

6 Weeks to a Faster You

Elite coach Tom Schwartz guides you through drills, strength training, and specialized workouts to improve your top end speed — so you can run faster and more efficiently at any distance.

Schedule and Progression

The program targets the following 3 major areas:

- 1) Skill development
- 2) Strengthening exercises
- 3) Sprint and hill workouts

Each training week includes a combination of drills, strength, and sprints. The training plan is organized in a week-to-week design based on your current skill level, so you can move smoothly through the program.

Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced levels refer to your experience and expertise with the specific types of training. Note that a runner can be highly experienced in distance running yet have limited experience with performing technical drills, strength training, or sprinting on flat ground or uphill. If you start with the beginner level, and during the six weeks you consistently complete your workouts, move to the intermediate level during the subsequent six weeks. After another six weeks of completing the assigned workouts, move to the advanced training level.

TECHNICAL DRILLS

Running quickly for a long time requires both fitness and proficient technical skills. As a model for excellence, elite runners demonstrate skilled movement patterns that reflect quick rhythm, relaxation, and exceptional coordination. The drills assigned in this program provide purposeful practice to teach you to run smoothly and skillfully; thereby lowering energy cost while running, reducing injury rates, and increasing the enjoyment obtained from gliding along effortlessly as a runner.

Warm up thoroughly before doing drills, just as you would before strength, sprint, or hill rep training sessions. A general warmup of 6-12 minutes of easy running will increase body temperature prior to the execution of technical drills or sprint training.

As a rule, you must break a sweat from the warmup prior to working on drills or sprint or hill rep training. Before and/or after the running warmup, perform Active Isolation Stretching (AIS) or Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF) and dynamic leg swings to improve flexibility and freedom of movement during the dynamic technical drills or sprint/hill training.

You'll do the A, B and C drills **that are described and demonstrated in the videos** every week, advancing to more sets of them as you progress.

FREQUENCY

Beginner level runners should perform the drills twice per week on key workout (or long run) days, at least 48 hours apart.

Intermediate level runners should alternate performing the drills two times per week for one week and three times per week the second week for three cycles during each 6-week program. Perform the drills on key workout (or long run) days, at least 48 hours apart.

Advanced level runners should perform the drills three times per week on key workout (or long run days), at least 48 hours apart.

STRENGTH TRAINING EXERCISES

Runners who develop strength to a sufficient level are less prone to injuries that can occur during hopping, plyometric, sprint, or hill rep training. If you cannot do 30 lunges on one leg while using only your body weight, the strength of the muscles around your hips (especially the glutes, upper hamstrings, and quads) are insufficient to stabilize your body upon ground contact. Without stability, you cannot generate the forward and upward propulsive force needed for speedy running.

Every strength session will include 11 exercises described and demonstrated in the videos:

- A) Squats with Kettlebell
- B) Lunges and Step-Downs with or without hand weights
- C) Step Ups (with and without weights) and Bodyweight Lunges
- D) Air Squats and Single Leg Lunges
- E) Wall Sits and Heel Raises
- F) Heel Drops - Elastic Band Resistance movements
- G) Hip Adduction, Hip Flexion and Extensions
- H) Ankle Plantarflexion and Dorsiflexion
- I) Ankle Inversion and Eversion
- J) Arm Swings
- K) Core Exercises

Long-term success depends on the use of a systematic (progressive overload) training plan increasing the number of reps, resistance, and frequency of strength training sessions.

Remember to take into consideration your prior (and recent) experience as you select a strength training level (Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced). If strength training is new for you, or if you have not strength trained in a long time, classify yourself as a Beginner for the first 6-week training cycle.

**Avoid strength training during the two days before competing in a race. Complete your last serious strength training sessions 5-6 days before your peak race of the competitive season.*

FREQUENCY

Beginner

Strength train twice per week on key workout or long run days.

Intermediate

Alternate strength training two times one week and three times the next on key workout or long run days, at least 48 hours apart.

Advanced

Strength train three times per week on key workout or long run days, at least 48 hours apart. Perform fewer sessions during competition weeks.

HOPPING AND PLYOMETRIC EXERCISES

Hopping or plyometric exercises emphasize mechanical movements used in running fast (sprinting) but with more emphasis on explosion through the range of motion and lower ground contact times. To be explosive on the ground, a runner needs plenty of strength, as well as balance and coordination in various body positions.

