



### Beginners running:

When you first start running the thought of a half or full marathon can be very daunting. But even elite athletes don't just wake up one morning able to run 26 miles- it's a gradual process of increasing your mileage in your training.

Below are some of the best training sessions to increase the distance and speed at which you can comfortably run.

'Long slow distance': as the name suggests, with this type of session the main focus is getting the mileage done. So if you are aiming for your first 10k for example, you might aim to do a 5-6k run for the first 5-8 weeks, progressing to an 8-9k run after 10-12 weeks. You keep a 'comfortable' pace going, which means you can just about talk, and can keep the same pace going over the total distance. If you have never done any running before, then start off aiming just to jog for 10 minutes, as slowly as you need to 2-3 times a week, then progress to 15 minutes the next week and so on, adding on 5 minutes every week until you are running for half an hour. Websites such as [www.mapmyrun.com](http://www.mapmyrun.com) are really useful to plot the runs you have done so you can track how far you are managing each time. This is great not only for motivation, but also so that you are realistic about how far you can run, and how long it takes you.

'Interval training': great for beginners who struggle to run for a considerable distance, but also for intermediate runners looking to improve their speed over a longer distance. Let's say your comfortable pace is 9km/ hour. With an interval session you might aim to run 400 metres at 10.5- 11km/hour, and then walk for say 400 metres. Since the distance is much shorter, you should be able to keep a much higher speed going over the distance, which will overload the body and elicit an increase in your lung capacity, which impacts on your cardiovascular fitness. Done on a regular basis, interval training can really help to increase your speed and will help to increase your 'lactate threshold' (the level at which your body produces too much lactic acid in the muscles due to maximal exertion, making it extremely uncomfortable to continue at the same intensity).

‘Strength training’: aside from strength training in the gym, one of the best ways to increase your leg strength for running is by adding in some hill repetitions to your training. Find a suitably steep hill (not too difficult in Bristol!) and aim for a lamppost, tree, or park bench about 50-100 metres away from the bottom (It can be useful to run up it first whilst timing yourself and stop at 30-45 seconds to choose your target finishing point). You aim to sprint as fast as you can for as long as you can from the bottom of the hill to the finish point, timing how long it takes. Once you are there walk or slowly jog back down, allowing 4-5 minutes recovery before going again. Repeat 5-8 times depending how tired you get! This will really increase your stamina and the power in the legs.