



## TRAINING PROGRAMME (February 2024)

4 Feb	Sun	Long Run	<90min+ Longer Sandwich Run [to include 3miles of quicker progressive tempo pace in middle of run ~ easier 20min cool down]	Focus on incorporating a key tempo workout (20-25mins) within Longer run.
6 Feb	Tues	LT intervals	60mins to include <b>Tempo Tuesday efforts</b> of (4-5)x5min efforts with [90sec rolling recovery] 10min progressive w/u & easier c/d. <b>** N&gt;B 15-25secs faster than Mar Pace = LT tempo pace</b>	
8 Feb	Thurs	VO <sub>2</sub> Max	<b>Easy as 3,2,1 #dustybin</b> 3x1200m / 2x800m / 1x400m [5600m] or 2x1200m / 3x800m / 1x400m [5200m] or 1x1200m / 2x800m / 3x400m [4000m] or active <u>slow</u> 90secs btwn all efforts - target 10k pace on longer 1200s and 5k pace on shorter distances	<b>**King James Town Car Park -6.45</b>
11 Feb	Sun	Long Run	<90min+ Longer Sandwich Run [to include 4miles of quicker progressive tempo pace towards end of run ~ easier 10min cool down]	Focus on incorporating a key threshold workout (25-30mins) within Longer run.
13 Feb	Tues	2 <sup>nd</sup> LR controlled Tempo run efforts	60mins to incl. easier longer grp w/u of 12mins plus <b>30mins [3x [3,2,1mins] with matched recoveries]</b> rolling active- slow paced intervals at controlled 10km pace plus 12min easy c/d <i>Confidence boost in turning the legs over</i>	Conserving the energy levels for Sunday's <b>BIG</b> race! Ensure the faster runs at appropriate 10km speed and recoveries are at an easier rolling pace
15 Feb	Thurs	VO <sub>2</sub> Max	Shorter 'underpass' Team Relays Longer w/u & c/d plus incline & decline 10 x 250m Keeping things very relaxed for those racing on Sunday	<b>**King James Town Car Park -6.45</b>
18 Feb	Sun	RACE	<b>*** Sunday Lge X-Country - (Race 5) ***</b> <b>#BLACK&amp;REDARMY</b>	Royston
20 Feb	Tues	2 <sup>nd</sup> Long Run	60 mins: <b>EASY RECOVERY</b> Group Run Boundary plus run of Royston	keep pace slower and flattish post demands of those that raced Sunday
22 Feb	Thurs	VO <sub>2</sub> Max	<b>Progressive split KMs</b> <b>[1-3sets] x [400/800/800/400] @5km pace,</b> recovery as 60sec-90sec very easy jog /2-3mins between sets plus 2x200m accelerating strides to finish [90sec between] easy c/d	<b>**King James Town Car Park -6.45</b>
24 Feb	Sat	RACE	<b>** National Cross Championships ***</b>	Shropshire
25 Feb	Sun	Long Run / recovery	1hr-90mins recovery run (keep pace steadier to aid recovery between weeks harder training)	Recharge energy levels
27 Feb	Tues	2 <sup>nd</sup> Long Run	60 mins: <b>Steady Group recovery</b> Run Boundary run of Royston incl. 5KS challenge (5xcirca 100m rolling on/off controlled strides)	
28 Feb	Weds	VO <sub>2</sub> Max	Spring(ish) <b>TRACK 'Floodlight' FUN</b> 2x1200m, 2x1000m, 2x800m [6000m] 2x1000m, 2x800m, 2x600m [4800m] 2x800m, 2x600m, 2x400m [3600m] [all efforts with a 2min rolling recovery] target @10km (longer reps)>@5km(shortest reps) Short <b>TEAM RELAY</b> to finish [time permitting]	<b>RR TRACK AWAY DAY ~ Ridlins Track, Stevenage</b>  progressively faster fr 10km>5km pace [<4 sec rule]

**\*Supplement these sessions with easy/steady 35-45 min RECOVERY runs, cross or circuit training, faster leg speed drills and lots of stretching\***

In the event of any further snow over the next few weeks and therefore likely snowy / icy conditions Thursday's prescribed **SPEEDWORK session can still be performed** but reverting to the seasonal favourite of '**ODDS & EVENS**' shuttle efforts on the SNOW!!!

