

TOSH TIMES

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Newsletter

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Fall 2016

Tempo Training for Runners

In the sport of distance running, coaches and athletes alike understand the value in building mileage to prepare for an upcoming race. While it's obvious that endurance training must include comfortable distance runs, an ideal regimen incorporates other types of workouts as well. Tempo runs, or threshold sessions, are one of those other types of workouts.

What is Tempo Training?

A common definition of tempo training is “comfortable hard” running. The intensity of a threshold run is certainly higher than an easy or moderate training run. Because the pace is more difficult, a runner should know they can complete the given distance at the given pace, but they also look forward to the end of the run. In other words, during such a workout the paces are challenging, but doable for a prolonged period of time, which normally refers to 20 to 30 minutes during a practice session. With ideal training, including practice at tempo pace and a suitable taper, some runners can learn to sustain this pace for nearly 60 minutes on race day.

If a runner is new to this idea, I have them periodically keep themselves in check. Generally this is best done by having them ask themselves if this is a pace they could



run for 30 or 40 minutes if I asked them to. At any point during the training session if that answer is “no,” then the athlete needs to decrease their speed. Experience has taught me that many endurance athletes tend to train at threshold paces almost daily. The idea that running has to be hard every day to be worth the effort is a myth. In structured training for improvement in performance, a tempo day will be faster than a recovery and maintenance day. It's important not to go too fast during this type of workout. Paces that are harder or faster than “comfortable hard” should be saved for interval training sessions.

Why is Tempo Training Important?

To become a faster distance runner, the goal of training is to prolong how long it takes you to hit points of exhaustion while running at higher speeds. The positive physiological benefits of tempo training sessions will help you achieve that goal. The purpose of these workouts is to train the body to clear fatigue-causing agents and byproducts. If a runner's body is unable to metabolize such



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pace for a sustained period of time without rest.

Tempo intervals are multiple runs, or intervals, at threshold pace with short rest intervals between each. Often I remind my athletes that the rest during these interval sessions is more of a mental break, since running at more demanding paces may challenge the inner strength of runners.

Paces during both of these sessions should be very similar if not the same. It's not uncommon for an individual to feel as if they should go faster during the interval workouts because they have a rest period. But that shouldn't be done. Instead, it is best to decrease your rest time to increase the amount of stress.

How Do I Get Started?

Before starting tempo training, I recommend runners first build their base mileage. Once fitness has improved and a good base has

been developed, tempo workouts may be implemented into the training regimen. First of all, these training sessions should always start with a warm-up and end with a cool-down. Next you can begin with steady runs at or near marathon pace. Remember your goal is to maintain the desired pace for up to 30 minutes. Start with a few minutes until you can complete 15 minutes at your desired pace. Eventually you'll work your way into 20 or 30 minutes.

As you're attempting to increase the total amount of time spent at threshold pace, tempo interval sessions will prove to be beneficial. Again, short breaks not only increase the likelihood that you'll be able to run more distance at the given pace, they also give you the necessary confidence to meet your goal.

If your goal as a distance runner is to be able to run your race faster, I recommend you try some tempo training sessions. You'll be able to run faster for a longer period of time if you can properly train your body through these workouts.

For more information about the TOSH Running Program in Murray, please call us at 801-314-2996 or email us at TOSHrunning@imail.org.

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TOSH Running Program Coordinator

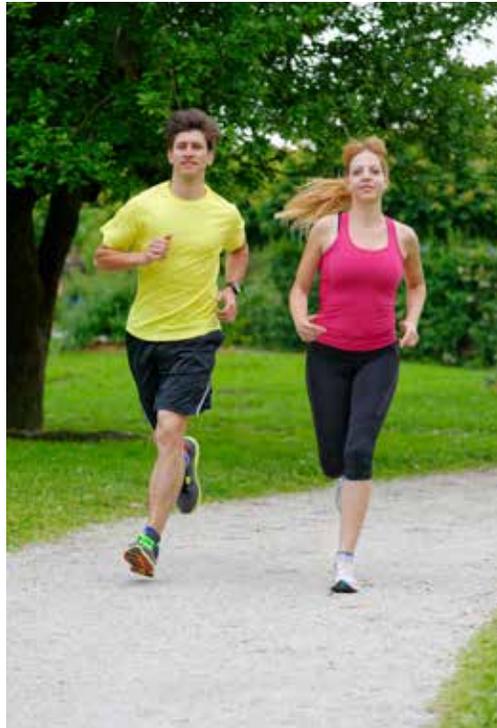
products associated with exhaustion as they're being produced, the runner will hit a state of fatigue. In tempo running and threshold sessions, an athlete's physiological systems learn to efficiently clear accumulating byproducts to manageable levels. Manageable levels then delay the onset of fatigue. So put simply, tempo training allows an athlete to run faster for longer periods of time.

Another important benefit — and something that shouldn't be taken lightly — is the confidence these training sessions can give athletes. In completing a tempo run, runners see themselves running at more difficult paces for longer periods of time. Through tempo intervals, they may notice they're able to persevere through longer training sessions at more demanding paces and intensity. Both types of threshold workouts have potentially positive mental benefits that will improve athletic performance in runners.

What is a Tempo Workout?

I generally break tempo training session down into two categories, tempo runs and tempo intervals. Other coaches may use different terms, so let me define what each of these mean to me.

Tempo runs are a steady run at threshold



Nutrition for Athletes – The Importance of Eating a Balanced Diet

As an athlete it may be easy to overlook nutrition as an important part of your development, but the truth is, healthy eating can be just as important as the training you do that makes you a better athlete.

An athlete who eats fast food, candy, and soda day after day is more likely to get sick or injured and will not perform as well as an athlete that eats whole grain foods, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and dairy products every day. Examples of whole grain foods include wheat bread, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and oatmeal.

Next time you go to a sandwich shop after practice, try ordering your sandwich

on whole wheat bread. Lean sources of protein include poultry, fish, seafood, beans, and low-fat dairy products. Try ordering a grilled chicken or fish sandwich instead of a cheeseburger.

Fruits and vegetables may not sound as tasty as a side of French fries, but it is very important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. Fruits and vegetables contain a lot of different vitamins and minerals that your body needs to stay healthy and grow strong bones and muscles. Fruits and vegetables can be eaten as part of a meal or snack. Combine other healthy foods with them for an even more nutritious option. For example, apples with cheese, bananas with peanut butter,

celery with nut butter and raisins, carrots with hummus, or a green smoothie.

Eating a variety of nutritious foods every day will help keep you healthy and provide you with the energy you need during training and to be your best.

If you are interested in a dietitian talking to your team about nutrition, TOSH offers this service free of charge! Just call 801-314-4038 or email TOSHnutrition@imail.org to schedule a group nutrition class.

Claire Siekaniec
TOSH Sport Dietitian



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