

The 3-2-1 Approach To Running A Faster Mile

Getting Started With the 1-Mile Nation Of Runners at 1MileNation.com

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<http://1MileNation.com>

I created 1MileNation.com to help everyday recreational athletes, high school runners, and the everyday fitness client, by focusing on the 1-Mile distance for fitness improvements.

We have 1 and 1.5 mile fitness tests that trainers & coaches use to assess aerobic capacity, having it be a general marker of fitness improvements. Just as some coaches & trainers use 1 Rep Maximum testing for total body strength tests, the 1-Mile Run can be a great distance to focus on for your fitness. With 1MileNation.com, I want to use the 1-Mile distance as THE marker you'll go by to assess your fitness & give you a solid goal to shoot for.

In some running circles, the 5K race is generally the only choice for testing your fitness levels, and its usually used as a gauge for the longer races of half-marathons to full marathons. I realize that not everyone could be ready to run a 5K race to test such levels, nor do they have the time to train for longer races. Simply put, our society is either too busy, too lazy, or a combination of both, to put forth the time & efforts into training for long distance races. So, why not focus on the Mile? It is shorter, simpler to train for, and doesn't take up as much time as you'd think. You could get 3, high-intensity workouts per week into your training, and reap the benefits of greater fat loss and health improvements by focusing on the mile.

The Mile is also a distance where you don't need a local race to constantly test yourself. Although there are 1-Mile races here & there throughout the country, 1MileNation.com is like a virtual 'online race' with others and yourself, throughout the course of the year, to constantly track yourself. You can easily test yourself on a stretch of road, on a track, an indoor track, and if safety is a concern, you can at least try it on a treadmill. The point is that most people can test their 1 Mile abilities and do it on their own, or with a group of friends, with no race entry fees either. 1MileNation.com is a free resource and community for you, to leave your comments, questions, and progress as you go. Simply subscribe using the Subscribe form on the left-hand side column, and you'll be updated when new posts arrive on the site.

I want to get into the basis of the 3-2-1 structure for a quick overall focus on the 1-Mile distance and how you can setup a fitness strategy to train for it. The 3-2-1 Approach means:

3, high intensity workouts per week of running

2 days of strength training (at least) per week for total body strength improvements

1 Mile for your distance to focus on

With 3, high intensity workouts per week, you will be conducting some very hard workouts. There, I warned you. This is not going to be a cake-walk. Cake-walks are for fundraisers, not for running the Mile. ☺ The mile can be a hard & faster-than-usual race, compared to an easy run for 2-3 miles. The reason why I choose to focus on 3 high intensity workouts is because they deliver both anaerobic, and aerobic training benefits for you. You are simply killing two birds (the anaerobic and aerobic energy systems) with one type of run. Research is showing time & time again that long & slow workouts don't add up to better fitness for everyone. You have to 'push the pedal down' and work your body off in order to see improvements in fitness. With 3 high intensity workouts, you will be getting plenty done, and if you choose to, you can still add in some easy jogs now & then if you'd like, but you're not forced into it like some programs outline for you.

With 2 days of total body strength training, you will be helping your body become stronger to handle the forces of running faster in your workouts. I have come across some simple strategies to help with keeping the body strong, while limiting the amount of muscle gain you may get. You see, with traditional strength training programs, the focus is on building muscle mass, and actually, more muscle mass could inhibit your ability to run faster. It is like strapping on more weight onto a rocket & expecting it to go faster. Whether that weight is fat mass or lean body mass, you could be in trouble. You don't need fluffy, puffed-up muscles to run faster, you need stronger, more dense muscle fibers that are smaller and can handle more forces. I will offer some strategies here to help you keep the mass gains low, and the speed gains high, with your strength training. The high intensity workouts will help shed off body fat for you, so all in all, you're looking at trimming up, keeping the muscle you have and making it stronger, and running faster as a result.

With the 1-Mile Focus, you don't have to run much longer than 2-3 miles in total distance on a training run. Sometimes it will be only 1-2 miles worth of running. Why? Because you'll be running a series of shorter distances at FAST paces, meaning your total training volume doesn't have to be so high (like a high mileage program you see for just about any running program). I feel the shorter the runs, the more focused you can stay and become more zoned-in on your fitness.

GETTING STARTED: 3, High Intensity Workouts Per Week

Here's a sample program, taken from my training guide, *The Peak Minutes Plan*, for multi-sport athletes (from my site, <http://asapworkouts.com>). The PMP is a series of 12 phases of training, with 12 workouts in each phase. 3 of these workouts could be done per week, giving you a whole month's worth of training. Another way to do it is to stretch it over 6 weeks, with 2 interval workouts per week, and one 'regular' workout if you wish.

The first phase is structured as follows:

(Taken from The Peak Minutes Plan)

Workouts are conducted on a scale of 1-10 on effort.
10 is an 'all-out' effort rating.

Workouts begin with 5 minutes at a level 5 to 6 rating.
"e" is for Easy efforts, such as 5-6.
"h" is for Hard efforts, such as 9-10.

Basic Workout Template:

Begin with 5 minutes at an "Easy" rating of effort.
Transition to the minute-based easy/hard workout periods, for the suggested workout duration for that workout.

