INTERVAL GUIDE

Interval training is based on running at race pace or faster for distances that are shorter than a race distance with breaks included to reduce the training stress.

If you are new to this type of training, you should ease into it and be prepared to skip some of the intervals to get used to the pace and type of training.

When running Intervals, it is better to keep moving after the repetition and even a slow walk is better than standing around afterwards waiting for the next one, but a slow jog is better still as this helps promote blood flow & recovery!

The idea behind the recovery period is that it promotes incomplete recovery and this is very important as it keeps a runner from running too fast on the next interval. The recovery should be to let heart rate drop to about 65% of max heart rate and a rule of thumb is that the recovery should be about 50% to 90% (it could even be less or more!) of the time taken to run the interval, so the sessions can only be a guide for so many people and for different abilities.

Using a heart rate monitor would be a good way to measure your own recovery period. More rest may be required at times eg after injury, after a hard race (or one to come!) or on a warm evening, or a windy one - not unusual at the track...

Recovery time should be used wisely, taking more time if necessary. If running economy is suffering because of a cut in recovery time the sessions purpose is lost. The ideal is to recover so that each interval is run as economically as the previous one.

Intervals main purpose are to stess your VO2 max, which is the max amount of oxygen that the heart can pump to the muscles and which the muscles can then use to produce energy. VO2 max determines aerobic capacity and very simplistically, the higher the VO2 max, the more ability there is to produce energy aerobically but then there is a limit to perform without enough oxygen - although with training, it can be improved.

Improving VO2 max can come by interval training that requires 95% to 100% (some may say 85-95%) of current VO2 max but for most people this would be about race pace to 3k to 5k pace and this will stretch the cardiovascular system to improve the ability to extract oxygen from the blood.

TEMPO running, or threshold running, is good at improving endurance and can be considered "comfortably hard" and is about 20 (perhaps up to 30 seconds) per mile slower than 5k race pace is somewhere in the region of 80% to 90% of Vo2, or about 88% - 90% of max heart rate.

Intervals to work effectively, should be run at a fairly consistent time.

A sample guide could be:-

1600m / Miles - variation of 5 - 8 seconds
800m - variation of 3 - 5 seconds
600m - variation of 3 - 4 seconds
400m - variation of 2 - 3 seconds
300m - variation of 2 - 3 seconds
200m - variation of 1 - 2 seconds

The key is being consistent, not running one too fast and then having to take a longer recovery to get the session back on track and very importantly running to your capability and not running them too fast. It is better to go at your pace rather than try & keep up with people who may be faster, thus not getting anything positive from the session (and making it too hard!)

Most runners would run intervals at faster than race pace, but that could be a fast or hard pace or even at race pace and another key is finding what works, around that 3/5k pace.

A suggested guide based on race pace times per mile, could be:

5k pace per mile	400s fast	400s 5k	800s fast	800s 5k	1200s fast	1200s 5k	1600s fast	1600s 5k
5.10	1.07	1.17	2.24	2.35	3.42	3.53	5.03	5.10
5.20	1.10	1.20	2.29	2.40	3.49	4.00	5.13	5.20
5.30	1.12	1.22	2.34	2.45	3.57	4.08	5.23	5.30
5.40	1.15	1.25	2.38	2.50	4.03	4.15	5.33	5.40
5.50	1.17	1.27	2.45	2.55	4.11	4.23	5.42	5.50
6.00	1.20	1.30	2.47	3.00	4.18	4.30	5.52	6.00
6.10	1.22	1.32	2.52	3.05	4.25	4.38	6.01	6.10
6.20	1.25	1.35	2.57	3.10	4.32	4.45	6.12	6.20
6.30	1.27	1.37	3.01	3.15	4.39	4.53	6.21	6.30
6.40	1.30	1.40	3.06	3.20	4.46	5.00	6.31	6.40
6.50	1.32	1.42	3.11	3.25	4.54	5.08	6.41	6.50
7.00	1.35	1.45	3.15	3.30	5.00	5.15	6.51	7.00
7.10	1.37	1.47	3.20	3.35	5.08	5.23	7.00	7.10
7.20	1.40	1.50	3.24	3.40	5.14	5.30	7.10	7.20
7.30	1.42	1.52	3.29	3.45	5.22	5.38	7.20	7.30
7.40	1.45	1.55	3.34	3.50	5.29	5.45	7.30	7.40
7.50	1.47	1.57	3.38	3.55	5.36	5.54	7.39	7.50
8.00	1.50	2.00	3.43	4.00	5.43	6.00	7.49	8.00
8.10	1.52	2.02	3.48	4.05	5.51	6.08	7.59	8.10
8.20	1.55	2.05	3.52	4.10	5.57	6.15	8.09	8.20
8.30	1.57	2.07	3.57	4.15	6.05	6.23	8.18	8.30
8.40	2.00	2.10	4.01	4.20	6.11	6.30	8.28	8.40
8.50	2.02	2.12	4.06	4.25	6.19	6.38	8.38	8.50
9.00	2.05	2.15	4.11	4.30	6.26	6.45	8.48	9.00