

# Nailing the Long Run



Parts 1 and 2 of the Run Series were designed to look at ways to make you run faster. The focus here is on your long run looking at different ways to approach building time on your feet. Every plan you look at has a long run each week with the distance or time elements increasing steadily. Here are my basic guidelines to follow with your long runs to minimise your risk of injury and burn out.

- Your long run should be at a comfortable pace. You should be able to hold a conversation (of sorts) and aim to maintain a steady pace.
- Volume should not increase by more than 10% a week. This gives you the chance to adapt and build gradually.
- In your plan, every 4<sup>th</sup> week should have a lower weekly mileage to give your body a rest and a chance to consolidate the progress so far. You will then be refreshed and ready to attack the challenge of the next week.

## A different approach

I often use the treadmill for my long runs at the start of a plan as this makes it easier to regulate pace, time and avoids the challenge of all the hills looming outside my front door. Initially it is about conquering the mind monkeys and building mental toughness. If you can run on a treadmill and keep going then you can run anywhere! It isn't for everyone but it can help to get you focused and build confidence before you face the world!

There are a couple of options with a long run. I know some clients prefer a circular route so that once they are out they are committed to finishing the run to get home. The alternative is to do an 'Out and Back' where you go a set time/distance and then turn around and come back. I always add the challenge with this one to beat my time coming back – it just adds an extra distraction to eat up the miles.

I think that there is too much focus on being able to run continuously and not walk at all. Plans like the NHS Couch to 5k focus on being able to run 5k without stopping. If you look at Ultra Runners they walk a portion of any run and training is all about building the time on their feet. I for one run faster overall if I take regular walk breaks. There is an element of psychology here and you can find out more by looking at the Run-Walk-Run strategy at <http://www.Jeffgalloway.com>. Jeff Galloway amongst others would argue that not only will you run faster with regular walk breaks but you won't fatigue so quickly and will stay injury free too. It is food for thought at least. Paula Radcliffe gives the advice to focus purely on putting one foot in front of another and again and again. She believes that in doing so you will keep going and not be overwhelmed by what you still have to do. She suggests finding some landmarks to tick off along your route to mark your progress.

Above all you need to relax. You can read more about this following the link to my blog [Chi Running & Why we all need to relax to improve](#).

I hope that you have found this useful and it has got you thinking. Running should be fun and is a good way to unwind and escape from every day pressures. Adding in variety and trying different things can really get you back on track and feeling good about your running again. I would love to hear your comments and for you share your favourite workouts too.