

## Express Lane: 10 Miles or Less

### How To Get In Quality Condition In the Express Lane of Running With 10 Miles Or Less Per Week

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When it comes to the activity of running, there are a multitude of Beginner level programs to follow, most of which are based on the 5K distance to prepare for. Most of these will follow a run/walk strategy for most of the workouts, and gradually build up to a continuous workout period of time where you are consistently running. For instance, here's a quick workout sample from Runner's World magazine's site:

[http://www.runnersworld.com/images/cma/beginner5k\\_table.jpg](http://www.runnersworld.com/images/cma/beginner5k_table.jpg)

WEEK	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	Walk/ XT 20 min or off	Run 10 min	Walk/XT 20 min or off	Run 15 min	Walk/XT 20 min or off	Rest	Run 2 miles
2	Walk/ XT 20 min or off	Run 15 min	Walk/XT 20 min or off	Run 20 min	Walk/XT 20 min or off	Rest	Run 2.5 miles
3	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Run 20 min	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Run 25 min	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Rest	Run 3 miles (on racecourse if possible)
4	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Run 25 min	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Run 30 min	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Rest	Run 3.5 miles
5	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Run 30 min	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Run 30 min	Walk/XT 30 min or off	Rest	<b>5-K Race</b>

A good portion of this workout is walking, cross-training (doing another aerobic activity, such as biking, elliptical trainer, etc), and then doing brief durations of continual running.

Considering most beginners may fall into a 10-12 minutes/mile pace of running, these workouts will have you covering 10-20 miles in a week, gradually increasing in total mileage.

The trouble with most mileage-based programs out there is the continual and gradual application of increasing one's weekly running distance by about 10% more per week over the course of time.

There comes a point & time where you simply either can't add more miles or time to your schedule, in which you find your running habit transitions into a complete obsession instead of a joyful activity for your health. I have seen this happen time & time again with beginner runners, who continually feel that the need to simply add more mileage, even if it means running twice a day to reach a goal of reducing one's time for even a race like a 5K. Most of this is based on marathon runners' past workout strategies, and ends up misleading a lot of beginners into thinking that only a 'true runner' obtains such a status once they build up to doing a marathon.

Not everyone is meant to be a marathon runner, just like not everyone is meant to be a super basketball player or baseball player.

My main concern here is if you end up running two times a day in order to achieve a goal of running a 3.1 mile race faster, then I think a majority of your running time is spent (and wasted) in a training zone that will not be optimal for your running goals to be met.

To put it more simply: if you spend 70-80% of your total running mileage per week in a state of 'easy', & only spend 20-30% of your training time in a period of 'hard' effort, how do you expect your body to perform 'hard' during a 100% effort on race day? A body trained the typical way for running is used to training 'easy' for 70-80% of the time you spend training. Therefore, your body will most likely become more efficient at operating in 'easy mode' more than it will build up any resistance & strength to handle a 'hard mode' of exercise.

As a past running coach of track & cross-country junior high & high school kids, here's what I've observed:

1. Athletes who play in team sports, like basketball & hockey, are used to practicing in 'hard' conditions, and get BETTER while practicing in HARD conditions, followed by brief periods of rest or active rest/recovery. The basketball team does not go for 3 mile runs and expect to hop on the basketball court and go all-out on game night. They practice drills, plays, scrimmage a lot, and do conditioning specifically on the court in order to get better for their sport. Take any team sport and they all follow the same practice concept: they practice hard, in hard conditions, which will mimic their game day requirements. Runners need to do the same!
2. If you take a young athlete who's used to training in that type of 'hard' practice environment year-round with all the sports they play, you can train them to RACE for the sport of running in a likewise manner, simply because they are already used to high intensity interval conditioning. High intensity interval training is a basis of most team sports training programs & structures. If such an athlete is taken into a slow/easy training period

- and have 1-2 hard efforts of racing in tough conditions each week, they will simply struggle in their hard efforts on race day. This is why high intensity interval conditioning methods must and should be applied to most runners who wish to perform well on any race day, especially for a 5K if they are serious about it!
3. If young athletes are trained in a manner of keeping up with high intensity interval training methods, that mimic their team sport practices, they can transition easier into their fall or spring season running sports, and also into their winter/summer sports. With athletes, I have witnessed most of them coming into a fall (cross-country) or spring (track) running season from their other sport seasons, and normally take 2-3 weeks to get into the normal 'mode' of running & racing.

