

## The Long Run

This is the staple of any ultrarunner's training program, and there are factors that need to be taken into consideration for a race like Hounslow.

### 1. Terrain

Hounslow is primarily very hilly single track with some very steep ups and downs and only around 7km of firetrail that is really runnable. So this is what your long runs should consist of. There is little point doing a long run on runnable firetrails, when the majority of the race is steep technical ascents and descents.

The more time you can spend on similar terrain the better. For many of you that will mean repeats of your local steep technical hill instead of a run over your normal runnable trails.

Hounslow has 550m of climbing, and of descent, per every 10km so that's what you should aim for in your long runs you run in your long runs. Of course if this is much more vertical than you are currently doing then each week add more vertical in to allow the legs to adapt to the increased load that comes with training on hills.

If you aren't comfortable on technical descents then practice on technical trails as much as you can before hand to build skill and confidence. Include as much technical terrain in your long runs as you can.

### 2. Distance

How long should the long run be? At its longest somewhere from 30-50km around 3-4 weeks from the race is ideal. Too long at it will take too many days to recover from. You should be able to resume normal training within a few days after the long run. For example if your long run is Saturday, then perhaps a day off on Sunday - easy run on Monday and back into some speed work or hill repeats on Tuesday. If you are unable to do that then the long run was either too long or you ran it too hard. Gradually increase the distance and the vertical over the coming weeks to a peak 3-4 weeks from race day.

### 3. Intensity

The long run has many benefits - conditioning the legs to handle the load of the steep ascents and descents, improving ability of the body to burn fat, and developing your aerobic system, to name a few. To maximise these adaptations you are better off keeping the intensity down to a comfortable conversation pace rather than thinking faster is better. Run it too fast and your training for the rest of the week will be effected.

But whilst I recommend the intensity to be comfortable it doesn't mean you can stop regularly take photos, post selfies, make phone calls, stop for lunch etc. Keep moving as much as possible and keep rests to a minimum - its a training session not a day hike!

### 4. Running vs Walking in the long run.

For most of you walking will make up a large percentage of your race ( most of the uphills) so it makes sense that you should train to become a faster walker in training. So even if you feel like you could run the hill in training ask yourself would you be walking it with 50km in your legs come race day? If so then hike it in training. A fast hiker can get to the top of a steep climb faster and using less energy than running, especially with the climbs you'll experience during the Hounslow Classic. So practise hiking in training. For those of you on the faster end of the spectrum, you'll want to work on mixing up running and walking regularly on the climbs. So even if you can run the whole climb in training, if you don't plan to do that come race day then you need to practice what you plan to do on race day.