

SheRACES Trail Series 2026 – Training Guide



I have compiled this document with some information and tips to help you on your journey.

The Training Plan

First off we shall start with the training plan... I have set this to 4 workouts per week which can be adjusted to suit your availability and fitness level. I am happy for you to either take out a run/walk and sub for a cross training activity (hike, bike, or similar aerobic session).

I am also happy for you to add in a session, however please be realistic with what your body can handle as I believe it is always better to undertrain than overtrain.

The biggest takeaway I would love for you all after this is to be able to listen to your body and know how it feels when you need to take a step back or when to ramp up.

Please don't think about the race at the moment; each week will prepare you for the next, and each week we will build on fitness, and learn new skills to prepare you for the end!

Below are some of the workouts and an explanation about them, that will you see on your plan.



Workouts you will see on your plan

Ideally you want to be training 3-4 days per week. The plan is a guide – you can choose to do everything on it or pick your own workouts to do. You can choose to do all easy runs/hikes or you can add in the workouts. I have added in recovery/easier week every 3-4 weeks to allow the body to recover and adapt to the training. Remember listen to your body and do what feels right for you. Just because it's on the plan doesn't mean it's set in stone!

If you are completely new to exercise and have any previous injury or health concern, please consult a professional coach or doctor to make sure this is suitable for you.

Aerobic/Endurance/Easy Run/Hike – comfortable pace – should be able to talk in full sentences. You should finish feeling like you could carry on at the same pace for longer – effort level 2-4

Long Aerobic Run/Hike – comfortably easy pace – start off slower so you have plenty of margin to increase as the run progresses. Great opportunity to practise training on similar terrain and elevation as race day. Practising fuelling strategies and kit on training runs closer to event day – effort level 2-4

The goal is time on feet and to practise using kit and fuelling.

Harder Effort Intervals - effort level 5-6

Strides (optional workout) – effort level 2-4, raising to level 8-9 for the strides.

Strides are short bouts of faster running with recovery in between. They help increase your range of motion, work on your turnover and subtly improve your form. Usually 30-60 second bouts of strides with full recovery in between. I would recommend these be done in the middle of your run when you are fully warmed up and then you have ample time to cool down.

Hill Reps (short) – effort level 7-8

Hill workouts introduce power and flexibility into the leg musculature and are an ideal transition and preparation for the faster, more demanding workouts to come. Use a harder effort going uphill and recovery walking/jogging down.

Always warm up 10-15 mins beforehand and cool down 10 mins after

Hill Reps (long) – effort level 6-7

These are for building hill fitness and improving stamina and aerobic fitness over a longer period of time. Pick a longer hill that you can run/hike continuously for up to 2-3 mins, a nice steady incline. Recover on the downhill.

Always warm up 10-15 mins beforehand and cool down 10 mins after

Workouts can be moved around in your training week to fit in with your day-to-day life. The golden rule in training is not to do back-to-back high-intensity workouts. Workouts that involve prolonged levels of harder effort take longer to recover from, as does race day. Sessions like hill reps and intervals can take 48-72 hours for the body to fully recover, so it is important to always train in the lower intensity or recovery zone for those days afterwards. For the body to recover fully from a race or event it can take 1 day per mile.

Below is the **Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)** – this can be helpful in training as we can get to learn how our body feels when we run easy as to when we run hard. It is a way of measuring physical activity intensity level. Perceived exertion is how hard you feel like your body is working. It is based on the physical sensations a person experiences during physical activity, including increased heart rate, increased respiration or breathing rate, increased sweating, and muscle fatigue. Through experience of monitoring how your body feels, it will become easier to know when to adjust your intensity. Workouts will often be set to an effort rather than a pace so it's important pay attention to how our responds to different paces.

RPE Scale

(Rate of Perceived Exertion)

1	Very Light Activity (anything other than complete rest)
2-3	Light activity (feels like you can maintain for hours, easy to breath and carry on a conversation)
4-5	Moderate Activity (feel like you can exercise for long periods of time, able to talk and hold short conversations)
6-7	Vigorous Activity (on the verge of becoming uncomfortable, short of breath, can speak a sentence)
8-9	Very Hard Activity (difficult to maintain exercise intensity, hard to speak more than a single word)
10	Max Effort (feels impossible to continue, completely out of breath, unable to talk)

Recovery

Taking on an ultra can take its toll on your body so it is important to listen and be aware of signs that your body needs to rest. Below is some information about how to tell how your body is coping with the training. Please pay attention to these symptoms as they will give you an idea of if/when you may need to take a step back and reduce intensity/volume.

