



Runner's World Run Less, Run Faster: Become a Faster, Stronger Runner with the Revolutionary 3- Run-a-Week Training Program

Bill Pierce , Scott Murr , Ray Moss , Amby Burfoot (Foreword)

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Includes Boston Training Programs for All 16 Qualifying Times

The science of running experts at the Furman Institute of Running and Scientific Training (FIRST) show you how you can run less and avoid burnout while producing faster race times!

With all-new revised and expanded user-friendly content, this new edition of *Run Less, Run Faster* shows you how to get stronger, faster, and better by running less. It also includes more sections for novice runners, as well as training plans for 5K, 10K, half-marathon, and marathon is the **3PLUS2 program**, which consists of: *3 quality runs*, including track repeats, the tempo run, and the long run, which are designed to work together to improve endurance, lactate-threshold running pace, and leg speed *2 aerobic cross-training workouts*, such as swimming, rowing, or pedaling a stationary bike, which are designed to improve endurance while helping to avoid burnout The quality-over-quantity approach optimizes training time and yields better performance—results runners will love no matter what distance they are racing.

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From Reader Review Runner's World Run Less, Run Faster: Become a Faster, Stronger Runner with the Revolutionary 3-Run-a-Week Training Program for online ebook

Debra says

I enjoyed the book but it wasn't very relevant for me. It's definitely written for a more accomplished (faster) runner than me. The tables in the book don't start until about 20 minutes per 1/2 marathon faster than my only 1/2 marathon time. I could probably work up to the slowest 5K time in the book and then use the training program for my next 1/2 marathon or something. I enjoyed the letters although they became pretty redundant. I skipped the Boston Qualifying chapter.

Samantha says

Well, I definitely have not been training fast enough. This book not only has me running my once-a-week speedwork runs faster, but also has me doing a weekly tempo run at faster paces than I am used to and my weekly long run at a faster pace than I am used to. Crazy. Shockingly enough, I do manage to recover enough between runs and feel like it's getting... well, *easier* is relative. Still hard. But I feel pumped every time I'm able to do it. I do feel like basing all of those training paces off a recent 5K time is a bit ambitious. My most recent 5K was super fast compared to my most recent half marathon, so I settled for a training pace somewhere in between the 2 to still keep things challenging and help me nail a personal record while not causing me to absolutely dread my next run.

Michelle Gamboa says

I think it's an ok book for those who run regularly and are under a 12 minute mile pace. If you're a beginner and over that pace, the charts don't go that high. There are some good tips, but you're going to do a lot of adjusting for the slower paces.

J says

I hate running. HATE it.

So you've probably guessed I'm not a runner. I am a reader though and if a printed page lies still long enough round here I eventually read it. Ranger Rick, Sports Afield, Transworld Surf... Yes, even Runner's World. I am married to a runner. I think. I don't see him much anymore since he's in training for the next marathon and, when I do see him, he's two sizes smaller than the already superfit hottie he was when I met him. Sometimes he's right here and I don't even notice. Yesterday he was touching his toes (stretching after a long run, dontcha know) and I fell over him. No kidding. Had no idea he was there. Anyway. I was pretty excited by the title of this book. Run less? Thank God! Run faster? Sure. Great. Isn't that everyone's sole aspiration? Whatever. Where's the run less part?

And it's there! It's true! You *can* run less and yet run faster. But don't expect to have loads of free time on

your hands to... oh, I don't know... finish the remodeling you started four years ago or take your wife out to dinner. You'll be working out just as much (You're addicted to that almost-sex rush anyway so it's not as if you actually *want* to work out less. Please.) but it'll be a more varied regimen. Not even running every day. This has GOT to be more interesting. And the program seems to actually work. It's in our house on loan from a friend who recently qualified for the Boston Marathon with the help of this very book. I'll let you know if it works for my ~~anorexic lunatic mostly absent picked me up at the airport after I'd been travelling for fifteen hours and stopped on the way home to buy new running shoes~~ husband.

