

## The ABCs of Running: Getting you up to speed

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It should be as simple as lacing up a pair of shoes and heading out your front door but as a new runner you might find yourself scratching your head in bewilderment when talking to an experienced runner about gait, choice of terrain and training plan.

Let's break this down a bit and get you up to speed on the lingo of this seemingly simple sport.

Just like when people watching in the mall, you will see runners of all different styles. **Gait** is the manner in which one walks/runs. Some folks **pronate** which is the turning in of your foot and putting pressure on the inner edge of your foot. This is also referred to as overpronating and is common in those with flat feet. **Motion control shoes** will help correct this if you are unable to do so through training. The opposite foot placement is **supination** (underpronating) and the foot strikes on the outer edge. You can also correct this condition with shoes and training as well.

The running surface you choose can also have a tremendous effect on your running speed and ability to remain injury free. Running on the **asphalt or tarmac** is referring to the street surface versus the sidewalk which is made of compressed **concrete**. When running on the street avoid a severe **camber** (the slant of the road). This can be avoided by running in the middle of the road if possible. If running the center line is not a safe choice then try changing sides of the road often to balance out foot plant over time. While you will be able to travel somewhat faster on these smoother surfaces, the pounding can be tough on your body and you might choose to go off road onto trails or sand. The con to **trail running** on nature's terrain is the danger of injury on uneven surfaces. Specific trail shoes can help give stability to avoid rolled ankles and other injuries. To find near perfect balance of a smooth and forgiving surface, try running on an **all weather track**. With track workouts, try to switch directions to avoid an uneven pull on the muscles.

While a steady run on any of these surfaces will benefit your cardiovascular system, getting race day ready and shaving time off that finish line clock will call for you to employ a variety of training techniques. For **endurance**, build on your **base** (comfortable longest distance) by increasing your running distance by no more than 10%. Your **weekly long run** should be no more than 150% of your longest normal run at a moderate to slightly slower speed utilizing your slow twitch muscle fibers. **Speed work** will help recruit your fast-twitch fibers for power and can come in the form of striders, fartleks, tempo runs or intervals. You should utilize one speed technique a week on a moderate run day. **Striders** are short bursts of smooth speed lasting 20-30 seconds towards the end of a workout that are **sub-maximal** (not too hard). **Fartleks**, from the Swedish terms for speed play, are challenging spurts of speed that can be a fun addition to your run. Simply make it a game during your workout to run faster between telephone poles and recover between others. You might also decide to increase your speed on the rollers (small inclines) and recover on the flats or descents. Fartleks are quite unstructured and can be

done in a variety of ways. A **tempo run** is a speed technique that is used after the warm-up in which you maintain 80-85% of your maximal heart rate for the remaining duration of your run. **Intervals** consist of short, hard distances coupled with equal recovery periods of jogging. Some common interval methods are repeats, pyramids and ladders. **Repeats** are fixed distances like 200 yards with a 100 yard recovery done four to six times in a row. **Pyramids** start with shorter distances and steadily increase to a peak then work back down. Distances can be as short as 100 yards to over a mile. **Ladders** can either start short or long and work their way up or down from there. To build strength in your workout you can **implement hill repeats** by picking a hill like Stanford Ranch by the Rocklin High School and going up and down it three to six times. As much as building endurance, speed and strength will help your race day performance, you will also benefit from recovery runs. Every third week should be a **recovery week** with shorter and easier runs to allow your body to recharge and keep injury free.

Now that you know how to talk the talk and are ready to run the run, I hope you achieve a **runner's high**...that rewarding feeling of euphoria after a hard training session or successful race.