

GETTING BETTER

Once you have a base ... getting better is a matter of gradually increasing the stress. Remember:
Stress + Rest = Improvement?

1. **ADD DISTANCE or MINUTES:** RULE OF THUMB: Never increase your time or mileage more than approximately 10% per week. Example: Say you're doing 3 miles 3 times per week or 9 miles/week. The next week you shouldn't do more than 10 miles total. You can do that by adding 1 mile to 1 of your (3) 3-mile workouts. (3 miles 2 days and 4 miles one day). Or, you could walk/run 3 miles one day and 3 ½ miles the other 2 days.
2. **ADD FREQUENCY:** Walk/Run 5 days/week instead of 4. Or work up to 6 days/week Intersperse rest-stride days in between your 3 workouts.
3. **ADD SPEED:** Choose one day a week of to go at a quicker pace (with easy warmup and cool down). That includes entering a race, speed workouts, time trials ... these all qualify. Then be sure to take it very easy on your recovery days. Never put 2 speed days back to back. Spread them out throughout the week.
4. **ADD DIFFICULTY:** In addition to the examples above, difficulty can include hills or hilly courses, grass (like cross country courses), sand (loose sand is VERY difficult ... go a short distance only!), etc.
5. **MIX IT UP:** Don't do the same workout every day at the same pace. You will "maintain" your fitness, but you won't "improve". If you average 3 miles/day; go 4 miles one day, 2 miles one day and 3 miles a one day.

IMPORTANT: Don't add all of these changes at once. You should introduce new elements to your training one (maybe two) at a time. Example: Don't jump your mileage up by 5 miles/week and start doing speed work 2 days/week all in the same week. You are asking for injury if you ignore this common sense principle.

SPEEDWORK (examples):

- **Races** - start with 5Ks. Then set a new goal 3 months in the future to walk/run a 5 miler or 10K. Increase distance gradually.
 - First, learn to pace yourself so your first mile isn't faster than your last. THEN, work on getting that pace down a few seconds per mile over time. Learning pace is the toughest lesson!!!
 - You can usually race distances up to 2-3 times your average total weekly workout ... but it won't be fun! Better to train up to the distance. Example: walk/run 6 miles at least once a week before you race 10K.
- **Distance intervals** - use a track* to alternate hard running/power walk with jogging/walking. Examples:
 - Push the straight-aways, easy pace the curves.
 - Pickup your pace to hard 1/2 lap: then recovery pace 1/2 lap.
 - Alternate full lap pickup; jog/walk easy 1/2 lap.
 - Push pace 1/2 lap, easy/recovery pace 1/2 lap, run full lap, jog 1/2 lap, run 2 laps, jog full lap (this is called a ladder). Then repeat.
- The same concept can be done off the track using city blocks or telephone poles or driveways, etc. ***Timed intervals** - use your watch. This is what we've been doing in First Strides NMB!
 - Pickup 30 sec, easy/recovery 30 sec. Continue this pattern for the middle 10 minutes of your workout.
 - Walk/Run 30 sec, easy walk/jog 30 sec, pickup 1 min, easier 30 sec, pickup 2 min, easier 1 min ... (see the pattern?) *Use the same or 1/2 the distance/time as your recovery jog/walk.*
- **Hills** - intervals. The steeper the hill, the shorter the interval. Attack hills at a pace that tires you, but doesn't stop you. Then recover slowly with a shorter strides on the downhill ... but don't hold back and strain your knees.
- **Time trials** - if you have a course you do daily, once a week push your pace and time it to see if you can go faster. Not every day ... just once ever couple of weeks. Walk/Run your course at a sustained, quicker (not sprint) pace than you normally do it.

* A "track" is usually ¼ mile/400 meters. Our NMB Meadow Loop is 0.6 miles-just over double a school loop track.