

Workout De jour

Long road repeats: 8-10 x 0.4 – 0.75 of a mile

Running path with turns necessary

Intersections optional

This workout, or variations thereof, are one of my favorite planned runs, requiring my being in strength running form. There are breaks in the run but they are short and I am still running 8-9 miles for the total run.

The meat of the workout is a series of set distance segments over a half mile and less than three-quarter mile. The essence of the workout is a quicker than usual beginning mile run in a pace no more than a minute faster than expected for the normal beginning mile pace. As part of that first mile the first 0.7-mile repeat in a controlled pace is included. After a 30-second rest, head back for a slightly faster 0.7-mile repeat before slogging forward for 1:30.

A three-quarter segment follows, this one being run between the same road intersecting the running path. On this section, there are almost invisible quarter mile markers that only you see. Huff the first segment, knowing you have 0.4-mile section of jogging. Before you turn around, run fast up the 0.4-mile incline to the intersection, rest 30 seconds, and bomb back down on the decline. Jog the 0.4-mile section in reverse direction, puff the pace back on the fast segment before jogging another 1:30 to the point of beginning. Repeat.

Should you be in great form on a good running day, do the incline/decline. If not, run the opening section and the second section without the hill. This is a strength workout. Run the segments at Zone 2 pace, or if you don't like that, run the segments at marathon pace plus 30 seconds. The purpose is achieved when you run each segment and the pace doesn't fall into the drink in the repeated section. You can build from this workout, setting a baseline for the next time you feel up to running this one. Finally, the workout is fun because you have short breaks and long ones. Patience is your friend.

Because you slightly pushing your pace, leaving the tank two-thirds full, the next strong run won't feel so daunting. A few weeks later, your ability to take on a faster effort for the hard runs will appear. Who doesn't want that?