

Runners Guide for ActionAid Runners

Expert advice from Jane Wake
Sports Fitness Consultant

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ActionAid supporters, Jamie, Oli, Geoff, James and Nathan broke the Guinness World Record for the fastest chained group to run the London Marathon in 3hrs, 38mins and 27secs in 2008, raising over £4,500.

PHOTO: Kristian Buss/ActionAid

Thank you for registering to take part in your running challenge for ActionAid and welcome to the Action Heroes Team!
To help get you started, **Jane Wake**, one of the UK's foremost sports instructors has put together key information on how to get the most out of your training to boost your performance on the big day itself!

Jane is a UK top fitness professional with a Masters degree in Sports & Recreation Management and qualified with the American College of Sports Medicine. Jane has been running her own health & fitness consultancy, Body-A-Wake, since 1993. And voted the UK's top sports and fitness expert by the Independent On Sunday with a previous nomination by FitPro Ltd as Fitness Leader of The Year.
Jane has collated this information for ActionAid in 2009. ActionAid works with Jane Wake to offer guidance to enhance your performance, we cannot be held responsible for any ill health or injuries you may have as a result from following this advice.



*Jane's dvd 'Stretch to the Limits' is available for purchase at £15.

www.body-a-wake.com

If you had a quick peek at your training schedule and felt a bit confused then here is an explanation of all things you will find.

If you are following the 5k or 10k plans you may not need all the components listed below but you will need to read through all the advice and tips. So, before you do anything else, make yourself a cuppa, sit down & read the following thoroughly...

A little word on intensity....

Getting your intensity right in each training session is essential. Some people like to use a heart rate monitor which is absolutely fine however this does not work for everyone. A much more useful and widely acknowledged method is called the RPE Scale. RPE stands for Rate of Perceived Exertion.

RPE SCALE	Talk Test
0 NOTHING	Could easily talk continuously, feels easy
½ Very Very Easy	
1 Easy	
2	
3 Moderate	Working into a sweat now, feeling heart rate go up, breathing getting heavy but can still talk
4 Somewhat Hard	
5 Hard	
6 Very Hard	Finding it a real challenge, can only string a sentence together
7	
8 Very Very Hard	Struggling to continue - can't talk at all – for high fitness levels only
9	For high fitness levels only
10 Exhaustion	

Once you get used to it, it really is so very simple. You just have to think about how you are feeling and relate this to a number. To make this even easier to follow we have also related it to something called the talk test.

Use the scale above to monitor your intensity:

This scale represents how you feel while you are exercising.

For example: '0' would be sitting down doing nothing; '½' would be getting up out of your chair to change channels on your TV; '2' would be a walk down the road to the local shops at your normal pace; '3' would be a walk where you pep up your pace and notice your breathing increase; '4' would be where you notice your breathing has become slightly laboured and you find it hard to talk for more than a few sentences at a time; '5' would be where you start to feel your intensity more challenged and so on. On your schedule you will find numbers in brackets with an asterisk - these are your intensity ratings for each session.

The Components

The following makes up the components of your training. A ** indicates that it is essential for all runners to follow.

The Warm up ** – Always warm up by walking/jogging slowly. After 10 – 15 minutes, if you have any vulnerable areas that feel tight, make sure you do some full range movements to increase your mobility .e.g heel lifts to toes up for calves, knee lifts to lunging back for hip flexors, heels to bum for quads (thighs).

The long run ** – As one seasoned runner I know would say, "It's the time on your feet" that counts here. To be able to do this you must take this run extremely slowly and carefully. Your intensity level should stay at 3/4 on your scale , occasionally peeking to 5 on hills or towards the end of your run. Aim to be able to chat most of the way round.

This once a week run is crucial and should not be missed. On longer programmes you may notice that after one week of having a very long run, the next week it actually goes down. This is important for recovery. Regard it as one step back in order to take two steps forward.

For marathon runners, you can also substitute this long run for a middle distance race such as a 10k or half marathon. This is good to get you into the feel of a race. Look out for race listings in Runners World and Runner Today websites.

To work out your times for your run, find yourself a measured mile, you can do this by clocking a part of your long run in a car. Use easy landmarks at the start and finish of the mile, e.g. a house number or particular tree. This will enable you to time yourself whenever you do the measured mile and give you an indication of your pace and potential finish times.

Stretching** - You must allow time for stretching at the end of every run. If you know there is a part of your body that gets very tight and restricted after running, give this body part more attention when you do your stretches by repeating the stretch 2 to 3 times. For detailed help on stretching please see our runners stretching guide.

