CUSTOMIZE YOUR RUNNING DAYS

I know many runners who follow the same training schedule year after year without ever taking time to analyze whether or not it is working for them. And I'm not talking about the total miles they run, I'm talking about how many days a week they run.

Having a schedule based on a Sunday through Saturday calendar is very convenient, but the bigger question is: Is that schedule the most effective for you? If you find that you're becoming injured more often, consistently taking time off due to illness, or if you're working hard but not sleeping well, quite possibly your body is telling you to adjust your workout pattern. The fact is, you won't know until you change it.

Here are some options that may work for you:

➢ There's the *"running every other day"* routine – so you run 4 days one week and 3 days the next. That's a great schedule and your body will love the consistency. With this choice, you'll never have back to back running days. Not only that, but you'll have more time for cross training and strength work which will possibly help your running.

➢ There's the *"3 day cycle,"* with many different formats. You could run 2 days in a row and then take a day off. Or, my favorite, run one day, bike the next and strength train on the third day. This allows the option to run more quality runs and rest the running muscles by getting on the bike.

➢ For those who struggle with recovery from long runs, there's the *"9 or 10 day"* schedule. With this option you run a long run every 9 or 10 days, instead of every 7 days. You get a couple of extra days between the long runs for recovery or to do more speed work.

Probably the biggest downside of changing from the normal 7 day calendar schedule is that you'll miss out running with your buddies, unless you can talk them into changing their schedules too. Changing your running schedule may also interrupt your lifestyle. But for those of you who have a flexible schedule, I encourage you to see if your body appreciates a change-up. You may become a better runner without any extra work.