rate (MHR) and it should be no more than 45 minutes in duration. This allows your body to adapt to the training workload and therefore improve. It also helps with the removal of the waste products, which accumulate in your muscles after harder efforts.

Threshold Runs (THR)
After the long endurance runs, tempo runs are probably your most valuable workouts. You will find them slightly uncomfortable and they'll require concentration, but they are well worth the effort. As they're run at a controlled brisk pace, about 80–85% of your MHR, you'll only be capable of uttering a couple of words to your training partners. Tempo/threshold runs improve your lactate threshold (the speed above which your body struggles to cope with the lactic acid created by burning energy without oxygen), your running efficiency and aerobic capacity (your body's ability to utilise oxygen). All this helps to improve your endurance performance.

Long Runs (LR)
Long runs are vital in your plan and key to racing well in long distance races from 5km – marathon. At first, concentrate on increasing the time on your feet rather than worrying about distance. Start off by heading out for at least an hour and run at 65% of MHR (conversational pace). Gradually this will build to 75% of WHR as you start to practice periods of marathon pace (MP) running. These runs improve your muscular endurance and condition your body to burn fat as its primary fuel source.

Continuous Hills (CH)
Hill running develops strength in your muscles and tendons without putting them under the type of stress they are exposed to during faster running. Run up a 5-10% gradient for 45-90 seconds at a steady-threshold effort. Turn immediately at the top and run down the hill at the same effort, then turn at the bottom and repeat without any recovery until the rep time ends. Like a tempo/threshold run, a hill session is time to concentrate, as you should be working at about 80–85% of MHR and be able to utter just a word or two.

Fartlek (F)
This is a Swedish term that literally means "speed play". It involves a number of bursts of effort over a variety of distances with a variable recovery. Originally the length of effort was based on the terrain, for example, pushing harder every time you came to a climb, no matter how long it was. But you can adapt it for your needs.

Interval Training (IT)
Intervals help to boost specific race pace speed and involve running timed efforts with a controlled recovery. The effort level is around 85–100% of MHR, depending on the duration of the event you are training for and the length and volume of intervals used. A typical example might be 6 x 3 minutes @ 5km race pace with a 90 second jog recovery.

Marathon Pace (MP)
Understanding the pace & effort you intend on running your marathon at is very important. Pace judgment and patience on the big day will be crucial to running your best marathon. Marathon Pace Practice, at about 75-80% of MHR, allows your body and mind to get used to what will be required on race day, and builds endurance quickly.

Warming Up/Warm down (WU)
When you are going to do any faster running such as Hills, Threshold Runs, Intervals or a race, it is important to warm up gradually. A 10-15 minute jog lets your muscles warm up and improve their range of movement. It also allows your cardiovascular system to prepare. You should also jog easily for 10-15 mins after any hard work out. This reduces muscle soreness; flushes away lactic build up and will make you feel better over the next few days.

Cross Training & Core Conditioning (XT)
It is important that your training is balanced with some non-impact activities such as swimming, cycling, rowing, aerobics, etc, otherwise you are more likely to pick up an annoying injury that will set back your training. But more experienced runners should also add cross training to their regime. Endurance running, especially the marathon, requires whole body-conditioning. To achieve this you should aim to work a variety of muscle groups and not just your legs. Remember, though, that you are a runner, so just be careful not to make the cross-training, whether it is core conditioning, lifting weights, using an elliptical trainer or practicing Pilates, so intense that you are left too tired for your running.

MILTON KEYNES MARATHON 2015 IMPROVER PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
1	30 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Progression run, 30 mins. 10mins easy, 10 mins steady, 10 mins threshold	Recovery run, 30 mins or 30 mins aerobic cross training	Easy/Steady run, 30 mins	REST	Continuous hills, 4 x (5mins effort/2mins jog)	Long run, 60 mins conversational pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
2	30 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Progression run, 30 mins. 10mins easy, 10 mins steady, 10 mins threshold	Recovery run, 30 mins or 30 mins aerobic cross training	Easy/Steady run, 30 mins	REST	Continuous hills, 45 mins total. 3 x (7mins effort/2mins jog)	Long run, 70 mins conversational pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
3	30 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Progression run, 45 mins. 15 mins easy, 15 mins steady, 15 mins threshold	Recovery run, 30 mins or 30 mins aerobic cross training	Easy/Steady run, 40 mins	REST	Continuous hills, 45 mins total. 2 x (10mins effort/2mins jog)	Long run, 80 mins easy pace on undulating route	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
4	30 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Threshold run, 45mins total. 4 x (5 mins threshold/2min jog)	Recovery run, 30 mins or 30 mins aerobic cross training	40 min out and back run – run out steady pace for 20 mins, turn back 2-3 mins faster	REST	Continuous hills, 45 mins total. 4 x(6 mins effort/2mins jog)	Long run, 90 mins easy pace on undulating route	☐	☺ ☺ ☹