I mentioned I don't really care much for running. Right? This is a decent book though if that's what you're into. The authors know you don't have a lot of free time and what you do have you want to spend running so the book is chock full of training program and pace tables for 5-k, 10-k, half, and full marathons. There are inspirational "I did it!" letters from supposed subscribers to the program as well as questions posed about it. Illustrations of specific exercises are provided. Cross-training and strength training are addressed. The importance of rest and recovery is stressed. There are chapters on both nutrition and injuries. Neither is comprehensive but then that's not the focus of the book. If your plantar fasciitis is making you cry maybe you ought to limp on into the doctors office instead. If you want to increase your speed and endurance and (Please, God, yes!) qualify for the Boston (chapter 14 - The Reality of Boston: How to Qualify) though, this may be the book for you.

Min says

The book is so so but the FIRST training program come with it is excellent.

I started to use the program when I was running 10min/mile pace a year ago. Now I am working on 8:30 min pace for 5k and 9:30 pace for Half

I love the plan since I did see improvements on speed after doing Track, Tempo and long run at the prescribed pace for 3 months.

The intensity is a little demanding so it is hard... Be careful not to injury yourself...

Samuel W. says

If your looking to improve and remain a healthy runner, this will give you a great set of tools to apply throughout the year. Depending on your situation, you may not need to read every page/chapter, but everyone will benefit from chapters regarding frequency of training, diet, cross-training, stretching, and runner specific weight training. If I had this book twenty years ago I would be giving 5 stars. At this stage (54 years old) I am less interested in remaining competitive and more interested in avoiding injuries. Since a significant amount of the book did not apply to my needs, I only gave it 4 stars. This is certainly not a reflection of the authors, but more a statement of my stage in life.

hoopiefoot says

I really like how this book is laid out. It's easy to read and it seems like the workouts are written so they are easy to understand (but not necessarily do). Right now I'm in a base-building phase, so I haven't run the

workouts, but they seem like they will be challenging but worthwhile.

I'm a little intimidated by the structure as I am usually more loopy-goopy in my training, but I think if I really want to buckle down and become more consistent and competitive I will follow this plan. I've already started incorporating more of the stretches and strength-building exercises in my daily workouts in hopes of keeping injuries at bay. Once I nail down my race plans for 2014 I'll probably re-read this a little more closely.

Lance says

Run Less Run Faster

If you know nothing of the authors or of the work they have done that put Furman University on the runner's map, you may be wrinkling your forehead in wonderment that running less could actually help you run faster. Isn't that counter-intuitive?

And yet the method described within these pages makes sense when investigated further. The main idea is that running everyday wears down the body because the time that should be spent recovering from a workout is used to workout more. The authors extol the virtues of running no more than three days a week and using the days in between to rest the running muscles. Note that I said rest the running muscles and not the body; the authors advocate cross-training on non-running days and taking one day a week off from exercise altogether. The book describes the details for all of these activities in its recommended program.

And for those who may not have the stamina of an athlete, this book is just as helpful. It contains 12-week programs for both the beginner and intermediate level runner to train the individual to reach the next level of performance. The beginner program, for instance, takes a complete couch potato who has never before run and puts running a 5K race easily within reach. I am very impressed with this program. I used the beginner program to do in 12 weeks what I could not do in 2 years. Before I had trouble running half a mile without being so out of breath that I needed a wheelchair with an oxygen tank. By the end of week 11 I was running 4 miles and I was anything but out of breath.

The authors describe their history with the development of the program and explain the statistical studies that helped establish it. From the perspective of someone who uses statistics as a part of his job, I found their validation lacking, particularly in terms of sample size. But what they lacked in math they made up for in method; the program is scientifically based and is simple in theory. They approach running from a thoughtful perspective, explaining the three aspects of running and how to train in each of these aspects. By targeting their training programs thus, runners really can run less and run faster.

This was a fascinating book and well worth every penny. I have not seen a book about running that is so down to earth and practical since I read Amby Burfoot's *The Principles of Running*. And upon trying the methodology I can testify that it works. I highly recommend this volume to anyone regardless of athletic ability or performance level. The program in this book can help you take those first steps towards a healthy lifestyle and then once there take your performance to an entirely new level.

