



[ COACH CULPEPPER ]

## SUMMER TO FALL TRAINING TRANSITION

Keep the momentum going as you prepare for longer races.

BY ALAN CULPEPPER

— **A YEAR AGO** in this column, I shared my thoughts on how “getting fast first” before transitioning to marathon training will ultimately benefit your performance several months down the road. Developing efficiency and a tolerance for quicker work translates to better economy and feeling more comfortable at marathon pace. Hopefully you’ve implemented something along these lines as you head into fall marathon preparation, but if not, there’s still time. Take the next three weeks and shift your focus to faster 5K/10K-type workouts, less mileage and a shorter long run before you jump into your marathon training.

Once you’ve done this, it’s time to transition to true marathon preparation. The key

to a successful transition—and ultimately running your best marathon—is twofold:

1. Continue to touch on all of the great efficiency and speed you developed prior to starting your marathon training.
2. Take full advantage of the ability to develop a larger aerobic engine.

Let’s take a look at these two concepts in more detail.



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### SPEED AND EFFICIENCY

Developing speed and efficiency is something we all need to focus on if we have any hope of running a faster pace on race day. Getting stronger aerobically is wonderful, but without the ability to hold a quicker pace, it will all be in vain from a muscular and mechanical standpoint—hence the need to “get fast first” before transitioning to longer, more marathon-specific work. The downside is that we are all limited by our natural disposition and genetic gifts. Some people are naturally more efficient and have more speed, so this comes easily and they develop quickly; for others, it takes a more concerted effort and, regardless of their intentions, they’ll be limited to some degree simply due to their makeup.

Regardless of your natural disposition, improving speed and efficiency should be an area of focus prior to beginning your marathon preparation, as well as during your marathon training (but to a lesser degree). During your marathon-specific training phase, performing a 5K/10K-type workout or a shorter hill session once every 10 to 14 days is adequate. The key is touching on speed—not trying to develop it further. By simply including a shorter, more intense workout every 10 to 14 days, you’ll get what you need. Think of it as speed maintenance, not speed development. These types of workouts help break up your marathon training. In the midst of higher mileage with long runs and tough tempo runs, a shorter, faster workout will provide a nice change in emotional stimulus as well.

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## AEROBIC ENGINE

One of the aspects I appreciate most about running is the fact that everyone can become stronger aerobically if they choose to put in the work. While ultimately there is a threshold for that development—and one can definitely overdo it in training—most people never reach their full aerobic potential or struggle with overtraining. The key is not only doing more, but also doing what is most effective. Many folks struggle with doing too many workouts in the same effort zone, or they just add in more slow mileage and don't exploit their window for aerobic development.

Below are a few workouts I call aerobic enhancers. Their purpose is to help accelerate aerobic development. In addition, consistent mileage and a solid long run will help this process move along. When transitioning from quicker workouts to marathon training, you must include periods of higher mileage and a weekly long run. Ten to 12 weeks is a good time frame for a marathon training plan, with two- to three-week microcycles within that window. Two to three weeks of higher mileage followed by a “down” week is a great way to properly absorb the training without becoming stale. The down week should include less volume while maintaining the intensity of your workouts.

### AEROBIC ENHANCER WORKOUTS

**2 X 20 MIN. TEMPO RUN:** Run at goal half-marathon pace. Jog 5 minutes for recovery between reps.

**4 X 8 MIN. TEMPO INTERVALS:** Start at marathon pace for first interval, then run 10 seconds per mile faster for each 8-minute push. Jog 2 minutes for recovery between reps.

**6- TO 10-MILE TEMPO RUN:** This workout should be done once every two weeks, starting at 6 miles and working up to 10 miles. Run about 5 to 10 seconds per mile faster than goal marathon pace.

**2-3 X 3 MILES:** Run each 3-mile repetition at your goal half-marathon pace. Jog 4 to 5 minutes for recovery between reps.

**4-6 X 1-MILE REPEATS:** Run each of these at your current 10K race pace. Take a 2-minute recovery between reps.

**6-8 X 1-MILE REPEATS:** Run each of these at your goal half-marathon pace, but with a very short rest (60 to 90 seconds) between each rep.

**3-4 X 6-8 MIN. INTERVALS:** Run these at your goal 10K pace/effort. Take 3 to 4 minutes recovery between reps.