

# RAT RACE • THE WALL • TRAINING PROGRAMME

Completing an ultra is something many people can do, but requires a certain level of fitness, a degree of training experience, and mental toughness. The key to reaching the finish line is having arrived at the start line well prepared, and this begins months before, with some simple steps.

## 1 DEFINE YOUR EVENT GOAL IN POSITIVE TERMS.

Write it down. Stick it somewhere visible.

## 2 MAKE A PLAN TOWARDS REACHING YOUR EVENT GOAL.

It should be realistic, progressive, flexible, recordable. Share it.

## 3 STICK TO YOUR PLAN.

If you can't stick to your plan, review your Event Goal, make a new plan, and stick to that.



**Rob Atkin**  
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Rob is responsible for overseeing all aspects of Rat Race's operations as well as getting hands-on with some of our most long-serving and classic challenges. He's here, there and everywhere! Rob is a Mountain Leader, a Sea Kayak Leader and maintains high-level Advanced Wilderness Life Support qualifications alongside health and safety, risk management and other qualifications, including an MBA from a previous life!

## EFFECTIVE TRAINING

Your training plan should start with your current capabilities, and gradually develop what you'll need to reach your Event Goal. You'll probably need a calendar and a calculator (or you could use the example we've given you below), but the key is to do it in small chunks. Step by step is how you're going to complete The Wall, so get some practise in now.

- 1. Do the running.** There is no better thing to do, miles matter.
- 2. Vary your running surfaces as much as possible.** Tarmac, trail, off-trail. The Wall route is not a single surface event, so you'll need to feel comfortable switching between hoovering up stretches of open road and track, and occasional sections of hilly trail and path.
- 3. Vary your running.** Include recovery runs, and quality sessions with "efforts". Give each run a reason.
- 4. Increase your mileage gradually.** +10% more each week is a maximum.
- 5. Take plenty of rest.** At least two no-running days every week.
- 6. If you miss sessions, go back before you go forwards.** Don't try to catch-up for lost time.
- 7. If you get ill or injured, get better first.** Really better. Do some walking.
8. Commit to periodic "test events" to use your kit, benchmark your progress, and review your training.
- 9. Learn how to walk strategically.** Make your slowest speed fast.
- 10. Mix it up,** with Cross Training and Core Stability sessions every week.

## ULTRA RUNNING TRICKS OF THE TRADE

### GET COMFORTABLE

Feeling as comfortable as possible from the start of an ultra-event can be the difference between success and disappointment. Although one of the principles of training is to take you out of your physical comfort zone, you should continually test what makes you feel more, or less comfortable, so you can take it a little easier on event-day.

### AFRAID OF THE DARK?

A little achluophobia (fear of the dark) is very normal in an ultra, it's common to feel a bit tired and emotional, especially towards the end. You may also feel more vulnerable than usual about running on your own, particularly if you're used to training with friends, or if your team-mate has run on ahead. Most participants prefer a bit of company during sections of an ultra, so never be afraid to start a conversation with another runner and buddy up, chances are they'll be grateful for it!

### COUNTRY ROADS

If you regularly run, walk, cycle or drive on country lanes without pavements, you should already have some reasonable road sense. Some of us train on roads like this every day (or night), so make these kind of judgements regularly. Since roads of this type make up a number of sections of the Wall route, the following considerations may help you feel more comfortable, both in training, and once in Wall country:

- Wear something that makes you as obvious as possible, throughout the day or night;
- At very narrow sections, ask yourself whether you would be safer as a walker, moving towards vehicles – or as a cyclist, with cars able to follow slowly behind you until the road widens;
- Be ready to cross from one side of the other, in order to see, and be seen in good time;
- Spare the iPod, and you'll have a better sense of approaching vehicles;
- Stay in single file. You'll stay focused, and drivers will be able to see past you;
- If there is a pavement, use it.

## "THERE'S THE RUB"

Unless you do a lot of miles in similar conditions, you're very likely to experience rubbing at some point during The Wall. This might be under your rucksack straps, between your legs, the dreaded "joggers nipple", or most commonly on your feet. You want to avoid at all costs a rub becoming a blister, since this will quickly become the single biggest threat to your completion of this event.

Rubbing is entirely specific to the individual, so you need to understand how, where and when it's most likely to happen to you, steps to prevent it, and how to stop it if it starts. Your long training runs should be as event-typical as possible in terms of terrain, weather, clothing, pack, sock and shoe combinations, and if these outings produce rubbing issues, you can experiment with different pre-treatments, or dealing with them "on the hoof".

Friction-reducing products like Vaseline and Bodyglide can be applied pre-event; barrier dressings like Zinc Oxide tape, Spenco and Compeed can act as sacrificial surfaces, applied either before, or during the event. Whatever your choice, it's most important that you learn how to use them for yourself, and practise makes perfect.

It's safest to assume that despite your diligent preparation, you're going to get some kind of rubbing on your feet, and you need to be equipped and able to stop a hotspot becoming a blister. The key is timing. As soon as you feel any foot discomfort, stop. Resolve the issue straight away, or every step will make it worse. If you're relying on getting some assistance at the next Pit Stop, your little niggle may be an event-stopper by the time you get there. A well-placed barrier dressing is normally the immediate answer, and a pair of fresh clean socks over the top can only help. Make up a small "blister kit" to carry with you, and put some more comprehensive supplies in your halfway bag.

