

# Dam to Dam TRAINING TIPS

*Start in March and have a great DAM race June 2, 2018*

We are approximately 10 weeks away from race day! At this point in your training program, consistency must be stressed. That means running 3-4 times a week at a minimum. While fast training runs and/or long runs are important, you cannot overlook your other daily runs. Prioritize your daily schedule so you are able to complete ALL of your training runs in the span of a week. Additionally, pay special attention to stretching and leg strengthening exercises to increase your resilience to injury.

“Treadmill vs. Road? There are 3 reasons to choose the road over treadmill every time: 1) It's better for your legs. Your butt and hamstrings are more fully engaged on the road compared to the treadmill, 2) It's better for your fitness. You will run faster on the road and give yourself a better aerobic training effect, 3) It's more enjoyable. Even in poor weather, within 15 minutes of forcing yourself outside, you will be glad you chose the fresh air.”

A simple and effective method to combine race-specific training and pace work is to complete progression runs. Simply start your next run slower than normal and increase pace with each subsequent mile until you reach or exceed goal race pace. Another option is to complete the last 1-2 miles of your long run at a hard effort, starting that final segment at goal race pace and building up to 10k pace or even 5k pace. Progression runs prepare your mind and body for the increasing effort required to maintain pace in the late stages of your half marathon.

How long should my longest run be prior to race day? It's safe to say your longest run should be equal in duration to the length of time you will be on your feet come race day, but it's not always that simple. If you become injured in the process of increasing your long runs then that obviously does you no good. I would recommend that you increase your longest run by 1-2 miles every other week from a starting point appropriate to your level of fitness. For example, if your longest run began at 3 miles and you only had time to build up to 9 miles then be content with 9 miles. It is better to arrive at the starting line healthy with a 9 mile long run then injured with a 13 mile long run.

There are huge benefits to running with a partner, especially if your partner is faster than you. Not only does a training partner offer a distraction, they will also push you to run faster than you will run on your own. Moreover, a training partner's presence may also cause your runs to feel easier while at the same time pushing you to run at

a faster pace. Make the sacrifice in your schedule and find someone to run with 1-2x week and you'll soon see significant improvements in your performance.

Setting Your Goal Pace on Race Day: There are a number of ways to determine your goal pace for race day. The simplest way to identify a realistic goal pace is to pay attention to your average long run pace during recent training runs. If you can cover your long runs at 8:00 pace it's reasonable to expect that you can cover your race day distance at the same pace. Another way to predict your goal pace is to plug in a recent 5k or 10k race into a pacing calculator. There are several to choose from and a simple internet search will reveal several options. I personally rely on those calculators devised by Jack Daniels or Greg McMillan. These calculators predict race times by providing comparable efforts at other race distances.

A common running form flaw is overstriding. It's a common misconception that long strides are desirable to proper running form. While I wouldn't recommend shortening your stride per se, you may want to consider increasing your rate of turnover. During your next run count how many times your foot strikes the ground in 30 seconds. If you're not within the range of 42-45+ then you could probably benefit from increasing your cadence. Start by taking the number of foot strikes you currently complete in 30 seconds and increasing that number by 2 until it becomes natural. Once you master that slightly higher cadence you can continue incremental increases in your stride rate until 42-45 becomes second nature. The advantages to a higher cadence are more efficient running and reduced risk of injury.

With just over 2 weeks to go until race day, a solid go-to speed workout is tempo intervals. This workout will sharpen your form and fitness without any unwanted fatigue. After a 1-2 mile warm-up run, perform 3-5 sets of 5 minutes at a comfortably hard pace with 1-2 minutes of rest between sets. Your pace should be within a range of 10-15 seconds per mile slower than 10k pace to 10k pace. Cool-down with another 1-2 mile run.

**by Tim Ives, running coach with  
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**Note - Tim running the mountains of Des Moines (?) in his Dam shirt**