Linda says

I read this book last year in preparation for my half. I have been rereading and referring to it a lot lately,

because I am thinking about doing that same half, this year. Last year, I could not keep up the pace, and I ultimately did get injured. I don't blame the method, but it, definitely, isn't a conservative approach. So, if you have some underlying issues, you could get hurt. I still buy into the basic training theory.

Mandi | No Apathy Allowed says

It is sadly ironic that as I write this post, I am sitting at home with a ridiculously miserable cold and am about as far from being able to run as I can get. But that hasn't stopped me from dreaming, planning and scheming about my next races!

As someone who seems susceptible to injuries — running related (IT Band Syndrome) and otherwise — I was intrigued when I heard about the FIRST training plans, and quickly read their book *Run Less, Run Faster*. Their basic training concept is 3plus2: 3 quality training runs + 2 quality cross-training sessions per week. While it may sound like an easy way out (most training plans have you running 5-6 days per week), it is anything but. The three training runs consist of one speed work session, one tempo run, and one long-run, all at slightly faster paces than usual. Because these runs are more intensive, the authors maintain that they shouldn't be done on back-to-back days. To allow recovery of the muscles used for running, but to still maximize aerobic fitness, they recommend that two intensive cross-training sessions and two days of rest should be interspersed with the running. So basically, a typical week might look like this:

Monday: Cross-training

Tuesday: Speed work

Wednesday: Cross-training

Thursday: Tempo run

Friday: Rest

Saturday: Long run

Sunday: Rest or optional cross-training

The authors present a fair amount of evidence based on experimental studies they did with runners using their training plans, demonstrating improved performance and better race times. And in case you're still in doubt, the book is also heavily sprinkled with anecdotes from other runners' success stories using the plans. I have to admit that they really sold me on the idea of simultaneously getting rid of the "junk mileage" (i.e., those miles without any specific training purpose) while increasing overall training volume through cross-training. I really appreciate the focus on reducing overuse injuries, while still improving overall running performance.

The book is full of useful pace charts based on your most recent race performance so you can accurately assess what pace you should be using for their suggested speed work, tempo runs and long runs. It also includes training plans for 5K, 10K, half marathon, and marathon distances. For beginning runners, they also offer 5K training plans that allow you to slowly build your training up to the point where you can use the more intensive standard plans.

Also helpful are their very specific suggested cross-training workouts (typically involving swimming, biking, or rowing) so people like me who have no idea what a comparable aerobic activity would be can get a clear picture of: what they need to do, how long, and how intensive an effort it should be.

The authors also include chapters on nutrition, strength training, recovery, and stretching. If this is the only book you've read or are planning to read about running, then there's probably some useful information in these chapters for you. But if you've been running for awhile and have done your research, there's nothing

new in these chapters that you haven't heard before. (Although I appreciated that they chose what they consider to be the key stretches and strength moves for runners, especially if you have limited time.)

Although I've had to take a bit of a break from running recently, I plan to try out one of the FIRST plans for my next race, incorporating cycling (and maybe rowing at the gym when the weather is bad) as cross-training activities. I'm even toying with the idea of actually racing a 10K, which in the past I've only run with minimal training. In any case, I'm happy to have a plan that sounds feasible for me, and I'm looking forward to testing out the FIRST theories for myself!

Abel C says

First, a concession statement: I met these guys at the NYC Marathon, and after only a few minutes of talking with them, I was smitten. They know their stuff and its hard to argue with their results. After reading the book, I can't wait to get training for my next race using the FIRST program.

Unfortunately the book itself is poorly organized and redundant. Better as a reference than a cover-to-cover read. I found myself flipping back and forth between chapters and having to double and triple check all my info to make sure I wasn't missing anything while organizing my training calendar. And after about the 9th testimonial from someone who had used the program after reading about it in "Runner's World," I was feeling like a sucker for reading a whole book when a simple article would have done just fine.