Example: Phase I, Workout 1 has 11 minutes worth of 50 seconds easy, 10 seconds hard for each minute.

You would do the 5 minute easy-rating warm-up, then transition into the 11 minute period of 50 seconds easy, 10 seconds hard. This ends up being a total of 16 minutes for a brief, concise workout.

Each Phase has been specially periodized (specifically planned) to have specified durations for each workout day within the total phase, in order to allow the body to work at differing volumes of total intensities throughout the phase. These fluctuations allow the body to adjust to varying demands that it sees in the world of sports.

Phase I Workout Durations:

Each minute is done with 50 seconds easy, 10 seconds hard, per minute.

Workout #	Phase I Durations
1	11
2	10
3	14
4	21
5	12
6	11
7	11
8	21
9	14
10	20
11	14
12	21

Here's another table to help you plan it out over a 4 week period:

Week	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week 1	11 minutes	10 minutes	14 minutes
Week 2	21 minutes	12 minutes	11 minutes
Week 3	11 minutes	21 minutes	14 minutes
Week 4	20 minutes	14 minutes	21 minutes

A Six-Week Plan with 2 Interval workouts/week would look as follows:

Week	Mon	Wed	Fri
Week 1	11 minutes	Light Run, 2-3 mi.	10 minutes
Week 2	14 minutes	Light Run, 2-3 mi.	21 minutes
Week 3	12 minutes	Light Run, 2-3 mi.	11 minutes
Week 4	11 minutes	Light Run, 2-3 mi.	21 minutes
Week 5	14 minutes	Light Run, 2-3 mi.	20 minutes
Week 6	14 minutes	Light Run, 2-3 mi.	21 minutes

This type of Phase is a great introduction to interval training methods, if you are not used to them. During the interval period itself, you are getting a 1:5 work/rest ratio each minute, with 10 seconds of hard work and 50 seconds of easier work to recover briefly from that hard bout.

Learning how to adjust to these demands is critical in running. When you run outdoors, you may face changing winds, hills, and other challenges of the environment within your running time that demand bursts of energy from you to conquer them.

2 DAYS OF STRENGTH TRAINING PER WEEK:

I'll try to keep things simple here and not give you too much, because you don't need to do a whole lot to get a lot of needed strength for your Mile goals. This is part of the reason why I recommend 2 strength training days per week, with a select series of movements to focus on. You can focus on 4 actions that will help you create a strong & stable body for the demands of running. These 4 actions are Squatting, Pushing, Pulling, & Bending.

I give examples of all these exercises in my free athlete guide, 'The A.S.A.P. Way'. You can find this guide at <http://asapworkouts.com/asapway.html> The Squatting actions will help with the lower body & lower back, the Push & Pull actions will cover the upper body muscles, while the Bending covers the core to strengthen that area more.

This is NOT a 'body toning' program, it is a general strengthening program for the body that allows it to create strength, not just an improved muscle appearance. You build strength for force development with strength training, when you are doing it for the purposes of running. That's why I created this guide: to get you stronger and fitter, not to chisel the abs or tone the upper body. I am not a bodybuilding coach, I am a RUNNING and PERFORMANCE Coach.

One of my pet peeves in the training & coaching field is getting asked questions about how to 'firm up' this, or 'tone up' that. I didn't get in this profession to firm up or tone up anything, I went into it to help people get stronger, fitter, and faster. The appearance stuff takes care of itself when those things are tackled first, not some problem area. Get strong, get fit, & don't get caught up on a problem area.

That being said, the type of workout you'll find in "The ASAP Way" guide is a circuit based workout of 2 exercises per circuit. Squatting & Pushing get paired in the first circuit, and Pulling & Bending are paired in the final one. Just 2 of these total body workouts, in conjunction with your runs, will give you 5 solid days of short, brief, focused exercise.

Why so short? One reason I made the workouts so short is that you'll need the extra time to rest from them. After getting countless questions from people spending 1-2 hours a day in the gym and still not seeing results, I have received more positive feedback when they start cutting down their workout times and apply these new focused strategies to their workouts. If you are simply too tired from working out incessantly, day after day and getting nowhere on that cross-trainer, then give these new short, brief workouts a shot.

I highly suggest reading through my free guides found over at <http://asapworkouts.com>. My books are largely targeted at the parent, coach, and athlete of high school & junior high sports, but the same principles can apply to you, the 1-Mile Runner With A Purpose.

Some quick links for those books are:

The Peak Minutes Plan: <http://asapworkouts.com/pmplan.pdf>

The A.S.A.P. Way: <http://asapworkouts.com/asapway.pdf>

If you are REALLY interested in my unorthodox training methods, then give my "Mini-Max Method" guide a try:

<http://budgetworkout.com/minimax.pdf>

BudgetWorkout.com is a site I made that is its own unique store for your home exercise needs. From books to barbells, you can get it at BudgetWorkout.com. All products are sold through Amazon.com's 'aStore' service, a trusted internet sales source.

<http://budgetworkout.com>

Have any questions? Post them on the blog in the comments section at <http://1MileNation.com>.

Send private questions to me at Rick@ASAPWorkouts.com

Get Strong, Get Fast!

Run so as to win!

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