

## Fatigued Quickness

Mid-August

Early morning in the Mid-South

79 degrees; dew point of 69

Clear sky

A temperate morning

Run around the local park mile loop day

Two-mile warm up at low end of aerobic heart rate

15(200m/150m jog)

Two-mile cool down at high end of aerobic heart rate

Arriving at the local park, the usual cars are spied. parked in their usual spaces.

Shoelaces tied; workout set into the running watch.

Sunglasses affixed to cap; early morning sun kept at bay.

Stepping out of the car, key in shorts pocket, time to start.

Wait for two women to pass walking and talking in stride.

Push the stride into the early run rhythm into the gently rising sun.

Into the first curve, pass the wannabe soldiers beginning their training morning.

Turn off the mile loop where the path follows along the river's flow.

Run in the shade past the little doggie pulling its cellphone using master.

Turn around where the path adjoins the back of the car repair lot.

Tap the trail sign, looking over to the varietal of cars waiting their turn.

Glance at the watch for the current heart rate.

Far enough into the run to slightly accelerate back to the park's mile loop.

The lamp post on the mile loop where the river path "t's" into the loop is the next start.

Pausing to rest the focus for the meat of the workout, the push leads to the acceleration.

An elderly couple move slightly right on the second curve, giving up the middle.

The little girl on the playground pauses to watch.

15 200's, half a lap tempos on the track.

"Oop! You're a bit slow on this one; oop! You were a bit quick on that one!"

Each repeat followed by a 150meter jog.

That's 15 times.

That's a lot of concentration time.

The first one is usually the fastest.

This time, the second repeat is run the fastest.

Somewhere in the middle of the workout, a cranky old guy hears footsteps.

One too many times to suit him.

"Boy, you run loud," he grumbles.

He looks up, finally noticing the obvious.

“Keep going!” he offers. “As old as you are, you’re doing us proud.”  
Finishing the eighth repeat, the thought appears.  
Run the last seven repeats one step quicker.  
Complete the total workout at an overall pace surpassing previous attempts.  
One step quicker means one extra 100<sup>th</sup> of a mile.  
One step quicker makes this workout worth the effort.  
One step quicker is easy in concept.  
One step quicker is hard in reality.

Rhythm takes over.  
Accelerate into the repeat.  
Hold the pace.  
Relax the shoulders, hold in the arm swing, let the ankles kick out, the knees following.  
Feel the legs glide over the path.  
Gaze beyond the asphalt just in front of the feet.  
Notice the three ladies walking, talking, taking up the entire path.  
Cough. Noticeably. Loudly. Aggressively.  
The ladies seem startled, moving over just before being passed.  
The latest repeat is complete.  
Recovery pace for the immediate short jog in time is forced.  
There is a purpose in this effort.

Legs are taught to relax in speed.  
The heart is trained to excel in speed sustained.  
The arms find the groove in short pumps, equal to the stride length.  
Efficiency in motion.  
That’s what it takes.  
That’ll get it done.  
Best part?  
Not the pleasure of achievement.  
Could be the childlike joy from running.  
Or not.  
Most likely, the training effect is clear.  
A tempo run in disguise.

Drinking the post-run water tastes good.  
As does consuming the energy drink.  
A quiet drive away from the local park.  
Self-satisfaction is in the DNA.  
Doesn’t matter how long it lasts.  
The hope is the feeling lasts to the next run.  
But . . .

Nobody cares, really