Thus, strength training plus technical drills provide the platform for hopping and plyometric training — as well as sprinting on flat ground or uphill. Note that uphill sprinting requires explosive power, just like hopping. However, the metabolic energy demand of uphill sprinting is much greater due to its sustained fashion.

In summary, it is important to have foundational strength and coordination before starting explosive hopping, plyometrics training, or repeatedly sprint training at near maximal speed. The buildup should take a few weeks, so be patient with the process.

HOPPING AND PLYOMETRIC EXERCISES

Here are the hopping and plyometric exercises demonstrated in the videos:

LEG HOPS

- A) Double Leg Hops
- B) Single Leg Hops/Bounding
- C) Side-Hops

PLYOMETRIC BOX HOPS

- D) Single Drop Hop
- E) Multiple Drop Hops
- F) Forward Drop Hops

Beginner

should complete the 6-week program at least once before adding hopping (jumping with two feet), bounding (jumping with one-foot at a time), or plyometric training (jumping on and off boxes). The decision to add hopping, bounding, or plyometric depends largely upon one's current level of strength, as well as one's history of injury. If you have not been injured in at least a year, then "jumping" exercises are probably safe for you – provided your level of strength and coordination are adequate. Follow the schedule outlined below, progressing to more reps each time through the program.

Intermediate

are typically strong enough to start jumping exercises during the first round of the 6 Weeks to a Faster You program. However, it is necessary to have a history of no injuries in the last year. Follow the schedule as outlined below.

Advanced

have a lot of experience and skill in sprint-training, so they can add hopping, bounding, or plyometrics during the first time through the 6-week program. However, if in doubt, it is wise to perform a small number of reps and sets the first half of the 6-week program to limit chances for injury. Finally, if you are adding a lot of distance work, or long interval or tempo running, to your running training schedule in addition to the 6 Weeks to a Faster You program, to avoid injury, cut back on the amount of strength, hopping, bounding, or plyometric repetitions that you complete in workouts.

Caution

Hopping, bounding, or plyometric exercises are essential for improving explosive power, which impacts running speed. However, each may cause injury for runners who lack strength and coordination. Therefore, both strength and technical skills need to be developed to an intermediate level before starting hopping, bounding, and/or plyometric exercises. Be sure to start with small amounts of explosive training and build proficiency gradually! Start with basic hopping (two-leg exercises) for a couple of weeks before adding hopping (one-leg exercises). After two weeks, add plyometrics.

SPRINT OR HILL REPS TRAINING SCHEDULE

If you want to get faster, it is important to work on your top-end speed, and that happens from completing sprint workouts. This is where the rubber meets the road — or track.

Remember

The "Beginner" level refers to your experience and expertise with sprinting or running hill repetitions. It is true that a runner can be highly experienced in long distance running yet have limited experience with sprinting or hill rep training.

Sprint Speed

It is possible to simply run by feel during sprinting training. If you want a more precise estimate of how far you should go during each timed sprint, follow these instructions:

SPRINT OR HILL REPS TRAINING SCHEDULE

Sprint Speed Assessment

Before completing your first sprint-speed training session, test your maximum sprint speed. Here is the procedure (If possible, ask a friend to time your sprints):

- Warmup thoroughly by jogging 6–12 minutes, followed by A-B-C drills. Next...
- Run 30 meters @ what feels like 70% of your top speed. Walk for one minute.
- Run 30 meters @ 80% of your top speed. Walk for two minutes.
- Sprint 30 meters @ 90% of your top speed. Walk for three minutes.
- Sprint 30 meters @ 100% of your top speed. Walk for five minutes.
- Sprint 30 meters @ 100% of your top speed.

Select the fastest time as your max speed.

Calculating top sprint-speed

Jo sprints 30-meters in 3.75 seconds, which is 8.0 meters per second ($30/3.75 = 8.0$ m/s). This is Jo's top sprint-speed, which is used to calculate all training sessions until a new time standard is achieved in a follow-up test after the 6-week program is completed.

Using top sprint-speed

If the assigned training session is 4 x 10 sec. @ 74% of top speed, then the pace for each rep should be 5.92 meters per second ($8.0 \times .74 = 5.92$ m/s). For 10-second sprints, multiply the target meters per second (5.92) by the number of seconds (10). In this case, Joe should run 59.2 meters during each 10-second rep. *For practical purposes, Joe should run 60-meter reps at the 74% speed. Close enough is good enough!

