RUN YOUR FASTEST MILE

The mile is a tricky distance. It's not a sprint, so you'll need aerobic endurance, plus enough speed to make it a true race. Still, even if you're new to running, the distance is accessible, while veteran pavement-pounders can push themselves in a new way. "The mile is a great test of overall fitness," says Michael Olzinski, a San Francisco–based run coach.

First, do the mile run test (see box below). Then do two cycles of the three-week plan, courtesy of Olzinski. Retest, aiming to run 30 seconds faster.

DAY 1 LIGHT STRENGTH WORK. Each week, do 3 sets of 6 to 10 reps of the following exercises: lunges (forward, lateral, reverse), body weight row (using a barbell resting on a rig, or rings), squat jumps, glute bridges, ending with 1-minute side planks.

DAY 2 POWER RUN. See box below.

DAY 3 ACTIVE RECOVERY/MOBILITY WORK. Take a yoga class, roll out using a foam roller and lacrosse balls, go for a walk, etc.

DAY 4 HILL REPEATS. Run 2 to 4 minutes on an incline. Jog on a flat stretch for 90 seconds to recover. Repeat 3 to 5 times. As it gets easier, increase reps or interval time.

DAY 5 LIGHT STRENGTH WORK.

DAY 6 SPEED-ENDURANCE RUN. See box below.

DAY 7 CROSS-TRAINING. E.g., cycle, shadow box, jump on an indoor rower.



MILE RUN TEST

To warm up, jog for 10 minutes, then do basic running drills (high knees, butt kicks). Pace yourself by imagining the flat track is actually uphill. "Don't blow yourself up in the first lap," Olzinski says. And make your last lap the fastest. "Give yourself the chance to have a sprint finish, which means using up every last bit of effort by the end," he says.

POWER RUN	
Week 1	2 Rounds: 6 x 200m at 1-mile goal pace with 90 seconds rest, into 6 to 8 minutes light jogging. (You should be able to carry on a conversation.) Rest 3 to 4 minutes between rounds.
Week 2	2 Rounds: 4 x 400m at 1-mile goal pace with 2 minutes rest, into 6 to 8 minutes light jogging. Rest 3 to 4 minutes between rounds.
Week 3	5 or 6 x 1,000m at a 5K pace. Rest 1 minute between reps.

SPEED-ENDURANCE RUN	
Week 1	Jog 5 minutes, then run 2 x 10 minutes at a challenging but sustainable pace. Jog 5 minutes, and end with 5-minute run.
Week 2	Jog 5 minutes, then run 2 x 12 minutes at challenging but sustainable pace; jog for 6 minutes between runs. Then jog lightly for 5 minutes to cool down.
Week 3	Time yourself for a hard 5K run, then subtract 30 seconds from your mile pace. That's your mile run goal. On second cycle of the program, test your mile.

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