

## Walking Your Way to a 26.2 Mile Run

Notes from talk given by Angela French to Capitol City Marathon Training Group

01-22-2011

### Different Kinds of Endurance

A common mistake that new runners often make is in assuming that the endurance needed for marathon running is all about cardiovascular endurance.

Training for long distance running (marathons and longer) is not about speed per se, it's about time on your feet.

Three kinds of adaptations that lead to endurance to consider: cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, and psychological.

#### Cardio vascular/Respiratory:

**What:** The ability of the circulatory and respiratory systems to supply oxygen to muscles during sustained physical activity. Exercise improves the respiratory system by increasing the amount of oxygen that is distributed to body tissues.

**How:** Start slowly, increase distance, and later increase intensity.

#### Musculoskeletal:

**What:** Bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments comprise the musculoskeletal system and get stronger with training. It is thought that when connective tissue is stressed from endurance exercise, that collagen production is elevated, producing thicker and stronger tissue. Another mechanism at play is an increase in growth hormones that occurs during exercise that directly affects recovery after exercise. Once stronger, bones and connective tissue can more easily handle greater stress, become better shock absorbers, and perform more efficiently. A stronger tendon can absorb more strain and a stronger muscle can produce greater force more efficiently. It is the lack of musculoskeletal endurance, or adaptation, which leads to the overuse of this system, resulting in breakdown and injury.

**How:** Weight bearing exercise – time on your feet and strength training.

#### Psychological:

**What:** Believing you can “go the distance”.

**How:** By practicing increasingly longer workouts on a weekly basis leading up to the goal date you will train your mind to adopt an endurance attitude. This will serve you well from miles 20-26.

Including walking in your long-run training plan can help you to achieve these three types of endurance sooner than you would if you just run. Walking provide an opportunity for active recovery, allowing you to continue running more comfortably.

## Is Walking for You?

Including walking into your longest workout of the week could benefit you the most if you are:

- A relatively new runner (2 years or less)
- You are training for your first marathon
- You are a more seasoned runner but aren't quite where you'd like to be fitness-wise because of an injury or illness.
- You run less than 4 times per week (your weekly mileage is fairly low)
- You are an over 40 runner and don't pile on the miles as easily as you used to because you don't recover as quickly any more.

## Tips for Walking During Your Long "Run"

- Walk the first 5 minutes and the last 5 minutes
- Learn to walk fast, using your arms to propel yourself forward
- Use walking breaks to drink or eat a little
- Use a walking break to stretch hamstrings (slowly reach down to your toes), or calf muscles (stretch on a light pole)
- Let the walk/run intervals become the rhythm of the workout. In this way, if you find yourself walking during the marathon it will be distressing to you, but part of the natural rhythm you have practiced
- Let the terrain dictate some walking periods (such as up hills)
- If you are working on improving your running form, by breaking up your workout into walking/running, you are able to refocus on your running form after every walk interval
- Make the walk interval a minimum of two minutes to ensure active recovery

## Suggested Plan

What is the amount of time you can currently run on a 4-5x a week basis?

For your long workout double this amount of time, but begin by walking 4 minutes out of every 5 minutes and running one. If you feel that that will be too easy, start at walking 2 minutes out of every 5. Add 30 seconds to the run interval every week, while decreasing the walk interval by 30 seconds (keeping a minimum of two minutes on the walk). Add 10 minutes to the total length of the workout every week. If you can comfortably run 60 minutes 4 to 5 times a week your plan might look like this:

### **Week 1** (24 minutes total of running)

Total time of workout: 2 hours

Walk 4 minutes/jog 1 minute.

### **Week 2** (39 minutes total of running)

Total time of workout: 2 hours, 10 minutes

Walk 3.5 minutes/jog 1.5 minutes.

### **Week 3** (56 minutes total of running)

Total time of workout: 2 hour, 20 minutes

Walk 3 minutes/jog 2 minutes

**Week 4** (1:15 total of running)

Total time: 2 hours, 30 minutes

Walk 2.5 minutes/jog 2.5 minutes

**Week 5** (1:36 total of running)

Total time: 2 hours, 40 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 3 minutes

**Week 6** (1:53 total of running)

Total time: 2 hours, 50 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 4 minutes

**Week 7** (2:08 total of running)

Total time: 3 hours

Walk 2 minutes/jog 5 minutes

**Week 8** (2:22 of running)

Total time: 3 hours, 10 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 6 minutes

**Week 9** (2:35 minutes of running)

Total time: 3 hours, 20 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 7 minutes

**Week 10** (2:48 minutes of running)

Total time: 3 hours, 30 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 8 minutes

**Week 11** (3 hours of running)

Total time: 3 hours, 40 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 9 minutes

**Week 12** (3:11 minutes of running)

Total time 3 hours, 50 minutes

Walk 2 minutes/jog 10

Compare this plan to one that has you starting at 1 hour, 3 minutes (say 7 miles at a 9 min. per mile pace) and adding a mile a week.

**Week 1**

Total time: 1 hour, 3 minutes

Total miles: 7

**Week 12**

Total time: 2 hours 42 minutes

Total miles: 18 miles

## How Fast Will I Go?

Alternating walking for 2 minutes at a 15 minute per mile pace, and running for 8 minutes at a 9 minute per mile pace averages out to about 9:45 per mile which comes out to a 4:15 marathon.