

Winter Running
2011-2012
Marietta XC

“ . . . as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter’s wind,
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say . . .
Sweet are the uses of adversity,”

As You Like It, by William Shakespeare: Act 2, Scene 1

“Baby, It’s Cold Outside”
Lyrics and composition by Frank Loesser, 1944

Every MXC athlete has made a substantial investment in his or her level of fitness this past season.

Some of you are using your fitness to participate in a winter sport, such as swimming or basketball. If you are involved in a winter sport, work in some runs on your off days so that you maintain a base level of running-specific cardiovascular fitness. Do not overdo it, however. Your winter sport takes priority, and running to increase your cardiovascular fitness should complement your primary sport, not detract from it. Make sure your winter sport coach is aware of your running and approves.

If you are not participating in a winter sport, you likely will take (or maybe have already taken) a week or two off: whatever you needed to rekindle your desire to run. Once you are past that break, return to a regular routine of running.

If you are going to participate in track, crew or baseball, a winter maintenance program will serve you well. Your current level of fitness was hard-earned. Nurture and maintain it like you would any living organism, and it will grow and prosper. Ignore it, and it will wither and perish.

Run by time, not miles.

Here's the plan: for upper class girls and boys: run 20 minutes on day one, 30 minutes on day two, and 40 minutes on day three. Day four is rest or cross-training, as you prefer and circumstances permit. On day five, start the cycle again: 20 minutes on day five, 30 minutes on day six, 40 minutes on day seven, and off on day eight. On the third week, run 65 minutes on day seven.

For ninth and tenth graders the cycle should be 15 minutes on day one, 25 minutes on day two, and 35 minutes on day three, again with day four off or cross-training. On the third week run 55 minutes on day seven.

For middle schoolers, the cycle is 10 minutes on day one, 15 minutes on day two, 20 minutes on day three and day four off or cross-training, with 40 minutes on day seven of your third week.

Repeat the 4-day cycle until it's boringly comfortable. Then, add 5 minutes per day. For example, for high school upper classmen, the next stage would be 25 minutes on day one, 35 minutes on day two, and 45 minutes on day three, with day four off or cross-training.

If you miss a day here and there, just count it as your rest day and do the run you missed on what would have been your rest day.

You probably won't miss interval workouts, but incorporate hills into your training, and, one day a week during the first four weeks, do either a tempo run or a fartlek run. Then, progress to a tempo run and a fartlek run during each week, but not on back to back days.

Some of you will want to do more and some may need to do less. This is a general schedule which allows you to work around your circumstances.

This is a time to maintain and improve your conditioning base, further injury-proof your body and lay the foundation for future success.

Keep your shoes in good shape. Replace them when necessary (8-10 weeks for high school runners). Alternate shoes every day or every few days.

Anytime you have a training question, call or e-mail Coach Leeper, Coach Hull, Coach Crow or Coach Cassady (leeper@theisenbrock.com; johnpatrickhull@gmail.com; ashleyakiko@hotmail.com); mttaxc@hotmail.com. We run at various times and places with friends, family and acquaintances, so if you are looking for company for a run, you can always find us.

Email us once in a while to let us know how things are going.

Trail running is great, and an easy way to incorporate hills. Trail running is especially enjoyable in the winter. The foliage is gone and everything looks different. Running in snow is a real treat (trail shoes can be very helpful). The Broughton Wildlife Area is a great place to run at this time of year.

It is actually easier on your body to cope with the cold temperatures of winter than with the steamy conditions of summer. Use layers, and fabrics which wick moisture from your body.

You will sweat as much on a cold, windy day, if you are properly dressed, as you do on a warm day. Consume fluids accordingly. Much of your winter running may be done in the dark. Be conscious of your visibility both when you dress and when you react to traffic. Roads and sidewalks can become extra slippery by the passage of traffic. We occasionally get freezing rain. Do not even try to run on ice.

Winter is also a time to build strength through cross-training and, especially, core work. A good core session might consist of 3 sets of 60-90 seconds bicycle holds; 3 sets of 60-90 seconds of Superman; 3 sets of 60-90 seconds of Superdog; 3 sets of 60-90 seconds each of right planks, left planks and center planks. You can modify right and left planks by slowly moving your top leg as if it were going through a running motion. Modify center planks by lifting each leg 4-6 inches from the ground, keeping it straight, and holding it there for 5 seconds, switching legs every 5 seconds.

To protect your ITB bands (and indirectly, knees and hips) and to help prevent shin splints, you can work in sets of straight (knee locked) leg raises (2-3 sets of 5-8 reps per leg) as well as lateral (knee locked) leg raises.

Crunches and push-ups are helpful.

Winter is also a great time to catch up on some recreational and running oriented reading. *Once a Runner*, the classic by John L. Parker, Jr., is available for circulation, as is *Running With the Buffalos* by Chris Lear. Parkers' long-awaited sequel, *Again to the Cathedral*, is also available, but you'll enjoy it more after you've raced a marathon (preferably several years from now!). We also have copies of *The Perfect Mile* by Neal Bascomb, a good telling of Sir Roger Bannister's historical assault on the four minute mile barrier, Kenny Moore's excellent biography of the icon of American running coaches, and co-founder of Nike, the legendary Bill Bowerman, and *Harriers* by the Shivers Brothers, an unpolished but very readable account of a journey from a mediocre season to the Ohio State H.S. Championship.

Run for all and all for run!

TEAM.

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