

Build Speed With Ease

Give your legs more oomph, not miles. A study from the University of Copenhagen found that runners who swapped a few steady runs for shorter sprint sessions each week shaved more than a minute off their 10K times, even though they cut their total miles by 25 percent. To supercharge your stride, trade one of your weekly loops for this all-levels interval routine from Matt Centrowitz, head track and cross-country coach at American University in Washington, D.C.



15:00-35:00

Run a quarter mile at your ideal 10K race pace. Want to run a 10-minute mile? Shoot for 2:30. For an 8-minute mile, 2:00. For a 6-minute mile, 1:30. Walk or jog for the same amount of time afterward to recover. Do 4 reps.



0:00-10:00

Jog to warm up.



10:00-15:00

Do four to six 20-second pickups, starting out easy and then pushing your pace to almost a sprint. Catch your breath for about 30 seconds after each pickup before hitting the accelerator again.



35:00-45:00

Jog to cool down.

Note

Aim to add one more run-walk interval into your workout every other week.

Ask the Expert

Q My lower back has been achy since I began running. Why?

A "You probably need to strengthen your center," says Bill Roberts, M.D., professor of family medicine and community health at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Strong core muscles keep your back from shifting out of alignment as you run by helping to prevent your pelvis from tilting, a common on-the-go no-no. "That shift forces your lower back, hamstrings, knees and ankles to absorb more impact," Roberts says. Find a great core-strengthening routine on page 64. If your soreness persists, see your doc.

Better From Behind

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