Rest Breaks

It is important to keep the rests between sprint reps plenty long — at least 15 to 20 times the length of the reps — so that high speed can be reached during each rep. This is especially true when the assigned target is greater than 88% of maximum speed. Remember, when the rep speeds increase, the recovery times should lengthen.

Hill Reps

Mix and match flat-ground sprinting with hill sprints. Uphill sprinting requires explosive power, just like hopping, in a sustained effort. As such, hill sprinting is one of the most powerful and effective ways to build explosive speed, for those who are ready to handle the load.

Generally, beginners should not replace flat-ground sprint training with hill reps until the last two weeks of the 6-week program. Intermediate level runners can replace flat-ground hill reps after Week Two of the program. Advanced level runners can replace flat-ground sprint reps with hill reps during the entire program.

Hill Rep Grades

Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced runners should use hill grades of 3-5%, 5-7%, and 8-10%, respectively.

Skipping Workouts

If you skip a particular workout, or miss a whole week, revert to the previous workout or training week before continuing with the schedule.

Number and Length of Reps

Follow the chart below and do sprints of the specified number of seconds based on your current skill level for the specific activity.

The video references sprints of 5–7 seconds, but this is a generalization. The key is keeping the sprints short. The difference between running 7-second and 10-second sprints or between 3 and 4 reps relates to small variances in the skill, fitness, and experience level of individual runners. In practicality, both will work fine. Just run what is doable for you, and pay attention to post-workout fatigue and muscle soreness. As a beginner, if you find that 4 reps are too much, back off to 3 reps. If you start with the Advanced schedule and find that 8 reps is too much, ease back to 6 or 7 reps and build strength before moving on to 8 reps on a regular basis. Be flexible in your approach, and you will avoid setbacks (injuries, chronic fatigue, or mental malaise).

FREQUENCY

Beginner

Do speed sessions twice per week on key workout or long run days.

Intermediate

Alternate speed sessions two times one week and three times the next week on key workout or long run days, at least 48 hours apart.

Advanced

Perform speed sessions three times per week on key workout or long run days, at least 48 hours apart.

HOW TO SCHEDULE THE TRAINING

Strength exercises should be done on the same days as harder running workouts. Either do strength training several hours before a running workout, or right after a running workout. Strength training should never be done immediately before running that focuses on aerobic development.

Technical drills should be done at least on the sprint or hill rep training days as a component of the warmup. The drills can also be performed on other days, but it is wise to not do technical drills more than two days in a row if you are in the Beginner or Intermediate categories. Advanced runners can perform drills 5-6 times per week, although the drills should be less in volume (fewer reps, or shorter durations or distances of the reps). In other words, it is wise to vary the stress level of the drills--meaning change up the number of reps, the distance or the duration of the reps, and vary the rest break between reps.

Jumping exercises (hopping, bounding, or plyo) should be done on the key sprint/hill rep days. Ideally, they should be done at least four hours before or after the sprints/hill reps, along with strength training, so as to give space and ample recovery time in between the high quality training. **Never do the jumping exercises on easy days!** You can do the jumping exercises (along with strength training) on a separate day from the sprint training days as long as there are 48 hours separating it from the sprints or hill rep training.

Example schedule for beginner- or intermediate-level runners

Monday	Technical drills; Sprints and/or hill reps; Strength training
Tuesday	(Easy)
Wednesday	Technical drills (optional); Jumping; Strength training
Thursday	(Easy)
Friday	Technical drills; Sprints and/or hill reps
Saturday	(Easy)
Sunday	Long or base run

Example schedule for advanced runners

Monday	Technical drills; Sprints and/or hill reps; Strength training
Tuesday	(Easy)
Wednesday	Technical drills (optional); Jumping; Strength training
Thursday	(Easy)
Friday	Technical Drills; Sprints and/or hill reps; Strength training
Saturday	(Easy)
Sunday	Technical Drills (optional); Long or base run

NOTE

All of these recommendations are based on the assumption that you are doing nearly no hard running workouts other than the 6 Weeks to a Faster You program. If you are doing hard interval workouts, long fast tempos, or doing fast long runs, you will need to dial back the amount of reps and increase the recoveries for the items listed in this program. If in doubt, do less! This will help you avoid injury and burnout, and stay motivated. From sustained enjoyment comes the long-term opportunity to succeed at two things: staying in the sport (thus deriving benefits) and avoiding setbacks like injuries, exhaustion, and mental malaise.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