Recovery Indicators

Three easy ways to tell if your body is insufficiently recovered from a workout:

1. *Morning Heart Rate: Elevated Heart Rate more than 10%.*
2. *Morning Body Weight: Sudden weight loss of 1lb. or more or steady continuous gain.*
3. *Number of hours slept: Loss of sleep, insomnia, and restlessness.*

Other Indicators:

- Bad mood
- Loss of enthusiasm
- Loss of aerobic fitness
- Signs of infection such as cold sore, sore throat etc
- Food cravings for salt sugar and/or caffeine
- Muscle soreness
- Loss of coordination or visible form
- Gait imbalance or compensation
- Loss of libido
- Loss of heart rate variability
- Loss of enjoyment of running



Over Training



Acidosis

© C.G. Livingstone



Catabolic State

Over-Training

There are four main causes of tiredness related to training:

1. **Glycogen Depletion** – the body is low on fuel and thus energy is low.
2. **Muscle Breakdown** – too much volume and/or intensity causing cellular destruction within the muscle.
3. **Acidosis** – metabolic acidity as a result of anaerobic metabolism.
4. **Dehydration** – water loss especially in hot weather.

Be sure to listen to your body and take a rest day when you need it. Rest is where the magic happens and the body adapts to the changes we are making during training, you can only train from what you can recover from.

Recovery tips

- **Get a good night's sleep each night.** Sleep is nature's main recovery mechanism.
- **Easy aerobic activity** or rest until the pulse rate is back to its baseline.
- **Eat a balanced diet to aid recovery.** This is more essential when you have run harder efforts or longer sessions acidosis. Antioxidant foods such as vegetables and whole grains should be the mainstay of a sound athletic diet. Avoid foods with little nutritional value, such as refined sugar and coffee.
- **Eat plenty of carbohydrates** since you are probably in a state of muscle glycogen depletion from overwork. Low glycogen levels will make you feel grumpy and depressed.
- **Drink plenty of water if urine is dark.** Sometimes fatigue can be a simple state of dehydration. Water will help to flush waste products out of your muscles.
- **Re-mineralise** with a quality mineral supplement especially if your muscles are sore. Most athletes are low on calcium, zinc, magnesium, iron and potassium, especially if you have worked out hard in hot weather. A hot Epsom salt bath is a wonderful relaxant for overworked muscles.

Recovery after a peak race

Guidelines: 1-day recovery for every mile covered. Therefore, after a marathon it takes the average runner about 4 weeks to fully recovery, a half marathon about 2 weeks, and a 10k about a week.

- The most accurate ways to measure recovery is to look for variations in Morning Pulse, Morning Body Weight and Number of Hours Slept.
- A recovery workout should place no strain on the body. This is the time to practise feeling-based activity and to err on the side of conservatism. All activities should be relaxed and feel good.
- Moving the body aids recovery, as opposed to total rest.

Mindset

Find your why

Training for an ultra can be a long journey! At times it will be hard and you may struggle, physically as well as mentally. Having a good, clear reason why you are doing this can be really helpful to get you through. It can help to have a few reasons that mean something to you, to help motivate you to keep going when it gets tough. In training and on the day.

Extrinsic vs Intrinsic motivations

Intrinsic motivation is the inner drive to succeed, engaging in the task or adhering to the activity for fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. An example would include going to the gym to keep healthy.

Extrinsic motivation comes from sources outside of the performer and usually involves rewards, for example, prize money, trophies, certificates or recognition.

Intrinsic motivations are more likely see you through in the long term. Think about what running really means to you.

Goals – Having a goal or several for you training or race can be helpful as well. Using process goals instead of outcome goals are more useful as these are ones that can be controlled.

*“**Process goals** focus on daily actions within your control, while **outcome goals** represent end results you’re aiming to achieve.*

Most people struggle with maintaining consistent progress toward their goals because they focus exclusively on outcomes without mapping the actionable steps needed to get there. Many people hope for big results, but often overlook the commitment required to make them happen.” ([source](#))

I always prefer process goals over outcome goals. We cannot predict what will happen and have no control over outcomes. Process goals we can control and these can help see us through the training, they can be small and achievable at the same time. These can be: being consistent, sticking to the training plan, listening to your body, fuelling your body well, etc. Try and set yourself a few small goals throughout training as it can be super rewarding to tick them off as you go.

