

OLD MUTUAL TRAINING PROGRAM

This training program is designed by the Sports Science Institute of South Africa for beginner athletes aiming to run a 21 km running race.

Only complete the beginner level training program:

- If you have less than 1 year of running experience.
- Have a 10 km running time of 60 minutes or more.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRAINING PROGRAM

ABBREVIATION	TERM	DESCRIPTION
WU	Warm Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the first 2 – 3 km of each workout to warm the muscles up. • Start slow and assess how your body feels. • Sometimes there may be a hard run on the schedule, but even by the end of the warm up you may still be feeling tired and heavy-legged. In this case it will be better to NOT go ahead and do the hard workout.
LSD	Long Slow Distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long slow distance runs are essential to preparing for endurance running events. • They should simulate race conditions as closely as possible (temperature, terrain, hills, etc.).
SPD	Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These sessions will include short bouts of high intensity intervals. • These workouts will help improve your ability to surge at necessary points in the race such as the finish and when passing competitors.
E	Easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An “easy” pace run is one done at a speed where it takes no effort at all, you look around, you can chat if you are running with someone.
M	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This running speed is just a bit faster than “easy”. • A little input of effort; don’t want to talk quite so much; and have to concentrate a bit on the running pace.
H	Hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This requires a big input of effort, relative to the distance (so “hard” for 5 km is a bigger effort input than “hard” for 10 km, for example). • Lots of concentration required, breathing very hard, certainly would not want to talk; looking forward to when you can slow down.

A note on training zones:	RPE	ZONES
Depending on the coach, training plan, or equipment you use – training zones will differ. This plan uses RPE as a guide to intensity. If you do choose to train with zones, this table which gives you some basic guidance on which RPE level corresponds with specific zones.	1	Z1
	2	Z1
	3	Z2
	4	Z2
	5	Z3
	6	Z3
	7	Z4
	8	Z4
	9	Z5
	10	Z5

ADVICE ON A SUCCESSFUL TRAINING PLAN	STRENGTH TRAINING	SIGNS THAT YOU NEED A REST DAY
	Strength training 3 times a week for 15 - 20 minutes helps athletes avoid overuse injuries and improves muscle imbalances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impaired performance that does not improve with 2 - 3 days of rest • A feeling of heavy, slow, tired legs or arms that does not improve with 2 - 3 days rest • Trouble sleeping • Sudden loss of appetite • Cranky mood • Flu-like symptoms

GOOD LUCK

This training program has the elements for you to succeed, it is a packaged training plan designed for athletes training for a 21 km. If you would like a plan catered to your specific physiology, time constraints, and goals, the Sports Science Institute offers personalised coaching services.

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BEGINNER TRAINING PROGRAM – 21KM

	BASE			RECOVERY WEEK	TRANSITION			RECOVERY WEEK	PEAK		TAPER	
DAY	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Mon	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST
Tues	5km E (RPE 2-3)	6km E (RPE 2-3)	7km E (RPE 2-3)	5km E (RPE 2-3)	8km E (RPE 2-3)	9km E (RPE 2-3)	9km E (RPE 2-3)	5km E (RPE 2-3)	9km E (RPE 2-3)	10km E (RPE 2-3)	9km E (RPE 2-3)	8km E (RPE 2-3)
Wed	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST
Thurs	4km SPD: • 1km WU; • 3 x 1 min hard (RPE 7-8) with 1min jog between; • Finish with cool down run.	4km SPD: • 1km WU; • 2 x 2 min hard (RPE 7-8) with 1min jog between; • Finish with cool down run.	4km SPD: • 1km WU; • 3 x 2 min hard (RPE 7-8) with 1min jog between; • Finish with cool down run.	4km SPD: • 2km WU; • 3 x 1 min at hard pace (RPE 7-8) with 1 min jog between; • Finish with cool down run.	5km SPD: • 1km WU; • 3 x 2 min hard (RPE 7-8) with 1 min jog between; • Finish with cool down run.	5km SPD: • 2km WU; • 4 x 2 min hard (RPE 7-8) with 1 min jog between; • Finish with cool down run.	5km SPD: • 2km WU; • 8 min hard (RPE 6-7); • Finish with cool down run.	6km SPD: • 2km WU; • 3 x 3 min hard (RPE 7-8); • Finish with cool down run.	6km SPD: • 2km WU; • 3 x 2 min hard (RPE 7-8); • Finish with cool down run.	6km SPD: • 2km WU; • 3 x 2 min hard (RPE 7-8); • Finish with cool down run.	4km SPD: • 1km WU; • 6 x 1 min hard (RPE 8-9) with 1 min E jogging between; • Finish with cool down run.	4km SPD: • 1km WU; • 4 x 1 min hard (RPE 8-9) with 1 min E jogging between; • Finish with cool down run.
Fri	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST
Sat	8km LSD (RPE 2-3) LSD runs should match race terrain as closely as possible (hills, road vs. gravel, temperature).	10km LSD (RPE 2-3)	11km LSD (RPE 3-4)	8km LSD (RPE 2-3)	12km LSD (RPE 3-4)	14km LSD (RPE 3-4)	16km LSD (RPE 3-4)	5km E (RPE 3-4)	18km LSD (RPE 3-4)	15km LSD (RPE 2-3)	8km E (RPE 2-3)	21km RACE
Sun	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST
Total kms	17	20	22	17	25	28	30	14	33	31	21	33

TRAINING PHASES	BASE	TRANSITION	PEAK	TAPER
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train with low intensity Increase aerobic capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build volume Increase intensity Simulate race conditions in training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete longest run Most specific fast running 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharpen technical skills Decrease volume but maintain intensity
Recovery weeks are included approximately every 4 weeks throughout the entirety of the plan to allow your body to adapt to the previous weeks of training. Some athletes are tempted to train more in recovery weeks, but resist the temptation!				

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