

## Anthony Whiteman Guide to:

# Interval Training

I am tackling the subject of interval training both from my past career as a professional athlete to my current role of advising and training my personal clients.

On the subject of the novice runner (for me a novice runner runs a 10km in 40-60 mins) I was very surprised how little interval training would enter into their training programmes and then thought why? Is it a lack of relevant knowledge? But when I thumb through running magazines I see plenty of articles on Interval training. Does the novice runner see little value in intervals when they have little time to fit in training around work and family and think a 45 min run is the best thing to do? Do they think that they are not fast enough to warrant doing intervals? I hope I can answer all these questions; with my novice runners I keep things simple, always 5 repetitions in a session and the first session is always 5 x 3 mins with 90 seconds recovery. Using a loop is best, a park is ideal, if you use a road loop make sure you do not cross any major roads. We then progress to longer repetitions with shorter recovery times. The toughest novice session is 5 x 1 mile (8-9 mins) with 45 seconds recovery, usually done when building up to a half or full marathon. Pyramid sessions also work well in the 5 repetition structure, 1km, 1 mile, 2km, 1 mile, 1km being a good example. Distances do not have to be exact.



The benefit of interval training, especially if you currently do none at all, can be exceptional. One example being one of my clients (just did steady runs before we trained together) who was stuck at around 42 mins for 10k, we worked hard on intervals and ran the Leeds Abbey Dash finishing in 40.09 and he has continued to improve. All my clients who do races complete regular intervals and they mostly operate around the 57/58 mins bracket for 10km!!!!

For the more experienced runner intervals can be incredibly wide ranging. A recent ski trip reminded of one interval session as it was the first time in many years I had felt such a similar lactic acid burn (any novice snow-ploughing skier will know what I mean!). The session was 4 x 400 metres with 3 mins then 2 mins then 1 min recovery I believe my times were 52, 53, 54, 55 seconds. A couple more sensible sessions that would suit the distance runner might be on a track 4-6 X ( 1km at 10 km race pace, 40 seconds recovery, 400 metres at 3 km race pace or faster, then 2 mins 30 seconds recovery). On the roads it really depends on the loop you use and it depends on your imagination. One year recovering from Glandular Fever and just getting back into training I went away to Majorca and with no track in site and found a strip of nice tarmac 500 metres long I did 4 sessions along this road and was able to change the emphasis of each session. 8-10 with a regular recovery, one around 1 min, the other 30 seconds, sets of 2 with short recovery like 30 seconds then longer in between like 2 mins, sets of 4, again with short recovery and longer in between sets.

In conclusion I cannot stress enough the importance of good interval training for any runner whatever their level of ability, done correctly it can give your running a new lease of life!!