## EXAMPLE TRAINING PLAN

If this plan starts below your current level, then simply miss a few weeks out, and repeat an appropriate four week cycle until you start closing in on Event Day. Eg: In Week 1 you'll need to run 14 miles, and in Week 2, 15.5 miles. During this period of Week 1 + 2 you'll be able to make up this mileage from 7 runs, but that must include Back to Back sessions of 5+5 miles, one hill session, one interval session, at least two 60min Xtraining sessions, and the equivalent of 4x 15minute Core Stability work.

The 20 week plan below is designed to give the maximum development, in the minimum time, in order to take a runner from 14 miles in the first week, to an event where they'll be covering over four times that in a weekend. It makes no reference to the speed in which you might be running, since that's down to you, and your time on the day will be more down to the conditions of the course than how fast you can run 10k. Instead, it's been designed to be as flexible as possible, so you can choose the time, distance, and type of your running sessions within each week or fortnight, to give you the best chance of completing the plan, and reaching your Goal.

<b>DISTANCES</b>	All distances are in miles. To convert to km, multiply by 1.6
<b>HILLS</b>	Sessions involving repetitions of the same hill (with downhill recoveries), or a run route with many hill efforts.
<b>INTERVALS</b>	Sessions involving multiple timed efforts, where speed is increased, with time-limited recoveries between.
<b>TEMPO</b>	Session where the first and last quarters/thirds are run easy, and the mid section run as fast as is sustainable.
<b>B2B</b>	Back to Back. Two runs separated by eight to twelve hours recovery. Eg 5+5 is two back to back 5 mile runs.
<b>LSR</b>	Long Slow Run. Can include walk intervals, and may involve taking some kit. Aim for the longer distance.
<b>XTRAINING</b>	Any other non-running exercise, like biking, circuit training, racquet sports, exercise classes, gym work.
<b>CORE STABILITY</b>	Exercises to focus on the muscles of the torso. These can be incorporated into the end of a running session.
<b>HALF PACK</b>	Your Event rucksack (or bum bag) containing half the weight of your Event gear.
<b>FULL PACK</b>	Your Event pack, as it'll be on Event Day.

RUNNING					SUPPLEMENTAL TRAINING
WK	TOTAL	FREQUENCY	HIGH MILEAGE SESSIONS	QUALITY SESSIONS	
1	14 MILES	7 x RUNS	B2B 5+5 MILES	1 x hills, 1 x intervals	Minimum 2 x XTraining 4 x 15min Core Stability
2	15.5 MILES				
3	17 MILES	7 x RUNS	LSR 10-15 MILES	1 x hills, 1 x intervals	Minimum 2 x XTraining 4 x 15min Core Stability
4	17 MILES				
5	18.5 MILES	8 x RUNS	B2B 7+7 MILES	1 x hills, 1 x intervals, 1 x LSR	Minimum 2 x XTraining 5 x 15min Core Stability
6	20.5 MILES				
7	22.5 MILES	8 x RUNS	TEST EVENT: 15-20 MILES	1 x hills, 1 x intervals, 1 x tempo	Minimum 2 x XTraining 5 x 15min Core Stability
8	22.5 MILES				
9	25 MILES	9 x RUNS	B2B 10+10 MILES	1 x hills, 1 x intervals, 1 x tempo 1 x LSR	Minimum 2 x XTraining 6 x 15min Core Stability
10	27.5 MILES				
11	30 MILES	9 x RUNS	LSR 20-25 MILES	1 x hills, 1 x intervals, 1 x tempo	Minimum 2 x XTraining 6 x 15min Core Stability
12	30 MILES				
13	33 MILES	10 x RUNS	B2B 12+12 MILES with half pack	1 x hill, 1 x intervals, 1 x tempo, 1 x LSR - All sessions with half pack	Minimum 1 x XTraining 7 x 15min Core Stability
14	36.5 MILES				
15	40 MILES	10 x RUNS	TEST EVENT: 25-30 MILES with full pack	1 x hill, 1 x intervals, 1 x tempo 2/3 sessions with Full Pack	Minimum 1 x XTraining 7 x 15min Core Stability
16	40 MILES				
17	36.5 MILES	9 x RUNS	B2B 15+12 MILES with full pack	1 x hill, 1 x intervals, 1 x tempo, 1x LSR	Minimum 2 x XTraining 8 x 15min Core Stability
18	33 MILES				
19	30 MILES	4 x RUNS	LSR 15 MILES with full pack	1 x intervals, 1 x tempo	Minimum 1 x XT + 4 x 15min CS Minimum 1 x XT + 3 x 15min CS
20	27.5 MILES	4 x RUNS	LSR 10 MILES with full pack	Easy runs only	
EVENT DAY					

This training plan has been created by experienced Ultra Distance runner, and a UKA qualified Leader in Running Fitness. It is an example only, and may not be achievable by all. Anyone deciding to act upon information provided by this website does so entirely at their own risk. Anyone wishing to start a physical training plan, or to increase or modify their level or type of physical activity should do so only having first discussed their plans with their GP.