

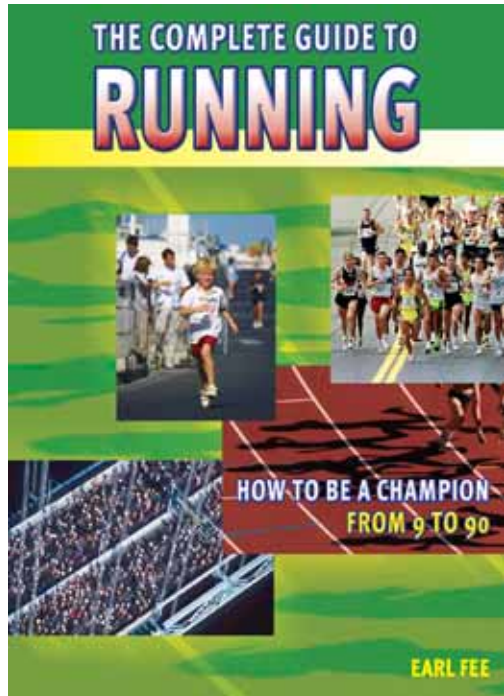
## The complete Guide to Running

by Earl Fee

**T**his book is advertised as being not especially for elite runners but for all fitness enthusiasts from young to age 90. This rather general orientation is an expression of the author's philosophy that the basic principles of training are applicable to all types of athletes and to all ages. This, however, should not distract from the fact that – as the title of the book suggests – the author Earl Fee's main focus is on running.

What are the most important principles of training? According to the author they are as follows:

- Work the five primary energy systems: (1) the phosphate or alactic system, (2) the anaerobic lactic acid system, and the aerobic system including (3) aerobic capacity training ( $VO_2\max$ ), (4) aerobic conditioning, and (5) anaerobic threshold training.
- Build a strong base before the speedwork phase.
- Train to increase the  $VO_2\max$  (aerobic capacity) and the lactate threshold.
- Do not neglect speed at any time of the year.
- Have a plan and adapt gradually to your faraway goal.
- Practise periodisation.
- Ensure proper nutrition and rest.
- Use legal 'magic' supplements.
- To avoid injury, stress recovery in training, and practise cross-train-



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- ing (e. g., running in the water).
- Run with good form and relaxation; be quick but don't hurry.
  - Do not neglect stretching, strength training, and working the central neural pathways.
  - Develop and practice mental techniques.
  - Race often, when ready.
  - Taper.
  - Look at each workout as a body, mind, and spirit experience.

The author outlines his philosophy of training in 22 chapters, ten of which are applicable in general and twelve are specific to running. The following topics and aspects are dealt with in these chapters:

*Chapter 1)* Physiological principles: energy systems; muscle fiber; the respiratory system; the anaerobic threshold and  $VO_{2max}$ ; the heart and coronary vessels; the blood; mitochondrial enzyme activity; physiological differences between men and women.

*Chapter 2)* Mental training harmony of body, mind, and spirit; the ideal state of the mind; relaxation techniques; visualization; self-assertive statements; overcoming prerace jitters; how to stay motivated; focus and refocus; mental toughness; emotional control; the power of belief, autosuggestion and the subconscious.

*Chapter 3)* Running form running sequence and running form for important body parts; breathing; toeing outwards or abduction; form practice; running stride length and stride frequency.

*Chapter 4)* Building a base and hill training.

*Chapter 5)* 26 principles of training [1] base training, [2] gradual adaptation, [3] sharpening and taper, [4] balanced training, [5] correct mix in the training session, [6] training partner, [7] limit training, [8] hard/easy, [9] going with your strengths, [10] specificity, [11] use it or lose it, [12] reversibility, [13] maintenance, [14] super-

compensation, [15] periodization, [16] intuition and training flexibility, [17] continuity and consistency, [18] the 'chicken mind' but stronger body, [19] relaxation, [20] least effort, [21] regularity, [22] living like a champion, [23] anti-shock, [24] neural training, [25] training within present capabilities, [26] shocking the system.