5	REST	Easy run, 30mins	Recovery run, 30 mins or 30 mins aerobic cross training	Easy run, 30mins	REST	Parkrun or 5km TT	Long run, 60 mins easy	☐ ☺ ☺ ☹
6	30-40 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Threshold run, 45 mins including 5 x (5mins threshold/90s jog rec)	Easy run, 40 mins or 40 mins aerobic cross training	40 min out and back run – run out steady pace for 20 mins, turn back 2-3 mins faster	REST	Continuous hills, 5 x (5mins effort/90s jog) within a 50 min run	Long run, 1hr 45 mins mins easy over an undulating route	☐ ☺ ☺ ☹
7	30-40 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Threshold session, 5 x (5mins threshold/75s jog rec)	Easy run, 40 mins or 40 mins aerobic cross training	60 min Progression run as: 20 mins easy, 20mins steady, 20mins threshold	REST	Continuous hills, 45-60 mins total. 3 x (10mins effort/90s jog)	Long run, 2 hours easy	☐ ☺ ☺ ☹
8	30-40 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Threshold session 5 x (6 mins threshold/90s jog) within a 60 min run	Easy run, 40 mins or 40 mins aerobic cross training	75 minutes including 2 x 10 mins @ threshold within final 30 mins	REST	Continuous hills, 45-60 mins total. 3 x (12 mins effort/90s jog)	Long run – 2 hours 15 mins all easy	☐ ☺ ☺ ☹
9	30-40 mins aerobic cross training + strength & conditioning	Threshold session 3 x (10 mins threshold/90-120s jog) within a 60 min run	Easy run, 40 mins or 40 mins aerobic cross training	Threshold session, 75 min run with middle 60 mins as 10x(3mins@threshold/3mins@steady continuous effort)	REST	Recovery run, 45mins	Long run, 90mins total. 30mins easy, 30mins steady, 30mins @ Half Marathon target PB pace	☐ ☺ ☺ ☹
10	REST	Recovery run, 40 mins total + conditioning work	Recovery run, 30 minutes	Progression run of 10 mins easy, 10 steady, 10	REST	Easy run, 20mins total.	HALF MARATHON @ pb pace + 15-20 min	☐ ☺ ☺ ☹

				threshold			easy jog (warm down) OR 2 hour long run with the last 60 minutes @ marathon pace		
11	30-40 mins aerobic cross training or run + strength & conditioning	Recovery run, 45mins	Easy run, 45 mins or 45 mins aerobic cross training	Threshold session, 60-70 mins including 6 x (5mins threshold/1min jog	REST	Recovery run, 45mins total	Long run, 2hrs 30 mins total. Last 45mins @ marathon pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
12	30-40 mins aerobic cross training or run + strength & conditioning	6 x 3 minutes alternating odd numbers @ threshold effort, even @ 5km effort with 90s jogged recovery	Easy run, 45 mins or 45 mins aerobic cross training	80 mins total inc. 3x(15mins MP/2-3 min jog)	REST	Recovery run, 45mins total	Long run – 3hrs – 3hrs 15 mins with final 60 mins @ MP	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
	30-40 mins aerobic cross training or run + strength & conditioning	8 x 3 minutes alternating odd numbers @ threshold effort, even @ 5km effort with 90s jogged recovery	Easy run, 45 mins or 45 mins aerobic cross training	90 mins total inc. 3x(15mins MP/2-3 min jog)	REST	Threshold run, 45mins total. 15mins easy, 15mins steady, 15mins threshold	Long run, 2hrs 45 mins – 3hrs total. Last 45mins @ marathon pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
	30 mins aerobic cross training or run + strength & conditioning	5 mins @ threshold + 2 x (5 x 90 seconds @ 5km effort) (60s between efforts, 120s between sets)	Easy run, 40 mins or 40 mins aerobic cross training	90 mins with final 30-40 mins @ MP	REST	Threshold run, 45mins total. 6x(3mins threshold/3mins steady)	Long run, 1hr 45 mins - 2hrs with with the final 30 mins @ MP	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
	REST	Recovery run, 30 mins	Recovery run, 30 minutes	Progression run of 15/15/15 with middle 15 @ MP	REST	5km parkrun or TT	Long run, 75 mins easdy pace	☐	☺ ☺ ☹

REST	30-40 mins run including 3x(5mins @marathon pace/2mins jog recovery)	Rest or/ Recovery run, 30 minutes	20 minutes to include 2 x 5 mins @ race pace	20-30 mins all easy	REST	15-20 mins easy jog + stretch	☐	☺ ☺ ☹
MILTON KEYNES MARATHON Good Luck!!	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	☐	☺ ☺ ☹

- **Note please do a 15 minute warm up and cool down before Threshold, Continuous Hills or Interval sessions**

- **If your are feeling ok you may wish to consider a 20-30 minute recovery run in the morning before any of the quality sessions above**

- **Always substitute cross training for running if you are injured, very sore or it is not safe to run.**

- **Please add a Core conditioning, Pilates or Yoga classes once or twice a week if you have time.**

- **Try to stretch every day for at least 10 mins.**

- **Always eat within 20-30 mins of finishing a run**

- **Always train at your target pace, don't compromise or run too hard. Tiredness always catches up and take extra rest if required…**

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