



# Boost your performance

PERSONAL TRAINER **LUCY FRY** REVEALS THE SECRETS TO RUNNING SUCCESS, WHATEVER YOUR LEVEL...

★ Whether you are new to running or have been jogging for a while, splitting your running training into five components will help to ensure you progress as safely and quickly as possible:

★ **Long easy run**

This session is absolutely essential for those who wish to be distance runners or are preparing for a marathon or similar. The distance covered or time taken should be increased gradually. If you simply want to use running to trim down, however, or are training for a shorter distance such as 5K, the long run (anything over 10K) is largely unnecessary and can be replaced by an extra interval session.

★ **Recovery run**

This is exactly what it says on the tin, so take it easy. Don't worry about the stopwatch and run slowly, taking in the scenery, slaloming between trees and chasing squirrels (or pedestrians)!

★ **Interval session**

Plodding away at the same pace will not elevate your fitness in the long-term. This session ensures that you don't become too accustomed to any single pace and therefore reach a plateau. One of the most common forms of interval training is repetitions. These consist of an easy bit and a hard bit, and those two bits are then alternated, e.g. one minute at 60 per cent (of full effort), and one minute at 80 per cent, repeated as recommended below. Bob Glover, author of *The Competitive Runner's Handbook*, refers to hill training as 'speedwork in disguise'. So, if you are bored with repetitions on the flat ground, go out

and find a big hill. Run up it (it helps to try and bounce a little) and walk or jog down. Repeat two to five times for beginners, five to eight for intermediates and eight to ten for advanced!

★ **Threshold session**

These are also called tempo, lactate or anaerobic runs. They involve an easy warm-up (say 50 to 60 per cent effort), followed by a short amount of time (around five minutes for beginners, ten for intermediates and 15 to 20 for advanced) at 70 to 80 per cent of maximum effort over reasonably level terrain, followed by a cooldown.

*'Find a running buddy! This will make it harder to cancel sessions, and even add some healthy competition'*

★ **Rest**

This is a vital part of any running or fitness programme. Obviously it doesn't mean just missing a session whenever you can't be bothered, but it does require you to take your recovery as seriously as your training. Film-maker and international marathon runner Alex Vero (see [www.theroadtobeijing.co.uk](http://www.theroadtobeijing.co.uk)) comments: 'You actually get fitter in between training sessions, not during them. Only increase your distance/intensity every third week of training. Overtraining can lead to fatigue and injury.'

On top of these five essentials, you would ideally add an extra non-running session too, so try to incorporate resistance training into your routine. Resistance exercises include squats, lunges, step-ups and press-ups among others, using your bodyweight, dumbbells or similar.

Alex says training your core will help, too. 'Challenge your core as much as possible. This will lead to a more efficient running style and keep you injury-free,' he says. He also offers everyday examples of how you can do this, outside of the gym, such as, 'brushing your teeth on one leg or not holding on when travelling on the train so as to let your core do the work instead of your arms'.

**Weekly running plan**

The example running plan below incorporates each of the five running components to help you maximise your performance. It is a weekly plan, but the days on which each session falls can be switched around to suit your lifestyle.

The percentages in the programmes refer to effort level. Put simply, 50 per cent effort should feel relaxed and as if you could continue for a good while without getting at all tired. At 60 per cent you should be able to hold a conversation, and at 80 per cent you'll be able to say a couple of words, but not chat. 100 per cent effort is an all-out sprint with no chance of speech. The rest is a sliding scale in between.

If you are new to running, you might need to adjust the beginner programme to include a walk-run. For example, for a 20-minute easy run, try a two-minute jog followed by a one-minute walk, and repeat until you reach 20 minutes.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
BEGINNER	Rest	Easy/recovery run 20 mins	Intervals (1 min at 60%, 30 secs at 80%, repeat x 3-5)	Resistance training	Threshold (5 mins at 50%, 10 mins at 70%, 5 mins at 50%)	Rest	Long easy run 35-40 mins Add 5 mins per week
INTERMEDIATE	Rest	Easy/recovery run 30 mins	Resistance training	Rest (or easy cycle, swim or walk)	Threshold (5 mins at 60%, 10 mins at 80%, 5 mins at 60%)	Intervals (1 min at 60%, 1 min at 90%, repeat x 6-8)	Long easy run 45-50 mins Add 5 mins per week
ADVANCED	Easy/recovery run 40-45 mins	Resistance training	Intervals (1 min at 60%, 1 min at 90%, 30 secs at 100%, repeat x 10)	Threshold (5 mins at 60%, 20 mins at 80%, 5 mins at 60%)	Resistance training or swim/cycle	Rest	Long easy run 60 mins Add 5 mins per week