

CROSS-COUNTRY SUMMER RUNNING

1. How often should I run?

Athletes new to running should plan on running every other day until they become acclimated to running. Over time, the athlete should transition to running every day except Sunday. During the cross-country season, we will run 6 days a week.

Veterans should be accustomed to running 6 days a week, but if they have taken significant time off from running for any reason, they may want to add more days off during the week until their bodies have readjusted to running regularly.

2. How much should I run?

This will vary by athlete and is certainly influenced by the athlete's experience, body structure, etc. This is NOT a one size fits all sport! The following chart provides a target for weekly volume based on an athlete's experience and encourages the athlete to add about 5 minutes of running each day for each year of experience. Some athletes will be able to handle more and some may require less and may need to supplement their running by cross training to stay healthy.

The athlete may not be able to meet these targets initially but should work to be able to meet them when the season begins in mid-August.

# of YEARS of HIGH SCHOOL cross-country experience	# of MINUTES of running per week
0	180 to 210
1	210 to 240
2	240 to 270
3	270 to 300

3. What type of running should I do?

Athletes new to cross-country running should be doing conversation-pace running ONLY to improve their general fitness and readiness for faster-pace running that will be introduced during the season. During a conversation-pace run, the athlete should be able to carry on a conversation for the duration of the run. If they cannot, they are running too fast. At the same time, the athlete needs to run fast enough to avoid running with poor form. This can lead to injury.

After 2 to 3 weeks of regular conversation-pace running, the athlete can introduce 4 to 6 striders at the end of their runs. Striders are 20 to 30 second (about 100 meters) runs at mile race pace with about 30 to 45 seconds rest between.

After 2 to 3 weeks of conversation-pace running and striders, **VETERANS** should begin to introduce some higher quality runs, as well. Most runs should, however, still be at conversation-pace. The following runs are recommended:

1. A threshold run one time per week. After a good warm-up, the athlete should run at threshold pace for 15 to 20 minutes depending on their fitness. Threshold pace is approximately one minute per mile slower than the athlete could run a timed, 100% effort mile run. For example, a 6-minute miler should run their threshold run at 7 minutes per mile. Athletes desiring to run longer than 20 minutes at threshold pace should add 5 seconds to their mile pace for each additional 5 minutes they add to their threshold run. The athlete should cool down after their threshold effort run.
2. A long run at conversation pace one time per week. Just like it says, it's a longer conversation-pace run and should last at least 45 minutes.
3. A hill session once every two weeks. Hill sessions should alternate between a long gradual hill at least half a mile in length during a long run one week to hill repeats on a somewhat steeper hill about 100 to 200 meters in length their next hill session two weeks later. The long gradual hills should be run at conversation pace, and the shorter hill repeats should be run hard with about 3 minutes of easy running between the hard hills for recovery.
4. Starting in mid-July, the athlete can introduce a Fartlek (A Swedish word that means "speed play") run during weeks that a hill session is not conducted. In a Fartlek run, after a good warm-up, the athlete mixes short bouts of faster running (you decide how fast and for how long) with short bouts of recovery running. There is no right way to perform a Fartlek run - just vary your speed and have fun with it while challenging yourself at the same time. If you need an example, see Coach Mojo.

4. What else should I be doing?

Participate in the strength and conditioning program at Memorial High School 2 to 3 times per week. Sessions are offered Monday thru Thursday from 7:00 AM to 8:30 AM or 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM. We will lift during the season, so this is a good way to become acclimated to Olympic-style lifts that we'll be doing during the season.

Stretch and refuel after each run. Refueling is simply replacing the energy used during a run by consuming good carbohydrates and protein. Drinking a large glass of low-fat chocolate milk is a great way to get both the carbohydrates and the protein you need at one time.

Do one of our core strengthening work-outs after a run on days when you are not involved in the strength and conditioning class. I recommend the hip drills we introduced last year. These should be done at least twice a week. Newcomers should ask a veteran what these drills are. If they can't help you, ask Mojo. The P90X ab-ripper X core drills is another set of good core drills you could do.

Log your activities either on the team online mileage log or on a hard copy mileage/minute log. A link to the instructions to help you establish an online mileage account is available on the girls' cross-country web page. A pencil and paper mileage/minute log can be obtained from Mojo.

5. OTHER HELPFUL HINTS:

- * Run in a good pair of running shoes that are designed for your type of foot and gait. A good rule of thumb is to replace your running shoes at the beginning of every season (summer, cross-country, winter, track and field) if you run year-round. Inadequate shoes are a leading cause for injuries suffered by distance runners. If you need help in selecting an appropriate pair of running shoes, ask Coach Mojo for the "shoe packet".
- * Run during the cooler part of the day - early morning or during the evening, and only run in an area where you are safe - even if you're running with a partner.
- * Run on grass or dirt trails. That's the type of surface we'll be racing on in the fall, and it helps prevent injuries.
- * Wear clothing that wicks moisture away from your skin when you run (a fabric like Dry-fit). You'll be more comfortable when you run, and it helps prevent heat-related issues.
- * Run with an I.D. and cell phone. If you're running alone and something should happen, you want to be able to seek assistance quickly.