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May 9, 2007

## Speed train first for faster race pace

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So you want to run faster?

The answer is to train faster, says speedy runner Mark Andrews of Henrietta. Andrews will be leading Fleet Feet Sports store's free interval speed workouts, open to the public, on Tuesday nights starting in June.

Coach Michael Reif, who helps runners improve their performance through the Genesee Valley Harriers Running Club and Greater Rochester Track Club, agrees that your training speed is a good predictor of how fast you'll race. If you can run comfortably hard for 20 to 30 minutes, you'll probably push yourself 20 to 30 seconds faster, per mile, in a 3.5-mile race.

Beginning runners shouldn't worry about speed. Andrews recommends building a base of longer, easier runs over six months before adding speed workouts, to avoid injury. If you're experiencing pain or you have health issues, see your health care provider or athletic trainer before proceeding.

Andrews and Reif outlined several forms of speed training. Andrews suggested speed work once a week, after a warmup jog of at least 10 minutes, sticking with the same type for a few months. Reif suggested adding speed to your runs once or twice a week. End with some easy running and stretching.

**Fartlek** (Swedish word for speed play): Pick a telephone pole, tree or sign in the distance and run faster to it, then jog for about the same distance. Repeat. You can do this loosely structured run anywhere — road, trail or track. It's a good choice for beginners.

**Hills:** On a moderate incline (such as Cobbs Hill) and preferably on grass, dirt or a trail rather than a paved surface, run hard to the top of the hill and jog down to recover, several times. Hills are a good way to build leg strength. You don't want a hill so steep that it drastically slows you down. Aim for between 1 and 2 miles, total, of uphill running, Andrews says.

**Tempo:** Your tempo pace is 15 to 20 seconds slower, per mile, than your race pace for a 10K (6.2 miles). Run at tempo for 1 or 2 miles, followed by a one- or two-minute jog, then repeat, for a total of 20 to 30 minutes, on flat terrain. Effort is at 8.5 or 9 out of 10, fast enough that you can't easily converse. Also called lactate threshold training, the goal is to increase how long you can run fast before lactic acid quickly builds up in the bloodstream and slows you.

**Intervals** (most challenging): On a flat, measured track or course, run at your goal race pace for a specific interval (in distance or time). From week to week, vary the intervals, aiming for a total of 1 to 2 miles of intervals for beginners, 2 to 3 miles for advanced runners. A beginner could do four 400-meter speed intervals (once around a track), each followed by a 400-meter jog one week, and the next week do two or three 800-meter intervals followed by 800-meter jogs. Advanced runners might do eight 400-meter intervals broken up with 200-meter jogs one day, then four 800-meter intervals with 400-meter jogs a week later. As you get more advanced, shorten the recovery time rather than speeding up, Andrews suggests.

Record what you do in a training log. "Then you can see what progress you're making," says Andrews.

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### Training: Week 7

To gradually build up to running 3.5 miles, former Olympic marathon champion Grete Waitz recommends training three times a week. We're in the home stretch of the 9-week plan.

**Day 1:** 3-minute walk; then do this cycle three times: 10-minute jog, then 1-minute walk. End with a 3-minute walk.

**Day 2:** Same as Day 1.

**Day 3:** 3-minute walk; then either jog 25 minutes non-stop, or do two cycles: 15-minute jog, then 1-minute walk. End with a 3-minute walk.

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