BUFFALO Stampede

Anniversary

2014
2024

Training Program Overview

Who are these programs for?

In short, anybody who wants to use them!! These programs are designed for any aspiring Buffalo Stampeders out there, that are either reasonably new or have a moderate level of experience. There are two levels to the programming, Beginner and Intermediate, as we're aiming to have a level of training that will suit a reasonable variety of participants. We do, however, understand that there is an extremely diverse range of athletes in the events, so it's not an easy task to provide programs that are going to suit everybody. Although, there are ways you can look at adjusting the training to perhaps suit you a little better as an individual, and we will go into some detail about that below.

What are they aimed at achieving?

As mentioned above, these programs are to suit a broad variety of participants, as such, they are not individualized in any way. With this type of programming we ideally want participants to have been running consistently for at least a few months prior to beginning the programs. Whilst the enthusiasm of someone jumping off the couch and into a program is commendable, it can also lead to increased risk of injury and inconsistency in the training. If there is one thing that we want athletes using these programs to achieve, it's consistency! If you are able to follow the program most of the time, bearing in mind there are many external factors that might affect it such as family, hobbies and work, then you are going to be in a great spot to complete the events successfully. Really, what we want from participants is that they can get out in the race, have a great time and have their body in shape to deal with the tough demands of these courses!

How should I approach the training?

Consistency is king! If there is one thing to preach to people that are beginning running, or running to a program, it's that consistency is the most important factor. It's very common to see people get excited about running, then go flat-out like a lizard drinking and burn themselves out or get injured. To be successful in training, you want to be excited about it, and you want it to be to a level that you can complete without feeling like you're extremely depleted and straining to get it done. For example, if you are beginning a new training week and are feeling tired, sore and have a bit of a niggle, then you probably shouldn't be doing a workout (harder session) early in that week, or maybe at all. You are always going to be much better off opting for a day of easy running if you're unsure, rather than pushing through and then realizing afterwards that you've only made your situation worse.

When shifting sessions around (as will no doubt be needed pending individual schedules), one important factor is to avoid placing your harder sessions back to back, or having too many consecutive days off and then more consecutive days running. I.e Doing a hard workout, then a long run, then another moderate length run, then another run, followed by 3 days off. Sometimes, this may be unavoidable if you're stretched, but it will pay to remain vigilant and try to keep at least a day of very easy running or rest between your harder workouts and long runs in particular.

The components of the programs

Recovery runs: Recovery runs are designed to function as a mode of active recovery, whilst still allowing you to promote some aerobic training stimulus. These runs should be VERY easy in nature, and you will almost never do them too slowly. You should be able to talk in full sentences whilst running at this intensity. For example, if someone has a half marathon time of 1:20, their recovery pace will be 5min/km+. For somebody with a half marathon time of 2hrs, their recovery pace will likely be 6:30/km+. Point being, you can't really do these runs too slowly, but you can do them too fast! As a general rule, they will be better done on flatter routes, as introducing hills will more than likely increase the intensity. They can certainly be done on trail, but those that are flatter are ideal.

Easy runs: Easy running is the zone where you will spend the majority of your training. This is responsible for the bulk of your aerobic conditioning as a runner and in the long term will give you your main training benefits. It is faster than your recovery pace, but you should never be pushing to maintain your pace in an easy run, as this defeats the purpose and you are beginning to introduce other stimulus.

%'s explained: With programs that are general in nature, it can be a tricky task to prescribe efforts as not everyone uses the same metrics when training. Some people rely on pace, others HR, whilst others just run free and by feel! These are all fine pending what you prefer, though with programs to suit the masses, we need to work on a system that can be somewhat consistent across the board.

When a percentage effort or percentage effort range is prescribed in the sessions, it is referring to your effort over those particular time frames. I.e 4 x 5mins @ 80%, with 2mins easy jog in between. For an effort of 5mins in length, you are running at roughly 80% of your maximum effort, for that 5min block. Keep in mind that you have 4 to complete. An effort of around 80% for 5mins, should be approximately your lactic threshold (there is a lot of variation to this, but roughly!). Whereas, if 8 x 2mins @ 80% off 1mins rest is prescribed, you're then running at 80% of what you could repeatedly for 2min blocks, so these will be faster than 80% for your 5min blocks.... That's about as clear as mud?! Essentially, the percentage is always relative to effort length.

For runs of 70% thereabouts, this is a steady effort, and should feel like you're definitely working, but shouldn't be 'hard'. If you are running a long tempo at around 70%, then you will definitely feel tired by the end, though you shouldn't be straining trying to maintain the effort, and you should be able to maintain form well. If you're straining and losing form, then you're pushing too hard.

Strides: These are short run throughs building to about 90% of your maximum pace, and are designed to provide neuromuscular stimulus. For people that haven't done strides before, it's recommended to start on the lower end of pace. Even though they are only 10-15seconds in length, they still require a lot of power, which equals a lot of fast muscular loading. So if you are just feeling them out, maybe do your first sets starting at 60% or so, building to about 80%.

The best way to do strides is at the end of an easy, or recovery run. Strides should never feel hard, as they are very short, and you should always be having adequate recovery between them, otherwise you're defeating the purpose of doing them. For example, you have a beautiful, easy 8km run on some trails. You get back home and find a nice spot that has about 60-80m or so of open running. You do a run through of 10secs, building to about 75% of your max pace. You then stand around, admiring the sites of your neighbourhood for say, 45-60secs, whilst you ensure that you aren't out of breath, that you feel good, and are completely ready to go again. You then do stride #2. This stride is at about 80-85% of your max pace, so slightly faster, but not all-out. You again take your nice little recovery period. Stride 3 comes along, which is at about 85-90% of your max pace. You'll then take your good bout of recovery, and the remaining 3 strides will all be at about 90%.

Surges: These aren't too dissimilar to strides, but are generally between 15-30secs long and are performed during your run, not after. They still provide some of the same neuromuscular stimulus, but will also place some more stress on your aerobic system. They aren't as fast as strides, so may only build to roughly 80-85% of your capacity, though the recoveries are jogging, not standing/walking, so you will recover less than in strides. As a result, these act as a mini-workout of sorts.