



## Tip #2: Basic Physiology of Your Easy Long Runs

The excitement and energy surrounding large training runs often generate adrenaline similar to a race, making it easy to run much faster than our ideal pace. As you begin your space journey, it is important to remember easy long run pace is significantly slower than your half or full marathon race pace. The purpose of your easy long runs is to build aerobic conditioning and train the body to conserve fuel. This is extremely important when training for the half or full marathon distances.

Aerobic conditioning can be any distance runs (or run/walk) of 20 minutes to three hours in duration. Depending on your goal time, fitness level, experience and race distance, the distance of your aerobic conditioning runs will vary quite significantly. Conditioning runs are done at about 45 – 1:30 min/mile slower than marathon race pace, 1:00 – 2:00 slower than half marathon race pace or 1:30 – 2:30 slower than 5k race pace.

Easy long runs should correlate to 65 – 80 percent of your maximum heart rate. From a perceived effort based perspective, you should be able to easily carry on a conversation.

Regardless of what distance you are training for, aerobic conditioning represents the majority of your training program.

Endurance long & easy runs will:

1. Increase the number of capillaries that can bring oxygen-rich blood to your muscles
2. Increase the amount of oxidative enzymes within the muscle cells that help to use oxygen more efficiently
3. Help you to get through “The Wall” and beyond. Your easy long runs train the body to conserve valuable muscle glycogen supplies and use fat as fuel. This type of conditioning is especially critical to the marathon distance. If you do your easy runs too fast, you burn glycogen rather than fat, thus your body has not adapted properly for the full marathon distance. Half marathoners, especially those running for a longer period of time, can also hit the wall.
4. Strengthen the tendons and connective tissues
5. Improve pulmonary capacity

In order to maximize your half and full marathon training experience, slow it down and enjoy some good chatter with your training partners and enjoy the scenery. It will have you well prepared for the half or full marathon distance.