

Workout De Jour – 400 repeats

12(400/1:00 jog)

Windy day

Wind-sheltered segment of bike path

Huge wind aside, this workout requires both an attitude adjustment and a willingness to run consistently for each 400. The attitude being adjusted is to run each segment no slower than the previous one. The willingness required is to run each segment just fast enough to raise the heart rate but slowly enough to not gas yourself out of completing the workout. It can be a fine balance.

No matter your chosen pace for the 12 400meter efforts, prior experience is a plus. I am no longer a colt wanting to be a thoroughbred on the track. Being well past those years, I am sufficiently savvy to know the pace I can hold, the effort it takes, and the humility to just do it. My first one is faster than my final warmup pace and slower than my 5km pace. After that initial effort, I grab my lunch bucket.

In my head, I break the dozen into three separate groupings of four segments each. I don't increase the recovery, but the time seems to fly when I count to four, three times. The first grouping ends faster than it started and I don't feel spent. On this portion of the path, I grow accustomed to the natural landmarks along the way. Out two repeats, back two repeats. Continue.

With each repeat in the second grouping, I feel the glide in my stride rising to the fore. My hips lower into my stride, my stride relaxes into an accelerated push, the last half of each segment feeling as if I could run just a titch faster. The splits for this grouping are faster than the first set without compromising the goal. Each repeat the same or slightly quicker in pacing.

The final grouping is a combination of being the quickest and no slower than any of the previous efforts. The lungs remain strong, as do the legs. But there is a slowly creeping feeling into the body of fatigue, which is precisely why I attempt this workout in the first place. I cannot race fast if I don't practice running fast with fatigued legs. I don't need to be fast; I merely need consistency. Running each week, varying the short distance and from that the pace, the effort remains as the pace organically quickens. This effort was a good one.