



David Fairlamb THE FIT FACTOR

LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Take some of the health habits you have formed during your training months and establish them into your life all year round. Make them positive, consistent changes – not just a month or two leading up to an event. It will help to improve your health and wellbeing.

FITNESS TIP

Learning to pace yourself now is key to being able to stay at the pace you want on Great North Run day. Staying disciplined is hugely important on race day or you could suffer badly in the final few miles.

Don't miss David's tips every Saturday in your Journal

THE Great North Run is one of the greatest runs in the world with a phenomenal atmosphere. Whether you walk, run or compete in a wheelchair, the feeling when crossing the finish line in South Shields is fantastic.

Making sure you finish the run is the most important thing and, with only four weeks to go, you should have completed most of your training and feel confident in your final approach towards the big day.

Here is a guide to help you through the final few weeks' training leading up to the run.

Obviously, this is to be adapted depending on your ability:

Try to train three to four times a week

- One long run.
- One shorter session at a quicker pace than you would be going on the day.
- Two other different types of sessions.

It's important that, no later than

three weeks before the run, you try to complete the half marathon distance. This will give you total confidence and self-belief that you can complete the distance. If you only train up to 10 miles, you may find your body is fine up to that point on the day but the last three miles is punishing – this is probably due to the fact that you have not trained your body to run that distance or for that length of time.

For the final five to six days you need to take it easy – maybe go for a walk and a light jog, which should allow your body to be fully charged and fresh for the run.

Here is a week's example schedule to help you. It is only a guideline, however, they are pretty much the distances you should be able to achieve by now.

The sessions can be done any time throughout the week – you don't need to follow the days, just whatever suits you best. Try to leave at least two days between the longer runs.

Always make sure you warm up

> **There's no better feeling than crossing the finish line after all the hard training**



before each workout and cool down and stretch.

Monday

Hill session: After a good warm-up, aim to do eight to 12 hills with a moderate incline of up to 100 metres. Your recovery is a slow jog/walk back to the start.

The speed is a sensible one, this

session will help build strength in your legs and works well alongside your longer miles.

Wednesday

Six to seven-mile run/walk at a pace slightly quicker than you expect to do during the run itself.

Friday

Strides: Mark a distance of around 80 to 100 metres, using a soft surface such as grass or sand.

Stride out – by this I mean stretch your legs with long strides at an easy pace. Keep light on your feet, this will help stretch your legs and hopefully make you feel looser, especially with all the slower shorter strides you have been doing during the longer runs. If you are walking, that's fine, just overstride.

Aim for 10 to 15 repetitions with a walk or jog recovery back to the start.

Weekend

11-mile run/walk: Take this session nice and easy.

This is a great build-up to the final long training run of 13 miles I'd like you to do over the next 10 days.

Nutrition

Try to eat as healthily as possible, steering towards fresh healthy food rather than processed foods often high in saturated fats and salt. A combination of slow-release carbohydrate and protein, eg wholewheat pasta, chopped turkey steaks and fresh tomatoes, will help you recover and stop any energy slumps later in the day.

Trainers and Kit

Make sure you have a good pair of trainers. Going to a sports shop two days before the event and picking the all-singing and dancing pair isn't the answer. You need to know your trainers are comfortable, you have worn them in, and won't suffer from blisters etc. This is the same for all your kit, including your socks! It's hugely important you have worn them on your long runs and you are comfortable.

Tough runs don't last – tough runners do

Motivational quote of the day