



Now's the Time

How to plan training around vacations and heat so you're ready to nail your fall goal BY LAUREL LEICHT

WHO LONGS FOR CRISP autumn air during swimsuit season? Runners with a fall goal, that's who. While it may be tempting to kick back during the dog days, summer is the time to get serious if you've targeted an autumn event. "Staying focused on the big picture is very important," says Pat Henry, head coach of track and field at Texas A&M University. "It's consistency over the long term that matters." Here's how to work training around vacations and sweltering heat so you can have some fun and still nail a race, go farther, or hit trails.

FALL FOCUS: FINISH A MARATHON
SUMMER SETUP → Runners aiming for a September or October marathon started training in May or June. They face two seasonal hurdles: workouts sacrificed to vacation days and superhot long runs. "Missing one day or one week won't affect your training too much," says Jeff Gaudette, owner and head coach of RunnersConnect in Boston. If you miss a week for a holiday, resume training at the point you'd be at if you hadn't taken a break; if you miss two weeks, reduce mileage by 30 percent for

the next three or four days, then pick up your training as if you hadn't skipped any runs, says Gaudette. When a long run coincides with extreme heat and humidity, consider moving the run to a different day or splitting it in two and doing the second half of the run on a treadmill in an air-conditioned gym (See "A Fool-Proof Marathon Training Plan," page TK.)



If you're building mileage, try running twice in one day, once a week. It's a good way to add miles without committing more days to training.

RUN
better

FALL FOCUS: FAST HALF-MARATHON

SUMMER SETUP → “The keys to racing a half-marathon well are having the aerobic strength necessary for a marathon and the speed for a 5-K or 10-K,” says Henry. So if you’ve got a vacation on the calendar, ramp up both speed and long runs for three weeks prior to your break, and use your break to recover, says Andrew Kastor, a running coach for Asics. Active rest, like swimming, yoga, and running easy, will help your body rebuild. If you’re forced to do speedwork under a blazing sun, reduce the distance of each effort and increase the recovery time “to let your body temperature drop below the boiling point,” says Kastor.

FALL FOCUS: RUN YOUR FIRST 5-K

SUMMER SETUP → Rather than look at the entire summer as a daunting training project, set a mini-goal to simply stick out two weeks of run/walking three times a week for at least 10 minutes. “Most people will notice a breakthrough after that window,” says Gaudette. So even when the weather turns you off or happy hour calls your name, you’ll be more likely to stay committed to your plan. Take it a week at a time, gradually increasing your run time and decreasing your walk time. “Time on your feet is the key as you get your body used to the demands of running,” says Christine Hinton, a running coach in Annapolis. Aim to be run/walking 30 to 45 minutes four days a week by Labor Day.

FALL FOCUS: RUN A TRAIL RACE

SUMMER SETUP → Schedule half to three-quarters of your weekly mileage on trails, says Gaudette. “You’ll learn to handle the terrain—hills, turns, tricky footing—and strengthen your ankles at the same time,” he says. “You’ll practice good form running hills and anticipating the optimal path through specific courses.” Plus, shady trails seem cooler than the open roads. That said, if you just can’t take another muggy slog through the woods, you may hit the treadmill—but be sure to adjust the incline often to match what you’ll encounter on your trail route.

FALL FOCUS: RUN FARTHER

SUMMER SETUP → If you want to increase your endurance—whether your longest run is five miles or 20—consistency is crucial, says Hinton. To stay consistent, you have to stay healthy. So break each summer month into a build-and-rest cycle. Increase weekly mileage by 10 percent for each of three weeks (the long run should make up no more than 25 to 30 percent of your total weekly mileage). During the rest week, drop your total down by 10 or 20 percent. Going farther is tougher in the heat, so don’t worry about speed. “If you feel you’re running at an appropriate pace but your watch says you’re slower, don’t pick it up,” says Hinton. “As the weather cools in the fall, you’ll see the result of muscling through the summer—and find your pace increasing without any extra effort.”

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Advice from the world’s best runners



LIBBY JAMES, 76, of Fort Collins, Colorado, ran a world 75-to-79 age-group record of 1:45:52 at the 2013 Walt Disney World Half-Marathon.

1. Work It

“I train at a pace I can maintain. So near the end of a race, I don’t slow down, because I’m accustomed to that pace.”

2. Soak It

“I swear by a short, daily soak in a hot tub. I jump in right after running. It’s a time when I can completely relax, and I think it loosens up my tight muscles.”

3. Forget It

“No one knows what suits your body better than you do. So don’t pay too much attention to your running buddies’ advice, because some of it won’t apply.”
—BOB COOPER

Stay in Touch

During a slack-off week, one solid workout helps keep you sharp

GOAL	WORKOUT
Finish first marathon	3 to 5 miles at goal marathon pace
PR in a half-marathon	3 to 4 x 1.5 miles at goal pace, with a 3-minute recovery jog
Run a trail race	4 to 8 hill repeats at a hard effort
Run first 5-K	Run at a conversational pace for 8 minutes; walk briskly for 2. Repeat twice
Run farther	75% of current long run at a moderate pace

87% OF RUNNER’S WORLD SUBSCRIBERS TRAVELED AT LEAST ONCE IN 2012, AND 77% OF THEM RAN WHILE ON VACATION.

Photograph by Marathonfoto