



## SunTrust Training Trips #2

### Speed Work and Maximizing Performance

(Powered by the DC Capital Striders Running Group)  
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#### **What is Speed Work?**

Speed work is a general term for almost any fast-paced strength training.

#### **Why is Speed Work Important?**

The primary goal of half and full marathon training is to build endurance. Speed work builds endurance but it also benefits pace and strength. The purpose of speed work is to build increased efficiency and improved energy conservation, which improves race performance. Also, speed work improves your aerobic capacity and lactate threshold (the point at which lactic acid starts to accumulate in your blood during periods of intense exercise). If you can increase your lactic threshold levels, you will be able to sustain vigorous exercise for longer periods of time.

#### **What are some Example Workouts?**

Different workouts can be incorporated during training. These can include fartleks, pace runs, time trials and short or long intervals.

**Fartleks** – Swedish for “speed play”, where runners run at different paces on a desired course. The runner will alternate speeding up and slowing down repeatedly during a run.

**Pace Runs** – a continuous short hard paced run, typically at race pace or near race pace.

**Time Trial** – a measure of a runner’s progress and an easy way to test stamina.

**Short or long intervals** – typically done on a track where a runner runs at race pace for an established distance and then jogs slower for an established distance before running at race pace again. This is then repeated multiple times over a period several weeks.

#### **When should you do Speed Work?**

There are no clear-cut rules to speed work. Each runner’s workout will vary depending on their goals, their overall training and their general progress. A sufficient running base (i.e. weekly mileage) is recommended before you begin speed work. Once you have an adequate base, you can begin some of the specific speed workouts listed above. Most runners dedicate one day a week to speed training. However, some experienced marathon runners may incorporate two days into their training.

#### **Tips to Remember:**

Always start with a warm up run to make sure your muscles are ready for your workout. Maintain proper form and posture while running. Finally, always cool down with a light jog for about 10 minutes after your speed workout.