

# GETTING BETTER

Once you have a base ... getting better is a matter of gradually increasing the stress. Remember:  
Stress + Rest = Improvement

1. **ADD DISTANCE or MINUTES:** RULE OF THUMB: Never increase your mileage more than 10% per week. Example: Say you're doing 3 miles 5 times per week or 15 miles/week. The next week you shouldn't do more than 16.5 miles. You can do that by adding 1/2 mile to 3 of your workouts. Or, you could run 4 miles one day and 3 1/2 another. Or go 1.5 miles longer one day per week.
2. **ADD FREQUENCY:** Run 6 days a week instead of 5.
3. **ADD SPEED:** Add a day or two a week of running or walking faster. That includes races, speed workouts, "Making Strides" workouts, time trials ... these all qualify. Then be sure to take it easy on your recovery days. Never put 2 speed days back to back. Spread them out throughout the week.
4. **ADD DIFFICULTY:** In addition to the examples above, difficulty can include hills or hilly courses, grass (like cross country courses), sand (loose sand is VERY difficult ... go short!), etc.
5. **MIX IT UP:** Don't do the same workout every day at the same pace. You will maintain your fitness, but you won't improve. If you average 3 mi/day; go 4 mi. one day and 2 mi. another.

**IMPORTANT:** Don't add all of these changes at once. You should introduce new elements to your training one (maybe two) at a time. Example: Don't jump your mileage up 5 miles/week and start doing speed work 2 days/week all in the same week. You are asking for injury if you ignore this common sense principal.

## **SPEEDWORK** (examples):

- Races - start with 5Ks. Then set a goal 3 months out to run or walk a 5 miler or 10K. Increase distance gradually.
  - First, learn to pace yourself so your first mile isn't faster than your last. THEN, work on getting that pace down a few seconds per mile. Learning pace is the toughest lesson!!!
- Distance intervals - use a track to alternate hard running with jogging/walking. Examples:
  - Push the straight-aways, jog the curves.
  - Run 1/2 lap, jog 1/2 lap,
  - Run full lap; jog 1/2 lap.
  - Run 1/2 lap, jog 1/2 lap, run full lap, jog 1/2 lap, run 2 laps, jog full lap (this is called a ladder). Then repeat.
  - The same concept can be done off the track using city blocks or telephone poles or driveways, etc
- Timed intervals - use your watch.
  - Run 30 sec, jog 30 sec. Continue this pattern for the middle 10 minutes of your workout.
  - Run 30 sec, jog 30 sec, run 1 min, jog 30 sec, run 2 min, jog 1 min ... (see the pattern?)  
*Use the same or 1/2 the distance/time as your recovery jog/walk.*
- Hills - intervals. The steeper the hill, the shorter the interval. Attack hills at a pace that tires you, but doesn't stop you. Then recover slowly on the downhill ... but don't hold back and strain your knees.
- Time trials - if you have a course you do daily, once a week push your pace and time it to see if you can go faster. Not every day ... just once every couple of weeks. Run or walk your course at a sustained, quicker (not sprint) pace than you normally run or walk it.