

Hill Training for Hounslow

Given there are very few flat sections in the race it makes sense that hill training will be a vital part of your training. To get the most out of your hill training there are a few key variables you should take into account when planning your training.

Terrain

The Hounslow course consists primarily of steep, technical, single track with lots of stairs so that what your hill repeats should be on. If you can't get to hills like this then repeats of stairs would be more beneficial than a gentle road hill.

Run vs Hike

Most of you will hike the majority of the hills so hiking hill repeats should feature prominently in your training rather than running every step. Hiking is a skill and uses muscles in a different way to running so must be trained if you want to improve your hiking speed.

Length

The race only really has 4 hills but they are very long and steep so we need to tailor the training to that.

Hill Training Sessions

Start with shorter reps and mixing hiking and running and gradually increase the volume

A typical progression might be

6 x 5 minutes
5 x 7 minutes
4 x 10 minutes
3 x 15 minutes
5 x 12 minutes
3 x 20 minutes
2 x 30 minutes

With 1-2 minute recoveries between sets

Of course if you haven't got access to hills that long then you'll just need to do more reps of a shorter hill

How much running vs hiking you do depends on your ability - the elites should do at least 50% running and practice switching from one to the other depending on terrain and would typically use a 2:1 or 3:1 running to hiking ratio. i.e. Run 2-3 minutes then hike 1 minute and repeat to the top of the hill.

For the back of the pack it's all about hiking so most of your hill reps should be hiking and you should use a 1:3 or 1:4 running to hiking ratio.

For people in the middle, a mix of both allows you to develop your hill running so you can run more of the climbs and improving your hiking speed. A running to hiking ratio of 1:1 or 1:2 should be used.

Another means of making hills harder if you don't have anything really steep is wearing a weighted pack. A weight of 5-8kg should be sufficient to turn a runnable hill into a tough hike!

For now take the downhills nice and easy. I'll be discussing downhills in a future article.

