

## Workout de Jour – a tempo run

Required: favorite local park and a running route of a certain distance

Ignore the running plans and the articles on what is a tempo run and how the tempo run should be done. Viewing the plans and reading the myriad layering of the tempo-run workout may fill leisure time, but running those tempo runs is simpler than all that dithering about. When you feel the need to run fast for just a few continuous miles, that is your clue that your mind and body have melded into the moment.

Every so often, I get that itch that only running fast can scratch. Not the kind of effort you would run on the track. The segmented workout is not always the response to feeling sufficiently strong to run fast. Any runner can perform segments on the trails or on a track. No, the need to run a tempo workout comes from deep within; that place inside you reminding you that you can run fast for a sustained period of time because you've earned this place.

You've trained yourself with long, easy runs, with short track segments, short easy runs, harder running segments, and thinking about each of those runs, all as part of your run training. This tempo run is a different event altogether. I woke up this morning, prepared to run short segments in the heat on the park path in my town. I headed to the park intent on running my usual 5.5-mile route around the park, away from the park and back, finishing with a flourish on the path. No one running with me. No one pushing the pace. Just me moving in my own rhythm at my own pace, encouraging myself to go, just go.

Once around the park is a mile, which my running watch informed me was almost one minute than the pace I expected. The second mile was a titch slower, but I'd found my "I'm gonna run fast" groove. Another 1.5-mile loop around the local college produced a split I'd not seen in almost three years. Fully committed and onboard with my running intensity, the hammer nailed the pedal to the metal, the mic was dropped. The last two miles were smooth and quicker, the last mile faster than the opening one.

I love those runs, those moments when my energized body's barking to go fast, tired of being tethered, overwhelms my brain's hesitance. All of me is focused. If only I could bottle that feeling for those sluggish runs.