What to do on a Saturday?? Why not try a parkrun or a weekly/fortnightly of the following:-

**Leg Speed: incorporate a XC session of fast strides, i.e. 10x100m,7x150m,5x200m,4x300m on & off hills**

High tempo Cross Country time trials 10-25min runs should be sensibly built into at least a monthly programme (race fitness tests). Balance the inclusion of **ALL** these above sessions within the priorities of the monthly schedule and into your personal programme that suits yourself, consider your own level of fitness, experience and weekly time commitments in planning these sessions but if sensibly placed across the month YOU will reap the rewards!!

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Developing runners are encouraged to slowly build an aerobic base by increasing mileage and/or adding a further run per week to their existing training - learn to run very easy on recovery days and hard on quicker sessions however listen to your body and avoid illness and injury!!

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**New Year RR Goals** - create good habits - throughout 2024 there will be a specific training goal. January kicked off to complete 5km of strides (5KS) as a weekly one kilometre (10x100m of controlled fastish form strides).

**February challenge** will be to finish strongly on those steady everyday runs. As a goal, once a week on that easier-steadier local run(s) is to consciously build a final surge for home!! Look to stretch a sustained finishing effort as from a landmark near to home (or approximate min(s) from home) as a test to enhance that pace and effort towards home. This will automatically create a good habit within legs and body to replicate in those race conditions.

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**Weekly Circuit Training - Come and join the party - Monday evenings.**

- ❖ Weekly sessions will be held at King James Academy School **JUNIOR** site, off Garden Walk, SG8 7JH. Held within the school gymnasium hall.
- ❖ **Times will be the same 6.00pm-7.30pm** (including post session stretch).
- ❖ All abilities welcome and adapted sessions to fit with individual goals.
- ❖ **KICK START 2024 WITH A TOTAL FITNESS DRIVE**
- ❖ Enjoy the delights of the CORE blast / LEG Burn / BURPEE Bash / ARMageddon

RR circuit sessions are at the bargain price of £4 per person/session. All fees go towards solely covering the cost of the hire of Hall / Gym.

Circuit training is an efficient and challenging form of conditioning. It works well for developing strength, endurance (both aerobic and anaerobic), flexibility and coordination.

It's one of the best types of training for improving strength endurance be it for any running related sport such as x-country, road running, speed sessions or a classic endurance event like the marathon or triathlon.



## **Coaching Corner**

### **Sharpening**

As you move into the last 8-12 weeks of training towards a half- or full marathon your training should change to help you to be as ready as possible on the day. The aim of this phase is to bring your performance to a peak on race day. For these long races the focus of these weeks is on race speed, which can be greatly improved in only weeks of training, and race endurance, how long you can maintain that speed for. Crucially, this must be done without overtraining. This involves a careful balance and so a period of realistic evaluation is needed.

### **Evaluate your condition and goals**

Sharpening will only be effective if you have built up a strong base and so are comfortable running regularly, with a weekly distance of over 30-35 miles. If you are not, you are not prepared to train for a fast race and would be advised to postpone the race or continue with base building with more modest expectations for the race. Equally, if your goal is simply to complete the course, a good goal for a first marathon, increasing the distance run as I describe in the base building article, focusing on increasing the long run, would be enough without further sharpening. In these cases a taper before the race is still needed, as described in my third article.

### **A lot does not change from base building**

While sharpening is an important phase in preparing for your best possible race, and receives the most attention in running books and magazines, it is actually quite similar to base building. In particular, I advise applying the same limits to increases in your training. Thus in one week you can EITHER increase the total distance run (by up to 10%) OR the number of hard days (tempo, speed, hills, race) OR the number of runs in a week. You should also continue to build in recovery weeks, in the same pattern as you are used to.

