

STARTING LINES

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[ONE COOL JOB]

RUSS JONES' SIMPLE THEORY: GO FASTER BY RUNNING LESS



Russ Jones is a former 2:18 marathoner who has been running for 40 years and is a top triathlete. Because of the high mileage he ran when he was younger and the injuries he had to overcome, Jones became a firm believer in the less-is-more theory. In fact, his new training company is called Trilessismore Training (trilessismore.com). And at 55 years old, Jones is racing faster than ever.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST MISTAKES YOU SEE PEOPLE MAKE IN THEIR TRAINING?

People sabotage their ability to go faster by overtraining. Athletes commonly have the mentality that more is better. Actually, the reverse is true. Less is better and faster, especially if you have a limited amount of time to train. If you train slowly and methodically, you'll race slowly as well. If you train short, fast and intense, you'll race faster.

HOW MUCH TRAINING DO YOU DO EACH WEEK?

I run 10 miles, bike 100 miles and swim 6,000 yards per week. I especially keep my running miles low.

HOW FAST SHOULD PEOPLE BE DOING THEIR TRAINING RUNS?

After they warm up well, they should be close to race pace or faster. Studies show that shorter, faster and more intense workouts are more beneficial; and you will swim, bike and run faster. The other huge benefit that low mileage brings to the

table is that you are less injury-prone and healthier. Also, running on trails, the treadmill and softer surfaces will reduce the impact on your leg muscles and bone structure.

WHEN YOU WERE A TOP ROAD RACER, WHAT WAS YOUR TRAINING LIKE?

I was running only 70-80 miles per week when I ran my 2:18, and I went through the half marathon in 1:07 that day. Most good marathon runners run 100 miles and more per week. I tried the high-mileage route with moderate success and ran in the 2:30 range a few times. I had more success when I dropped to 70-80 miles because they were all quality miles with intervals, speed work and race-pace workouts. I ran 2:21 to qualify for the USA Olympic Marathon Trials and only six weeks later ran a 2:18 on much lower mileage.

IS THERE A FORMULA I CAN USE TO FIGURE OUT HOW MUCH I SHOULD BE RUNNING EACH WEEK?

I always ask myself when coaching clients what is the lowest mileage they need in order to run faster. For the runner, two or three times the distance of your target race is appropriate. For example, if you are targeting a 10K, run 14-20 miles per week. For triathletes the number can be even lower, because they get more of an aerobic base from swimming and biking and that fitness will transfer over to running faster.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COOL JOB.

I train and coach with the Trilessismore philosophy of quality over volume. Most athletes have busy schedules and a limited amount of time to train. I maximize training time for runners and multisport athletes and implement a schedule that will help them train smarter and race faster.


With less mileage, especially on the run, athletes can be faster, less injury-prone and more able to enjoy their sport of choice a whole lot more. —BB 

Photo by opix

FACTOID

HALF-MARATHON GROWTH CONTINUES: The half marathon continues to be the fastest-growing distance in running. From 2000 to 2009 the number of **13.1 finishers grew by 131 percent**, from 482,000 to 1.1 million. But the **5K is still the most popular race distance** and grew 40 percent over the same period. runningusa.com