

MY FAVORITE SPEED WORKOUTS

By Rob Maxwell M.A.

As many of you who have been reading my articles know, the way I believe you become a faster runner is by running faster. Through the years, I've used a lot of different types of speed workouts, and I've found that just about any time you run faster than your norm, you'll get faster. I also think it's important to mix it up and do different things for your mind and body. There are many other speed workouts out there that work well, but these are the ones that I have "enjoyed" through the years the most. Here are some of my favorites:

- **TRACK:** I could spend the entire article talking about different type of track workouts, but most people already have a pretty good idea of what to do when they go to the track. So I'll simply leave this category wide open. One great speed workout is to go to the track!
- **GPS MILE REPEATS:** Warm up in the first mile by running an easy pace (easy typically is 1-2 minutes slower than you could race the same distance that you're running that day); Then run 3 X 1 mile at your tempo pace (about 10-20 seconds slower than your pace per mile in a 10k) w/ 2 minutes in between of easy running. Of course you can do these anywhere and mark the course or do it at a track. But I like using the GPS and just run any route I feel like!
- **3 MILE BUILDING WORKOUT:** Run the first mile at an easy pace, run the second mile at a tempo pace, and run the last mile as fast as you can (hopefully, faster than your current 5k pace average mile). Walk to cool down.
- **3 MILE EVERY OTHER MINUTE FAST/EASY:** Warm up with a 10 minute jog; have 3 miles measured out (or use GPS); Run the first minute "fast" (sub 5k pace) and the next minute easy; repeat every minute until the 3 miles is up. (Check your time; you may be surprised.)
- **THE IPOD SHUFFLE:** This one is for all the Techno Geeks (me included) that have an IPOD or other music device and a GPS. Run the first 2 songs at an easy pace; run every other song (3-6 total repeats) at sub 5k pace. On the "recovery" song, simply run easy. I recommend a GPS because it simply makes it easy. When it's time to go fast, you simply look down at the pace per mile on the GPS and stay quicker than your 5k pace. Word of warning—check what is loaded on your IPOD. Don't get stuck going fast on a Stairway to Heaven interval! I got caught once on an 11 minute Soundgarden song! Ouch.

For the non-techno geeks, you can do the same thing—but it's not as fun. Simply warm up and then do 3-6 repeats of 4-5 minutes at sub 5k pace with 4-5 minutes of easy jogging in between.

- **NEGATIVE SPLIT 3 OR 4 MILER (OR MORE!):** Run to the ½ way point in your run at an easy to comfortable pace and turn around and try to run race pace (5k) on the way back. Note your time and how you felt going out versus coming back. This is a great workout for those who feel as though they don't finish races very well.

I do have more tricks up my sleeve, but those are my current favorites. I simply go with my mood regarding which one I want to do. Remember, 1 to 2 days of speed work a week is all you need, and anymore will lead to overtraining!