Comparison is the thief of joy – Always remember your journey is your own.

We are all on our own paths and not everyone has the same 24 hours in a day. Although we are all training for the same race, everyone is different. Do not compare yourselves to each other.

I really recommend keeping a training journal either writing things down on paper or online. This can be really helpful especially when we come to tapering and closer to the race as that's time those negative thought patterns creep in. Reading back on your journal and reminding yourself how hard you've worked can help keep those thoughts at bay.

Fuelling & Nutrition

Understanding the role of macronutrients in our daily diet is crucial for optimising health and performance. These nutrients—carbohydrates, proteins, and fats—are required in substantial quantities to keep our bodies functioning efficiently.

Carbohydrates: The energy powerhouse

Carbohydrates are the body's primary fuel source, especially vital during exercise, as they break down into glucose, which is the preferred energy source for our muscles and brain. Stored in the liver and muscles as glycogen, carbohydrates are essential for sustaining physical activity. For endurance activities lasting over 90 minutes, it's recommended to consume between 60-90g of carbohydrates per hour, tailored to your body weight. It takes 500g of carbs to fill your glycogen stores. This is equivalent to 1600-1200 calories worth – enough to last 120 mins of moderate activity. The harder you work the faster your store deplete. The more you train the more your store will be depleted

It is important to vary the amount of carbs you eat depending on your daily activity levels. A good rule of thumb for endurance activity over 90 mins is to take on between 60-90g per hour - depending on bodyweight.

Consistently under fuelling and low glycogen stores can lead to low energy, impaired recovery, reduced injury and poor performance. It can also lead to poor brain function and the ability to make good decisions - particularly important in long distance events.

Types of carbohydrates

- **Complex carbs:** These are the starchier kind and take longer for the body to digest and absorb making them – slow releasing. (Eg wholegrain pasta, brown rice, oats, couscous, potatoes, wholemeal bread and some cereals)
- **Simple carbs :** These are rapidly digested and absorbed, include sugars from dairy, fruit, honey, table sugar and most sports nutrition. Physically active people need a mix of both. Ideally complex at mealtimes and simple options before, during and after training depending on intensity

Carbohydrate requirements

Low intensity or rest days = 3g per kg of bodyweight

1 hour moderate training = 5-7g per kg

1-3 hours of training = 6-10g per kg

4-6 hours = 8-12g per kg

What does that look like?

100g of wholemeal bread = 60g carbs

100g of dry pasta = 75g carbs

100g of beetroot = 20g

1 banana = 25g

400g tin of chickpeas = 39g

200ml cows milk = 10g

Proteins: Building and repairing

Proteins are fundamental for growth, maintenance, and repair of body tissues. Formed from amino acids, proteins support muscle repair and immune function. Adults generally need around 0.8g of protein per kg of body weight, but athletes or those involved in heavy exercise might require 1.2-1.6g per kg.

Protein content of common foods:

100g chicken or turkey breast – 30g protein

100g oily fish or tinned tuna – 26g protein

100g of red meat – 25 g protein

1 egg – 5g protein

150g Greek yoghurt – 15 g protein

100g tofu – 8g protein

200ml cows milk – 7 g protein

200ml soya milk – 7g protein

200ml almond milk – 1g protein

100g baked beans – 6g protein

Fats: Vital for health

Fats are essential for absorbing vitamins, forming cell membranes, and supporting immune function. It's important to distinguish between saturated and unsaturated fats.

- **Saturated Fats:** Found in processed meats, cheese, and butter, these should be limited in the diet.
- **Unsaturated Fats:** These include monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in olive oil, avocados and nuts, which are healthier choices.

Daily intake tip:

- Aim for fats to make up about 35% of your daily intake, focusing on unsaturated sources.

Balancing macronutrients

Balancing these macronutrients according to your lifestyle and physical demands is key. For those engaging in regular physical activity, varying the intake based on intensity and duration is crucial to support energy needs and recovery. It is worth keeping track of your daily intake of macro nutrients as this can help us meet our bodies requirements. My fitness pal is a great free app.