What can the 'Mere Mortal' in the fitness world gain from this insight of active, young athletes?

Plenty.

If a generally active person has been stuck in a state of "Workout Purgatory", that is, not really getting anywhere with a walking and/or jogging routine that is stuck at similar paces & distances covered in each workout, you can learn a lot from adding HIIT workouts to your mix.

I am all about following and applying High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) methods to one's running program, because I feel it can provide concise, precise results for somebody who's wishing to obtain a higher level of fitness.

Why do I feel this way? Well, with my experience of training & coaching runners, those who follow such HIIT method principles will obtain faster results with less mileage & overall time spent on working out.

It is why I came up with the "Express Lane" name to this article. Much like a retail store has the "Express Lane" or aisle for 10-12 items or less, the fitness field needs its own "Express Lane", which is best found on the indoor or outdoor track, and can achieve better fitness results with 10 miles or less per week.

Case in point: I'll use myself. In January of 2009, I started up my running blog, <http://1MileNation.com>, and followed it up with holding the internet's first Virtual 1-Mile Race online, where runners could submit their 1-mile race times from 4 laps around a track. The turnout was small, but it did reach across the world, in which I had a runner from Australia participate in it.

My personal time was 6:12 in the 1600m distance. (The 1600m distance is typically referred to as "The Mile" by those in track, since 1609m is approx. 1 Mile.) In just a few short weeks by applying high intensity interval training, I took my time down to 5:53, almost 20 seconds off my time. In less than 10 miles a week...3 workouts a week, pretty much.

In June, I tested myself on 4, 1-lap trials of 400m, doing one every 5 minutes. I obtained a 75 second average on each lap, which would total up to a 5-minute mile pace if I held that pace consecutively. My estimated guess at a 1-mile time would be in the 5:30-5:40 range, in just over 2 months from my initial time trial in April, as I write this article near the end of June.

I feel I could maintain an 80 second pace for every 400m, which would tally up to a 5:20 mile time. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, I participated in a 5K, and obtained a 19:33 time in that race, which is a 6:18 pace per mile in that race. So, I went from an all-out 1-mile trial time of 6:12, into a 6:18 per-mile pace over 3.1 miles of a race in about 2 month's time. I am not trying to brag myself up with these times, but I am merely showing you that I obtained and have maintained a darn good level of fitness for my age (32) by applying high intensity interval training methods and doing so by running less than 10 miles a week. (Also, my 19:33 time in a 5K was a new personal best by 25 seconds, compared to a time I obtained in 2006 of 19:58!)

You see, my day job is detailing cars & trucks at a Chevy dealer in my hometown. With my job, I'm on my feet & moving in, out, & around all types of vehicles for 8-9 hours a day. When I get home some nights, I am physically beat & tired. So, I only have so much energy to give for my runs that I go on, down at my old high school's track. My mileages are short, sweet, and focused: usually 2 to 2.5 miles in total running is done. I typically run about a half-mile's worth before I start a majority of my workouts. I will jog ¼ mile to my track, then 1 lap on the track, and then begin my main track workout of "**DBIT**", distance-based interval training.

**DBIT** is a term I came up with to describe my hard/easy periods of running on the track, determined by the 100m markers around the track. Here are some samples:

2 miles worth of 100m jog, 100m at race-pace around the track  
(Race Pace at this time is 20 seconds per 100m or less)  
I mostly do the 100m race-pace portions of this on the straight-aways.

2 miles worth of 200m jog, 200m race-pace (RP)

My 1-2-3-4-3-2-1 workout, which is jog 100m, race pace 100m, jog 200, RP 200, jog 300, RP 300, jog 400, RP 400, then jog 300, RP 300, jog 200, RP 200, jog 100, RP 100. This ends up being 2 miles total in running.

