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## Introducing: Hill Training



In our four-part training series, we'll be introducing some of the training methods you can use to help you improve your running and your parkrun PB, whilst showing how a couple of tweaks to your mid-week training can help you become a more confident runner, whatever your aspirations!

**In this instalment, we're discussing Hill Training.**

To help us to do so, we've enlisted the help of **Alli Crossman**! Alli Crossman is a former 800m runner who now coaches a number of athletes, from sub-elite distance runners to up-and-

coming young athletes across various distances.

### **What is hill training?**

Put simply, hill training is running repetitions up a slope! This provides resistance, and results in your legs gaining strength and helps to improve your running technique (form).

It is perfect training for running faster 5k times as it improves endurance, therefore making you stronger over distance.



### **What are the benefits of hill training?**

By regularly including a hill session to your training you will gain fitness, improve strength and your running efficiency (running economy).

As well as the fitness benefits, hills are also a great way of adding variation to your training and are a free form of strength training without the need for gym membership.

Best of all it's a fun way (honestly!) of getting outdoors and exploring your local area. Elite athletes include hills as a regular part of their training, especially in the winter months, but they are just as useful to all runners whatever level you are and an excellent way of improving your parkrun time.



### **How should you include it in your training?**

Initially, I would recommend introducing a hill training session to your training once a fortnight, and on a day where you are rested, in other words not the day after a long run, the day before a race, or an attempt at running your parkrun PB!

The day after a hill session, if you are planning to run, then make sure you run easy, slow your pace down and use the run as recovery.

As time goes on and strength improves, weekly hills sessions can be built into your training or alternate hill sessions with other sessions. For example: one week build in a hill session and then the following week an off-road interval session.



### **Example hill sessions:**

To get you started here are a few sessions to try out. Always make sure though that you thoroughly warm up with an easy jog of around one mile before you hit the hills, and incorporate a cool-down jog afterwards.

#### Session one (starter level).

If you have not run a hills session before and want to get a taste of what is involved, then an easy way to incorporate hills is to run efforts up the hills over a 1 to 2 mile loop. You will need a loop with a few hills of varying degrees and distance.

Run at an easy-steady pace on the flat. Once you get to the first hill run hard right to just over the brow. Then easy run from the top of the hill onto the next one – and repeat. Do as many times as you feel you can manage.

To progress the difficulty of this session, after each hill effort, walk or jog back down to the bottom and repeat three times before easy running on to the next hill.

#### Session two (5 x 200-400m sprints).

Find a hill of around 200-400m in distance. It does not need to be a steep hill; a gentle climb is sufficient. Run as hard as you can up the hill to just over the brow. Dependent on ability,

either walk or very slowly jog back down to the bottom, and then repeat.

Try five hill efforts, then if you feel up to trying another set, walk or easy jog for five minutes before starting another set of five sprints.

### Session three (8 x 400-600m + 200-300m)

This session is my favourite, although you may not think that during it!

- Find a longer hill between 400-600m
- Run hard to the top
- Turn around and jog or walk halfway down
- Turn around and sprint to the top
- Jog or walk down to the very bottom
- Repeat 6-8 times



### **Alli's top tips**

You don't need to find a mountain to run up! A gentle slope will give you lots of benefit and minimise the chance of injury.

Hill sessions may sound tough, but if you can get a friend to join you, then you can work

together. If one of you usually runs at a faster pace, then the faster runner can start each hard run up the hill a few seconds later and you can use the chase to motivate each other.

At first you may feel that you cannot jog down the hill on the recovery – that is no problem, simply walk down. Always do the hills to your own ability, not anyone else's, and as you become fitter gently build up the number of hill repetitions. Most importantly, enjoy!

**[You can view the rest of the training blogs in this series here.](#)**

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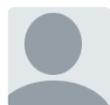
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**Matthew Sparkes** • 11 days ago

Interesting read but I find it very lazy writing when a training article mixes miles and meters as measures. As park run is measured in km can we not stick to that?

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I think you'll find that meters are used for measuring gas, water and electricity