

6 WORKOUTS

EVERY RECREATIONAL RUNNER NEEDS

How each one works, what heart rate to hold, how long to run, and ready-made options for your level.

HEART RATE

as a percentage **of your max HR**. A guide, not a law.

LEVEL

Starting out: running for less than a year. **Experienced:** running regularly for more than a year.

BEFORE A HARD SESSION

10-15 min easy + 4 strides.
After: 5-10 min jogging.

HOW TO FIND YOUR MAX HEART RATE

Formulas only give a rough guide. "220 minus age" is often off by 10 beats or more. On average, **208 - 0.7 × age** (the Tanaka formula) is a bit more accurate: at 35 that gives 183. But for any one person the spread is still large.

Field test (only if you're healthy and have no heart issues; a chest strap works best):

- warm up: 15 min easy + 3-4 strides;
- 3 min uphill or on the flat at 5K pace, 2 min jogging;
- another 3 min faster, the last 30 sec all out;
- the highest number on your watch is your max, usually give or take a couple of beats.

Simpler: check your max heart rate at the finish of a 5K race. If you'd rather skip the test, go by feel; it's described for every workout below.

01 EASY RUN



HEART RATE

65-75%

DURATION

30-60 min

FEEL

you can talk

The foundation of everything: **70-80% of your running**. It builds endurance and helps you recover after hard days. Conversational pace: you can speak in full sentences. If you feel the urge to walk to catch your breath, you're going too fast.

Starting out

- 30-40 min steady
- recovery run: 20-30 min even easier, the day after a hard session
- run-walk: 5 min running + 1 min walking, 5-6 times

Experienced

- 45-60 min steady
- 45 min + 6 strides of 15-20 sec at the end
- easy hills: 50 min over rolling terrain, don't speed up on the climbs

02 TEMPO RUN



HEART RATE

83-87%

DURATION

15-30 min

FEEL

short phrases

One continuous block of **"comfortably hard"**: hard but under control, steady, no surges. It teaches you to hold a fast pace for longer. The most common mistake: speeding up to interval pace.

Starting out

- 3 × 5 min, 2 min jog recovery
- 2 × 8 min, 2 min recovery
- 2 × 10 min, 2 min recovery
- 15 min continuous
- tempo fartlek: 6 × 3 min at tempo / 2 min easy

Experienced

- 20 min continuous
- 25-30 min continuous
- 2 × 15 min, 3 min recovery
- progression: 30 min, a little faster every 10 min, finishing at the lower edge of threshold
- tempo inside a long run: 60-75 min, the last 20 min at tempo

03 THRESHOLD INTERVALS



HEART RATE

87-92%

REP

4-12 min

RECOVERY

1-2 min jog

Same threshold, but in pieces and slightly sharper than tempo. Short recoveries let you rack up **more time at threshold** than one continuous block. Recovery guide: about a minute for every 5 minutes of work. Total work: **20-40 min**.

Starting out (20-25 min of work)

- 5 × 4 min, 1 min recovery
- 4 × 5 min, 1 min recovery
- 4 × 6 min, 1.5 min recovery
- 3 × 8 min, 2 min recovery
- ladder 4-6-8-6 min, 1.5 min recovery

Experienced (30-40 min of work)

- 6 × 5 min, 1 min recovery
- 5 × 6 min, 1.5 min recovery
- 4 × 8 min, 2 min recovery
- 4 × 10 min, 2 min recovery
- 3 × 12 min, 2.5 min recovery

04 VO2MAX



HEART RATE

90-95%

REP

30 sec to 4 min

RECOVERY

same as the rep

Maximal oxygen uptake: close to your max but not a sprint, so your last rep is no slower than your first. It raises your ceiling and is the key session for the **5K and 10K**. Total work: **12-20 min**. Reps of 3-4 minutes give you more time near the ceiling; shorter ones are easier to handle.

Starting out

- 30/30: 10-12 × 30 sec fast and 30 sec jogging
- 10 × 1 min, 1 min jog recovery
- 8 × 1.5 min, 1.5 min recovery
- 6 × 2 min, 2 min recovery
- pyramid 1-2-3-2-1 min, recovery same as the rep

Experienced

- 4 × 4 min, 3 min recovery (Norwegian 4×4)
- 5 × 3 min, 2.5 min recovery
- 6 × 3 min, 2-3 min recovery
- 30/30: 2 sets of 10-12 reps, 3 min between sets
- pyramid 1-2-3-4-3-2-1 min, recovery same as the rep

On reps shorter than 2 minutes, your heart rate doesn't have time to reach the zone. Go by feel and pace, not the number on your watch.

05 SPRINTS AND STRIDES



REP

15-20 sec

REPS

6-10

RECOVERY

60-90 sec walking

Fast and **relaxed**: 85-95% of your top speed, not all out. Strides teach your legs to run fast and easy, and improve your form and economy. Recover fully so each one starts on fresh legs. Heart rate doesn't matter here.

Starting out

- 6 × 15 sec at the end of an easy run
- 4-6 strides as part of your warm-up
- progressive: 6 × 80-100 m, build up, hold, ease off smoothly

Experienced

- 8-10 × 20 sec after an easy run
- short hills: 8 × 10-12 sec up a steep hill, walk down
- longer hills: 6 × 30 sec up a moderate hill, jog down

06 LONG RUN



HEART RATE

65-78%

DURATION

60-120 min

FEEL

relaxed

The longest run of your week, at an easy pace. It teaches your body to work for a long time and use fuel economically. Toward the end your heart rate creeps up at the same pace: that's **cardiac drift**, and it's normal. Drink, and don't chase the number.

Starting out

- 60-75 min steady
- add 10 min every 1-2 weeks
- run-walk: 1 min of walking every 20 min, makes drinking easy

Experienced

- 90-120 min steady
- progression: the last third a little faster, but still easy
- marathon-specific: the last 15-20 min at marathon pace
- with strides: 6 × 20 sec in the last 15 min

HOW TO BUILD YOUR WEEK

3 runs	easy + strides · one quality session (alternate: tempo or threshold intervals one week, VO2max the next) · long run
4 runs	easy · threshold intervals · easy + strides · long run
5 runs	easy · VO2max · easy · tempo or threshold intervals · long run

5 RULES

- **One or two hard sessions a week.** Hard means tempo, threshold intervals and VO2max.
- At least **48 hours** between hard sessions.
- Just starting out? For the first **4-6 weeks**, only easy running and strides. Then add tempo, and a couple of weeks later, intervals.
- Don't make up a missed workout. Missed a hard one? Just carry on with the plan.
- Tired, slept badly, feeling ill: **swap the hard session for an easy one.** Fitness grows during recovery.

These guidelines draw on the methods of Daniels (tempo and threshold intervals), Helgerud (4×4), Billat (30/30) and Friel (heart rate zones). Max heart rate from the "220 minus age" formula is often off by 10 beats or more; a test or a race gives you a more accurate number.

WANT THIS TO WORK **FOR YOU?**

I'll tailor your workouts to your level, goal and schedule. The first consultation is free: we'll look at how you run now and what to change.

BOOK A FREE CONSULTATION

More on Instagram: [**@runnigor**](#)