



Training to race at the World Cup 100 km

Ultra Running - By Don Wallace

The points and views I express here come from my own experience*. Hopefully you be able to take some of them and use them to your own benefit in ultra-running, especially in the 100 km or similar event. Some of it may be a bit brief, so I am happy to receive any queries about what I have written. If what you are doing now is working well then I suggest you continue doing that with some fine-tuning. If you think that you need to make some changes to get better results then I would suggest that you at least bounce ideas off someone with sufficient experience.

Arthur Lydiard said

"The fundamental principles of training are simple, which may be why it needs repeating so often: it is to develop enough stamina to enable you to maintain the necessary speed for the full distance at which you plan to compete."

The longer the race you are running the more stamina you are going to need to complete it. Now the good news is that stamina is the easiest component of your running to develop. The other useful components are strength and then speed. As far as 100-km running is concerned speed is very little importance. Stamina is the most important element followed by strength. Your need to develop stamina first. As you do you will also build some strength into your running. If you build good stamina and some strength, then speed will look after itself.

As an experienced runner if you can put together a consistent block of training for 8 - 12 weeks, then you will put you in shape for a good performance at any major race. I would suggest for the 100 km to keep it simple. Maintain or build up a good level of fitness and then focus on a 9 weeks preparation for the race. In this 9-week period I would suggest to do

5 weeks of good marathon

conditioning work to build your stamina. What is required is a large volume of aerobic running. Running daily you should be doing around 10 to 12 hours running a week.

- Then the next 3 weeks of training you should cut back on your mileage and add in some hill running for strength and some tempo runs. Total training will be 75-80% of the stamina phase.
- The final week of will just be a taper for before the big race.

Conditioning phase.

The point of the condition phase is to do a large volume of aerobic running. Do not do any anaerobic running in this phase.

- Of course a long run on the weekend is the most important session. I would make this 3 hours for 100 km running. (Sat or Sun) If you are not use to this build up to it by doing 2:20, 2:40 then 3 hours. But I would recommend you get at least three 3 hr runs in this period. I recommend doing these off the road. Time on the feet is important rather than distance covered. You should also pace yourself so that you are running at a comfortable level over the last hour and not slowing down.
- Next I would highly recommend that you do a mid-week (Wed or Thurs) run of 2 hours. Run on a flat course at your target 100-km pace. The first few may be a bit slower but by the end of 5 weeks you should be able to do this with ease. This should be on a sealed road. An out & back course is fairly good for this. It may take 20 or 30 minutes to get into a steady rhythm, but after that try and stick closely to that pace for the remainder of the run. For my training I would do 30 km. It may have taken me over 2 hrs initially but at the end of 5 weeks I could easily run it in 4 or 5 minutes under 2 hrs.
- One session of an hour at strong aerobic pace (Tues, Thurs or Fri).

This can be done over a flat course or rolling hills. Reduce intensity if you are building your mileage, tired or have a additional long runs planned.

- Do at least one (preferably 2) other run of 1.5 hrs during the week. Run these at an easier intensity. Backing up your weekend long run done Saturday with a 1.5-2 hour run Sunday can be of benefit. This may be useful if commitments during the week limit your training.
- It is far better to run one longer training session in a day then 2 session that give the same total time.
- It is far better to start off at an easier pace, especially if you are tired. As you continue on and you will often find your pace and rhythm well improve. While is if often good to build up the pace as the run progresses, do not over do this. I would recommend most weekend long runs be off road. I would do at least 50% of my running on bush tracks.
- The best way to be consistent is to do the repeat the same training sessions on the same day of the week.
- Near the end of the conditioning phase do a run of 50-55 km or 4 - 4.5 hrs duration. Using a trail race for this is ideal if it can be arranged. However you should approach the race purely as training run. I would recommend those athletes in Queensland consider doing the Glass House Mountains 50 km 3rd September 2006. I would not recommend much longer then this, unless you have a lot of experience at such events. I all my preparations for 100 km events and the Comrades Marathon I have never run over 55 km, in training, in the 10 weeks before the race, with only one run of this distance. You should have an easy day before and after this run. If you do it without to much strain, you will find that your stamina will be

"You all know that somewhere in the race it is going to get tough . . .when you have to dig deep if you only have 15-10 km to run then nothing will stop you"

improved, in the following weeks. Do not do any anaerobic running during this phase. The aim of the training is to improve your maximum aerobic capacity. There is no need to develop anaerobic capacity, it is not economical and could cause fatigue and the inability to continue running effectively run at a good aerobic effort. Your training should always be at a level where you finish feeling slightly tired but knowing that you could run faster. The effort should be such that you can recover sufficiently for the next day.