Fuelling for performance

Proper nutrition is not just about what you eat, but when you eat. Preparing for training sessions should start 24-72 hours in advance, and refuelling with a mix of carbohydrates and proteins shortly after exercise can speed up recovery.

Understanding and balancing your macronutrient intake can lead to improved performance, better health, and enhanced well-being. Adjust your intake to match your personal health goals and activity levels for optimal results.

Fuelling on the run

Generally try and take some food/sports nutrition/gels with you and practice

taking on food for any runs over an hour. It is just as important to train your gut as it is to train the rest of your body. Eating on the go can take practice so it is important to do this before the race. Don't try anything new on race day! You want to aim to consume between 30-60g of carbs per hour on race day, and this can take practice! Your long runs will be the perfect time to practise this.

Carb loading before your race

Aim to take on about 6-10g carbs per kg of body weight over a period of 2-3 days before the race. Focus on high GI carbs – white bread, pasta, potatoes, cereals. Reduce fibre intake to give the gut a rest.

Pre-race meal should contain around 1-2g carbs per kg of bodyweight, 1-2 hours before the race. This should be high GI carbs, minimal fibre and something familiar – **nothing new on race day!** Always practise this in training – try it on your long run/hike days.

Post-exercise fuelling

While this isn't a hard and fast rule, it is important to replenish glycogen stores post training. Ideally within a 30 min window – aim for 1g per kg of bodyweight or carbs and 0.4g of protein per kg of bodyweight. This will help refill your glycogen stores and help with post-exercise muscle fatigue. Therefore aiding recovery/fatigue from exercise.

Examples: 300ml cow's milk and a banana or a recovery shake, toasted bagel with peanut butter or scrambled egg, granola and Greek yoghurt.

Hydration

It is important to drink enough water and rehydrate on the go but also on a daily basis anyways. Aim to take on 2 litres of water a day. This race is in the summer when it could potentially be a really hot day. Therefore you will need to think about replacing salts and minerals during your runs. Electrolytes or salt tablets can help with this. As a loss of too much can lead to nausea, and potentially be a race ender. [Precision Fuel & Hydration](#) have a great quiz where you can find out about what type of electrolytes to use and also offer a free fuelling plan. [XMiles | Endurance Nutrition Store for Athletes](#) also offer this service.

Kit

It is a good idea to have a look at the kit list for the event and practise using it. Getting a good packing system in your bag can save lots of time at checkpoints! Play with how to store your fuel for the race and your water. Also getting your body used to carrying a bit of extra weight is good practise for the event. Also it's a good chance to practise using and carrying poles if you going to be using them on race day.

Strength training

It is advisable to incorporate some kind of strength training into your weekly training. This will help support your body not only through the event but also through the training.

If you are completely new to strength training and have some previous injuries or health concerns it is advisable to consult a qualified professional to advise you personally before you embark on anything new. If you experience any sharp pain: STOP and consult a professional.

Here is some basic strength exercises for you to try. To start with you can perform 3 rounds of 10 reps of each exercise. You can add a weight to progress or add in more reps up to 15.

Squats <https://youtu.be/4KmY44Xsg2w?si=q3V0y6kH9t7tISvf>

Romanian Deadlifts <https://youtu.be/5WxMW-Fu5KU?si=QrubSluowYcYVOBP>

Stair Calf Raises <https://youtu.be/eYz7BiwtIM4?si=oDvlaKXmrTTwrdDO>

Glute Bridges <https://youtu.be/OUgsJ8-Vi0E?si=7QqCCUnIZCRd2SiC>

Forearm Plank https://youtu.be/ASdvN_XEl_c?si=FEExDHu8_oF1uubed

Start with 30 sec hold

Side Plank https://youtu.be/ribtncUfriU?si=ag8GCDV2Lz6J_qZ5

Start with 30 sec hold

Single Leg Balance https://youtu.be/Dtgh2_LFkBQ?si=4C_QDgGLUlyj692i

Start with a 30 sec hold

Arabesque – progression of above https://youtu.be/Z2hLoQD66JA?si=wY_s5mlUqju20hSY

Wall Sit https://youtu.be/cWTZ8Am1Ee0?si=KJ0Xn3Z_w363Pjvr

Start with a 30 sec hold

Good luck!

And most of all enjoy the journey!