## **One thing is different during sharpening**

While there are a lot of methods of training that could be used during the sharpening phase, I believe they can be summarised as a single difference. Base building is done at a level that could be maintained forever, gradually increasing as your fitness improves. Sharpening can not. This means that while at the end of every base training run you should finish feeling able to do more, during sharpening you may not. By training harder, you can make your body able to move faster and for longer than at your base fitness. These gains are temporary, however. Train like this for too long or too hard and you will burn out, ending up less able to race than at your base level.

How long the phase lasts, and how hard you should train, depend on the individual. A typical guide is 8-12 weeks. It is important to watch out for signs of overtraining, since this could undo all your training so far. Some typical signs are that sessions you are used to doing feel harder, you lose interest in running or in other activities you normally find enjoyable (and, yes, you can read this euphemistically), difficulty sleeping or an increase in your heart rate of over 5 beats per minute. Illness and injury are more likely when you overtrain, so are also a late sign.

### **Training components of sharpening**

#### **1) Rest and recovery (top priority)**

Remember that the training benefits come while you are resting and recovering. While sessions will push you hard, you should be able to do the next sessions a couple of days later as well.

#### **2) Training for race endurance (high priority)**

This is particularly achieved through the long run. This run is especially geared to getting used to time on your feet. A trick used by elite athletes is to do this run, at its longest, for the time they plan to do the race in, no longer. This is harder for slower runners as the stress on the legs from running for long periods is high. A guide could be not to run for more than three and a half hours continuously, either limiting your run to the distance you run in that time or taking a break on the way round.

As you build up the long run I would recommend not adding more than 2 miles to the distance in any one week. In addition, runs over 16 miles are tough so perhaps should only be run every other week, with a run under 16 miles in the weeks in between. Within the limits above, a good goal is to reach a distance of 16-22 miles several times during sharpening. With the club this run could be done on the Sunday long runs.

A second training session to build race endurance is running at race pace, which can be done as all or part of a run (the rest being at a fairly easy pace). The distance of this run might be increased by around 1 mile per week

reaching a maximum of around half the race distance. This could be done on the Tuesday club runs.

It is important to be aware of how your training fits with the other runs you do that week.

### 3) Training for race speed (next priorities, in order)

Preparing to run at race speed is done by sessions run at that pace or faster. These sessions will likely be the main new sessions added on top of your base training. If you add them you should follow the guidelines above – each of these sessions is added to replace an existing session so that the weekly distance and number of runs do not change in the same week. Each session prepares a different aspect of your running speed. These are in order of priority and so of how often you should do them. An intermediate or advanced runner might run at race pace every week, tempo pace most weeks and faster intervals only a couple of weeks during sharpening.

- Race pace running – This is described above. Care should be taken to run at the correct pace, not faster, just as you will need to at the start of the race on the day. It helps to improve your running efficiency and race pace judgement.
- Tempo pace running – This is run at your 10 km to 10 mile race pace, as a continuous run or carefully planned long intervals. In either case a proper warm up and cool down are required. While faster than race pace, it is still using the same aerobic energy system and so training your body to use the energy sources it will need in the race. It improves your speed endurance, how long you can keep moving quickly.
- Faster intervals – Running faster than 10 km race pace trains your muscles to work without oxygen. This is only done relatively little in marathon running. However, it will be needed, for example on hills (even gentle ones near the end of the race) or to stay with a group during the race. An important goal of training for these efforts is to make your muscles able to recover quickly from these challenges and continue the race. This training also makes you more able to carry out the tempo and race pace training effectively. It is done as intervals at around 3-5km race pace with recoveries either standing or running at a slower pace. It can be done as coached session, fartlek running or in hill training. These runs can be used early in sharpening to get you used to running quickly and prepare you for tempo and race pace running. Alternatively you could use them later to prepare for faster running during the race. Overall this training improves your ability to increase effort when tired and to maintain your aerobic training.