The easy run** - These runs are important for adding to your total mileage and for when your body feels tight and needs a gentle jog to get it warmed up and feeling better. A good time to focus on lots of stretching is at the end of this run.

Moderate run** - This run should be reasonably comfortable (4/5 on your intensity scale) yet progressive in terms of mileage. Add distance and time to this run but not so much so that it starts to get harder to achieve. With increased fitness levels you should be able to feel strong throughout this run.

The hard run – It is good to challenge yourself with a hard but not too long run, in the week. This will help you to increase your fitness level. Find a route that can be extended. Time yourself on this run and monitor your improvements. Aim to stay at 6/7 on your intensity scale.

The Compnants cont.

Fartlek/speed training – This is not an alternative method for propelling you forwards. Fartlek is Scandinavian for 'Speed Play'. This type of training is important if you are aiming for a certain time and want to improve your speed. This session can be performed on a track, by using a stop-watch or by using evenly placed markers such as lamp posts. Aim to run as hard as you can for a set time/distance and then take it easy for the same distance e.g. run hard for 1 minute then gently jog for 1 minute repeat 4 times, increase to 2 minutes hard, 2 minutes easy, repeat 4 times.

Hill Training – Hill training is important if you are keen to build your leg strength and challenge yourself a little more. Climbing hills will make you use more muscle in the back of your legs and bum and will challenge your cardiovascular (heart and lung) system more.

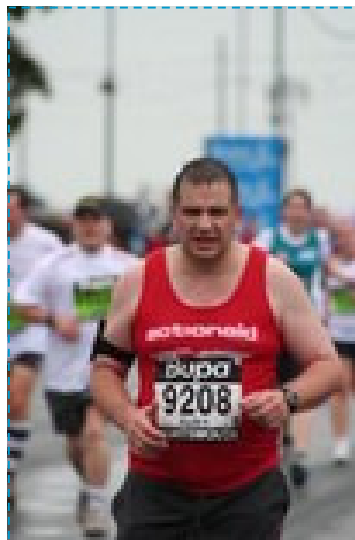
If you can't find a series of hills to run on, find one hill that you can incorporate into a repeated circuit.

Word of warning; never do hill training the day after a long run. If your hamstrings (back of thigh) are slightly weak/restricted or your calves (back of lower leg) tight, this could be one way of injuring them.

Cross Training – More and more runners are now seeing the benefits of including cross training in their programmes. Doing activities like strength training will help build your leg and core (main body) strength and help to prevent injury. It is also worth taking the weight off your legs once a week by trying an activity such as cycling or swimming.

Don't aim to challenge yourself too hard in your Cross Training sessions. If working with weights, concentrate on exercises for the legs like squats and lunges, and some general exercises for your upper body and torso.

Aim to work with light weights that fatigue the muscles after 15 – 20 repetitions. See our Runners Core Strength Training Guide for more information.



"I completed the run in 2 hrs and 53 seconds, helped by the crowd and the bands."

Paul Askew, 41, an engineer from Hampshire completed the 2008 Great South Run raising £280
PHOTO: Paul Askew

"It was a privilege to run for ActionAid and raise money for those who struggle to get water and the basics we take for granted every day. There is enough to go around in the world; it's just not shared out evenly."

Helen Howes, 32, a housewife from Gloucestershire completed the 2008 Flora London Marathon in 5hr 36mins, raising £2310.89
PHOTO: ActionAid



Your Top 10 Tips!

- Invest in a good pair of running shoes.** Don't just go to any sports shop on the high street. For a specialist running shoe shop, buy a runners magazine such as Runners World or Running Today. These magazines will list recommended retailers who will give good advice.
- Find yourself some comfortable, warm (if running in winter) clothing to exercise in.** Many sportswear companies now produce specialist running gear that is designed to take the sweat away from your skin so that you can stay dry and warm. Hats and gloves are preferable, as is a waterproof running jacket. Again go to a specialist running shop for advice.
- Join your local gym.** Most sports centres now have well equipped gyms and there are also many private clubs who do very cheap membership deals. Look out for health clubs and gyms that are doing special offers.

