

FAQs about the MMM training plan

What are interval sessions?

To do an interval session, all you need to do is increase your running speed for a set time or distance. These intervals are short. During the interval you should be trying so hard that you are unable to speak. The recovery time should be equal to or longer than the interval itself. Every Tuesday Manx Fell Runners have interval training sessions in two locations in Douglas and in St John's/ Peel (Peel in winter). These led sessions are a great way to add structure to your interval training. They are also a perfect opportunity to meet other athletes and arrange some long weekend runs.

How can I do a hill session on a Thursday evening in winter?

Many fell runners, with the right equipment and a good head torch, do train off-road in the evenings. However, if that's not an option for you then you can run on the road. Choose a route on the road that has a few hills that you can run up and down. For these sessions, don't choose a hill that is so steep that you have to walk up most of it. Save them for later in your training.

What does a tempo session feel like?

Tempo runs are not as fast as interval sessions but are longer. After a good 10-15 mins warm up of easy running, increase your effort so that you start to feel a little uncomfortable. If you are running with a partner you should be able to hold a conversation during the warm up but only manage to string a few words together during the tempo effort. If you can't talk at all you're working too hard. For your first tempo session on or off road try 15 mins easy/ 15 mins increased effort/ 15 mins easy.

And the long runs?

Use your long runs to get used to running off road. If you can run parts of the MMM route, then do so. But it is more important to get used to running off road or on the fells. If you are going off road, make sure you are properly equipped, have a mobile phone and something to eat/ drink. If you cannot use a map and compass, either run with someone who can or stay safe. Please make sure that somebody knows where you are going and how long you intend to be out.

Do I have to do every run on the plan?

Absolutely not. It is important to train consistently and to gradually increase your running distance/time. If you don't feel well, are injured or are tired, it is always preferable to choose to miss a few runs than be forced to miss weeks of training.

What are the club runs? Can anybody join them?

These guided runs are for people who have entered the MMM. Volunteers from MFR will lead runs over sections of the MMM route. By taking part in these you will get the opportunity to ask experienced fell runners about the MM and get to know parts of the route.

Should I try to do all the races in the plan?

If you have the time to do the Winter Hill Races, then do them. They are only short but taking part in them will help you with your climbing and descending skills. Also, you will get to meet other fell racers. They will help you prepare for the monthly fell races in 2018. X-country races are really demanding. They hurt. Taking part in them will help you to develop your off-road running skills. Some fell runners use them as speed sessions.

Why is the longest run only 3 hours long when the race will take a lot longer than that?

We recommend that a novice runner does not try to run for more than 3 hours at a time. Research has shown that the risk of injury or illness increases after approximately 3 hours of off-road running. In this plan there are 'back to back' runs on Saturday and Sunday. Running on two consecutive days means that you will be able to recover a little between sessions but you will be being up the endurance that is needed to complete a mountain marathon.

What if I can't fit in 3 or 4 sessions a week?

We suggest you do what you can, when you can but try to fit in at least 3 runs a week. If you are really only do 2 sessions, 1 of them should be a long run and the other an interval or tempo session. Unusually, this is a 25 week training plan. It is designed to allow you to build up your running slowly so you can begin with runs of an hour or even less that you may be able to squeeze in. By doing this, you will build up your strength and endurance. You will feel the benefit of this when you start doing the longer runs.