

# PLANNING TO Succeed

With fitness mentor and running coach Nina Anderson as she shows you how to make the most of your training time whether you're an experienced runner or just starting out plus follow the fortunes of Nina's weight loss client Shan Hughes as she takes her first steps to fitness.

**Photography:** Richard Browne

**There are more** ways to improve running than merely to churn out more miles. With the plethora of sports science information available, it can be difficult to know which advice to follow. First documented in the early 20th Century by the Russians, periodisation is now widely acknowledged to be the backbone of training methodology. This is the term used to describe the planning process by which the year is divided into training blocks. It is equally important for the non-athlete to have a defined training plan, as this can help to both guide and motivate. Regardless of racing distance and level of ability or experience, using a specific structure can enhance the probability of individual potential being fulfilled.

## **Best foot forward: plans for runners with experience**

In order to begin planning the outline of the training year, you must first set a long term goal. It is vital to aim for realistic and achievable targets. The main objective should be the event or season when you would hope to perform optimally. This may be once or twice a year (e.g. a marathon runner competing annually i.e. single periodisation, or a track runner competing both indoors and outdoors i.e. double periodisation).



The goal should be able to be broken down into small, measurable and attainable targets:

TYPE OF RUNNER/ DISTANCE/ EXPERIENCE	INTERMEDIATE GOAL	INTERMEDIATE GOAL	ULTIMATE GOAL
experienced marathon runner	improve 10k performance	improve 1/2 marathon performance	Autumn marathon
road runner with 5k pb of 20m	improve 1500m + 3k on track	improve 10k road	Vets World Champs in Sept - 5k

Once the focus is established the plan can be drafted:-

## Phase 1 - Preparation

This background training is what many would consider to be the 'slog' work, and is the foundation upon which to progress and develop. It consists of both aerobic and strength conditioning. These are basic fitness requirements and must be a primary consideration when starting your regime. Incorporating this work into the beginning of your programme can be a major contributory factor in injury reduction. The duration of this phase would depend upon your athletic background and the specific event for which you are training.

## Phase 2 - Specificity

Training should now focus on the requirements necessary for your specific event. In order to race with more speed, you must train with more speed and phase 2 should incorporate this. An increase in session intensity will produce a better 'quality' of training. Rest periods within sessions need to be extended in order to allow you to run quicker. It is important to include strength training at this time. This can be achieved by doing event-specific lifting focusing on the main

muscle groups, and/or hill sessions. Some runners may choose this period to train at altitude, or warm-weather camps.

## Phase 3 - Pre-Competition

The training in this period is of very high quality and intensity, incorporating both maximal effort and 'sharpening' sessions. A reduced volume of work, coupled with increased recovery, allows an athlete to



train in this way. The aim is to reach the desired performance level, so time trials and tests would be useful at this stage.

## Phase 4 - Competition

If your goal is a single race, the pre-competition phase will lead straight to

race day. If you are preparing for a season of races, it is important to maintain the balance of rest, quality work and basic aerobic fitness. Ideally, it is in this phase that you will reap the benefits of accumulated background training.



## Phase 5 - Rest

The start and finish of the cycle should always consist of a rest period in order to recuperate, both mentally and physically, from the many months of training, and in so doing prepare for the next cycle.

Phase 1 - Preparation	Phase 2- Specificity	Phase 3 - Pre - Comp	Phase 4 - Comp Phase	Phase 5 - Rest
Oct - Jan	Feb - Mar	Apr	May - Aug	Sept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aerobic base - increase mileage @ 65% - 75% MHR*</li> <li>Increase VO2*</li> <li>Raise lactate threshold</li> <li>Circuits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aerobic maintenance</li> <li>Progress lactate threshold</li> <li>Muscular endurance - weights, hills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality sessions</li> <li>Increase recovery</li> <li>Adjust weights</li> <li>Aerobic maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taper to each race</li> <li>Quality sessions</li> <li>Increase recovery</li> <li>Aerobic maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rest</li> </ul>
High Volume Low intensity	High Volume Increase Intensity	Lower Volume High Intensity	Lower Volume High Intensity	

**Above gives a general overview of a yearly plan for an endurance runner. The phases may overlap and vary depending upon the individual needs and background of the athlete.**

This type of planned progression can be invaluable for both the novice and experienced runner.

## Fresh feet: plans for beginners

Now we come to the non-athlete. How helpful would a plan be to define a fitness regime for someone with little or no experience? Setting attainable targets and working within a training regime can be beneficial to anyone. If you are carrying excess weight and wish to improve your fitness, (and thus lose body fat in the process), following a programme can be both motivational and physiologically beneficial.