When joining a gym/health club, vet it on the following criteria:

- Do they offer to show you round before joining and do they have a good knowledge of all the services they offer?
- Do they impose a minimum qualification standard for their gym staff?
- Do they offer extra services such as physiotherapy, sports massage and one to one gym inductions?
- Does their gym have a good range of equipment? Check whether they have plenty of treadmills (1 or 2 is not enough for any gym bigger than your living room). Free weights and weight machines; look to see if the equipment is well maintained; check that the environment is clean and friendly and that they have water stations.
- Check that the changing rooms are clean and showers well maintained.
- Look to see whether they have health and safety signs/fire procedures.

Joining a gym can provide you with extra motivation and will help to build up your strength, prevent injury and give you less excuse not to exercise when its cold and wet.

cont. overleaf

Your Top Tips! cont.

- 4 If you are training on your own and don't want to stay that way, try to find a running mate or a running club.** Look in the magazines/websites mentioned earlier for local running clubs or contact the sport and recreation department at your local council. They will have a list of clubs in your area. Many leisure centres and health clubs will also hold running sessions led by instructors. Failing this, get a friend to start training with you. Remind them of those extra pounds they were hoping to lose before Christmas!
- 5 In the winter time you have to be more aware of safety factors than at any other time.**
- Avoid, at all cost, running/walking on your own in the dark. If you have to, follow a well lit main road that has a path. Avoid wooded areas and wear reflective bright clothing (runners don't wear those fluorescent coloured shorts for nothing you know).
 - Always carry a mobile phone in case of emergencies.
 - Always warm up by starting off slowly and gradually over 5-10 minutes, building up to a pace where you feel slightly out of breath. The colder the weather the longer you will need to take.
 - Always cool down by walking slowly and follow the stretches in your Runner's Stretching Guide.
 - When it's cold, be aware of ice. Stick to grass verges which will give you more grip
- 6 Plan your routes with varying distances according to your schedule.** If you are unable to calculate miles, plan to walk or run in one direction for 15/20/30/45mins etc and walk/run back.
- 7 Thinking positively about your eating will ensure that you have enough energy to run -** Take on board ALL of Jane Griffin's advice.
- 8 To avoid injury:**
- Always warm up and cool down (see tip 5 above)
 - Don't over do it
 - Listen to your body. If something aches whilst your exercising, monitor it, if it gets worse slow down. If it becomes really painful, making it difficult for you to run/walk, stop and get it checked out by a sports physiotherapist*.
 - It is quite probable that you will ache 24 – 48 hours after your first exercise sessions. This is quite normal when you haven't been exercising for a while or try something new. Try to rest during this time, have hot baths and follow the stretches in your Runners Stretching Guide. If aching persists and/or feels very painful, go and get it checked out by a sports physiotherapist. If you constantly ache, you are doing too much and need to slow down.
 - Always try to have one or two days a week, in between training sessions where you completely rest your body.
- 9. Water is your life line!** If you are not used to drinking water, it's imperative you start now! Aim to drink 2-3 litres of water in a day more on an exercise day. Drink a lot before and after you exercise and if you can, take sips of water while you exercise.
- *Private physiotherapist is often practise at sports clubs/leisure centres or gyms. Look out for one that specialises in sports injuries. If you can't afford one, go to your GP and ask (demand!) that they refer you to a physiotherapist or other specialist on the NHS.
- 10. Stretching and core strength is essential for balance, performance and injury prevention.** Make sure you follow our stretching and core strength guides.

SOME WORDS OF WISDOM

- **Get your diary out now and book time out, especially for your long runs.** Weekends are for most people the best time to fit in long training sessions in, so if you've planned 10 breaks away between now and your event, be prepared to pack your trainers.
- **If you've not got yourself kitted out yet, for goodness sake, do it now!** Check out our top ten tips for more information. Most important of all is to have at least one good pair of trainers. Once you've found a pair that suits you (get advice from a running specialist shop) try and get another pair so that you can alternate them.
- **Listen to your body.** If you are feeling low physically or psychologically it will affect your running ability. Don't panic if one day you just don't seem to be able to run so well. It's possible that your body is telling you to slow down. One of the most important things over the next few months is to take as much care of your self as possible. Don't do any high intensity training if you feel a muscle niggling you or a cold coming on. Check back through our top ten tips to ensure you are keeping your health in good condition and if you are in any doubt about whether to train or not, go and see your doctor immediately.
- **Enlist the help of those around you.** Family and friends are a vital part of your training: they have to be understanding when you tell them that you have to run for 2 hours on Sunday and can't look after the kids; They have to be mercenary by shoving you out the door for a wet and cold hill session on a Tuesday night and they have to be supportive when you're tempted to trade in your Sunday morning 15 miler for 10 pints of beer and a curry on a Saturday night.