UPDATE: I first gave this book a 3 immediately after reading it, because it was so confusingly put together. Half way through my training, though, I had already cut 26 minutes off my marathon PR and had to upgrade it to 4 stars. Now, as my training comes to a head, I'm upgrading the book to 5 stars. Though demanding and intense, this is absolutely THE BEST training program.

Doug Macy says

Recommend read for the intermediate or advanced runner. The techniques and training philosophy are sound, with plenty of evidence to back them up. The workouts are quite technical, probably a bit too much so for the casual/beginning runner looking to gain some speed. It will continue to be a good reference to have on the shelf.

Christina says

I'm usually too lazy to write Goodreads reviews, but I wanted to share my love for the FIRST training plans. I started using the FIRST training plans with the shorter version of their half marathon plan from Runner's World, and I found it to be a great fit. I then used the Runner's World version of their full marathon plan. I'm now using the longer version of the half marathon plan that's included in the book.

I don't really read training plans for the skillful writing style, so I don't care much about the tone or layout. The plan itself (3 hard runs a week/2 days cross training) is a good fit for my busy schedule, and I've stuck to it and PRed by 5-10 minutes in every race I've done using their plans.

The Runner's World articles and associated training plans are a good intro to the FIRST methodology, so if you're on the fence, read the articles and give those a try. The plans in the book are more

detailed/longer/have more race distances available, but the RW articles are a great intro. The book has pace tables, which are more convenient than doing the math yourself with the RW articles.

Ronald says

You can find this book used on Amazon for a buck. It is a very good resource that goes nicely with Galloway's running method. Galloway is a little more careful about over extending one's physical condition. This method, First is careful about injury but at the same time makes clear suggestions regarding getting better times for races. It is a 3 run days a week and 2 cross training days(3plus2). There is a lot of good information in this book covering nearly every topic regarding running races of all distances up to a Marathon. If your a new runner I would highly recommend it.

Malin Friess says

This is the most reasonable, scientifically based 1/2 marathon and marathon running training program available. If you like charts, paces (for 800 m, 5k up to marathon), and daily specific guidelines (6 miles at 8:05 pace) you will enjoy this book. And if you follow the 16 week program I think you will run the marathon time you are gunning for and qualify for the Boston Marathon.

A few concepts I agree with:

Running less and faster! While many marathon training programs (Hal Higdon) suggest running 6 days a week and upwards of 40 miles per week. Bill Pierce in this book sticks to a 3-RUN-A-WEEK Program with about 20-30 miles per week. I agree. When I run 6-7 times per week I get mental burnout (boredom) and skip workouts. When I run more than 30 miles in a week I get plantar facisititis (pain in the heal) and I have to back off.

Bill Pierce is a big fan of cross-training twice per week: particularly cycling and to a lesser extent swimming. They are both non weight bearing activities that are aerobic. Pierce does not promote Yoga, cross fit, or p-90x.

Figure out what you are capable of. Pierce wants you to run a 5k first and then that time can be extrapolated to an expected marathon finish. A 21 minute 5K and you ought to be able to run a 2:57 marathon.

You must run with purpose. For example 3:10 BQ marathon time (week 16). 1) 3x1600--6:01 pace, 2) 2 miles east, 2 miles 6:34 pace, 2 miles easy, 3) 13 miles at 7:44 pace. I believe the number one reason I qualified for the BQ this past December was Yazzo 800's..repeated (6-12) 800 splits with rest in between at 3:10 pace.

Men run shorter faster and longer slower. Women run shorter slower and longer faster.

Running at elevation (as I do in Albuquerque at 6000 ft)....you will see about 6.3% increase in efficiency when running at sea level.

Pierce doesn't want runners in the weight room..but does suggest one and two legged squats.

Muscle density and bone mass decrease about 1% a year above the age 30..but runners can still have some of

their PR's in their early 40s.

My disagreements:

Pierce wants you to complete 5 20 mile runs. I think this is too much..and the recovery is too difficult.

Pierce is not a big fan of hill training. (I enjoy hill repeats and think they are effective).

Perce ought to talk more about proper weight.

5 stars for this book. If you are gearing for a marathon or 1/2 marathon. Check out this book and copy down your plan.