2 miles worth of jog 300m, RP 100m.

2 miles worth of jog 300m, RP 200m, jog 200m, RP 100m. 4 rounds of that equals 2 miles.

My typical training schedule goes like this:

Monday: rest from running, strength work

Tuesday: track workout

Wednesday: rest from running, strength work

Thursday: track workout

Friday: rest from running & strength

Saturday: rest from running, strength optional

Sunday: track workout

My typical work week has me doing 45-50 hours a week of continuous physical labor, which is more than most people do, I realize. (This is the most physically taxing line of work I have experienced, and that includes street/sewer work as a college summer job!) But, if you are looking at a bare minimum to start with, this type of routine could fit you just fine.

Since most of my runs are 3 miles or less in total, with only 3 days a week of running, that's still around 8-9 miles only a week worth of running. Keep in mind 40-50% of each workout is run HARD with brief recovery periods that are equal in distance, not just time.

As far as time goes, I can generally cover, at the current moment, 100m in 20 seconds. This comes out to some goals to reach for each 200, 300, and 400m time to get:

200m: 40 seconds

300m: 60 seconds

400m: 80 seconds (1:20)

800m: 160 seconds (2:40)

My jogging/recovery pace per 100m is usually around 30 seconds, so my recovery times to aim for as well become:

100m: 30 seconds  
200m: 1 minute  
300m: 1:30  
400m: 2 minutes

I am not saying that you or anyone else should follow or shoot for my times, especially if you are new to running & doing so on a track. All I'm showing here is that there are some methods to apply and things to measure if you really want to get serious about your training methods for your sport.

Let's face it: if you want to be stuck in never-never-land with your current training methods that aren't working, fine. But if you really want to get results, those results must be measured, tallied, reviewed, and adapted for your needs! I would do this with my XC runners, by giving them times to shoot for in our racing drills I'd do with them. Yes, runners do DRILLS, too. Running is a sport, and sports have drills within them to get the athlete better for that sport. My "Drills" for running were hard efforts done in 1000m or less, in a repeat fashion, totaling up to race distances for each athlete's needs. For example, my 5K boys would do 5000m worth of 1000m repeats on our 1000m days, which was 5 trials. If the boy wanted a 20 minute 5K time, he had to run at 4:00 or faster for his 1000m time trials. If they wavered off from this time, I'd have them rest. Basically I wanted them running at the competition speed they needed to prepare for & get used to for race day. A 500m repeat day would have this same kid running at 2:00 or less in their times.

Bottom line is that I as a coach had to measure, track, and progress each athlete if it was my job to help them get faster.

If you are your only 'coach' in charge of your running strategy, this is what you have to do.

This is why I love the track as the place to do hard workouts at, if you are looking at improving your fitness. You have markers on the track to measure your distances, plus a simple stopwatch can help guide you at first with tracking your race-paces you want to run at for race day. What even works better is using GPS speed monitors for your training, which I wrote a book about right here: It is called "Endure!", and its part of a unique training e-book package at <http://kettlebolics.com>.

The track is also the reason I came up with my blog at <http://1MileNation.com>. I feel active people today can use the 1-mile distance to use it as a measure of their current fitness, and use it as a goal distance to achieve better fitness results. A track is commonplace in most parts of the country, and needs no official 'race' in order to test oneself. 5K's are great to do, don't get me wrong, because I love the community 5K racing environment in any town I've done one in. But, the track is a personal test of willpower & determination that is always there for you, on any day of the week.

I feel its time for people to get out of "Fitness Purgatory" and enter into "Fitness Heaven" when they start applying time-tested training routines & principles that have created successful athletes & runners for ages.

Re-think your training strategy and start doing more in less time, and less distances overall!



Coach Rick Karboviak is a past running coach of cross-country & track athletes, and a former full-time fitness/sports performance trainer. He currently does summertime training sessions for athletes and consults with trainers & athletes through his multitude of sites, mainly <http://1MileNation.com> and <http://ASAPWorkouts.com>. These portals will take you into the unorthodox training methods that Coach Rick has applied to many fitness & athletic enthusiasts.