*Chapter 6)* Training for sprinters speed, speed endurance, and tempo training; technique and form; drills for sprinters; stride rate and stride length; flexibility; reaction drills; seasonal schedules for sprinters; Charlie Francis' sprint system.

*Chapter 7)* General training theory for distance runners aspects involved in proper distance training; interval training; the five training systems; running economy; heart rate monitoring to indicate performance improvement

*Chapter 8)* Training for 800 meters, 1500 meters, and miletypical weekly training schedules for 800m, 1500m or mile runners [including, for example, El Guerrouj's training for 1500m world record]; middle distance training the Kenyan way.

*Chapter 9)* Training for 5K, 10K, and marathon preparation time; training pace; mileage goals; training tempo for longer runs; amount of high intensity training; kind of high intensity or quality training; marathon training; long distance training the Kenyan way.

*Chapter 10)* Design your own distance training schedule (e. g. quality sessions; phases of training; correct balance of quality training sessions; example training schedules; ways of making the schedules easier or harder.

*Chapter 11)* Running in the pool advantages; the practice of water running: running form, heart rate, perceived effort, workouts in the deep and shallow end; precautions.

*Chapter 12)* Stretching stretching do's and don'ts; types of stretching; some essen-

tial stretches; stretches to avoid; stretching before a workout; stretching after a workout.

*Chapter 13)* Recovery best recovery methods; recovery in days after a race; recovery after a marathon.

*Chapter 14)* Training shoes types of last and training shoes; tests to determine shoe type.

*Chapter 15)* Nutrition recommended percentage of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats; total daily calories; fiber; alkaline and acid forming foods; proper and improper food combinations; glycemic index; water; pre-competition meal; alcohol and wine; vitamin and mineral supplements as well as “magic” supplements.

*Chapter 16)* Injury prevention and causes causes of specific major injuries; important causes of injury; precautions to prevent injuries; treatment of injury; the good and bad of anti-inflammatory drugs; delayed onset muscle soreness.

*Chapter 17)* Plyometrics theoretical explanation; exercises for lower body; lower, intermediate, and higher impact alternatives; medicine ball exercises.

*Chapter 18)* Dynamic warm-up disadvantage of static stretching before training; advantages of dynamic warm-up; recommended dynamic warm-up sequence.

*Chapter 19)* Weight training free weights vs. machines; rubber tubing exercises; number of reps, sets, and loads; nutritional supplements for strength-trained athletes; importance of abdominals and back muscles; popular weight training exercises; preventative maintenance weightlifting for distance runners; strength exercises more specific to running.

*Chapter 20)* Tactics tactics for middle and long distance races.

*Chapter 21)* Younger and older competi-

tors precautions with growing children; weight training and running training for 13 to 16-year-olds; effect of age on race results; training older competitors.

*Chapter 22)* Inspirational sayings.

This detailed overview of the contents of the book shows that the author covers all aspects of the training and recommended lifestyle for sprinters to marathoners. Although at first sight the book seems to be just another book on running for fitness enthusiasts, a closer scrutiny reveals it to be also a book for serious and even elite athletes. The training examples presented are bang up to date and even include world-class runners (e. g. El Guerrouj). The information presented is very practical and therefore readily applicable. Also, the writing style is concise and the language is easily understandable. Every chapter reflects the vast experience of the author who has not only been a coach and world-class master runner for 18 years but also has 40 world records in track events. The seriousness of the author's approach to the subject is also expressed in the fact that at the end of every chapter there is a sometimes rather long list of references for the sake of evidence or for further study.

To sum it up, *The Complete Guide to Running* is definitely not another of the many books on running. It is an extremely practically orientated handbook that exceeds all expectations. It deserves to be thoroughly recommended.

Reviewed by Jürgen Schiffer