WEEK	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
1	<p>Strength Training 1 set of 8 reps for exercises A-K. (Rest 30-60 seconds between each exercise)</p> <p>Jump Training (Hopping, Bounding, and Plyometrics) 1 set of 4 reps, progressing to 1 set of 8 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 30 seconds between exercises) *If you are physically strong and coordinated, you can immediately start Jump Training with 1 set of 4 reps per exercise. Otherwise, start the Jump Training the 2nd time you go through the 6-week schedule.</p> <p>Technical Drills 1 set of ABCs</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 4 x 10 seconds @ 74% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 2:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 2 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 30 seconds between each exercise and 4 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training (Hopping, Bounding, and Plyometrics) 2 sets of 5 reps, progressing to 2 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 25 seconds between exercises and 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABCs (Rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 6 x 10 seconds @ 77% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 2:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 30 seconds between each exercise and 4 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training (Hopping, Bounding, and Plyometrics) 3 sets of 5 reps, progressing to 3 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 20 seconds between exercises and 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 3 sets of ABCs (Rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 8 x 10 seconds @ 80% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 2:00)</p>
2	<p>Strength Training 1 set of 10 reps for exercises A-K. Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 1 set of 5 reps, progressing to 1 set of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 25 seconds between exercises.)</p> <p>Technical Drills 1 set of ABCs</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 4 x 10 seconds @ 74% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 2:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 2 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 3 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 2 set of 5 reps, progressing to 2 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 20 seconds between exercises and 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABCs (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 6 x 12 seconds @ 80% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 2:30)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 3 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 5 reps, progressing to 3 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 15 seconds between exercises and 30 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 3 sets of ABCs (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 8 x 12 seconds @ 83% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 2:30)</p>

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

WEEK	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
3	<p>Strength Training 2 sets of 7 reps for exercises A-K. (Rest 4 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training 2 sets of 4 reps progressing to 2 sets of 8 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 20 seconds between exercises, rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABCs (Rest 4 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 4 x 12 seconds @ 80% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 3:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 8 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 4 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 5 reps progressing to 3 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 15 seconds between exercises and 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABCs (Rest 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 6 x 14 seconds @ 83% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 3:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 3 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 5 reps, progressing to 3 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 10 seconds between exercises and 30 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 3 sets of ABCs (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 8 x 14 seconds @ 89% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 3:00)</p>
4	<p>Strength Training 2 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 4 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 2 sets of 6 reps progressing to 2 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 30 seconds between exercises, rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABCs (Rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 4 x 14 seconds @ 83% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 4:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 3 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 6 reps progressing to 3 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 20 seconds between exercises and 60 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 3 sets of ABCs (Rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 6 x 16 seconds @ 86% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 4:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 3 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 6 reps, progressing to 3 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 10 seconds between exercises and 30 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 4 sets of ABCs (Rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 8 x 16 seconds @ 89% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 4:00)</p>

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

WEEK	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
5	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 8 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 5 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training 2 sets of 6 reps progressing to 2 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 25 seconds between exercises, rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABC Drills (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 4 x 16 seconds @ 86% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 5:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 6 reps progressing to 3 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 10 seconds between exercises and 60 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 3 sets of ABC Drills (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 6 x 18 seconds @ 89% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 5:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 6 reps, progressing to 3 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 10 seconds between exercises and 30 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 4 sets of ABC Drills (Rest 2 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 8 x 18 seconds @ 92% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 5:00)</p>
6	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 4 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 3 sets of 5 reps progressing to 3 sets of 10 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 30 seconds between exercises, rest 3 min. between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 2 sets of ABC Drills (Rest 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 4 x 18 seconds @ 89% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 6:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 2 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 4 sets of 6 reps progressing to 4 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 15 seconds between exercises and 90 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 3 sets of ABC Drills (Rest 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 6 x 20 seconds @ 92% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 6:00)</p>	<p>Strength Training 3 sets of 10 reps for exercises A-K (Rest 2 min. between sets) Add 5% to the resistance of the previous week.</p> <p>Jump Training 4 sets of 6 reps, progressing to 4 sets of 12 reps the 2nd time going through the program. (Rest 10 seconds between exercises and 60 seconds between sets)</p> <p>Technical Drills 4 sets of ABC Drills (Rest 1 min. between sets)</p> <p>Sprint Training Twice per week, complete 1 set of 8 x 20 seconds @ 95% of maximum sprint speed (1 rep every 6:00)</p>