If you persist with maintaining a large volume of aerobic running for 5 weeks you really boost stamina. What initially seemed quiet challenging in the first few weeks will become easy to maintain after 3 or 4 weeks.

Strength phase.

The point of the strength phase is to maintain your stamina and do some hill running and tempo running to build strength. This phase will involve sufficient anaerobic running. In this phase the overall time/mileage can be cut back to 75-80% of that of the conditioning phase.

You can now cut back your long runs back each week. I would recommend doing 2:30-40, 2:10-20 and 1:40-2 hr run in these weeks.

Also cut back your midweek long run to 1:40, 1:30 and 1:20 but it is still important to maintain this at race pace. I would highly recommend doing a 25km or 20 km run on an accurately marked course, at your target race pace, in this period.

Do at least one session a week on hills. I would recommend 2 too more experienced runners. These should involve about 15-20 minutes of uphill running in all. This can be done on a circuit with a 2-3 minute uphill, which is run 5-6 times with 8-10 minutes per circuit. Alternatively a fartlek type session over rolling hills which has 8-10 hills spaces over 30-40 minutes can be used.

The purpose of hill running is to run up the hill maintaining good running form. The effort should be slightly anaerobic, so that you are able to complete the session, with easy running between efforts. If you are not very experienced with hill work in your program it would be best to contact me to discuss how to incorporate it.

You should include some tempo runs in this phase. I would recommend running a long one 12-16 km in the first week and 8-10 km later. These may be run at closer to your marathon pace.

Taper phase.

I believe one week taper was sufficient for me. If you prefer 2 then start your build-up a week earlier.

The Monday of the week before the race would be an easy run of 50-60 Min. I would usually do some rolling hills/fartlek on the Tuesday. On the Wednesday I would recommend a 20 Min warm-up and 5 km at your race pace with a short warm down.

Racing 100 km

Have a plan and prepare yourself to be able to achieve it. To run a good 100-km race you need to set out at a pace that you can comfortably maintain for at least 80 km. You need to be quite fresh at 50 km and maintain a good steady pace to 80-85 km. Personally I would try to run as evenly as possible. You all know that somewhere in the race it is going to get tough. That's when the tough gets going. The difference between the winner at the World Cup 100 km and the other top runners will often be that they will run faster over the final 10 to 20 km. When you have to dig deep if you only have 15-10 km to run then nothing will stop you.

- Stick to your planned race pace, even if it feels too comfortable.
- If you are passing other runners in the later part of the race it will spur you on.
- Take on sufficient fluid and as much fuel as possible.
- Prepare yourself mentally for a good performance

* Personal Experience

I have competed in 6 100-km races from 1992 to 1995.

I set an Australian Record of 6:39:26 in my first attempt at 100-km, winning the inaugural Australasian 100-km Championship in 1992.

I won 3 consecutive Australasian Championship at what came to be known as "That Dam Run" in New Zealand. I won in 6:44 in 1993 and again 6:44 in 1994.

I completed at 2 World 100 km Challenges. In 1993 Torhult in Belgium I failed to finish in my second attempt at 100-km. In 1994 I ran 6:51 to finish 16th at Lake Saroma in Japan, where Tim Sloan smashed his pb to run 6:43 for 10th and Trevor Jacobs ran 7:13 (34th). The team was placed sixth and our combined time 20:47:48 is the best performance by an Australian team for 100-km.

In my final race in 1995 I finished 2nd at Lake Saroma in 6:57.

Additional between 1994 and 2002 I have run 5 Comrades Marathon in South Africa. Here I have run 4 "Up" runs and one "Down"

1994	5:59	12 th
1996	5:49	12 th
2000	5:42	8 th
2001	5:47	15 th (Down)
2002	5:44	8 th

1994 was most probably my best year of racing, I was 33 at the time.

31st May. I ran the Comrades Marathon 5:59 for 87.6 km

26th June. (26 days later) World Challenge 100 km 6:51 for 100km

6th August. (6 weeks later) won the first stages of the Telecom Tasmania Run** 5:56 for 88km

7th August. (next day) won second stage, 6:54 for 92 km including an hour running in a complete blizzard.

8th August. lead third stage at about 4 min km pace for 35km before having to stop due to a muscle strain

28th August. Won Noosa Marathon 2:31

31st December. That Dam Run 100 km also ran three 50-km races during 1994. I raced a total of 42 races in 1994 covering 950 km.