## running fitness

Throughout this series we will follow Shân Hughes on her physical and emotional path to fitness. 'Aunty Shân, when are you going to have your baby?' That was the comment which motivated her to contact me. Shân wrote 'After years of denial I need help! I am fat and fifty and seem to have let myself go. At 16 I was a local beauty queen, famous in our pub for my hot pants. I hate photographs of myself. I hate getting on the scales. I hate the gym and there never seems to be enough time for exercise in my busy life.'

### Shân's Current Profile

**Age** – 51

**Body Fat** – 47.5%

**Weight** – 110.2kg



### Initial consultation

When we first met six months ago Shân had not exercised for ten years. We decided on a long term goal - to improve her fitness to a level where she will be able to run continuously for 30 minutes (3 to 4 times per week), and so reduce body fat. I devised a programme to incorporate brisk walks in her lunch hour at work (using a pedometer), mixed with jogging interval sessions. The rest (or recovery) period for the interval was based on the length of time it took for her heart rate to drop below 100 after each effort, (10 second count of pulse x 6 = heart rate per minute).

### Month 1 Week 1

*Number in brackets rest period in minutes*

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
walk	walk	walk	rest	jog	rest	Walk with dog incorporating session below
2x4m(2)*	2x4m(2)	2x4m (2)		8x1m (3)		4x3m(2)

*\*4 minute brisk walk, 2 minute rest, 4 minute brisk walk*

By the end of a 3 month period Shân had progressed to longer jogs mixed with bike sessions

### Month 3 Week 13

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
jog	rest	jog	rest	jog	bike	rest
14x1m(1)		5x3m(2)		15x1(1)	easy 30m	



## Interval Session For Beginners

This just means going faster between two points (e.g. trees):

- Begin with a slow warm-up walk of 10 minutes, then spend a short time stretching the leg muscles
- Walk briskly or jog slowly between your two chosen points
- Walk very slowly back to your starting point, this being your 'rest' period
- Repeat 5-10 times
- Finish with a slow cool-down walk of 10 minutes then stretch leg muscles
- As your fitness improves you can either extend the distance between the points, increase your speed, or shorten your rest times



Nina's clothes supplied by ASICS ([www.asics.co.uk](http://www.asics.co.uk)), 01925 243360

### Why run?

- Very few other forms of exercise can burn as many calories per minute as running. It is aerobic and so improves cardio-vascular fitness which in turn improves the efficiency of the heart
- Excellent both as part of a weight-loss programme and for the maintenance of a healthy body. As with any exercise, it has to be incorporated with nutritious and well balanced eating in order to reap the greatest rewards
- It is free and a form of exercise which can be done practically anywhere. All you need are the correct type of trainers and for women a sports bra
- Running can generate both an overall feeling of wellbeing and a reduction in stress levels.
- It is weight bearing and can help to reduce the risk of osteoporosis



Quad Stretch



Hamstring Stretch



Calf Stretch



## Getting started

- As a complete beginner, or if you have not exercised for some time, it is always advisable to consult your GP prior to embarking on any exercise regime
- To set goals can be both motivational and fun and it is better to think in the long term. It is crucial to aim for attainable targets and to ensure that you are not being over ambitious
- Build up slowly - don't try to do too much too soon
- Schedule exercise into each day prior to the start of your week. You will then know exactly when you are able to train throughout this period. Make your train-



ing a priority and part of your lifestyle

- To devise a weekly programme is simple. It will give a visual record from which you will be able to monitor progress

## Useful tips which can help in the reduction of injury:-

- Running on grass reduces impact - easier on the joints
- Resting is vital - this is when the body adapts in preparation for further training
- Stretching - aids mobility and muscle recovery
- A wobble (or balance) board - essential to strengthen ankles and train nerves in order to increase reaction speed
- There is always time:-
- 5 minutes of exercise in a day is better than no minutes
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the remaining distance
- Buy yourself a pedometer and fit in a brisk 20 minute walk before having lunch. Note the number of steps and try to improve on this next time
- Walk up escalators

## What Shoes?

It is important to purchase your trainers at a specialist running shop. The staff have the expertise to analyze how you walk or jog and provide you with shoes specific to your needs. This is essential in helping you to remain injury free.

***Don't wait until tomorrow. Buy the trainers, make the time and start to feel better about yourself.***



**Nina** has a passion for athletics and fitness. She started jogging at the relatively late age of 25, and only stepped on to the track for the first time four years later. Now, at the age of 35, she is a competitive athlete (400m and 800m). As an athletics coach she specialises in technical drills, strength and conditioning, and designing individual running programmes. Together with this, Nina works as a Fitness Mentor with a very wide range of clients.

[www.ninaanderson.com](http://www.ninaanderson.com)



## Next issue

VO2 max and lactate threshold are terms that a runner may hear often. Nina Anderson explains what they are, why they are so important and how they can be improved. We also catch up with Shân our weight loss client and discover how using a heart rate monitor has helped her training.

You can read about Shân's progress and follow her weekly programme at

[www.ninaanderson.com](http://www.ninaanderson.com)