

## **THE THEORY BEHIND THE SCHEDULES by ALAN NEWMAN**

The training schedules followed by the adult distance running group are all written by me, based on the experience gained as a qualified coach for nearly 40 years. I was first encouraged by Newbury AC to join the few who help the majority get the most out of their sport. As the Berkshire 3000m Steeplechase champion, I chose that event and the longer distances in which to specialise.

My career in the police service included seven years as a PTI, resulting in many qualifications in physical training, self defence, swimming, life saving and first aid. I gained the Fellowship of the British Association for Physical Training and was awarded Life Membership after serving on the Council.

My coaching influences include the late Wilf Paish and '62 European 5000m champion Bruce Tulloh, who coached me and several Newbury athletes at Marlborough during the golden era of British distance running in the 1970's. Athletes in my squad went on to run 3:55 for 1500m and below 2:12 for the marathon. One became the 1986 Commonwealth Games 10,000m champion. I believe in following a structured programme without becoming a slave to any schedule. Flexibility should be the key to allow for the occasional virus, minor injury or hard race – all of which should result in a short rest period.

For those that are interested, the PWAC winter schedules are systematic and progressive. Each month there are eight different sessions to include variety and to challenge the body and mind in different ways. For example note the following extracts taken from the first and last months of the winter schedule:

Tue 28th Sept	Sustained Pace Run: 16 mins
Thu 30th Sept	Stamina Run @ 75% for 45-60 mins
Tue 5th Oct	Standard Hills - Transfesa - 20 mins
Thu 7th Oct	Base Pyramid Session: 2/4/6/4/2 mins / 2 mins recovery
Tue 12th Oct	Speed Endurance: 6 x 3 mins / 3 mins recovery
Thu 14th Oct	Self Timed Winter Time Trial (1)*
Tue 19th Oct	Pace Judgement Run: 9 mins out / 9 mins back
Thu 21st Oct	Speed Session: 9 x 2 mins / 2 mins recovery

The first eight sessions in Sept/Oct are based on 16-18min of hard efforts. This progresses incrementally through the winter with a peak of 24-30min of hard efforts in March, to coincide with the final preparations for the London Marathon in April. There is sufficient challenge in these sessions for marathon runners and cross country or shorter distance exponents. Marathon runners will obviously add event specific training in the form of two hour plus runs at the weekend and a tempo run of at least ten miles during the week. Note how the sessions rotate and repeat in an eight week cycle?

Tue 1st Mar	Sustained Pace Run: 24 mins
Thu 3rd Mar	Stamina Run @ 75% for 45-60 mins
Tue 8th Mar	Progressive Hills - Transfesa - 30 mins
Thu 10th Mar	Mega Pyramid Session: 2/4/6/6/4/2 mins / 2 mins recovery
Tue 15th Mar	633 Squadron Session: 6/3/3/6/3/3 mins / 3 mins recovery
Thu 17th Mar	Self Timed Winter Time Trial (6)*
Tue 22nd Mar	Pace Judgement Run: 12 mins out / 12 mins back
Thu 24th Mar	Speed Session: 12 x 2 mins / 2 mins recovery

With regard to the benefits of the different types of sessions, some of this is self explanatory. The **sustained pace run** is a hard (90%) effort on a regular lap so that progress can be measured. It improves race pace and running technique on the tricky bits of the course. Coaches have to use laps so we can keep an eye on runners of all abilities as we are responsible for your safety. There is no shame in being lapped and it gives the faster runners an incentive and the opportunity for them to give and receive encouragement.

The **stamina run** should be relaxed (conversational pace) and enjoyable with no-one trying to race anyone. Pair up and concentrate on running efficiently. **Hills** are only really enjoyed by a few masochists but are hugely beneficial. On the “standard” hills the aim should be to run consistently and powerfully up each hill and over the top before “floating” down the other side. This improves leg strength, lung capacity and the oxygen transport system (VO2 max). Most importantly, it also trains the mind to become tough and resolute. **When the going gets tough the tough gets going.** Love the hills and you will excel at cross country and on the track as well as in road races. “Progressive” hills add a further dimension of three increasing distances and therefore different pace.

**Pyramids** and **speed sessions** are different forms of interval training. There is no more efficient way to train the heart and lungs than in running alternating fast and slow efforts, either in this structured form or in the informal “fartlek” or speed-play sessions we all enjoy in the summer. The key to obtaining the maximum benefit from these sessions is simple. **Run the fast bits fast and the slow bits slow.** Sounds obvious, I know but it never ceases to amaze coaches how many runners cannot grasp this concept. A basic sports watch that has a “countdown repeat” feature with an alarm is a pre-requisite and the other key is to pace the session so that each effort is consistent. No-one will be impressed by the hare that charges off at the start but fades away or the one who saves his or her effort for the last run. Both will be found out in races! Finally we have the **self timed time trial** – it does what it says on the tin. It is a flat out blast over 4.2 miles on the same course each month. How are you doing? Making progress? And the **pace judgement run** – need we explain? Without pace judgement you are going nowhere in this game!

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