

## **TURN YOUR MARATHON PREPARATION UPSIDE DOWN**

*Take a look at this marathon training plan from runner from Bob Wallace, former champion marathoner, life-long runner, and experienced coach of both novice and seasoned runners.*

The standard preparation for marathon training for years has been build a base; work on endurance, stamina and strength and top it off with some speed. For some runners that works just fine. But for others, especially those who have never developed their speed, there's another choice to consider.

Here's a new way to look at marathon preparation that changes the old standard around. It begins with building the aerobic base. This part hasn't changed at all. The aerobic base is getting in as many miles as you can, as safely as possible. That means low intensity runs during the week along with a weekly or bi-weekly long run. The more miles the better, as long as you can handle it.

This aerobic base building is critical for new marathon runners, but it does lack excitement with the exception of running further than you ever have on a regular basis. For experienced marathon runners, spending more than 6 weeks in this phase of training will result in marginal, if any, gains. Hang in there it gets better.

Now comes the exciting part, jumping into speed work. And I mean speed work, as in 1 - 3 minute repeats with at least equal time recovery; 400's at faster than 5K race pace; fartlek and some hill repeats. The focus of this training is to shake up the bones and increase your turnover dramatically. It's fun, invigorating and something that most serial marathon runners never do.

This is your opportunity to become a faster runner, and it will translate into faster marathon times if you give it a chance. That being said, for many this is a big transition and one dose of this intense running per week is enough. Of course, you should continue with a weekly long run during this training period.

After 4 – 6 weeks of the speed work comes your marathon specific preparation that builds your endurance and stamina. This is the time to add some marathon pace, or faster, miles into your long run. It's also the time to add tempo runs, long 6 to 12 minute repeats, and steady state efforts. This section of the training will go for approximately 6 weeks before a 3 weeks taper.

What this training routine provides is an added emphasis on speed, which makes the marathon specific runs just that little bit easier. It also breaks up the boredom of endless miles with very little change of pace. Because the intensity of the speed work and the added benefits on your efficiency it's possible to shorten the period of the marathon preparation by up to a month.

