

## INTERVAL TRAINING

Interval training provides a great way to improve your fitness and race speed. It's known as interval training because a session includes repeatedly running (quite fast!) and then taking a rest interval, which may be complete rest, walking or jogging.

The advantage of interval training is that you can run a given distance faster than you could run it in one piece. For example, you will be able to run 5 x 1k much faster than 1 x 5k, if you take a break between each 1k to recover. Nevertheless, you will have run a total of 5k at a higher speed than your normal race pace, and the training effect is the same. The same is true over shorter distances. Suppose you can run 1600 metres (4 laps of a running track: roughly 1 mile) in 7 minutes. You can probably run 4 x 400 metres, with suitable rest between laps, in 1 minute 30 seconds per lap. This is 6 minutes per mile, so you have trained at 1 minute per mile faster than your best 1 mile pace.

From a performance point of view, there are three main benefits to running the same distance at a higher speed:

- It improves your leg speed and/or stride length. To run faster, one or the other, or both, must increase. So using intervals to train at a higher speed will improve your race performance by making your body (and brain) more comfortable at a faster pace.
- You will run nearer your maximum heart rate, which will improve your heart strength and capacity. This will make racing at any pace seem easier.
- Depending on the type and duration of the rest interval, you will improve your lactate tolerance and/or clearing capability, both of which enable you to better resist fatigue when racing over any distance.

We will do more interval training when we get back onto the track in October. Now there's something to look forward to!