

8: Train Fast – Race Fast

Speed work is essential for runners who have a decent running base and want to run faster. Take Jane* - she competed for years, but this winter changed her run form and incorporated speed work into both her bike & run training. She PBed in her 10 km at the chilly UBC Olympic triathlon (March), qualified for Kona in Arizona (April), and PBed again (2 mins faster on the bike:run!) at the North Shore triathlon (May). Does that convince you? Read on to run faster!

Firstly, you have to run with good technique. It may be worth 4-8% - without increasing your training volume. If you do speed work with poor technique you are increasing your risk of injuries and limiting your potential as a runner. Many of the concepts I teach are available on an excellent DVD entitled "Evolution Running". I distribute them in B.C. and they come complete with my written critique. Check out my website www.valburke.com.

In the Tri BC Spring Edition I talked about performing NM repetitions in the early season. Your important races are now 6-10 weeks away, so move to longer intervals. 3-5 minute (1 km) and 5-8 minute (2 km) intervals work to 1) increase your VO₂ max., lactate threshold, & run economy (limiters to 5 and 10 km performance) and 2) increase the strength of your running muscles. It also helps you establish accurate pacing for races.

Examples of Speed Sessions Performed Early and Mid-Season.

Early Season (April-May)

Warm up 2 kms

6 x 2 minute hills (6% grade)

6 x 500 m intervals: 500 m EZ run between

Cool down 2 kms

Mid-Season (June-Aug)

Warm up 2 kms

5-7 x 1 kms or 3-4 x 2 kms

- Undulating, just like your races
- 4 minutes recovery between each.

Cool down 2 kms

Speed work should be done 1-2x/week, depending on experience, races, and cycling intensity work.

**Jane is a real athlete - name changed for privacy reasons.*

References:

Originally printed in Summer 2006 edition of TriBC Word